

INTRODUCTION

Ciriaci & Muscio (2010) reveal that attending a reputable university improves students' employability and reduces brain waste. Globalization led to an international market for educational services and increased competition to attract students. As competition among universities has increased, universities have been obliged to embrace market-oriented strategies to differentiate themselves from their competitors and to appeal themselves to as many students as possible (Butt and Rehman, 2010). Also, universities have also realized that their sector signifies a business-like service industry and have begun to emphasis more on exceeding the needs of their students (Gruber et al., 2010). What's more previous research has shown a significant need exists to identify the most important factors that shapes the student perceptions of the university's image.

PURPOSE

The image of universities is a hot topic that is receiving countless attention as universities recognize the importance of attracting students and obtaining a distinctive image in the competitive world.

This paper examines the effect of causal factors, such as perceived comparability of education standards, perceived quality of education, as well as perceived facilities and extracurricular activities on perceived employability and university image.

This research empirically correlates three fields of research: TQM in higher education, branding and image, and leadership

Research Problem

What are the determinants of the perceptions students hold vis-à-vis Qatar University (QU)?

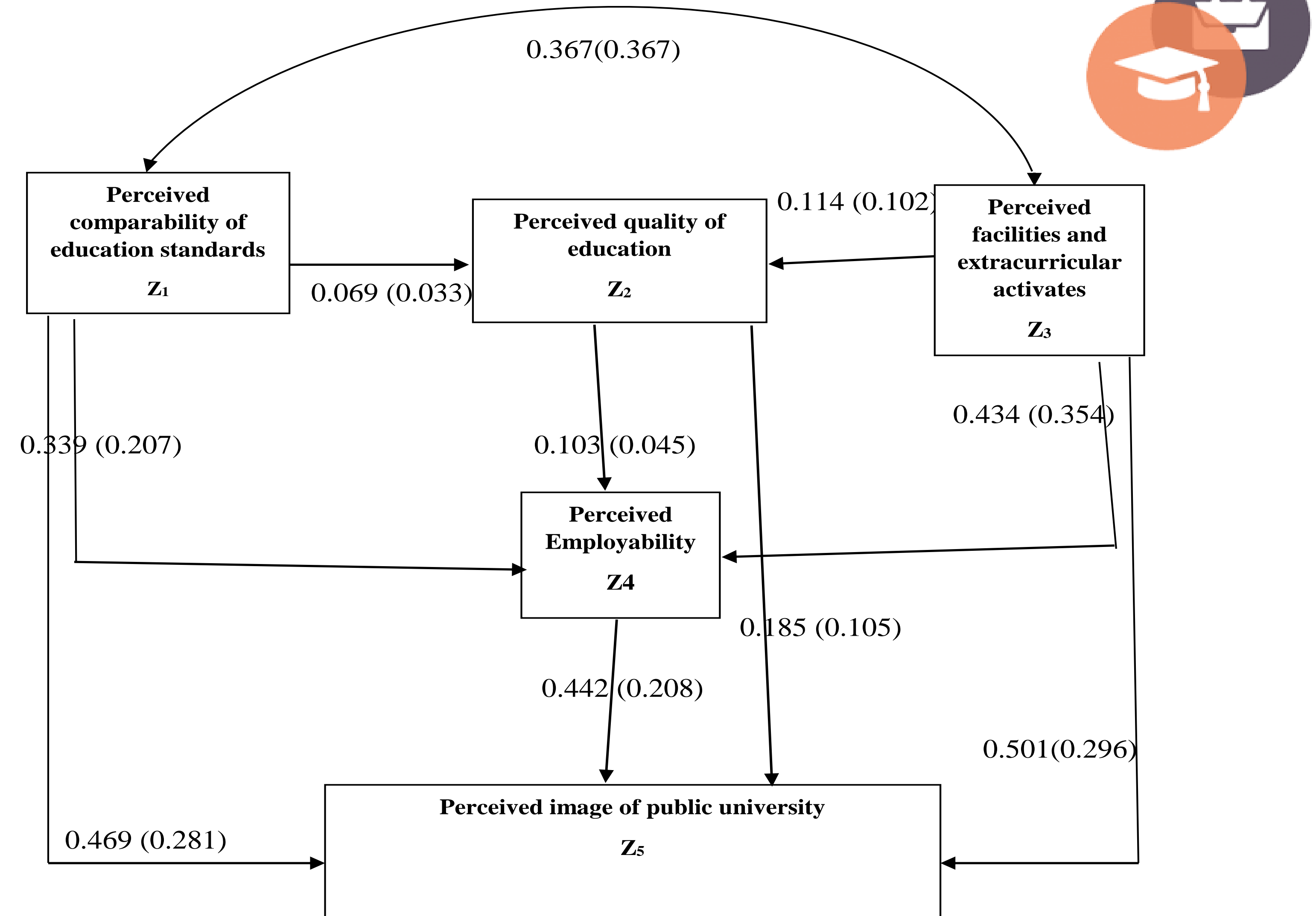
METHODOLOGY

The data used is from the QU- Image project conducted in year 2015. The study involved 1427 high school students.

Using SPSS, the researchers used factor analysis to establish construct validity, based on two suitability tests: the Kaisers-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy and the Bartlett test of sphericity. The dimensions were found to be reliable and valid.

Using a criterion of an Eigen value greater than 1 (the total variance explained by each factor) yielded six factors: Perceived image of QU, perceived quality of education, perceived comparability of educational standards, perceived cost, perceived facilities & extracurricular activities and perceived employability. Perceived cost was not significant and was deleted from the path analysis.

Figure -1- Antecedents and Consequences of Perceived Employability



The true direct effect between two variables is shown between parenthesis as an estimated path coefficient converted into standardized Z-score while the other numbers are the zero-order relation (i.e. the total relation = direct effect + indirect effect). Perceived comparability of standards and perceived extracellular activities are two exogenous variables affecting the endogenous variable perceived quality of education. These three variables affect perceived employability which in turn affect perceived image.

RESULTS AND CONCLUSION

The findings of this study indicate that the way students perceive Qatar University is determined by four main factors: Quality of education, comparability of educational standards, the facilities and extracurricular activities provided, and graduates' employability.

- The results support this study's hypothesis that students' positive perception of Qatar University's image is associated with their positive view of QU's educational standards.
- This study's results further support the hypothesis that student's positive perception of Qatar University's image is associated with their positive views of the university's facilities and extracurricular activities
- Moreover, as consistent with all empirical studies, the more positive students' perceptions of the quality of education at QU, the more likely they are to perceive the university's image favorably.
- Finally, the more positive students' perceptions of the employability of QU's graduates, the more likely they are to perceive the university's image favorably.

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References:

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