



# **Evaluation of personnel's brand involvement in a private university setting: The case of MODUL University Vienna**

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## **Affidavit**

I hereby affirm that this Bachelor's Thesis represents my own written work and that I have used no sources and aids other than those indicated. All passages quoted from publications or paraphrased from these sources are properly cited and attributed.

The thesis was not submitted in the same or in a substantially similar version, not even partially, to another examination board and was not published elsewhere.

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## Abstract

Branding is nowadays perceived as a universal term in every industry. Also in the higher education sector, branding recently has become a necessity for marketing a university as a valuable brand to its future students to gain an edge over their pool of competitors. The aim of this thesis is, to investigate and explain the ways in which MODUL University Vienna is involved with the universities brand. Thus, the main goal of this thesis is furthermore to measure, to which extend the personnel of MODUL University Vienna is involved into the universities brand. The outcomes of this case study could be of great importance for MODUL University Vienna, as they could provide the management of the university with relevant research on the existing situation among personnel when it comes to brand involvement, and furthermore provide future improvement ideas concerning this issue.

The main results of the case study showed, that at the moment personnel of MODUL University Vienna, is already involved with the university's brand, but this involvement needs to be strengthened and developed further. In addition, there are slight differences between the brand perception of faculty and staff of the university. Especially communication and training need to be enhanced and the existing "gap" between faculty and staff departments needs to be bridged by taking various actions.

Such actions include, in concrete, the conduction of regular employee meetings and surveys and regular following employee discussions. Furthermore career development opportunities need to be designed more attractive to keep the turnover rates of employees as low as possible. As especially the faculty of the university wishes to get more information on the brand of the university, a written document of brand guidelines of the university could be beneficial for "existing" employees. Furthermore "brand guidelines handbooks" and "brand introduction sessions" could be offered to new employees of the university to get them familiar with the brand. Lastly regular meetings on branding guidelines of MODUL University could be held, to trigger discussions between employees of the university.

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## List of Abbreviations

*MU-MODUL University Vienna*

# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Background information

Nowadays stiff competition in all kinds of industries exists. Because of that, branding has become a very important issue that needs to be dealt with in every organization. Thus, branding currently counts as a necessity for companies to position themselves on the market among competitors (Sevier, 1994). As a result of that, companies started to brand their products and services in order to remain their competitive advantages. Various studies show how an effective branding process leads to higher customer satisfaction, better competitive positioning and increased profits (Aaker, Fournier, & Brasel, 2004). Furthermore, branding can be applied internally. Internal branding within a company helps to promote the company values to its employees which results in better brand understanding among employees (Ahmed & Rafiq, 2003). In addition to that, it is a creator of brand commitment and brand loyalty (Papasolomou & Vrontis, 2006).

One of the industries that has recognized the need of branding over the past years is higher education. As universities are defined as branded institutions (McAlexander, Schouten, & Koenig, 2005), the use of branding in universities has become a necessity for marketing a university as a valuable brand to its future students to gain an edge over their pool of competitors (Joseph, Mullen, & Spark, 2012). Thus, universities try to communicate their messages and stories to distinguish themselves on the market and target future students (Judson, Aurand, Gorchels, & Gordon, 2008). Hence, not only prospective students fear about competition when applying to Universities. In order to effectively design a university brand, universities have to re-think their position. It has become of great importance for universities to highlight its distinct features, which differentiate them from other educational institutions. This is especially important for “young” universities which are founded after the year of 1992. These universities need to develop strong brands in order to be able to compete with well known, historic university brands (Rooney, 1995). However, also well-known university brands need to focus on branding and marketing activities even more to be able to retain their market share and quality of student intake (Naudé & Ivy, 1999; Melewar & Akel, 2005).

A good branding strategy should therefore reflect the capacity to satisfy student's needs as well as engender trust in its ability to deliver a certain type and level of higher education (Bick, Jacobson, & Abratt, 2003). Therefore, external strategies for promoting the universities brand, such as advertising and sales promotion are being used (Judson, Aurand, Gorchles, & Gordon, 2008). Although, external promotion strategies are very important, one must not forget about employees of an organization. Recently, the workforce of a company has been recognized as crucial to the organization's positioning (Judson, Aurand, Gorchles, & Gordon, 2008). Service literature highlights that branding relies strongly on the performance of employees, including their actions and attitudes towards customers of an organization. Thus, it is crucial for an organization to develop great service branding to constantly attract consumers (de Chernatony & Dall'Olmo Riley, 1997). In particular, in university setting, the role of employees should not be overseen. It is meaningful that employees of a university are involved with the brand in general but also to be able to contribute to the various branding aspects. Various authors demonstrate how the role of personnel of a university offering high service standards, such as high caliber teachers, influences how students tend to be attracted towards the university (Gatfield, Barker, & Graham, 1999; Gutman, & Miaoulis, 2003). However, research still lacks on understanding how the position of a university, private or public has a different approach to branding and its outcomes. On top of that, internal branding is hardly investigated in the higher education sector.

### **1.1.1 Research objectives**

Based on the preceding discussion this paper aims to investigate the role of internal branding in the higher education sector. In particular, this paper aims to investigate and explain the ways in which faculty and staff of MODUL University Vienna is involved with the universities brand. Thus, the research question of this thesis is:

***To which extend is the personnel of MODUL University Vienna is involved into the university's brand?***

To be able to measure the brand involvement of personnel of MODUL University Vienna, relevant variables such as “brand identification”, “brand commitment” and “brand loyalty” which are associated with the topic of brand involvement are being used as tools for investigation. The first part of the thesis will be directed towards an introduction and elaboration of the topics relevant literature, explaining what “branding” and “internal branding” is about in a general context, as well as furthermore focusing on “branding within a university setting”. Furthermore, the terms “brand identification”, “brand commitment” and “brand loyalty” will be explained and discussed. The second part of this paper consists of a case study featuring the case of MODUL University Vienna. A survey will be distributed amongst personnel of MODUL University Vienna, to get specific insights on their perceptions of the brand. The paper furthermore aims to give the board of the university insights on how well their internal branding strategy is working towards its personnel. The results of the case study could be a helping tool to showcase to which extent faculty and staff of the university identify themselves with the brand and give further implications on the different ways of personnel involvement. Consequently, possible improvement ideas concerning personnel engagement could be triggered, that the university could profit from in the long run.

## 2 Literature Review

The following section of this paper is directed towards the elaboration of relevant literature. There is a vast variety of literature concerning the field of branding. Thus, the following literature review will only deal with the topics perceived most relevant for this paper. The first paragraph of the main literature used for this thesis, will be directed towards what “branding” is all about. After that, the terms “internal branding” and “university branding” will be explained. Furthermore, literature on the various stakeholders of a university will be discussed. Lastly the literature review will identify the meaning and co- relation of “brand identification”, “brand commitment” and “brand loyalty”.

### 2.1 Main literature

The term “branding” is nowadays used as a universal term in every industry. The following paragraphs will provide an overview on different approaches and definitions of the term existing in literature and how “branding” is understood in context of this particular paper.

#### 2.1.1 Branding

Branding has been used for a long time and is perceived as a universal term. The term is not only limited to products or services of a company, but is also used in the context of employees, stakeholders and marketing. Hojberg Christensen (n.d.) states that there are various suitable definitions of the term branding. He personally defines branding as

***“a continuous communication-, business-, organization process where the customers differentiate themselves from other competitors based on their individual core values and stories. “***

Ambler and Styles (1996) define branding, as

***“the promise of the bundle of attributes that someone buys... these attributes may be real or illusory, rational or emotional, tangible or invisible” (p.10).***

Lastly, Kotler and Keller (2008) refer to branding as

***“an assisting tool which helps to position a product on the market to the right group of target customers.”***

Thus, it can be stated that branding refers to the process of internal and external communication in organizations, which is linked to not only products or services, but also to marketing, the employees and stakeholders of an organization. Furthermore, the right branding can enable organizations to position their product in a favorable position on the market amongst customers (Aaker et al., 2004).

In literature, there are also different views on the components of branding. Various authors (i.e., Cherantoni & Dall’Olmo Riley et al., 1998 (as cited in Bennett & Ali Chaudhury, 2009) refer to a brand only consisting of three components:

***(1) a collection of promises to the outside world***

***(2) a set of distinct features, which define the brands nature and reality***

***(3) an assortment of aesthetic designations and external communications, as an external representation of the brand***

Højberg Christensen (n.d), however, assumes that the concept of branding consists of four different aspects, known as

***(1) Strategic branding, which is responsible to answer the value proposition of an organization, the creation of value for its customers and to work out the main strategy for the organization.***

***(2) Marketing branding, which should create strategies how not only the organization, but also its products can differentiate themselves from competitors on the market.***

***(3) Employee branding, which should help employees and management to “live” the brand and know what the brand is all about.***

***(4) Stakeholder branding, as the company needs to communicate with its stakeholders about social parts and the position of the company.***

Therefore, one can see that branding consists of various components which are co-related with each other. A brand consists of certain features and promises which need

to be effectively communicated to the customers of an organization with the help of strategic marketing and employees and also include the stakeholders of an organization. For this paper, and especially the case study on MODUL University Vienna, both above mentioned views on components of a brand are applicable. As in this paper, branding is perceived in the context of a university setting, there are some specifications on the definition of the term. In a university setting, it is especially important to brand the organization itself, but also to include other aspects such as marketing, employees and stakeholders. Thus, branding in university settings is defined as

***“a helping tool to differentiate an educational institution from another to stand out amongst competitors.”***

Because of that, successful branding in university settings needs to be able to reflect its capacity to satisfy the student’s needs (Bennett & Ali-Choudhury, 2009). Furthermore, branding for universities shall convey trust in its ability to deliver a certain type and level of higher education. This will be discussed in more details later. Furthermore, there is a vast amount of research discussing what makes a brand successful. Bock, Poole and Joseph (2014) claim, that “a good brand has various side-effects. First, a good brand delivers a clear value proposition to its customers. Second, the firms’ credibility is enhanced by a good brand. Third, the brand enables the consumer to connect in an emotional manner, which subsequently leads to more loyal consumers and turnover rates.” (p. 19) Kotler and Keller (2008) conclude, that branding can be seen as successful if the customer perceives the product or service of a company as the only solution to his “problem”. This leads them to state, that successful branding requires strategic segmentation, given that segmentation helps marketers to understand their target markets. Furthermore, Kotler and Keller (2008) state that segmentation helps to have an effective matching between firms’ products and consumers’ preferences and needs. Then, Punjaisri and Wilson (2007) refer to the role of employees as in the success of branding. They believe that employees are the ones that accomplish to deliver the promise in a suitable manner to the customer. In this perspective, the topic of internal branding becomes of utmost importance; the next section of this paper will explain this in more detail.

### 2.1.2 Internal Branding

Ahmed and Rafiq (2003), define internal branding as a tool of assistance for an organization for internally promoting the brand to its employees. This assumption is being supported by various researchers (i.e., Aurand et al., 2005; Burmann and Zeplin, 2005) who state that internal branding creates understanding of a brand within an organization. Thus, if the management of an organization communicates the brand values in an understandable manner to its employees and they understand it correctly, this will lead to higher brand commitment amongst employees (Suchjaphong, Nguyen, & Melewar, 2005). On top of that, research also highlights the importance of internal marketing to foster internal branding. Drake et al. (2005) and Mitchell (2002) assume that internal branding is created through internal marketing. Mosley (2007), defines internal marketing as a form of customer-based management, where on the other hand internal branding is more of a resource based management form, which intensifies a common-value based culture.

Thus, internal branding, helps companies to promote their brand internally to its employees. If then, the employees understand the values of the organization; they will be more committed towards the organization.

In fact, internal branding co-relates with various different brand-related variables. As such, that internal branding acts as an enabler of success when delivering the brand promise to meet the brand expectations of customers (Drake et al., 2005). Therefore, it has become a necessity to dispose of an informed workforce with a strong commitment to deliver the brand promise to its customers (Punjaisri, Evanschitzky, & Wilson, 2009). Thus, various big companies such as IBM, Southwest or Ernst and Young make use of internal branding (i., e, Boone, 2000; Buss, 2012).

Internal branding can be carried out in various ways. One approach of applying internal branding in organizations, is through creating a visual identity, such as an organizations name, a specific slogan, logo or symbol, which creates uniqueness among a brand (Melewar & Akel, 2005). Other than that, Punjaisri and Wilson (2011) found out, that internal branding in companies is carried out through training and communication. This includes (daily) briefings, group meetings, notice boards, or training and orientation. One example for this would be the toiletry company Bath & Bodyworks' which conducts branding training workshops to all kinds of its new

employees, coaches educate them on their brand's general concept of branding, their most important industry competitors as well as on the specific attributes of the brand that they are promoting externally. In this particular company this is done due to the fact that every employee of the company should know about the company's brand values and attributes to be able to promote the brand to their customers on an everyday basis. Additionally, internal branding is carried out through physical measures such as specific dress codes in the form of employee uniforms. At the clothing company "Abercrombie and Fitch" for example, employees have to wear clothing of the "Abercrombie brand" in order to act as "brand representatives" and symbolize enthusiasm and energy for themselves and amongst customers. Furthermore, wearing similar clothing should promote a feeling of "oneness" among the employees of the company (Harquail, n.d.).

Thus, there are various ways of how internal branding is carried out amongst employees in organizations. Companies of all kinds of industries make use of visual-, emotional-, and physical measures to promote internal branding in their organization.

On top of that, research shows that internal branding also leads to employees' brand loyalty. In particular, forms of internal communication and training in the light of internal branding enhance employees' brand loyalty (Papasolomou & Vrontis, 2006). Furthermore, various other authors (i.e., Boone, 2000; de Chernatony & Cottam, 2006; de Chernatony & Segal-Horn, 2001; Hankinson, 2002; Kotter and Heskett, 1992) agree that internal branding influences employee brand-supporting behavior. This can be easily explained, because when employees understand the concept and values of a specific brand, they are committed to the brand, its values and the brand promise and are able to deliver it to the customers' expectations. Bergstrom et al. (2002) argue that internal branding is related to employee brand identification, because it creates a feeling of "oneness". This feeling is created through communication of unique brand values which differentiates the brand from its competitors (De Chernatony, 2001). Maxwell and Knox (2009) built a more precise model on how this feeling can be created amongst employees. The authors assume that, through a unique and attractive employer brand which leads to successful organizational employee identification towards the organization. If employees can identify themselves with a brand, it creates organizational citizenship behavior, impression management as well as distinctive behavior amongst them. Mitchell (2004) and Schultz (2003) furthermore

stress, that management cannot force employees to live the brand, they have to want to do it themselves.

Given the previous discussion, one can state that it is important for managers of organizations to understand that successful internal branding includes strong internal communication as well as human resources in forms of training and employee development programs. As Punjaisri et al. (2009) state, organizations should make use of internal branding to improve the brand performance of their employees as well as to enhance the employee's attitudes towards the organization. Furthermore, internal branding should be used by managers to foster brand commitment and pride amongst their employees. (Punjaisri, Evanschitzky, & Wilson, 2009).

The next section will explain, how branding is applied especially in university settings. Furthermore, different approaches on the definition of a university brand will be stated and discussed and the components of a university brand will be elaborated.

### **2.1.3 University Branding**

Generally, one can say, that universities are branded institutions. (McAlexander, Schouten, & Koenig 2005). Universities are facing a steadily increasing amount of competition in their environment. Thus, it is important for them to differentiate themselves on the market and communicate their messages and stories (Judson, Aurand, Gorchels, & Gordon, 2008). Hence, also in the context of universities branding started to play an important role.

In fact, university branding plays a major role among all kinds of educational institutions. Given the diverse kind of universities existing nowadays, branding helps with differentiation amongst competitors. On the one hand, new universities (founded after 1992) need to focus on establishing strong brands, to be able to compete with historic well-known universities (Rooney, 1995). On the other hand, due to the branding efforts of younger universities, older educational institutions are forced to increase their branding and marketing activities more than ever to maintain market share and quality of student intake (Naudé & Ivy, 1999; Melewar & Akel, 2005).

Thus, since the last decades, universities aim to develop valuable customer-oriented marketing systems as well as to develop a strong university brand (Judson, Aurand,

Gorchels, & Gordon, 2008). In this case Frederick, Austin, and Drapper (2002) (as cited in Judson et al., 2008) define a

***“brand in a university setting as “a name, an image, a compelling description of an organization that captures the essence of the value that your college provides” (p. 55).***

Bick, Jacobson & Abratt (2003) define that a university brand includes the features of the institution that distinguish it from competitors. They hereby showcase that the university is able to satisfy student’s needs and is reliable in providing a certain level of higher education. Universities have realized that an increasing number of knowledgeable, prospective students choose their university based on their brand (Judson, Gorchels, & Aurand, 2006). Various authors (i.e., Chernatony & Dall’Olmo Riley, 1998; Balmer & Soenen, 1999; Pringle & Thompson, 1999; Alessandri, 2001; Melewar & Jenkins, 2002; Stern, 2006; Bennett & Ali-Choudhury, 2009) state that a university brand consists of the following components:

- (1) a collection of promises presented to the outside world-concerning the brands benefits (brand as a “covenant”)***
- (2) a set of distinctive features that define the brand’s inherent nature and reality (the brand’s quiddity)***
- (3) an assortment of aesthetic designations and external communications that describe the brand (the brand’s symbolic and external representation).***

According to Bennet and Ali-Choudhury (2009) the most important component of a university brand are the promises, which include the bundle of attributes the educational institution offers. This bundle of attributes includes the universities learning environment, the student’s prospects on graduation, student support services and social environment. Hence, this shows that the role of personnel becomes a significant representative element of a university brand. As Judson et al. (2008) state, students will observe the people inside of a university to get a better understanding of the quality of intangible elements of the university. As highlighted by Mitchell (2002), personnel needs to understand its roles and the brand to possible “live it” to better reach customers.

The next section of literature is directed towards the various stakeholder segments of a university brand. Thus, the stakeholder groups of students and staff (including faculty and employees) in the context of a university brand will be discussed.

#### **2.1.4 The various stakeholders of a university brand**

The stakeholders of universities are very broad. The group of stakeholders includes students and their parents, alumni, faculty and staff, landlords, merchants and sports fans as well as members of the neighborhoods and surrounding towns. Stakeholders in university settings create different relationships with each other, but also with the university itself. Thus, in the light of branding, one needs to understand the role of the most prominent stakeholders. (McAlexander, Koenig, & Schouten, 2005). Therefore, the following paragraph focuses on the specific stakeholder groups of students and staff in university settings, as these groups are seen as most relevant for this thesis.

#### **2.1.5 Students**

The first most important stakeholder group is students. Nowadays, choosing a university is a difficult task for prospective students. Due to the variety of educational institutions, it can be perceived as an overwhelming task. In case of choosing a university, students focus on decision variables such as “image or reputation”, “location”, “cost” and “availability of a certain academic program” Students tend to think of the factor “image” as the most important for their choice. (Sevier, 2000). For example, students are especially attracted to universities that offer great student support services, high calibre teachers and a student friendly administration (Gatfield, Barker, & Graham, 1999; Gutman, & Miaoulis, 2003). Other than that, McAlexander, Koenig and Shouten (2005) demonstrate factors like personal growth, enjoyment and enrichment are determining whether a student is joining a certain university.

Another aspect of the university setting are the social experiences. In a university setting, students experience relationships with new people, new surroundings and new ideas. Sometimes that means moving away from their home town for the first time, experiencing change and getting to know other lifestyles and beliefs, which can be described as a stage of transformation in a young adult’s life. Shared experiences, such as challenges faced together with peers during exam-week or the attendance at a university football game lead to relationship building among students of a university.

Thus, the development of close relationships with other peers and/or faculty of staff can lead to students' identification with the university, subsequently leading to loyalty. This is supported by customer relationship-literature, based on the assumption that customer-to customer relationships contribute to an organizations loyalty. Furthermore, there is a relationship between the loyalty of students to an educational institution and the quality of their "university experience" (McAlexander, Koenig & Shouten, 2008). Hence, the quality of university experiences shows to be highly influenced by factors such as social networks and quality of experiences. As McAlexander et al. (2008) state that also former students should not be forgotten when building a university brand. The relationship between alumni and the university can lead to positive word-of-mouth and support in university promotion.

### **2.1.6 University's Personnel**

The second stakeholder group discussed in this thesis is university staff. Personnel is known to be the most important asset of any organization. Generally speaking, employees of an organization can be seen as internal customers. Thus, when discussing the topic of branding, the role of firms' internal customers cannot be ignored. As a result, firms need to be aware of the fact that brand messages do not only need to be directed towards customers, but also need to be delivered to the employees themselves as the internal customers need to be able to associate themselves with the brand to serve the organization's standards (Gummesson 1987; Bowen & Schneider, 1988; George, 1990). Furthermore, firms need the support of their employees when communicating the brand message as this leads to authenticity and credibility of the communication. Hence, employees have to match their performances to the external brand promises (Schiffenbauer 2001; Schultz & Schultz, 2000). As a result, the external brand promise is delivered through the employee's performance to the customers (Schultz & Schultz, 2000; Arruda, 2002).

In the light of a university, one can state that the brand of a university is reflected in its staff and faculty. It seems clear, that personnel of a university is separated into two main responsibility groups. Firstly "staff", which mainly supports the non-academic purposes of the university environment, being for example student support services. The other main group consists of "faculty" of a university, which provides academic support as for example teaching amongst the student environment. The brand image of a university is thus perceived as a rather strong impact on how

the personnel of the university carries out their job tasks (Judson, Aurand, Gorchels, & Gordon, 2008). In fact, the university brand shows to strongly influence how university staff performs their job, meaning how they use and integrate the brand into their job tasks on an everyday basis (Judson et al., 2008). In university settings brand values need to be aligned with employee behavior (Sujchaphong et al., 2015).

To guarantee this, employees of a university need to understand the university brand clearly. If they do not understand it properly, they might act in a manner which represents their own values instead of the values of the educational institution (Jevons, 2006). As a result of that, the university brand becomes unreliable (Stensaker, 2005).

However, there is a slight difference in how strong the brand understanding of university employees influences their performance. The impact of brand image when carrying out job tasks is stronger among staff of private universities than in the public university sector (Judson, Aurand, Gorchels, & Gordon, 2008). In addition to that, (Judson et al., 2008) found out that the clarity of the brand message of private university is slightly more distinct than in public educational institutions. Furthermore, the brand image has a stronger impact on staff management in private universities compared to public universities. Lastly, the brand understanding of university staff is stronger in private university settings. (Judson et al., 2008)

Thus, there are some differences when it comes to employee branding in public and private educational institutions. The concept of brand identification can help to understand this process better. The next section of this thesis will explain this in more detail.

### **2.1.7 Brand Identification**

In case of discussing the topic of branding, the topic of brand identification is an important one. Brand identification is defined as a way external and internal customers identify themselves with the brand (Hatch & Schultz, 1997; Balmer, 1998). The specific and enduring features of a firm or university in this case are perceived as the “organizational identity”. Thus, the term brand identification is described as a feeling of belonging to a specific group and as a perception of being linked with the believes and faith of the group (Mael & Ashforth, 1992, 1995; Tolman, 1943). In this

case the group represents the university, the personnel and students belonging to the brand. As Lawlor (1998) states, brand identity is

***“the essence in how one would like his institution to be perceived by alumni, prospective students, legislators and the public.”***

Brand identification of employees can be triggered by internal branding as this creates a sense of “oneness” among employees. As explained before, internal communication of unique brand values enhances the brand identification process. This again highlights the significant role of internal branding to build a successful brand as it includes internal communication of unique brand values which are specific to a certain brand (Bergstrom et al., 2002; de Chernatony, 2001). As James et al. (1977) state, if employees can identify themselves with a brand, they will experience failure or success concerning their brand.

Such employees furthermore will be proud to be part “of the group”, which has positive impacts on their behaviour as well as the external image of the brand and organization Oakes & Turner, 1986 (as cited in Punjaisri, Evanschitzky, & Wilson, 2009). Some authors (i.e., Legge, 1995; Mowday et al., 1982; Porter et al., 1974 (as cited in Punjaisri, Evanschitzky, & Wilson, 2009) refer to the fact that brand identification and brand loyalty constitute employee commitment. In addition, research (i.e., Loveman, 1998; Ashforth and Mael, 1989; Silvestro, 2002 (as cited in Punjaisri, Evanschitzky, & Wilson, 2009) make a distinction between the two concepts. Nevertheless, it is obvious that brand identification is a driver of brand commitment subsequently leading to loyalty too (i.e., Kelman, 1958; O’Reilly & Chatman, 1986 (as cited in Punjaisri, Evanschitzky, & Wilson, 2009). The following part of this paper will elaborate on brand commitment.

### **2.1.8 Brand Commitment**

As discussed in the previous section the role of brand commitment is crucial for enhancing a brand’s success. Burmann and Zeplin (2005) define brand commitment as

***“the extent of psychological attachment of employees to the brand, which influences their willingness to exert extra effort towards reaching the brand’s goals” (p.284).***

In particular, nowadays this topic has become extremely important as we face fierce competition and demanding consumers, calling for a strong brand commitment from internal and external stakeholders. Also, here, as Thompson et al. (1999) state, successful internal communication with employees within a company leads to a better understanding of the brand and enhanced emotional commitment within a brand. Furthermore, Aurand et al. (2005) and Burman and Zeplin, (2005), argue that through internal branding a shared understanding of a brand inside an organization is created, which fosters brand commitment.

Thus, when employees understand what a brand is all about through the help of internal branding, Punjaisri, Evanschitzky, & Wilson (2009), assume that they then are showing increased brand commitment. Hence, employees will work in a manner which accepts the brand values. As a result, they will perform in a way that meets the customers brand expectations. Therefore, internal marketing and internal branding have effects on employee's brand commitment (Punjaisri, Evanschitzky, & Wilson, 2009). Consequently, one can see that there is a link between internal branding and brand commitment. (Burman & Zeplin, 2005). Brand identification has a positive impact on brand commitment. (Punjaisri, Evanschitzky, & Wilson, 2009). In case managers successfully foster employee brand identification, they can expect positive brand commitment (Punjaisri et al., 2009). Managers need to focus on applying various methods in order to foster brand identification among their employees. Thus, if employees are able to identify themselves with the brand they work for, they show more commitment towards the brand.

The following section of this paper will explain the role of brand loyalty and its links to other concepts explained before.

### **2.1.9 Brand Loyalty**

Brand loyalty is very meaningful to the success of an organization, as it saves costs in the long-run and is a generator of employee satisfaction. From the customer side, brand loyalty is most commonly used to describe the willingness of customers to repurchase a good or service. In university settings, this definition is rather not applicable, as usually students do not "repurchase education" (Berkowitz, Jacoby, & Chestnut, 1978). As this paper aims to discuss the brand involvement of personnel in

a university setting, in this particular case brand loyalty is rather perceived according to Reicheld's (1996) assumption that defines brand loyalty as

***“the willingness to remain with the present company.”***

Loyal employees are found to exhibit a relatively stable and conscious tendency to engage in a relationship with their employer (Bloemer & Odekerken-Schröder, 2006). Employee loyalty cuts costs for organizations through a reduced need to recruit and train new staff, subsequently this leads to more profits (Reichheld, 1996). This applies to every industry but also to university settings. Consequently, if personnel of a university is loyal to the brand, meaning the employees stay longer in their positions, the university has lower costs in recruiting new employees. Additionally, especially for, for example a position as a professor in a university, a lot of training and briefing is required for the candidate that enters the new position which is costly and time consuming. As a result of that, it is clear, that loyal employees are really important in university settings for being able to keep costs as low as possible.

Thus, in a university setting, brand loyalty plays a huge role, as educational institutions face immense competition. On the one hand, brand loyalty can be analyzed from the external stakeholders (i.e., students), and on the other hand, internal customers (i.e., personnel). Thus, brand loyalty is a function of the integration in the brand community, i.e., of more and stronger relationships binding a person to the community (McAlexander, Koenig, & Schouten, 2005). Positive inter-customer relationships contribute to loyalty. Bonds formed between peers and the character of the university experience can have long term influences on desirable loyalty related outcomes. (McAlexander, Koenig, & Schouten, 2005). This highlights the need of universities to invest in social activities, such as student events for their student community. If bonds or friendships are formed among the student body, students are more likely to be loyal to their university in the long run.

Moreover, various authors (McAlexander, Koenig, & Schouten, 2005) demonstrate a co-relation between customer loyalty-behavior and “experiences”, such as made in, for example, fraternity-sorority systems or student events at universities. Because of that, it should be taken into consideration for educational institutions to invest in such “experience-creating activities”, in order to build brand loyalty among its customers

which lasts possibly until after graduation. In case of discussing internal customers' brand loyalty, the use of internal communications and training enhances the employee's brand loyalty (Papasolomou & Vrontis, 2006).

Hence, to summarize, one can stated that brand loyalty is very important for all kinds of organizations and has various meanings from both the customer- and employee side. Brand loyalty is crucial for cutting costs. In a university setting brand loyalty is associated to personnel working for the university and the students of the educational institution. The next chapter will introduce the case study used in the paper to analyze internal branding in the higher education sector.

### 3 Case study MODUL University Vienna

As this paper aims to investigate the topic of brand involvement of faculty and staff of MODUL University Vienna, the following pages will introduce the University to the readers, and reflect on the university's external and internal branding approach. Furthermore, some background information of MODUL University Vienna will be given. To get more insights on the (internal) branding situation of the university, both the Marketing Manager of MODUL University Vienna, Mr. Andreas Eder and the Generalist of Human Resources, Mr. Robert Vukotic were interviewed. This interview, gives more detailed information on how the management level of MODUL University Vienna perceives the importance of branding in a university setting in general, but also concerning their own institution. Furthermore, they also showcase their approach to branding and internal branding among faculty and staff.

#### 3.1 Introduction of MODUL University Vienna

MODUL University Vienna, is an international private university located on Kahlenberg, a spectacular hill in the 19<sup>th</sup> district of Vienna, Austria. The university was founded in the year of 2007 and is a part of the MODUL brand which also includes a vocational tourism and hospitality school in Vienna and exists already for more than 100 years. The MODUL brand is owned by the Chamber of Commerce and Industry, which is the largest provider of private education in Austria.

MODUL University Vienna offers BBA, BSc, MSc, MBA, and PhD study programs in various fields, such as tourism and hospitality management, international management, new media technology, public governance, sustainable development. At the moment, the university has a study body around 600 students coming from 70 different countries. Following programs are currently offered at MODUL University Vienna:

##### **Bachelor level:**

*Bachelor of Business Administration in Tourism and Hospitality Management*

*Bachelor of Business Administration in Tourism, Hotel Management and Operations*

*Bachelor of Science in International Management*

**Master Level:**

*Master of Science in Management*

*Master of Science in International Tourism Management*

*Master of Science in Sustainable Development, Management and Policy*

**PHD Level:**

*Doctorate of Philosophy in Business and Socioeconomic Sciences*

At MODUL University Vienna, all offered programs are taught in English as language of instruction, additionally there is a guaranteed lecturer to student ratio of 1:20, to offer optimal student support. The university strives to provide answers to economic, environmental and social questions, promotes and supports sustainable economic development and aims to equip students with the ability to value people's ideas and creativity. Thus, graduates of MODUL University Vienna should have learned to:

*Challenge what we take for granted and embrace change*  
**(Knowledge, Creativity, Innovation)**

*Support the principles of equality and justice*  
**(Personal Integrity)**

*Value diversity and humanity*  
**(Mutual Respect)**

*Serve as ambassadors of sustainable and responsible living*  
**(Responsibility and Stewardship)**

The values stated above: Knowledge, Creativity, Innovation, Personal Integrity, Mutual Respect, Responsibility and Stewardship, are the core values MODUL University Vienna stands for and are perceived as the university's key success driving factors ("History and Values", n.d., n/a).

These values need to also be respected by the numerous employees of the university. The educational institution has approximately 65 faculty members and 50 staff members. The faculty of the university works in the various departments related directly to the fields of education available at the educational institution. MODUL University's main research departments are the department of Applied Statistics and

Economics, the department of International Management, the department of New Media Technology, the department of Tourism and Service Management and the department of Governance and Sustainable Development. Employees working in these departments, teach, do research and publish research work. In addition, there are over a hundred external lecturers working for MODUL University Vienna at the moment, who teach different courses at the university.

On the other hand, there are around 50 staff members working in the thirteen different administrative departments of the university being the department of Accounting, the department of Accounting and Administration, the department of Admissions and Services, the department of New Media Technology, the department of Facility Management, the department of Information Systems Services, the Library, the Managing Director's Office, the department of MODUL Career, the Reception, the department of Recruitment and Development Office, the department of Student Services and the University Communications Office. While some of these departments, such as for example, the Accounting and Administration department or the department of Information Systems Services are mostly responsible for administrative tasks, other departments such as the department of Student Services, the MODUL Career department or the Library department are additionally more involved with face-to-face student contact during their daily work operations.

### **3.2 Branding of MODUL University Vienna**

In the following part of this paper, the topic "Branding" and "Internal Branding" in the case of MODUL University Vienna will be discussed: This includes an interview which was conducted with the head of Marketing of MODUL University Vienna, Mr. Andreas Eder, as well as with the Human Resource Generalist of MODUL University, Mr. Robert Vukotic, who both shared their expert opinions and views on the topics of branding and internal branding at MODUL University Vienna.

The Human Resource Generalist of MODUL University Vienna perceives branding in general as very important, but states that it is mostly important for younger universities, like MODUL University Vienna. He furthermore believes that, a university brand needs to offer the same strong quality both internally and externally, because applicants (both students and employees) expect certain standards of the university as a brand. In addition to that, with the young age of MODUL University Vienna there

are challenges involved when attracting faculty and staff to work for the educational institution. These challenges include that, with the strong branding of historic universities, some expectations of applicants are automatically attached. Younger universities such as MODUL University Vienna need to work on building their brand much more in order to be able to attract applicants. Nevertheless Mr. Vukotic sees an advantage for MODUL University Vienna being a younger institution. Thus, a younger institution is able to change in various “directions”. Whereas, very old historic universities cannot change the image they have built over past decades that easily.

MODUL University Vienna in a certain way inherited the brand of the over a hundred years existing MODUL brand including the vocational school “Hotel- und Tourismusschulen MODUL” Vienna. As the university was founded in 2008, a logo created from an advertising agency already existed, together with a website and the vision and mission including faculty of the university. However, back then there were no sorts of any written branding materials available. Thus, what the brand should represent to the outside, and how it should be promoted to the outside was not clearly identified during this time. As a result of that, it can be said, that the university was in a pioneer phase during the first five years of operation, which also led to many changes concerning programs and directions since then. Since the year 2013 the university board has decided on a set of lived values, which are re-occurring unique selling propositions, and act as marketing missions to promote the university and its activities on various channels (see previously introduced). In 2015, MODUL University Vienna published official handbook for MU’s brand guidelines a “Brand and Visual Identity Guidebook”, which is online on their website ([www.modul.ac.at](http://www.modul.ac.at)) due to the re-launch of the university’s brand. This was especially of great importance as MODUL University started to have campuses around the globe. For example, MODUL University Dubai was founded. Therefore, it was necessary to professionalize the university’s branding to train external colleagues of the university to act as kind of the brand that is lived at MODUL University Vienna.

This guidebook deals with branding related topics such as brand values and brand strategy of the university, official marketing tagline and the visual identity of the university. After the first five years of operation, the university identified its “brand values” which should work as guidelines for student marketing and brand strategy processes in the long run. These guidelines should be used for promotion purposes

for both undergraduate and graduate study programs. There are thirteen “brand values” identified to be used for promotion activities among potential students:

- (1) Strong private ownership with non-profit legal status***
- (2) MODUL brand history as the oldest vocational training school with a long tradition in tourism and hospitality education worldwide***
- (3) MODUL University Vienna hosts the ‘European Center’ for tourism research***
- (4) Austria’s leading international private university***
- (5) Focus on English-taught study programs***
- (6) International study population of more than 70% international students***
- (7) Value-based, holistic education concept (based on MODUL University’s educational values)***
- (8) Sustainability as key principle of the university’s philosophy***
- (9) Personalized service and community spirit***
- (10) Commitment to quality and innovation (AQ Austria and ENQUA accreditations)***
- (11) Multidisciplinary research and education with a faculty to student ratio of 1:20***
- (12) University exchange programs on most continents and international career partner companies***
- (13) Vienna as international student city and mount ‘Kahlenberg’ as unique study location; secure city with a high standard of living***

Furthermore, the “Brand and Visual Identity Guidebook” includes a standardized lead text which should be used whenever referred to MODUL University Vienna’s main brand story to the public. Additionally, the document indicates the ways in which the brand values concerning student marketing should be communicated to successfully

strengthen the “MODUL brand” both within and outside of Austria. Also, there are some “Official Marketing Taglines” described in the guidebook, which should help in the area of mass communication providing two tagline phrases used both internally and externally: The first one being “Expanding Horizons” which represents a link to the university’s vision to broaden minds and the second phrase “Austria’s Leading International Private University”, which is connected to the university’s development plan and provides a long-term promise to all of its internal and external stakeholders. Lastly, the guidebook provides some detailed description on the “Visual Identity” of the university’s logo. Therefore, there are certain specific guidelines about in which format the logo can be used on for example print outs or in power point presentations. These regulations include size, colours, options for the logo in monogram format and the typography used for official documents (“Brand & Visual Identity Guidebook”, n.d.).

As Mr. Eder perceives the visual identity of the MODUL brand especially important, the guidebook includes also certain guidelines related to issues such, on the exact spot on a document where the logo of the university needs to be printed on, in order to ensure unity when promoting the brand externally. Mr. Eder furthermore perceives the usage of pictures as very important for the branding process of MODUL University Vienna. As he stated, MODUL University Vienna sells an emotional product. Thus, in his opinion pictures need to be taken and presented in a professional manner. This is why, every photo used for marketing purposes is taken from a photo stock of approximately 45 pictures, which was created by a professional photographer. The main focus of the promotion strategy of MODUL University Vienna has been to increase the numbers of student, by communicating emotions and the expected experiences. The main focus is co- related to the young age of the educational institution. Hence, Mr. Eder would have tackled the issue of branding of the university differently, if the focus concerning promotion would have been for example to improve the research output.

Mr. Eder personally thinks that there is a living culture based on pioneers that attended the university before. Additionally, there are certain types of assemblies and meetings where the main visions of the university are discussed and transported. Nevertheless, apart from the labour regulations, there are no official internal documents (e.g. guidelines) asking the employees to follow certain guidelines

concerning branding of the university. Mr. Vukotic additionally confirms that there is no written document of internal branding regulations existent at the moment. However, in his opinion, internal branding still exists at MODUL University Vienna, but not in a written form.

Hence, as seen in the literature review, the more an employee knows about the brand and the longer the duration of being employed by the university, the higher the motivation, knowledge and empathy to the organization. Also, Mr. Eder points out the fact, that there is a difference between the brand awareness of faculty and staff, as for example a staff member of the cafeteria has a different job description but also not the same amount of usage of the brand while their work processes. Nevertheless, both faculty and staff have a very intrinsic motivation to work for MODUL University Vienna in common. Mr. Eder sees a great challenge in terms of branding in guaranteeing that every member of faculty and staff of the university has a “voice” in contributing to the brand, but also to clarify that certain brand related decisions are made centralized. That is why high brand involvement of faculty and staff brings a lot of empathy among employees but also challenges. He furthermore thinks that at MODUL University Vienna, there is a structured culture lived, but faculty and staff have different duties in this process. Nevertheless, the head of Marketing of the university would also definitely hand out a brand guidebook not only to faculty but also to staff in order to make them more familiar to the brand.

There are several nationalities at the university, and therefore cultures come and work together. Mr. Vukotic would prefer to have some kind of formulated guidelines available to distribution among employees. Mr. Eder supports the consideration of implementing some sort of written guidelines of internal branding for employees of the university. One example for such guidelines would be that Mr. Eder is currently thinking about creating guidelines on employee behaviour of MODUL University Vienna concerning social media platforms, because this would be a helping tool to guarantee a favourable and unified online presence on such channels. From a larger perspective, such internal branding guidelines would need to include and provide a basic understanding about the history of the university, how the brand was built over the first few years of operation, and future directions of the university. Thus, at the moment, there is no such document, distributed among new employees of MODUL University Vienna. Nevertheless, currently, there are some informal guidelines of

internal branding provided to new employees of the university through their supervisors. However, as there are no formal guidelines written down in an official document, every supervisor carries out this responsibility in a different manner. Mr. Vukotic himself has the impression that he “grew” into the brand while working at the university. As the university board just recently hired a Human Resource Generalist, Mr. Eder sees this decision as a very important strategic move concerning the approach to internal branding. This is due to the fact that in his opinion; the process of internal branding will be approached now from the Human Resource Generalist using his expertise in this particular field. In addition to that, from a marketing point of view Mr. Eder sees that the right understanding of the brand of students, faculty and staff leads to positive word of mouth, that is why internal branding is crucial for promoting the university.

In the past, surveys were used as a tool of measuring satisfaction of faculty and staff of MODUL University Vienna. These surveys did not mainly focus on employee branding, but more on general satisfaction of faculty and staff of the university or the job development opportunities at the university. Other than that, no other methods were used to measure internal branding among faculty and staff of the university before.

Nevertheless, Mr. Eder and Mr. Vukotic, are very interested on the brand involvement of faculty and staff of the university. For example, they are eager to know, how the faculty and staff of MODUL University relate to the quality of education offered at the university. Various alumni of the university currently work for the university after graduation. That is why Mr. Eder and Mr. Vukotic assume, that it could be the case that alumni of the university associate their experience concerning great high quality education experienced during their studies at MODUL University also with the MODUL University brand as an employer. Meaning, as they experienced high quality standards while studying they expect the same values when working for the MODUL University Vienna brand. Other than that, they are interested in the brand understanding of employees of the university and would like to get an impression on how good faculty and staff of MODUL University is aware of the university’s brand values. Thus, it would interest them as well, how employees of the educational institution see the university in the future.

With the help of a survey distributed among faculty and staff of MODUL University Vienna, these questions should be answered and analysed further.

## **4 Research Methodology**

The study aims to measure the brand involvement of faculty and staff of MODUL University Vienna. Therefore, an online survey was created with the help of the online survey creator [www.my.surveo.com](http://www.my.surveo.com)." This survey creation tool was used for both simplicity reasons but also for the sake of time saving and easy handling of the online creator. As the aim of the conduction of the survey was to measure the extend and ways personnel of MODUL University Vienna is involved with the university's brand, the survey was distributed among all faculty and staff of MODUL University Vienna to get primary data from the personnel of the university. The survey was answered from 32 participants in total, as 2 surveys were not filled in completely, or invalid a number of 30 complete surveys could be counted. The survey was distributed via e-mail through the intranet of MODUL University Vienna to every member of faculty and staff and was online for a total of 20 days during the time period from 14<sup>th</sup> of December 2016 until the 2<sup>nd</sup> of January 2017.

### **4.1 Survey Design and Research Instruments**

The survey was designed in English language and distributed online through the intranet of MODUL University Vienna, which made it simple to reach every registered member of faculty and staff of the university. In the introduction of the online survey which was created with the help of the online survey creator tool [www.my.surveo.com](http://www.my.surveo.com) total anonymity and confidentiality was guaranteed to all participants of the survey. This was especially important due to the rather small number of personnel at MODUL University Vienna. The survey consisted of a total of fifteen questions. The format of the questions included open-ended questions, dichotomous questions, semantic differential questions, likert scale questions and multiple choice questions. In appendix 3 an overview of the survey can be found.

The very first part of the survey consisted of demographic questions which asked participants about personal information about themselves, such as age, position at MODUL University Vienna and length of employment relationship. In the following section of the survey, participants were asked to rate the job attractiveness, their

perception of communication between different departments, the greatness of career development opportunities, the quality and frequency of employee training and their likelihood to stay within the company in the upcoming years. Next the survey asked to answer open ended questions on brand perception, future brand development and brand value incorporation of the university. Additionally, some questions dealing with the perception of brand values and brand identification of MODUL University Vienna were posed. Lastly participants were given the opportunity to add any further comments. The survey creator tool [www.my.surveio.com](http://www.my.surveio.com) was used for graphical organization of the gained survey results.

The main variables brand identification, brand involvement and brand loyalty were measured based on existing scales from literature and adapted to the study setting. Brand identification based on a scale from Maxwell and Knox (2009) in their study "Motivating employees to "live the brand": a comparative case study of employer brand attractiveness within the firm", brand involvement on a scale from Judson, Gorchels, and Aurand (2006) in their study "Building a University Brand from Within: A Comparison of Coaches' Perspectives of Internal Branding", and brand loyalty on a scale from Judson, Aurand, Gorchels, and Gordon (2008) in their study "Building a University Brand from Within: University Administrators' Perspectives of Internal Branding".

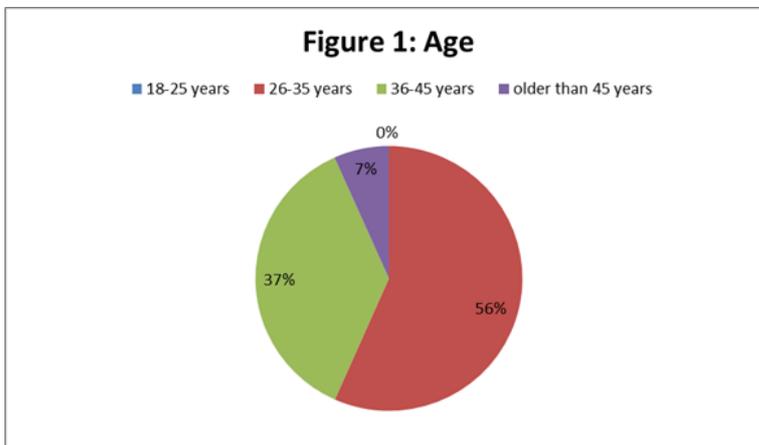
## 5 Results

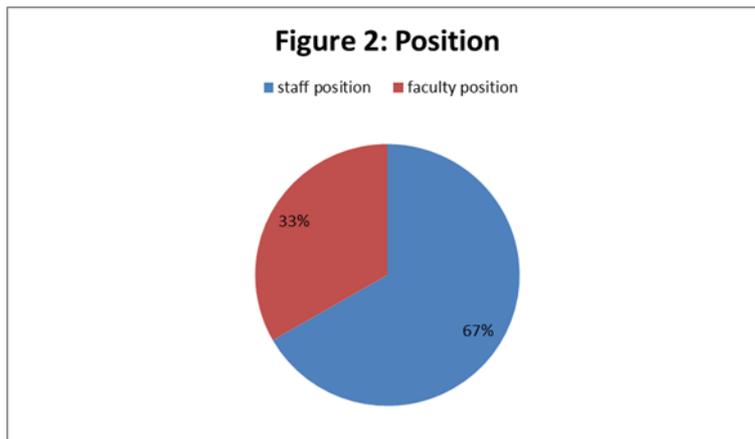
The following part of this thesis elaborates and describes the outcomes and results of the survey conducted, and investigates in their relationships and co-relations between each other.

### 5.1 Descriptives

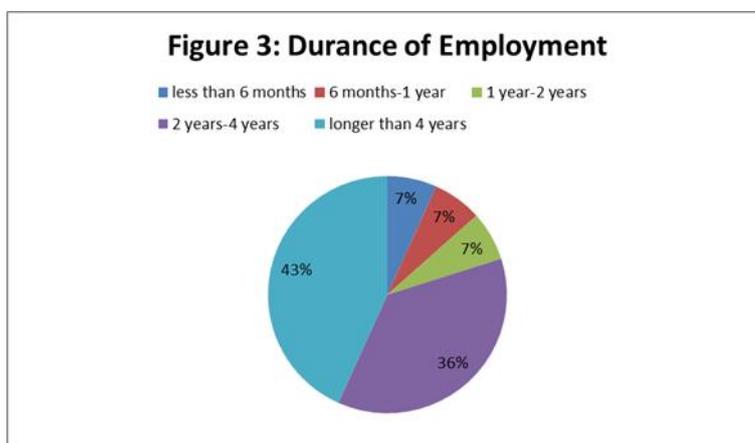
#### 5.1.1 Characteristics of survey participants

The survey conducted for this thesis was able to generate a number of 30 participants. More than half of the sample of personnel of MODUL University Vienna (17 people; 56.7%) indicated to belong to an age group between 26 and 35 years. The age group which was chosen second mostly was between the ages of 36 to 45 years old and consisted of a total number of 11 people (36.7%). There was no participant present in the sample aged between 18 to 25 years. As for the question of working position of personnel at MODUL University Vienna, a number of 20 people (66.7 %) stated to be working within staff positions, whereas 10 people (33.3%) stated to belong to the faculty of the university.





Concerning the question how long participants have been working at MODUL University Vienna, 13 people of the sample (43.3%) has been working for MODUL University Vienna for a period of longer than four years. Eleven people (36.7%) of the sample have been working at the university for two to four years. The group of people who has been working at the educational institution for less than two years is equally distributed with each 2 people (6.7%) for each time span category (1 year up to 2 years; 6 months up to 1 year; less than 6 months).



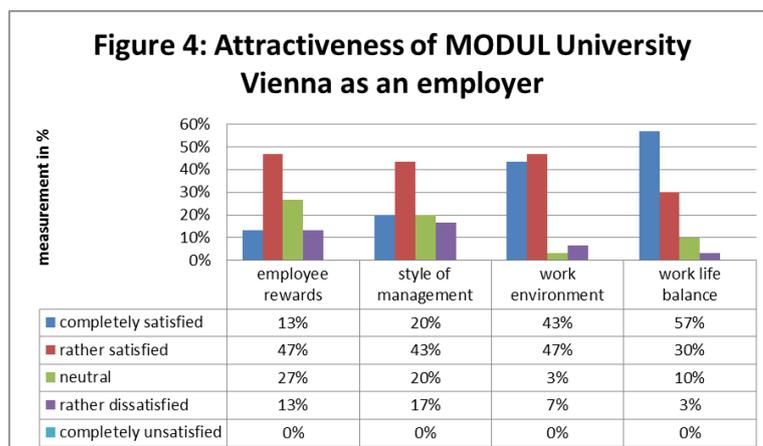
### 5.1.2 Job Perception of Personnel of MODUL University Vienna

Respondents were asked to rate their perception of their job on a semantic differential scale. The variables which were positively associated most with how faculty and staff perceive their job was answered with “interesting” (8 people; 26.7%), “challenging” (7 people; 23.3%) and “exciting” (7 people; 23.3%). Furthermore 12 survey participants (40%) chose their job to be “rather exciting”, while 9 people (30%) found their job to be “rather interesting”. Three respondents of the survey (10%) stated their job to be “rather easy” as well as three people (10%) found their job to

be “rather unrewarding”. None of the participants stated their job to be “totally or very unvaried” or “totally or very uninteresting”.

### 5.1.3 MODUL University as an employer

Concerning the attractiveness of MODUL University Vienna as an employer, the “work-life balance” was rated as the most satisfying variable among personnel of MODUL University Vienna with 17 people (56.7%) rating it to be completely satisfying and not a single person rating it completely dissatisfying. The second highest rated variable, “work environment” was rated to be completely satisfying by 13 people (43.3%) and very satisfying by 14 people (46.7%). The number of employees which were totally satisfied or dissatisfied with the variable of “employee rewards (salary)” was equal at 4 people (13.3%) for each of the before mentioned levels of satisfaction. “Style of Management” was ranked to be “rather dissatisfying” by 5 people (16,7%) which showcases that “Style of Management” is considered to be the most dissatisfying variable among employees of MODUL University Vienna.



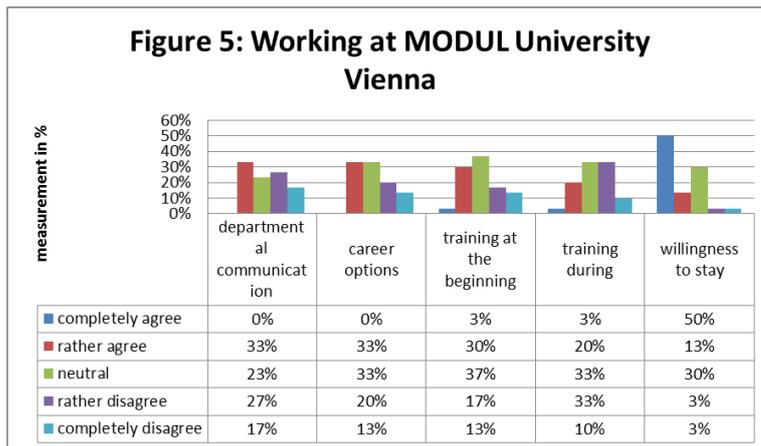
Participants of the survey furthermore had to answer several questions related to the work-environment at MODUL University Vienna. Thus, 10 (33.3%) employees of the university rated “communication between the various departments at MODUL University Vienna” as being rather great, whereas on the other hand 8 (26.7%) people would rather disagree and 5 (16.7%) people totally disagree on the statement that “the communication between the various departments within MODUL University Vienna is great”. 7 respondents, rated to be “neutral” towards this statement.

None of the faculty and staff of MODUL University Vienna totally agreed on the statement that MODUL University Vienna offers great career development

opportunities to its employees, nevertheless one third of respondents (10 people; 33.3%) rather agreed on the statement, and another third of the survey participants (10 people; 33.3%) feel neutral concerning this statement. Six respondents (20%) rather disagreed, and 4 respondents (13.3) completely disagreed on the statement that MODUL University Vienna offers great career development opportunities to its employees.

Nine (30%) survey respondents rather agreed on the statement that employees of MODUL University Vienna receive relevant job training on a regular basis at the beginning of their career, whereas 11 (36.7%) survey participants answered to think “neutral” concerning this topic. Furthermore 4 (13.3%) employees of the university totally disagreed on having received relevant job training on a regular basis at MODUL University at the beginning of their career. Furthermore, 5 (16.7%) respondents rather disagreed on receiving relevant job training on a regular basis at MODUL University Vienna at the beginning of their career. However, when asked, if employees would agree concerning receiving relevant job training on a regular basis during their career, 10 (33.3%) respondents rather disagreed on this statement. Six (20%) employees of MODUL University Vienna rather agreed to receive relevant job training on a regular basis during their career.

When asked if faculty and staff would see themselves working at MODUL University Vienna for the next two coming years, half of the respondents (15 people, 50%) indicated total willingness to stay within the organization, additionally 4 (13.3%) people rather agreed that they desire to stay with MODUL University Vienna as their employer for the next two coming years. Only 1 (3.3%) respondent indicated the definite preference to leave MODUL University Vienna as an employer in the next two following years and another single respondent (3.3%) would rather not consider staying within the company in the next two coming years.



### 5.1.4 Brand Perception of Personnel of MODUL University Vienna

In an open ended question the survey contained, participants had to briefly describe what the brand of MODUL University Vienna represents and stands for according to their personal opinion. Most of the respondents described MODUL University Vienna as an *international, research based business school with a focus on Hotel and Tourism Management*. Several answers included furthermore, that MODUL University Vienna stands for a *high level of excellent education*. The majority of survey respondents additionally mentioned that the “MODUL brand” stands for sustainability, innovation and diversity as key values of the educational institution. Moreover, MODUL University Vienna was described as representing great tradition inherited from the MODUL tourism school from several survey participants. Various participants additionally highlighted the familiar feel and community spirit the university represents, as well as small class sizes, personal interaction between stakeholders of the university and the beautiful environment at ‘Kahlenberg’ hill.

In another question respondents of the survey were asked to choose the brand values of MODUL University Vienna, they personally find most appealing. The brand value, which was perceived as most appealing to personnel of the educational institution was “International study population of more than 70% international students”, which was chosen by 22 (73.3%) respondents. The second most chosen brand value was “Personalized service and community spirit”, which was chosen by half of the respondents (15 people; 50%), followed by “Sustainability as key principle of the university’s philosophy”, “Value-based, holistic education concept (based on MODUL

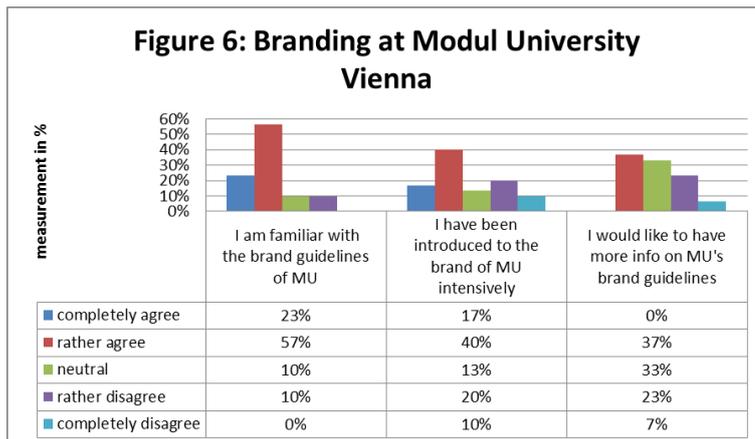
University's educational values)" and "Multidisciplinary research and education with a faculty to student ratio of 1:20" all each rated by 11 people (36.7%).

The least popular brand values among personnel of MODUL University Vienna were "Strong private ownership with non-profit legal status" with only one vote (3.3%) as well as "University exchange programs on most continents and international career partner companies" and "MODUL brand history as the oldest vocational training school with a long tradition in tourism and hospitality education worldwide" which only reached 3 (10%) votes for each brand value.

### **5.1.5 Brand awareness of personnel of MODUL University Vienna**

The next question of the survey conducted dealt with the brand awareness of personnel of MODUL University Vienna. Seven (23.3%) employees of MODUL University indicated to be totally familiar with the brand guidelines of MODUL University Vienna, also 17 (56.7%) respondents chose to be rather familiar with the brand guidelines of the university. Only 3 (10%) survey participants rather disagreed on being familiar with the brand guidelines of MODUL University Vienna and none of the respondents completely disagreed on being familiar with the brand guidelines of the educational institution.

As Figure 6 shows, five (16.7%) employees of MODUL University Vienna totally agreed on the statement that they have been intensively introduced to the brand guidelines of the university, additional 12 (40%) employees rather agreed as well on this statement. On the other hand 6 (20%) respondents of the survey rather disagreed and 3 (10%) respondents completely disagreed concerning the question if they have been introduced intensively to the brand guidelines of MODUL University Vienna. Consequently 11 (36.7%) respondents would rather prefer to receive more information on the brand guidelines of MODUL University Vienna, 10 (33.3%) survey participants indicated to have no clear opinion towards this issue, whereas 7 (23.3%) employees would rather not like to receive more information on the university's brand guidelines and only 2 (6.7%) respondents stated their preference of not desiring to get more information on the brand guidelines of MODUL University Vienna at all.



Survey participants also had to give some recommendations on how they would improve the internal branding activities at MODUL University Vienna in an open-ended question. The majority of survey respondents indicated that to improve the internal branding activities at MODUL University Vienna, more employee, management and staff meetings need to be held which would lead to more internal communication and would also trigger valuable discussions on the topic of branding among personnel of the university. Furthermore, various employees of the university would recommend yearly satisfaction questionnaires and meetings with a following discussion meeting to enhance both communication and satisfaction of personnel. Especially for new employees, faculty and staff who participated in the survey, found it important to offer brand introduction sessions or workshops and additional training. The new employees should be introduced to the brand values and guidelines by for example a senior member of management or a member of the department of Human Resources of the university in form of a briefing, at the beginning of their job.

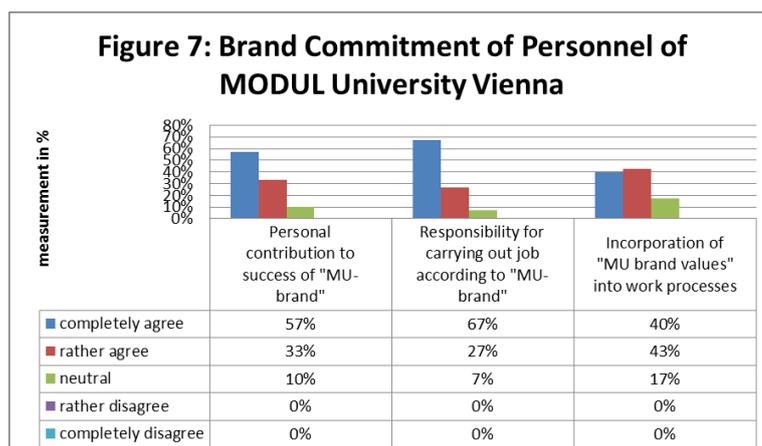
Also, brand information packages were mentioned by survey participants, which could be handed out to new employees. Furthermore, various respondents stated that faculty and staff need to work closer together, as there is currently a “gap” between non-academic staff, academic staff and faculty. Therefore, the survey participants recommended that, (especially new) employees need to be introduced to all departments intensively, as that would strengthen the team spirit within the university. In addition to that, respondents recommended, that MODUL University Vienna should offer support to its faculty and staff on how to incorporate the university’s brand guidelines and core values into their daily work processes. Thus, there should be training available to lecturers on how to incorporate brand guidelines and key values of MODUL University Vienna into their teaching. As suggested by a

survey respondent, a professor could then for example get further training on innovative teaching methods for his or her particular class.

### 5.1.6 Brand Commitment of personnel of MODUL University Vienna

Another question of the survey was directed towards brand commitment of personnel at MODUL University Vienna; see Figure 7 for an overview. Seventeen (56.7%) survey respondents completely agreed to feel that they are personally contributing to the success of the “MODUL brand”. Furthermore 10 (33.3%) participants rather agreed to feel that their personal contribution leads to success of the university’s brand. There was no respondent who rather disagreed or disagreed completely concerning this topic. Twenty (66.7%) survey respondents agreed completely to feel responsibility to carry out their job in a manner that represents the brand values of the “MODUL brand”. Additional 8 (26.7%) survey participants indicated to rather agree on this statement. There were no respondents who rather disagreed or disagreed completely on feeling personally responsible to carry out their job in a manner that represents the brand values of the “MODUL brand”.

Twelve employees of MODUL University Vienna stated to agree completely and 13 employees indicated to rather agree when asked if they do try to incorporate the brand values of MODUL University Vienna into their daily work processes. None of the respondents chose to rather disagree or disagree completely on this statement.



Faculty and staff were furthermore asked to give examples on how they personally incorporate the brand values of MODUL University Vienna into their daily work processes. Most survey respondents mentioned that, engaging in the “MODUL community” plays a huge role for them, when incorporating the brand values of

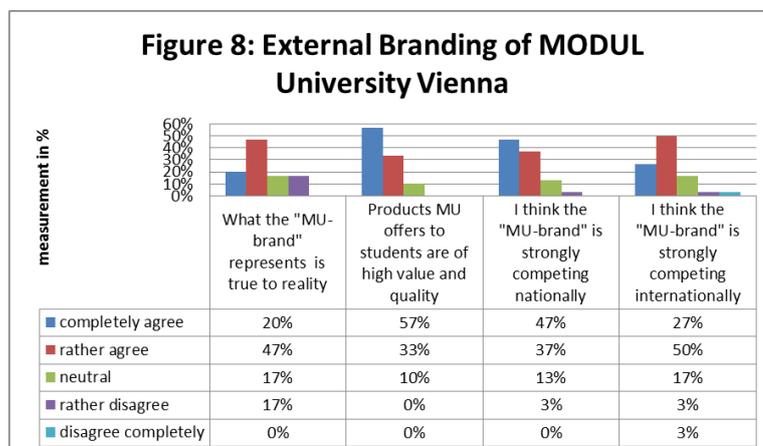
MODUL University Vienna into their work processes on a daily basis. Thus, they indicated the importance of making the students of the university feel welcome and appreciated while trying to interact as much as possible with them. Additionally, various survey participants stated that they try to support the community spirit of the university by appreciating the diverse cultural backgrounds of students and by motivating students to take part in student events and activities, while taking part in these events and activities themselves. Moreover, faculty and staff of MODUL University who took part in the survey mentioned, that the key value of sustainability plays a huge role when incorporating the brand values of MODUL University into their daily work processes. Personnel of MODUL University Vienna indicated to working with care about the environment and also social surrounding, but also a focus on a sustainable future. As examples for that, respondents mentioned working in a manner that uses the least amount of resources such as for example trying to avoid unnecessary prints, reusing print outs for taking notes or using a refillable water bottle instead of a water bottle made of plastic or turning off the lights when leaving the class room. Respondents of the survey additionally stated keeping English as language of communication among all stakeholders of the university as a very important aspect of incorporating brand values of MODUL University in their daily work processes. They indicated that, speaking in English language helps to eliminate language barriers and supports the aspect of internationalization of the university. Also, the majority of survey respondents mentioned that they are putting effort in the ways they conduct research when trying to incorporate the brand values of MODUL University into their daily work processes. They do this, by actively going to research seminars and choosing recent topics for their research projects that fit within the brand values of the university.

### **5.1.7 External branding of MODUL University Vienna**

Next in the survey, a question on external brand representation was asked. As figure 8 shows, six (20%) survey respondents agreed totally on, what the “MODUL brand” represents to its external stakeholders in terms of marketing is true to reality. Fourteen (46.7%) survey participants rather agreed on this statement. Contrary, 5 (16.7%) respondents partly disagreed on the statement, that what the “MODUL brand” represents to its external stakeholders in terms of marketing is true to reality. None of the respondents disagreed completely on this statement.

Seventeen (56.7%) respondents strongly perceive that the products and services offered to students of MODUL University Vienna are of high value and quality. Ten (33.3%) respondents indicate to rather perceive that the products and services offered at MODUL University Vienna are of great value and quality. Three (10%) respondents feel neutral towards the subject whereas none of the respondents perceives the quality and values of products offered at the educational institution negatively at all.

Nearly half of the survey respondents (14 people, 46.7%) agree completely on the “MODUL brand” being strongly competing on the private education market on a national level. Eleven (36.7%) people in addition rather agree on this issue. Only one (3.3%) respondent rather disagreed on the “MODUL brand” being strongly competing on the private higher education market on a national level and none of the respondents disagreed completely. On the other hand, when being asked whether the “MODUL brand” is strongly competing on the private higher education market on an international level, respondents had slightly different views. The number of respondents who indicated to agree completely on the “MODUL brand” being strongly competing on the private education market on an international level decreased to a lower number as for the national market with only 8 (26.7%) respondents who agreed completely on the statement. One (3.3%) respondent rather disagreed and one (3.3%) respondent disagreed completely concerning the “MODUL brand” having a competitive position on the private higher education market on an international level.



### **5.1.8 Future development of MODUL University Vienna**

Lastly survey participants were able to state in an open-ended question, how they see MODUL University Vienna develop as a brand in the next 10 coming years. Generally, most of the respondents indicated that MODUL University will become Austria's leading private university while expanding on an international level and opening more branch universities worldwide. Additionally, they believe that the university's network of partners will increase and that the overall awareness and reputation of the "MODUL brand" will be better on a national and international level. Respondents assume that the level of reputation will depend on the performance of graduates in their jobs. Many respondents furthermore expect MODUL University Vienna to increase in terms of student number and offered study programs. As they think, that the "MODUL brand" currently stands mostly for education in tourism and hospitality, they assume that in the future, MODUL University Vienna will also be known for its business-related programs. Thus, some of the participants believe, that the change of ownership of the university will decide whether the university will transform into a business school going away from its current focus on being a university focused mainly on tourism and hospitality.

### **5.2 Differences between faculty and staff of the university**

As the survey conducted was filled in by both faculty and staff of MODUL University Vienna, the following paragraph is dedicated to showcase differences between these two groups of personnel of MODUL University Vienna.

Staff of the university participating in the survey indicated to be aged between 26 and 35 years (40%) and between 36 to 45 years of age (60%). None of the staff stated to be older than 45 years of age. On the other hand, 20% of faculty of MU indicated to be older than 45 years of age. Furthermore 10% of staff members stated to be working at MODUL University Vienna for a duration of less than 6 months or a duration between 6 months up to one year. In contrast, only 10% of faculty members of the university indicated to be working at MODUL University Vienna for a time period between one to two years, whereas 50% of faculty has been working for the university for more than 4 years.

Concerning the job perception, only 10 percent of staff stated to completely agree when asked if they found their job to be challenging, on the other hand 50% of faculty

of the university perceived their job as very challenging, and 40% as rather challenging. In addition, only 5% of the staff members of MODUL University Vienna found their job to be very rewarding, whereas 40% of MU's faculty indicated that their job to be very rewarding. 50% of faculty perceives their job as very exciting. On the other hand, none of the asked staff members rated their job as very exciting. Only 15% of staff perceived their job as rather exciting. In addition, 40% of faculty of the university perceives their job to be very varied, whereas none of the staff members did perceive their job to be very varied, and 60% of the staff of MU perceived their job to be rather varied. Moreover 50% of faculty believes their job to be very interesting, but only 3% of staff feels that their job is very interesting.

Concerning employee rewards, 70% of faculty indicated to be rather satisfied with their salary, but only 35% of staff of MODUL University stated to be satisfied with their salary. Fifty percent of the staff members are rather satisfied with the style of management of the university, whereas only 30% of faculty is rather satisfied with the management style carried out at MU. Only 20% of faculty found the work environment at the university very great, whereas 55% of staff perceived the work environment as very great. Moreover, 65% of staff of the university indicated that they perceive the work-life balance as very great, while only 40% of faculty perceived the work-life balance to be very great

When asked if they perceive the communication between the various departments at MODUL University Vienna as great, 20% of faculty disagreed completely and 50% felt neutral concerning this question. Additionally, 40% of staff rather disagreed to the communication being great. While 40% of faculty believes that there are rather great career development options at MODUL University Vienna, 20% believe that the career development options at the university are really bad. 15% staff of the university strongly disagreed on receiving relevant job training at the beginning or during their job. On the other hand, 30% of faculty indicated to rather agree on receiving relevant job training at the beginning of their job, and 40% indicated to rather having received relevant job training during their job. Both half of members of faculty and staff indicated the willingness to stay within their jobs for the next two coming years.

When asked to rate the 4 most important brand values of the university, staff of MU choose "International study population of more than 70% international students" as most important value (80%), followed by "Personalized service and community spirit",

chosen by 60% of staff members, “Vienna as international student city and mount ‘Kahlenberg’ as unique study location; secure city with a high standard of living” (45%) and “Focus on English-taught study programs” which was perceived as important value by 40% of staff members. Only 5% of staff chose “Strong private ownership with non-profit legal status”, which made this value the least popular.

On the other hand, faculty rated “Value-based, holistic education concept (based on MODUL University’s educational values)” as most appealing value (80%), followed by “International study population of more than 70% international students” (60%), “Multidisciplinary research and education with a faculty to student ratio of 1:20” (50%), and “Sustainability as key principle of the university’s philosophy” (40%). None of the faculty members rated “University exchange programs on most continents and international career partner companies” as appealing.

When asked if respondents are very familiar with the brand guidelines of MODUL University Vienna, 65% of staff indicated to be very familiar with the brand guidelines of MU whereas only 10% of faculty members, believe to be very familiar with the brand guidelines of the university. Furthermore, 75% of staff completely agreed to having been introduced to the brand of MODUL University Vienna intensively, but only 10% of faculty completely agreed to having been introduced to the brand of MODUL University intensively. Thus, only 30% of staff would rather prefer to receive more information on the brand guidelines of MODUL University Vienna, nevertheless 60% of faculty would rather prefer to receive more information on the brand guidelines of the university.

65% of staff strongly believes to be contributing to the success of the university, and 40% of faculty of MODUL University Vienna, strongly believes to be contributing the university’s success. Furthermore, 75% of staff and 50% of faculty, indicated to completely agreed on feeling responsible to carry out their job in a manner that represents the brand values of the “MODUL brand”. Additionally, 50% of staff completely agreed on trying to incorporate the brand values of MODUL University Vienna into their daily work processes, while only 20% of faculty indicated to completely agree concerning this matter.

65% of staff rather believes that what the “MODUL brand” represents to its external stakeholders in terms of marketing is true to reality, on the other hand, 40% of faculty

of the university rather disagrees on the statement that what the “MODUL brand” represents to its external stakeholders in terms of marketing, is true to reality. Additionally, 55% of staff, and 60% of faculty, believes that products and services offered to students of MODUL University Vienna are very great.

When asked if MODUL University Vienna, is competing strongly on the private higher sector on the national market, 50% of the staff members of MU completely agreed and 40% of faculty completely agreed on the university being strongly competitive on the national market. When asked whether the university is competitive on the private education sector on the international market, 25% of staff completely agreed and 30% of faculty completely agreed on this question.

## 6 Conclusion

The following section of the thesis is directed towards discussing the results of the research outcomes and elaborating on the co-relations between the findings.

### 6.1 Discussion of research outcomes

The main goal of this thesis aimed to understand in which ways faculty and staff of MODUL University Vienna is involved with the university's brand. In literature *brand identification*, *brand commitment* and *brand loyalty* are associated with the topic of branding and were used as variables for measuring the brand involvement of personnel of MODUL University Vienna in this thesis.

At first, looking at the big picture both faculty and staff of MODUL University Vienna, seem to be involved with the brand of the university. However, it is important to look at the previously mentioned variables in detail to find out about their brand involvement and the ways of this involvement more precisely.

The *brand identification* of personnel of MODUL University Vienna was measured with various questions in the survey conducted for the case study of MODUL University Vienna. If personnel is generally satisfied with their job, they tend to be able to identify themselves more with a certain brand. Personnel of MODUL University Vienna, rated their job rather positively, but there were various differences on the job perception between faculty and staff of the university. Thus, faculty of the university generally felt their job to be more "challenging", "rewarding", "exciting", "varied", and "interesting" than the staff of the university. This could be the case as faculty of the university has more direct contact with students of the university and their job tasks could be considered less repetitive than job tasks of personnel working in staff positions. In addition, faculty and staff of MU showed to be standing behind the quality and value of education offered to students of the university. These results show that, employees of the university can identify themselves with the brand of MODUL University Vienna not only concerning their job and working environment, but also with the products the university is offering to its students.

Furthermore, employees of organizations need to be committed towards the organization, in order to be involved with the brand of the company. Employees tend to show more commitment towards a brand, if they know what it stands for and represents. Personnel of MODUL University especially finds that the international student body of the university and the personalized service and community spirit of the university are very appealing among the brand values of the educational institution. Most of the faculty and staff also described the university as a brand in a rather similar manner mentioning it being an international, research based university, while focusing on excellent education in the field of Tourism and Hospitality and standing for innovation and sustainability. Although generally faculty and staff indicated to be aware of the brand guidelines of the university, both faculty and staff stated that they haven't been introduced to the brand of MODUL University Vienna intensively. Especially faculty of the university wishes for additional information on the branding guidelines of MODUL University Vienna.

It is important for employees of an organization to feel that they and their actions "matter" within a company to trigger brand commitment (Tyler & Blader, 2000). The majority of personnel of MODUL University Vienna believes that with carrying out their job, they contribute to the university's success. Thus, they aim to carry out their job in a manner that represents the brand values of the "MODUL brand". Although, this is already really valuable for the educational institution, managers of the university should support personnel more when it comes to incorporating the brand values of the university into their daily work processes. Many employees already try to do so, by for example, focusing on sustainable use of resources or respecting cultural differences. However, various participants indicated that there needs to be support on how to incorporate the brand values of the university in the most efficient manner.

As seen in literature, brand commitment is created through effective communication (Thompson et al., 1999). Personnel of MODUL University Vienna, rated the communication between the various departments of the university as rather bad. Thus, actions need to be taken to enhance the communication between colleagues of the university. As some participants mentioned that there is currently a "gap" between faculty and staff departments of the university, it is of great importance to take actions to bridge this gap, with for example increasing the number of employee

meetings, introducing new employees intensively to each other or organizing team building events for both faculty and staff.

Although personnel of the university is rather aware of the key values of the university, they would generally wish for better communication between departments which could enhance commitment, especially in bringing faculty and staff together.

*Brand loyalty* in organizations, can be achieved, if employees are feeling comfortable in the working environment and feel that their job offers career development opportunities which leads them to stay in their position longer (Reichheld, 1996). In this study, personnel of MODUL University Vienna generally feels rather satisfied with their environment of their job at the university. The employees indicated that they are rather satisfied with the working conditions of MODUL University Vienna, including their salary, the style of management of the university, the working environment, and the work-life balance of their job. There were slight differences between the ratings of faculty and staff. Especially concerning “salary”. Faculty of the university rated salary to be really great, whereas staff did not perceive the salary to be as great.

Career development opportunities are also associated with playing a very important role when it comes to motivating employees towards being loyal to a company’s brand (Reichheld, 1996). At MODUL University Vienna, career development opportunities are not perceived as being very great, however faculty of the university perceives career development opportunities as slightly better than staff members. Participants additionally indicated the lack of relevant job training carried out on a regular basis at the beginning and during the job of personnel of the university.

The lack of these career development opportunities could lead to an increase in turnover in the long run, as employees could feel to leave the company, if they see no potential for further promotions or career directions (Lam, Zhang, & Baum, 2001). Thus, only both half of faculty and staff indicated to planning to be staying with MODUL University as an employer in the next two coming years. In order to enhance the loyalty of personnel of MODUL University Vienna, actions need to be taken to point out career development opportunities in a more attractive and efficient manner among faculty and staff of the university.

To conclude, one can say, that both faculty and staff are involved with the brand of MODUL University Vienna, but this involvement needs to be strengthened and developed further. Especially communication and training need to be enhanced and the existing “gap” between faculty and staff departments needs to be bridged by taking various actions.

## **6.2 Recommendations**

As discussed in the previous part of this thesis, various actions need to be taken in order to enhance the brand involvement of personnel of MODUL University Vienna further. As a result of that, communication needs to be supported throughout the various departments of the university. This could be carried out, by holding regular employee meetings as well as conducting employee surveys and following discussions. Additionally, career development opportunities need to be designed in a more obvious and attractive manner, to keep the turnover rate among employees as low as possible. Although employees are rather informed about the university’s brand values and guidelines especially, faculty wishes to get more information about the brand of the university. Thus, a written document on branding guidelines of the university for “existing” employees could be beneficial. Numerous survey participants furthermore pointed out the need for “brand introduction sessions” or “brand guidelines handbooks” which could be offered to new employees in order to help them to get familiar with the brand. Furthermore, regular brand workshops could be held to constantly trigger discussions concerning what the brand stands for among the colleagues of the university.

## **6.3 Limitations and future research**

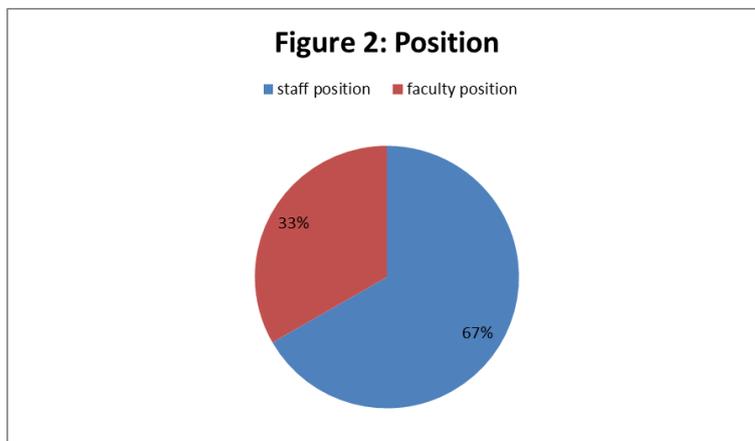
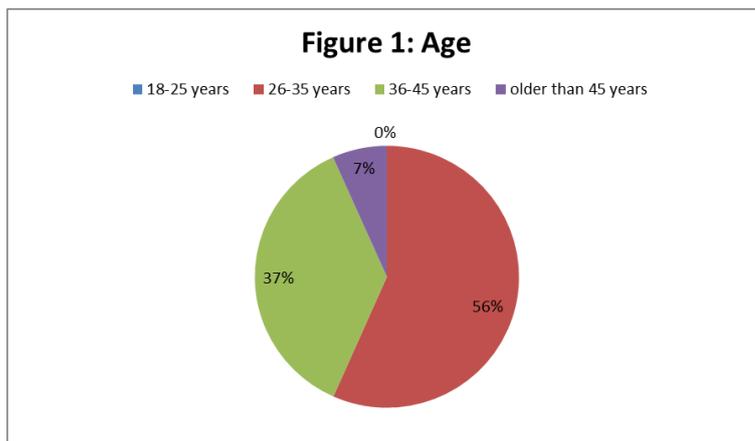
One limitation of the study would be the amount of participants which was achieved. Only approximately 50% of personnel of the university participated in the survey. Additionally, participants could have answered the questions in a biased way, as they could have felt a responsibility towards the university to answer the questions in a manner that represents the university in a favorable way.

As at the moment, there is a lot of research on branding in general and in various industries, there needs to be more research on branding in university settings. University need to be seen as branded institutions in order to achieve this. As research on stakeholders of universities (especially on students) already exists, there needs to

be research on faculty and staff as stakeholders of an educational institution in particular as well. Universities themselves need to investigate in the position of their personnel concerning branding, to be able to take actions to enhance the overall positioning of their brand.

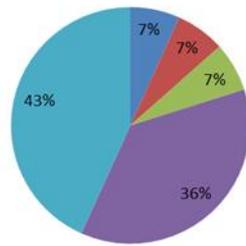
## 7 Appendix

### 7.1 Appendix 1 (Figures)

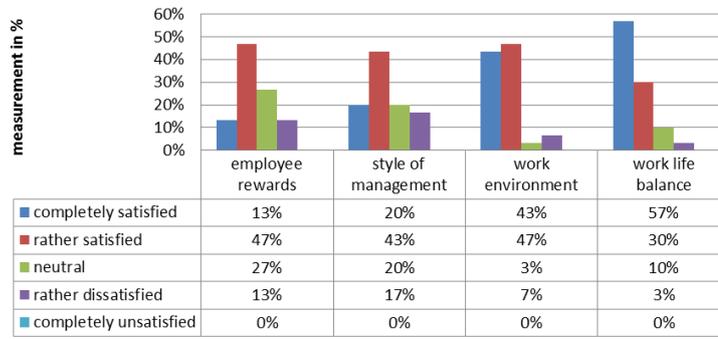


**Figure 3: Durance of Employment**

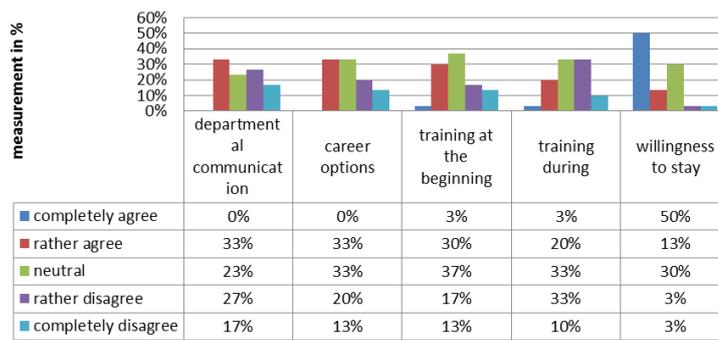
■ less than 6 months ■ 6 months-1 year ■ 1 year-2 years  
■ 2 years-4 years ■ longer than 4 years



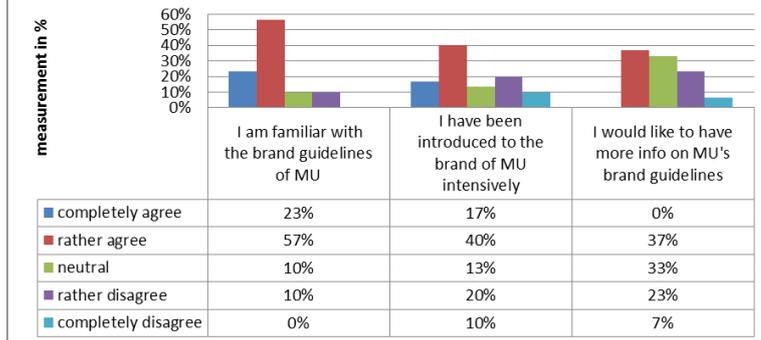
**Figure 4: Attractiveness of MODUL University Vienna as an employer**



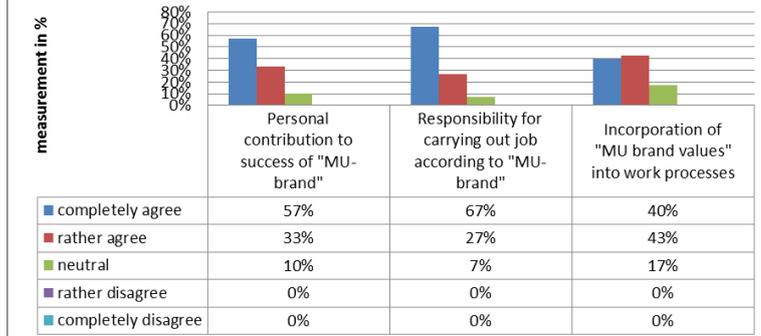
**Figure 5: Working at MODUL University Vienna**



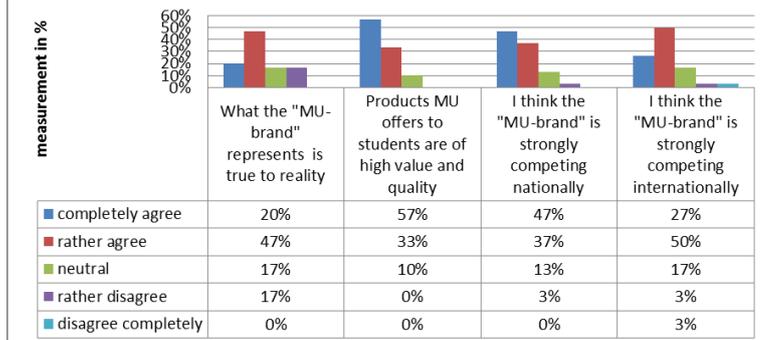
**Figure 6: Branding at Modul University Vienna**



**Figure 7: Brand Commitment of Personnel of MODUL University Vienna**



**Figure 8: External Branding of MODUL University Vienna**



## 7.2 Appendix 2 (Survey questions)

### "Evaluation of personnel's brand involvement in a private university setting: The case of MODUL University Vienna"

Dear participant,

As the following survey will include sensitive work-related- and personal topics, I herewith assure, that all the collected data will be treated in confidential manner, and total anonymity will be given to all the participants of the survey. I furthermore guarantee, that the data will be only used for completion of my bachelor thesis titled "Evaluation of personnel's brand involvement in a private university setting: the case of MODUL University Vienna". This thesis aims to investigate and explain the ways in which faculty and staff of Modul University Vienna is involved with the university's brand.

**BEGIN SURVEY** →

### "Evaluation of personnel's brand involvement in a private university setting: The case of MODUL University Vienna"

Employee Profile

2

**How old are you?**

18 to 25 years old

26 to 35 years old

36 to 45 years old

older than 45 years

← BACKWARD

1/15

FORWARD →

### "Evaluation of personnel's brand involvement in a private university setting: The case of MODUL University Vienna"

3

**My job at MODUL University Vienna is...**

a staff position

a faculty position

← BACKWARD

2/15

FORWARD →

## "Evaluation of personnel's brand involvement in a private university setting: The case of MODUL University Vienna"

4

For how long have you been working at MODUL University Vienna?

less than 6 months  
 6 months up to 1 year  
 1 year up to 2 years  
 2 years up to 4 years  
 longer than 4 years

← BACKWARD
3/15
FORWARD →

## "Evaluation of personnel's brand involvement in a private university setting: The case of MODUL University Vienna"

Working Environment at MODUL University Vienna

6

How do you consider your job? Please indicate according to your personal opinion.

challenging	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	easy
rewarding	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	unrewarding
exciting	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	boring
varied	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	unvaried
interesting	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	uninteresting

← BACKWARD
4/15
FORWARD →

## "Evaluation of personnel's brand involvement in a private university setting: The case of MODUL University Vienna"

7

The following variables measure the attractiveness of MODUL University Vienna as an employer. Please indicate your level of satisfaction according to these variables.

	I am completely satisfied	I am rather satisfied	neutral	I am rather dissatisfied	I am completely dissatisfied
employee rewards (salary)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
style of management	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
work environment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
work-life balance	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

← BACKWARD
5/15
FORWARD →

## "Evaluation of personnel's brand involvement in a private university setting: The case of MODUL University Vienna"

8

Please indicate your opinion concerning the following statement:

	I completely agree	I rather agree	neutral	I rather disagree	I completely disagree
"The communication between the various departments within MODUL University Vienna is great."	<input type="radio"/>				
"MODUL University Vienna offers its employees great career development opportunities."	<input type="radio"/>				
"Employees of MODUL University Vienna, receive relevant job training on a regular basis" (at the beginning of their career)	<input type="radio"/>				
"Employees of MODUL University Vienna, receive relevant job training on a regular basis" (during their career)	<input type="radio"/>				
"I see myself working at MODUL University Vienna in the next two years."	<input type="radio"/>				

BACKWARD 6/15 FORWARD

## "Evaluation of personnel's brand involvement in a private university setting: The case of MODUL University Vienna"

The "MODUL" brand

10

Please shortly describe what the brand of MODUL University Vienna represents and stands for according to your personal opinion.

Type a paragraph

1500 characters remaining

BACKWARD 7/15 FORWARD

## "Evaluation of personnel's brand involvement in a private university setting: The case of MODUL University Vienna"

11

Please choose the 4 brand values of MODUL University Vienna that you personally find most appealing:

- Strong private ownership with non-profit legal status
- MODUL brand history as the oldest vocational training school with a long tradition in tourism and hospitality education worldwide
- MODUL University Vienna hosts the 'European Center' for tourism research
- Austria's leading international private university
- Focus on English-taught study programs
- International study population of more than 70% international students
- Value-based, holistic education concept (based on MODUL University's educational values)
- Sustainability as key principle of the university's philosophy
- Personalized service and community spirit
- Commitment to quality and innovation (AQ Austria and ENQA accreditations)
- Multidisciplinary research and education with a faculty to student ratio of 1:20
- University exchange programs on most continents and international career partner companies
- Vienna as international student city and mount 'Kahlenberg' as unique study location; secure city with a high standard of living

## "Evaluation of personnel's brand involvement in a private university setting: The case of MODUL University Vienna"

Internal Branding Activities

13

Please indicate your opinion concerning the following statement:

	I completely agree	I rather agree	neutral	I rather disagree	I completely disagree
"I am familiar with the brand guidelines of MODUL University Vienna."	<input type="radio"/>				
"I think that I have been introduced intensively to the brand guidelines of MODUL University Vienna."	<input type="radio"/>				
"I would like to receive more information on the brand guidelines of MODUL University Vienna."	<input type="radio"/>				

BACKWARD 9/15 FORWARD

## "Evaluation of personnel's brand involvement in a private university setting: The case of MODUL University Vienna"

14

If you would have any recommendations on how to improve the internal branding activities at MODUL University Vienna, which would you provide? Please give a short answer in the text field below.

Type a paragraph

1500 characters remaining

BACKWARD 10/15 FORWARD

## "Evaluation of personnel's brand involvement in a private university setting: The case of MODUL University Vienna"

Branding in the working environment at MODUL University Vienna

16

Please indicate your opinion concerning the following statement:

	I completely agree	I rather agree	neutral	I rather disagree	I completely disagree
"I feel that I, as an employee of MODUL University Vienna personally contribute to the success of the "MODUL brand".	<input type="radio"/>				
"As an employee of MODUL University Vienna I feel the responsibility to carry out my job in a manner that represents the brand values of the "MODUL brand".	<input type="radio"/>				
"I do try to consciously incorporate the brand values of MODUL University Vienna in my daily work processes."	<input type="radio"/>				

BACKWARD 11/15 FORWARD

## "Evaluation of personnel's brand involvement in a private university setting: The case of MODUL University Vienna"

17

Could you give an example how you incorporate the brand values of MODUL University Vienna into your daily work processes?

Type a paragraph

1500 characters remaining

← BACKWARD

12/15

FORWARD →

## "Evaluation of personnel's brand involvement in a private university setting: The case of MODUL University Vienna"

The current situation and lookout of the "MODUL University Vienna Brand"

19

Please indicate your opinion concerning the following statement:

	I completely agree	I rather agree	neutral	I partly disagree	I completely disagree
"The representation of the "MODUL brand" among its external stakeholders in terms of marketing is true to reality"	<input type="radio"/>				
"The products and services MODUL University Vienna offers to its students are of high value and quality"	<input type="radio"/>				
"I believe that the "MODUL brand" is strongly competing on the private higher education market on a national level"	<input type="radio"/>				
"I believe that the "MODUL brand" is strongly competing on the private higher education market on an international level"	<input type="radio"/>				

## "Evaluation of personnel's brand involvement in a private university setting: The case of MODUL University Vienna"

20

Please shortly describe how you would see MODUL University Vienna develop as a brand in the next 10 coming years.

Type a paragraph

1500 characters remaining

← BACKWARD

14/15

FORWARD →

## "Evaluation of personnel's brand involvement in a private university setting: The case of MODUL University Vienna"

21

If you would like to add any further comments please state below.

Type a sentence

250 characters remaining

← BACKWARD

15/15

SUBMIT SURVEY →

### 7.3 Appendix 3 (Interview Summary)

The Human Resource Generalist of MODUL University Vienna perceives branding in general as very important, but states that it is mostly important for younger universities, like MODUL University Vienna. He furthermore believes that, a university brand needs to offer the same strong quality both internally and externally, because applicants (both students and employees) expect certain standards of the university as a brand. In addition to that, with the young age of MODUL University Vienna there are challenges involved when attracting faculty and staff to work for the educational institution. These challenges include that, with the strong branding of historic universities, some expectations of applicants are automatically attached. Younger universities such as MODUL University Vienna need to work on building their brand much more in order to be able to attract applicants. Nevertheless Mr. Vukotic sees an advantage for MODUL University being a younger institution. Thus, a younger institution is able to change in various “directions”. Whereas, very old historic universities cannot change the image they have built over past decades that easily.

MODUL University in a certain way inherited the brand of the over a hundred years existing MODUL brand including the vocational school “Hotel- und Tourismusschulen MODUL” Vienna. As the university was founded in 2008, a logo created from an advertising agency already existed, together with a website and the vision and mission including faculty of the university. However, back then there were no sorts of any written branding materials available. Thus, what the brand should represent to the outside, and how it should be promoted to the outside was not clearly identified during this time. As a result of that, it can be said, that the university was in a pioneer phase during the first five years of operation, which also led to many changes concerning programs and directions since then. Since the year 2013 the university board has decided on a set of lived values, which are re-occurring unique selling propositions, and act as marketing missions to promote the university and its activities on various channels. In 2015, MODUL University Vienna published official handbook for MU’s brand guidelines a “Brand and Visual Identity Guidebook”, which is online on their website ([www.modul.ac.at](http://www.modul.ac.at)) due to the re-launch of the university’s brand. This was especially of great importance as MODUL University started to have campuses around the globe. For example, MODUL University Dubai was founded. Therefore, it

was necessary to professionalize the university's branding to train external colleagues of the university to act as kind of the brand that is lived at MODUL University Vienna.

This guidebook deals with branding related topics such as brand values and brand strategy of the university, official marketing tagline and the visual identity of the university. After the first five years of operation, the university identified its "brand values" which should work as guidelines for student marketing and brand strategy processes in the long run. These guidelines should be used for promotion purposes for both undergraduate and graduate study programs. There are thirteen "brand values" identified to be used for promotion activities among potential students:

Furthermore, the "Brand and Visual Identity Guidebook" includes a standardized lead text which should be used whenever referred to MODUL University's main brand story to the public. Additionally, the document indicates the ways in which the brand values concerning student marketing should be communicated to successfully strengthen the "MODUL brand" both within and outside of Austria. Also, there are some "Official Marketing Taglines" described in the guidebook, which should help in the area of mass communication providing two tagline phrases used both internally and externally: The first one being "Expanding Horizons" which represents a link to the university's vision to broaden minds and the second phrase "Austria's Leading International Private University", which is connected to the university's development plan and provides a long-term promise to all of its internal and external stakeholders. Lastly, the guidebook provides some detailed description on the "Visual Identity" of the university's logo. Therefore, there are certain specific guidelines about in which format the logo can be used on for example print outs or in power point presentations. These regulations include size, colors, options for the logo in monogram format and the typography used for official documents

As Mr. Eder perceives the visual identity of the MODUL brand especially important, the guidebook includes also certain guidelines related to issues such, on the exact spot on a document where the logo of the university needs to be printed on, in order to ensure unity when promoting the brand externally. Mr. Eder furthermore perceives the usage of pictures as very important for the branding process of MODUL University Vienna. As he stated, MODUL University Vienna sells an emotional product. Thus, in his opinion pictures need to be taken and presented in a professional manner. This is why, every photo used for marketing purposes is taken from a photo stock of

approximately 45 pictures, which was created by a professional photographer. The main focus of the promotion strategy of MODUL University Vienna has been to increase the numbers of student, by communicating emotions and the expected experiences. The main focus is co- related to the young age of the educational institution. Hence, Mr. Eder would have tackled the issue of branding of the university differently, if the focus concerning promotion would have been for example to improve the research output.

Mr. Eder personally thinks that there is a living culture based on pioneers that attended the university before. Additionally, there are certain types of assemblies and meetings where the main visions of the university are discussed and transported. Nevertheless, apart from the labor regulations, there are no official internal documents (e.g. guidelines) asking the employees to follow certain guidelines concerning branding of the university. Mr. Vukotic additionally confirms that there is no written document of internal branding regulations existent at the moment. However, in his opinion, internal branding still exists at MODUL University Vienna, but not in a written form.

Also, Mr. Eder points out the fact, that there is a difference between the brand awareness of faculty and staff, as for example a staff member of the cafeteria has a different job description but also not the same amount of usage of the brand while their work processes. Nevertheless, both faculty and staff have a very intrinsic motivation to work for MODUL University Vienna in common. Mr. Eder sees a great challenge in terms of branding in guaranteeing that every member of faculty and staff of the university has a “voice” in contributing to the brand, but also to clarify that certain brand related decisions are made centralized. That is why high brand involvement of faculty and staff brings a lot of empathy among employees but also challenges. He furthermore thinks that at MODUL University Vienna, there is a structured culture lived, but faculty and staff have different duties in this process. Nevertheless, the head of Marketing of the university would also definitely hand out a brand guidebook not only to faculty but also to staff in order to make them more familiar to the brand.

There are several nationalities at the university, and therefore cultures come and work together. Mr. Vukotic would prefer to have some kind of formulated guidelines available to distribution among employees. Mr. Eder supports the consideration of

implementing some sort of written guidelines of internal branding for employees of the university. One example for such guidelines would be that Mr. Eder is currently thinking about creating guidelines on employee behavior of MODUL University Vienna concerning social media platforms, because this would be a helping tool to guarantee a favorable and unified online presence on such channels. From a larger perspective, such internal branding guidelines would need to include and provide a basic understanding about the history of the university, how the brand was built over the first few years of operation, and future directions of the university. Thus, at the moment, there is no such document, distributed among new employees of MODUL University Vienna. Nevertheless, currently, there are some informal guidelines of internal branding provided to new employees of the university through their supervisors. However, as there are no formal guidelines written down in an official document, every supervisor carries out this responsibility in a different manner.

Mr. Vukotic himself has the impression that he “grew” into the brand while working at the university. As the university board just recently hired a Human Resource Generalist, Mr. Eder sees this decision as a very important strategic move concerning the approach to internal branding. This is due to the fact that in his opinion; the process of internal branding will be approached now from the Human Resource Generalist using his expertise in this particular field. In addition to that, from a marketing point of view Mr. Eder sees that the right understanding of the brand of students, faculty and staff leads to positive word of mouth, that is why internal branding is crucial for promoting the university.

In the past, surveys were used as a tool of measuring satisfaction of faculty and staff of MODUL University Vienna. These surveys did not mainly focus on employee branding, but more on general satisfaction of faculty and staff of the university or the job development opportunities at the university. Other than that, no other methods were used to measure internal branding among faculty and staff of the university before.

Nevertheless, Mr. Eder and Mr. Vukotic, are very interested on the brand involvement of faculty and staff of the university. For example, they are eager to know, how the faculty and staff of MODUL University relate to the quality of education offered at the university. Various alumni of the university currently work for the university after graduation. That is why Mr. Eder and Mr. Vukotic assume, that it could be the case

that alumni of the university associate their experience concerning great high quality education experienced during their studies at MODUL University also with the MODUL University brand as an employer. Meaning, as they experienced high quality standards while studying they expect the same values when working for the MODUL University Vienna brand. Other than that, they are interested in the brand understanding of employees of the university and would like to get an impression on how good faculty and staff of MODUL University is aware of the university's brand values. Thus, it would interest them as well, how employees of the educational institution see the university in the future.

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