



UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA

INPUT FACTORS AND OUTCOMES OF PRE-PURCHASE DISSONANCE

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By

AIFA ROZAINI BINTI MOHD RADZOL

**Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia,
in Fulfillments of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

July 2017

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Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in fulfillment of the requirement for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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AIFA ROZAINI BINTI MOHD RADZOL

July 2017

Chairman : Kenny Teoh Guan Cheng, PhD
Faculty : Economics and Management

This study addresses problems faced by parents regarding the choice of private tertiary education in Malaysia, for their children. Due to the intense competition to get a place in Malaysian Public Universities, parents turn to Private HEIs to pursue their children's dreams. Private HEIs make enticing promises but the deliverables are not guaranteed; this, coupled with prohibitive costs often leaves parents in a dilemma which is known as Cognitive Dissonance. Previously, Cognitive Dissonance was believed to exist at the post-facto phase only. However, a recent study has shown that Cognitive Dissonance also exists at the ex-ante phase. Consequently, this research posits that if Cognitive Dissonance could be reduced at the ex-ante phase (i.e., Pre-Purchase Dissonance), it could increase buyers' positive feelings towards a product; and, as a result, lead to a greater likelihood of purchase. Drawing on the Theory of Buyer Behavior, this study proposes a conceptual framework that examines the effects of antecedent and moderating variables on Pre-Purchase Dissonance vis., i) Brand Equity, Buyer Involvement and Advertising were independent variables, ii) Pre-Purchase Dissonance and Pre-Purchase Satisfaction were sequential mediating variables, iii) Buyer Expectation was the moderating variable, and iv) Word-Of-Mouth (WOM) was the moderating variable. Questionnaires were distributed to parents at education fairs and university open days in the Kuala Lumpur. This research adopted a purposive sampling technique; and 394 respondents completed the survey. Variance Based-Structural Equation Modelling (VB-SEM) was used to analyze the data (SmartPLS 3.0). The findings of this study suggest that Brand Equity and Buyer Involvement can reduce Pre-Purchase Dissonance; while advertising can induce Pre-Purchase Dissonance. Pre-Purchase Dissonance and Pre-Purchase Satisfaction were found to have a negative relationship. Pre-Purchase Satisfaction was also found to have a positive relationship with Purchase Intention. The findings also revealed that Pre-Purchase Dissonance and Pre-Purchase Satisfaction have a sequential mediating effect between Brand Equity and Advertising. This research found that WOM moderates the relationship between Pre-Purchase Dissonance and Pre-Purchase Satisfaction. These findings, suggest that Pre-Purchase Dissonance can be reduced at

the ex-ante phase. Practically, marketers of Private HEIs should focus their marketing strategy on enhancing their Brand Equity, and promote parent Involvement to reduce Pre-Purchase Dissonance. In contrast, this research suggests that marketers should reconsider their Advertising strategy to attract parents because Advertising seems to create dissonance among parents.



Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk Ijazah Doktor Falsafah

KESAN INPUT DAN KESAN PERCANGGAHAN KOGNITIF PRA-PEMBELIAN

Oleh

AIFA ROZAINI BINTI MOHD RADZOL

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Kajian ini mengemukakan masalah dihadapi oleh ibubapa mengenai pemilihan pusat pengajian tinggi untuk anak-anak. Disebabkan persaingan sengit untuk mendapatkan tempat pengajian di Institut Pengajian Tinggi Awam (IPTA), ibu-bapa memilih Institut Pengajian Tinggi Swasta (IPTS) untuk anak-anak mereka menyambung pengajian. Institut Pengajian Tinggi Swasta (IPTS) agak menarik perhatian para ibu-bapa, akan tetapi ianya tidak sama seperti apa yang dijanjikan; seperti, kos larangan yang akan menyebabkan dilemma di kalangan ibu-bapa yang dikenali sebagai Percanggahan Kognitif. Sebelum ini, Percanggahan Kognitif dipercayai wujud selepas pembelian. Walaubagaimanapun, kajian terbaru mengatakan bahawa Percanggahan Kognitif juga wujud sebelum pembelian. Oleh itu, kajian ini mencadangkan bahawa Percanggahan Kognitif boleh dikurangkan sebelum pembelian (i.e., Percanggahan Kognitif Sebelum Beli), ia boleh meningkatkan perasaan positif kepada produk atau servis; dan, kesannya boleh membawa kebarangkalian membeli yang tinggi. Berasaskan kepada Teori Gelagat Pembeli, kajian ini mencadangkan konsep rangkakerja yang mengkaji kesan pembolehubah bebas dan moderasi pembolehubah kepada Percanggahan Kognitif Sebelum Beli iaitu i) Ekuit Jenama, Penglibatan Pembeli dan Pengiklanan sebagai Pembolehubah Bebas, ii) Percanggahan Sebelum Beli dan Kepuasan Sebelum Beli sebagai mediasi berturutan iii) Niat Beli sebagai Pembolehubah Bersandar iv) Jangkaan Pembeli dan Penyebaran Mulut sebagai moderasi pembolehubah. Kajiselidik telah diagihkan kepada ibu-bapa semasa pesta pendidikan dan hari terbuka universiti di Kuala Lumpur. Kajian ini menggunakan teknik persampelan bertujuan; dan 394 responden telah menjawab soalan kajian. Varians Based- Persamaan Struktur Model (VB-SEM) digunakan untuk analisis data (SmartPLS 3.0). Hasil kajian mendapati bahawa Ekuiti Jenama, Penglibatan Pengguna

boleh mengurangkan Percanggahan Sebelum Beli; tetapi, Pengiklanan boleh mendorong Percanggahan Sebelum Beli. Percanggahan Sebelum Beli dan Kepuasan Sebelum Beli didapati mempunyai hubungan yang negatif. Kepuasan Sebelum beli dan Niat Membeli didapati mempunyai keputusan yang positif. Kajian juga mendapati Percanggahan Sebelum Beli dan Kepuasan Sebelum Beli mempunyai kesan mediasi antara Jenama Ekuit – Niat Beli dan Pengiklanan – Niat Beli. Kajian ini mendapati Penyebaran Mulut memoderasi hubungan antara Percanggahan Sebelum Beli – Kepuasan Sebelum Beli. Hasil kajian ini mendapati Percanggahan Sebelum beli boleh dikurangkan pada fasa sebelum beli. Secara praktikal, pihak pemasaran Insitut Pengajian Tinggi Swasta (IPTS) seharusnya mengatur strategi untuk meningkatkan Jenama Ekuiti dan mempromosi penglibatan ibubapa untuk mengurangkan Percanggahan Kognitif Sebelum Beli. Di sebaliknya, kajian ini turut mencadangkan supaya pihak pemasaran menimbang kembali strategi Pengiklanan, kerana Pengiklanan didapati tidak mengurangkan Percanggahan Kognitif Sebelum Beli, tetapi lebih kepada mendorong Percanggahan Kognitif Sebelum Beli dikalangan ibu-bapa.

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I certify that a Thesis Examination Committee has met on 25 July 2017 to conduct the final examination of Aifa Rozaini binti Mohd Radzol on her thesis entitled "Input Factors and Outcomes of Pre-Purchase Dissonance" in accordance with the Universities and University Colleges Act 1971 and the Constitution of the Universiti Putra Malaysia [P.U.(A) 106] 15 March 1998. The Committee recommends that the student be awarded the Doctor of Philosophy.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AVE	Average Variance Extracted
CB-SEM	Covariance Based – Structural Equation Model
CMV	Common Method Variance
CR	Composite Reliability
CVR	Cross-Validated Redundancy
f^2	Effect Size
ML	Maximum Likelihood
PLS-SEM	Partial Least Square – Structural Equation Model
Q^2	Predictive Relevance
R^2	Co-efficient of Determination
SEM	Structural Equation Model
SRMR	Standardized Root Means Square Error
WOM	Word-of-Mouth

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This chapter consists of nine sections. Section 1.1 introduces the Background of The Research. Section 1.2 discusses the Problem Statement for this research. Section 1.3 presents the Definitions of Terms used throughout this research. Next, Section 1.4 and 1.5 discuss the Research Question and Research Objectives respectively. Section 1.6 addresses the Research Significance and Section 1.7 describes the Research Scope. Section 1.8 gives a short brief on the Emergence of Private HEIs in Malaysia and Section 1.9 outlines the Organization of the Research. Lastly, Section 1.10 provides a Conclusion of Chapter 1

1.2 Background of the Research

Every day, consumers are involved with decision making such as, what to buy, where to buy, and when to buy. These are the most frequent questions playing in the minds of consumers. Usually, consumers make decisions without complete information about all aspects of the purchase. As a result, consumers might face disharmonies between what they expect from a product/service and its actual performance. These “disharmonies”, according to Festinger (1957) are termed, “*cognitive dissonance*”.

To understand cognitive dissonance, it is necessary to understand the consumer decision making process. Table 1.1 below shows the decision making process in various contexts by several experts.

Table 1.1 : Decision Making Process

Author(s)	Sequence
Starch (1925)	Seeing→Reading→Believing→Remembering→Acting
Strong (1925)	Awareness→Interest→Desire→Action
Lionberger, Roger (1960)	Awareness→Interest→Evaluation→Trial→Adoption
Colley (1961)	Unawareness→Awareness→Comprehension→Conviction→Action
Lavidge and Steiner (1961)	Awareness→Knowledge→Liking→Preference→ Conviction→Purchase (i.e., Cognition→Affect (Conation)
McGuire (1969)	Exposure→Attention→Comprehension→Yielding→Retention→Behavior
Howard and Sheth (1969)	Attention→Brand Comprehension→Attitude→ Intention→Purchase
Rogers Shoemaker (1971)	Knowledge→Persuasion→Decision→Confirmation
McGuire (1976)	Exposure→Perception→Comprehension→Agreement → Retention→Retrieval→Decision Making→Action
Engel, Blackwell and Kollat (1978)	Perceived information→Problem recognition→Search→Evaluation of Alternatives→Beliefs→Attitudes→ Intentions→Choice
Brit (1978)	Exposing→Attending→Perceiving→Learning and Remembering→Motivating→Persuading→Desired Action
Foxall and Goldsmith (1994)	Environment→Attention and perceptual filter →Interpretation (involving experiences, beliefs, attitudes and goals held in short and long term memory)→Brand beliefs→Brand attitudes→Purchase→Usage

From Table 1.1, it is clear that purchase decisions are the behavioural patterns of consumers who determine and follow decision processes comprising various phases in order to reach a choice. These models have often been applied to research cognitive dissonance *after the fact*; in other words, after the purchase has been made and the product/service has been experienced – i.e., *post-purchase dissonance*.

However, Koller and Salzberger (2007 p. 217) have demonstrated that “... cognitive dissonance can meaningfully be extended to phases in the decision-making process with which it is normally not associated, namely the pre-purchase and even the pre-decision phase”. The implication of this is that cognitive dissonance is “... applicable in the pre-decision phase” (p. 217); but more than that, it also implies that if marketers can minimize cognitive dissonance in the pre-purchase phase, it could lead to a further reduction in post-purchase dissonance; thus resulting in greater consumer satisfaction.

To be sure, dissonance does not arise in all purchase situations. In a review article entitled “Cognitive Dissonance and Consumer Behavior: A Review of the Evidence” (Cumming and Venketesan, 1976) it was evidenced that dissonance only arises when three conditions are met. They are:-

- i) The decision must be important to the buyer.
- ii) The buyer must feel free during the decision making process; that is, the decision must be made voluntarily.
- iii) The buyer must display irrevocable commitment to the decision once it is made. The decision must be irreversible.

Considering the three conditions highlighted by Cumming and Venketesan (1976), this selects Private Higher Education Institutions (HEI) as the research context to be tested with Pre-Purchase Dissonance constructs. This research chooses the Higher Education industry as the context because the choice of a university has life-long implications. Many parents would want to obtain as much information as possible before they choose a university for their children. In other words, these parents, whether or not they know it, are actually trying to reduce their dissonance before purchasing (enrollment) the education for their child. Parents become the unit of analysis because they are the ones who bear the education cost; not the child. Also, the tuition fee paid to the Private HEIs are almost always, irrevocable and thus it becomes a long term commitment. Hence, with the growing competitive environment, Private HEIs have dramatically increased the competition by providing high quality services as a solution to compete in this turbulent market (Haur, 2006; Sohail et al, 2003). Therefore, any Private HEIs that recognize and acknowledge the Pre-Purchase Dissonance phenomenon will have a competitive advantage vis-à-vis its competitors.

Consumers do not necessarily, strictly, follow the linear models of traditional purchase behavior as depicted in Table 1.1, in that, they are passive receivers of product/service information. Modern day consumers tend to do more pro-active research by checking the product reviews from experienced consumers through the internet. As a result, marketers need to shift their focus to examining and attracting buyers at the pre-purchase phase; rather than at the post-purchase phase. Specifically, marketers need to be more aware of the underlying factors considered by students when choosing a Private HEI (Hassan and Sheriff, 2006) if they want to survive in this competitive environment (Vaira, 2004). In other words, it is important for marketers of Private HEIs to know the factors that could reduce 'dissonance' *before* the parents decide on a study program for their children.

Therefore, this research changes the perspective of the traditional Cognitive Dissonance model which to date, has been examined, *ex post*. This research seeks to help marketers enhance their understanding of consumer needs and wants prior to purchase – the *ex-ante* perspective of Cognitive Dissonance; thus, this presents a research opportunity – the gap – to uncover the causative factors that lead to Pre-Purchase Dissonance; how Pre-Purchase Dissonance affects Pre-Purchase Satisfaction; and how Pre-Purchase Satisfaction can enhance buyer Purchase Intention.

1.3 Problem Statement

Nowadays, Malaysian parents grumble about the difficulties for their children to study the courses of their choices in Public HEIs. Obviously, Public HEIs which are very competitive, offer very limited opportunities to enroll for choice courses such as medicine, dentistry, geologist, astronomy, accounting, business and so on. As a result, many parents many parents opt for enrolling their children in Private HEIs. However, enrolling a child in a Private HEI is not an easy solution for parents either because parents have to bear three to five times higher cost of education as compared to Public HEIs. Thus, it leaves parents in a dilemma where parents want to choose the best for their children's future; but have financial constraints.

(The Star Online, 15 Jan 2017)

Hence, parents face a dilemma with its accompanying uncertainties or disharmony in their cognition to make the best decision for their children's future, i.e.; Cognitive Dissonance. Traditionally, this Cognitive Dissonance (Festinger, 1957) was understood to arise after the purchase, that is, "the uncomfortable feeling faced by consumers about their purchase" (Sweeney et al, 2010). However, Koller and Salzberger (2007) have suggested that cognitive dissonance could possibly arise prior to purchase and this phenomenon is named as "Pre-Purchase Dissonance". Other than Koller and Sazberger (2007) finding, Festinger (1964) also agreed that Cognitive Dissonance is not restricted to post-purchase decision and can occur prior to a consumer decision. The statement by Festinger (1964) states that:-

"The pre-decision situation is generally regarded as one in which the person experiences conflict. The conflict exists, presumably, because of the simultaneous presence of a least two mutually incompatible response tendencies. Much of the theoretical thinking on the subject decision situations has been concerned with how the person behaves during the period when he is in conflict, that is, before he has come to a decision."
(Festinger, 1964:3)

Oliver (2010, 1997) highlights that dissonance development process exists at various decision making process. *In the pre-decision phase, dissonance arises where choices exist between similar attractiveness alternatives resulting to pre-decision conflicts.* However, limited research has been found that focus on managing Pre-Purchase Dissonance. A conceptual work by Chou (2012) suggested that Online Review can be one of the factors that could reduce Pre-Purchase Dissonance.

In fact, Pre-Purchase Dissonance is more likely to happen today because of the easy access to information such as through online product reviews, discussion groups, product ratings; and also through the social media such as Facebook, Instagram and

blogs, which are fast becoming the main sources of consumer reference rather than product advertising itself (Fader and Winer, 2012; Mayzlin and Yoganarasimhan, 2012; Onishi and Manchanda, 2012). Research also shows that 67% of all consumers read online reviews before they actually purchase the product or service – roughly, consumers read at least four (4) online reviews before making a purchase (Godes and Silva, 2012; Kee, 2008). These online reviews play a key role in modern day purchase decisions. Consequently, marketers should acknowledge this web phenomenon and pay serious attention to the pre-purchase phases of buyer decision making.

Past literature show that post-purchase studies regarding Cognitive Dissonance are plenty; but only few studies capture pre-purchase decision making scenario (Koller, 2009; Sharifi and Esfidani, 2014). However, limited research has been found that focus on managing Pre-Purchase Dissonance. Therefore, a research gap is evident here and this research uses this opportunity to investigate Pre-Purchase Dissonance and its concomitant constructs at the *ex-ante* phase. A conceptual work by Chou (2012) suggested that Online Review can be one of the factors that manage Pre-Purchase Dissonance. However, this study does not adopted recommendation by Chou (2012); instead propose other psychological constructs to be test with Pre-Purchase Dissonance. In fact, the importance of Brand Equity, Involvement, and Advertising to this research is strongly underscored by their prominence in consumer research: Brand Equity (Taylor et al., 2004; Mahajan et al., 1994; and Keller, 1993); Involvement (Parment, 2013; and Webster, 1993); and Advertising (Aaker, 2013; Turley et al., 1997 and Johnston, 1994). The research further enhances the framework by investigating consequences of Pre-Purchase Dissonance, namely, Pre-Purchase Satisfaction and Purchase Intention. In addition, Buyer Expectation and Word-of-Mouth (WOM) are added as moderators to enhance realism of the research framework.

1.4 Definition of Terms

There are nine (9) terms that are specific to this research. The definitions are adopted from published research. Details for each definition are provided in Table 1.2.

Table 1.2 : Definition of Terms

No	Term	Author (Year)	Definition
1	Brand Equity	Aaker (1991)	Represents a set of brand assets and liabilities linked to a brand, its name and symbol that add to – or subtract from – the value provided by a product.
2	Buyer Involvement	Solomon (2015)	Represents a buyer’s perceived relevance of the object based on their inherent need, values and interests.
3	Advertising	Kotler (1999)	Represents activities that communicate the product or service and persuade target buyers to purchase.
4	Pre-Purchase Dissonance	(Sweeney et. al., 2000)	Represents cognitive and emotional distress that a buyer might feel before the act of purchase arising from disharmony (i.e., inconsistency) between expectation and expected performance”,
5	Pre-Purchase Satisfaction	Westbrook (1980)	Represents internal positive feeling(s) that buyers have when they evaluate information, before they make a purchase of a desired product.
6	Purchase Intention	Whitlark, Geurts and Swenson (1993)	Represents purchase probability associated with an intention of individuals who will actually buy products.
7	Word-of-Mouth (WOM)	(Westbrook, 1987)	Represents informal communications directed at the other consumers about the ownership, usage, or characteristics of particular goods or services and/or their sellers”.
8	Buyer Expectation	Prakash and Lounsbury (1984)	Represents the beliefs that may be formed on the basis of past experience, information from advertising, and opinions of other people.

1.5 Research Question

This research proposes three Research Questions to close the research gap. The proposed research questions are:-

- i) What are the Input Factors and Outcome of Pre-Purchase Dissonance?
- ii) Are there any indirect effect of Pre-Purchase Dissonance and Pre-Purchase Satisfaction between Input Factors and Purchase Intention?
- iii) What are variables that could moderate the relationship between Input Factors and Purchase Intention?

1.6 Research Objective

The main objective of this research is to examine the relationships between Input Factors (Brand Equity, Buyer Involvement, and Advertising) to Pre-Purchase Dissonance; to Pre-Purchase Satisfaction; and to Purchase Intention. At the same time, this research examines the sequential mediating effect of Pre-Purchase Dissonance and Pre-Purchase Satisfaction between Input Factors (Brand Equity, Buyer Involvement,

and Advertising) and Purchase Intention. In addition, the moderating effects of Word-of-Mouth (WOM) and Buyer Expectation are also examined.

Accordingly, the following sub-research objectives are derived:-

- i) To determine the relationships between Input Factors (Brand Equity, Buyer Involvement, and Advertising) and Pre-Purchase Dissonance.
- ii) To determine the relationship between Pre-Purchase Dissonance and Pre-Purchase Satisfaction.
- iii) To determine the relationship between Pre-Purchase Satisfaction and Purchase Intention.
- iv) To determine the sequential mediating effects of Pre-Purchase Dissonance and Pre-Purchase Satisfaction between Input factors (Brand Equity, Buyer Involvement, and Advertising) and Purchase Intention.
- v) To determine the moderating effect of Word-of-Mouth (WOM) between Pre-Purchase Dissonance and Pre-Purchase Satisfaction.
- vi) To determine the moderating effect of Word-Of-Mouth (WOM) between Pre-Purchase Satisfaction and Purchase Intention.
- vii) To determine the moderating effects of Buyer Expectation between Input Factors (Brand Equity, Buyer Involvement and Advertising) and Pre-Purchase Dissonance.

1.7 Research Significance

To begin with, Koller and Salzberger (2007) first proposed the concept of dissonance at the pre-purchase phase (Pre-Purchase Dissonance). However, since then, there has not been any structured follow-up research that has expanded on the work of Koller and Salzberger (2007). This research is significant in that, it proposes antecedences and moderators to the Pre-Purchase Dissonance phenomenon; and equally important, it places all these constructs in a model that relates the Pre-Purchase Dissonance construct to the Pre-Purchase Satisfaction construct, and thence to the Purchase Intention construct.

For marketers, analyzing dissonance at the pre-purchase phase is important because the cost to retain a buyer is much lower than the cost to acquire a new buyer. As stated in a research conducted in early 1988, TARP Worldwide reported that the cost to attract a new customer on average is USD750 while the average cost to retain an existing customer is USD150. Also, TARP reported that the cost to obtain new buyers and retain existing buyers ranges between 2:1 and 20:1 (Goodman, 1999). Similarly, Andrew (2003) reported that in service industries, the average cost of retaining an existing customer is USD57.33, compared to USD279.48 as the average cost of attracting a new customer.

Last, but not least, this research is significant to marketers in that it highlights the importance of eliminating Cognitive Dissonance before the point of purchase (*ex-ante*), thus adding another weapon to the marketer's arsenal to enhance the differentiation of their product vis-à-vis competitor products (Roberts, 1990). Thus, Pre-Purchase Dissonance analysis can be a prime source of competitive advantage to the marketer.

1.8 Scope of the Research

This research focuses on the pre-purchase phases of the buyer decision making process; rather than the complete decision making process. Accordingly, the end-point of this research (i.e., the Dependent Variable) will be Purchase Intention. Purchase Intention is the dependent variable because Purchase Intention is the most suitable construct to measure Purchase Action; in fact, Jobber and Fowler (2000) found that buyers' Purchase Intention have an 80% predictive power on Purchase Action.

Accordingly too, the starting-point of this research shall be the antecedences of the Pre-Purchase Dissonance construct. This research limits itself to the following Input Factors (Brand Equity, Buyer Involvement, and Advertising) which are theoretically supported by literature. Then, the relationship between Pre-Purchase Dissonance to Pre-Purchase Satisfaction; and Pre-Purchase Satisfaction to Purchase Intention are investigated. This study concludes with a test of the sequential mediating effect between Input Factors and Purchase Intention.

Since such an investigation would be incomplete without an examination of the role of moderators; therefore, the scope of this research will incorporate the role of the following moderators –WOM and Buyer Expectation. WOM has been chosen because buyers frequently rely on informal and/or personal communication sources in making purchase decisions as opposed to more formal and/or organizational sources such as “advertising campaigns” (Bansal and Voyer, 2000, p. 166). Buyer Expectation is selected because ‘expectations’ is crucial at the pre-purchase phase (Creyer, 1997). The population of this study is parents who enroll their children in Private HEIs in Klang Valley. The list of Private HEIs in Klang Valley is obtained from the Higher Education Ministry Website. Although Private HEIs are well distributed all over Malaysia, a majority of them are located in Klang Valley. Parents who plan to enroll their children in Private HEIs are selected to become the target respondents for this study is because they are the one who will bear the cost of education for their children.

1.9 The Emergence of Private Higher Education Institution

The 1990's has been an exciting period for the education system in Malaysia. The Malaysia Government is desirous of turning Malaysia into a center of excellence for education. It has taken momentous strides in liberalizing the educational services industry by encouraging competition amongst operators in public as well as private sectors.

Both, public and private education providers play equally important roles in the provision of higher education. Based on the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) website, education providers in Malaysia can be grouped into two major categories:-

Public Higher Educational Institutions (Government Funded)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Universities – 20 Public Universities • Polytechnics – 32 Polytechnics • Community Colleges – 45 Community Colleges
Private Higher Educational Institutions (Non-Government Funded)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Private Universities – 44 private Universities • Private Universities-Colleges – 31 Private Universities Colleges • Foreign University Branch Campuses – 9 Foreign University Private Colleges – 401 Private Colleges

Figure 1.1 : Categories of HEIs in Malaysia

As at December 2015, Malaysia had 135,502 international students from 160 nations studying in public and private higher education institutions. It shows an increment of 16.5% from 2013. Out of this, 74,996 international students studied in private higher education institutions, an increase 29.9% from 2013; while in the public institutions, the number was 32,842. Table 1.3 provides the data of student enrollment in Private HEIs in Malaysia – In Private HEIs alone, more than half a million students were registered in Malaysia in 2010. This is an indication of the immense size of the Private HEI industry. A detailed enrollment based on level of study is presented in Table 1.4.

Table 1.3 : Student Enrollment

Type of PHEI	Student Enrolment (Malaysia)	Student Enrolment (International)	Total
Private Universities	193,086	15,859	208,945
Private University Colleges	77,343	16,295	93,638
Foreign University Branch Campuses	13,280	3,730	17,010
Non-University Status Institutions	195,215	26,821	222,036
Total	478,924	62,705	541,629

(Source: studymalaysia.com As at December, 2010)

Table 1.4 : Enrollment in Tertiary Education Institutions by Level of Study

Level of Study	Average Annual Growth Rate (%)			
	2001-2005		2006-2010	
	Public	Private	Public	Private
Certificate	9.8	3.0	30.1	8.6
Diploma	1.6	2.3	23.6	7.5
1 st Degree	4.4	13.0	6.7	4.0
Master	7.5	14.1	26.5	6.5
Doctorate	15.0	1.4	26.0	14.0
Total	4.5	5.5	16.9	6.7

(Source: Ninth Malaysia Plan, 2006-2010, Table 11-6, p245)

Malaysia had become the fastest growing destination for international students, attracting an annual increase of over 16%. This suggests that education in Malaysia is not just affordable, but also accessible and welcoming. By 2020, Malaysia aims to attract 200,000 international students to become an international education hub.

1.10 Organization of the Research

This thesis consists of six (6) chapters. Chapter One, “Introduction”, introduces this research and highlights the background of the study, problem statement, definitions of terms, research question, research objectives, research significance and chapter summary. Chapter Two, “Literature Review”, presents the literature review from past studies about each construct and the theoretical support. Chapter Three, “Theoretical Framework and Hypothesis Development”, portrays the theoretical framework and hypothesis development used in this research. Chapter Four, “Methodology”, will discuss research methodology that will be employed to collect data and conduct analysis. Chapter Five, discusses the “Data Analysis and Results” of the research and the last Chapter Six, presents the “Discussion and Conclusion” of the research.

1.11 Chapter Summary

This chapter presents an overview of this research, its scope and its motivation. The next chapter focuses on the Literature Review of the research constructs involves in this research.

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