The Student Psychological Contract as a Predictor of University Brand Evangelism in Tanzanian Higher Education: Insights from Social Exchange Theory

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Abstract
This study sought to extend empirical and theoretical understanding of university brand evangelism as an outcome of the student psychological contract in the higher education sector. The conceptual model was developed and tested using structural equation modelling on 451 students at two colleges of higher education in Tanzania. The findings indicate that the student psychological contract influences university brand love en route to university brand evangelism. Thus, university operations should be well-defined by a social contract that stipulates the obligations of both students and staff. For students to engage in university brand evangelism, higher education institutions must fulfill their expectations as stipulated in the contract. More specifically, their staff should fulfill their obligations emanating from promises made to students. This calls for specific standard procedures to fulfil expectations and thus optimise university brand evangelism.

Key words: Higher education sector, higher education institutions, university, branding strategies, student psychological contract, university brand evangelism

Cette étude visait à étendre la compréhension empirique et théorique de l'évangélisation de la marque universitaire en tant que résultat du contrat psychologique de l'étudiant dans le secteur de l'enseignement supérieur. Le modèle conceptuel a été développé et testé en utilisant un modèle d'équation structurelle sur 451 étudiants de deux collèges d'enseignement supérieur en Tanzanie. Les résultats indiquent que le contrat psychologique de l'étudiant

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influence la fidélité à la marque de l'université en vue de l'évangélisation de la marque de l'université. Ainsi, le fonctionnement des universités devrait être bien défini par un contrat social qui stipule les obligations des étudiants et du personnel. Pour que les étudiants s'engagent dans l'évangélisation de la marque universitaire, les établissements d'enseignement supérieur doivent répondre à leurs attentes telles que stipulées dans le contrat. Plus précisément, leur personnel doit remplir ses obligations découlant des promesses faites aux étudiants. Cela nécessite des procédures standard spécifiques pour répondre aux attentes et ainsi optimiser l'évangélisation de la marque universitaire.

Mots clés: Secteur de l'enseignement supérieur, établissements d'enseignement supérieur, université, stratégies de marque, contrat psychologique de l'étudiant, évangélisation de la marque universitaire

1.   Introduction

Worldwide, the higher education sector is undergoing major transformation and reformation that prompt changes in the management of higher education institutions (HEIs) (Maringe and Mourad, 2012). Over the past two decades, higher education in most countries was reclassified as not for profit and is therefore fully state-owned and funded (Anabila et al., 2020). However, transformation and reformation allow private investors to invest in the sector, leading to HEIs manifesting features similar to those of profit-making organisations (Qionglei et al., 2016). This has resulted in the mushrooming of HEIs, increasing competition for students, research grants, partnerships with the corporate sector, and government funding (Maringe and Mourad, 2012). Marketisation and commercialisation of higher education (Mwenda et al., 2019) imply that HEIs have to adopt market-based approaches such as branding to survive in an extremely competitive environment (Nedbalová et al., 2014).

Following a decrease in government funding, HEIs were forced to rely on fees and grants from the corporate sector to finance routine operations (Maunze et al., 2020). This implies the need to increase student enrolment and collaboration with the corporate sector (Simiyu et al., 2020). Public universities have been worst affected by the decrease in government subventions and research grants (Amani, 2018; Kinyongoh, 2019) on which they depend to cover operations costs and development expenditure (Amani, 2018).

Corporate institutions prefer to fund HEIs with a reputable corporate image (Sataøen, 2015). Branding is a strategic resource to build a competitive edge to boost student enrolment and partnerships with the corporate sector (Ng, 2016). The literature on higher education marketing shows that HEIs use different approaches to branding, with no universal approach that could render such marketing more effective (Sataøen, 2015; Kinyongoh, 2019). Branding is relevant to this sector due its re-categorisation as part of the service sector (Williams et al., 2012). Thus, HEIs are regarded as service organisations, staff as service providers, and students as customers (Khanna et al., 2014; Woodall et al., 2014). In what Koskina (2013) defines as a tripartite relationship, staff is considered to be at the core of the process because students consider an HEI as an abstract entity represented by its staff (Koskina, 2013).

The literature on HEI branding considers the relationship between staff and students as the engine that drives unique identification and differentiation. Alwi and Kitchen (2014) argue that a university's corporate image is an amalgamation of cognitive and affective brand attributes. Affective brand attributes involve aspects related to the inter-relationship between staff and students. Bowden (2011) emphasises that students are important actors in marketing HEIs; therefore, a relationship-based approach is relevant to ensure that they are engaged in building a unified corporate image. However, relationship-based approaches have not received much attention by scholars (Alwi and Kitchen, 2014).

Knapp and Masterson (2016) assert that exchange theory offers a holistic explanation of the relationship between students and their respective HEIs. This study examined the student psychological contract as a predictor of university brand evangelism. Social exchange theory suggests that a life-long exchange relationship between students and HEIs can prompt supportive student behaviour such as favourable referrals and volunteering (Bordia et al., 2010; Knapp and Masterson, 2017). While several empirical studies have been conducted on HEI branding, there is a paucity of research on university brand evangelism as an outcome of the student psychological contract. The social exchange theory suggests that the parties in the relationship, i.e., students and staff, respond positively to each other if the relationship offers mutual benefits (Bordia et al., 2015).

In social exchange theory, the student psychological contract involves subjective personal or group understanding of the reciprocal exchanges between students, staff, and the HEI (Koskina, 2013). It consists of both unwritten promissory (transactional) and non-promissory (relational and ideological) expectations of the informal agreement, which are very influential in determining students' potential behaviour (Bordia et al., 2015). This study theorised that one potential behaviour that the student psychological contract can elicit from students is university brand evangelism, an advanced level of student behaviour intentions. As university evangelists, students play a strategic role in preaching the good news about their favourite university to convert or persuade prospective students (Ghani and Ibrahim, 2018). Thus, brand evangelism is perceived as reciprocation by students due to mutual benefits that surface and accrue in the exchange relationship between them and HEI staff.

2.   Theoretical Foundation and Hypothesis Development
Social Exchange Theory

The study was theoretically grounded in the social exchange theory propounded by Blau (1964). It explains the form of the social contract between two parties that offers mutual gain. The theory suggests that exchanging social elements such as gratitude, respect, love, support, and material resources is an important component of social relationships (Knapp and Masterson, 2017). Furthermore, it posits that social exchange is constructed by reciprocity, which implies that what a person receives from another party should be returned in kind (Blau, 2017). Thus, social exchange is built on the concepts of "*give*" and "*take*" between the parties to the contract (Rousseau, 2001). The theory is widely applied in employee-employer relationships to explain specific employee behaviours due to expected mutual benefits from their employers (Bordia et al., 2015).

The student psychological contract is based on the theoretical understanding that student-staff relationships constitute a form of social exchange (Bordia et al., 2015). Knapp and Masterson (2017) and Bordia et al. (2010) suggest that theoretically, the relationship between students and staff can be holistically explained by the social exchange theory. The theory suggests that, under normal circumstances, students reciprocate by exhibiting positive behaviour when there is reciprocity in their relationship with staff or HEIs (Koskina, 2013). Knapp and Masterson (2017) cite positive referrals and volunteering as the supportive behaviour expressed by students in exchange relationships. Thus, supportive

behaviour, referred to university brand evangelism, is considered a branch of advanced behaviour that is supportive of the university brand.

Student Psychological Contract

The relationship between students and staff is of interest to scholars that examine student satisfaction. Koskina (2013) considers this relationship as a social contract that confers mutual benefits. Students and staff play specific roles in fulfilling the stated obligations of the contract. For example, HEIs must provide conducive learning environments, staff are expected to deliver services through teaching, and students are expected to participate in the learning process and pay all charges, including fees (Knapp and Masterson, 2017). Koskina (2013) notes that the contract is socially constructed and includes promissory and non-promissory expectations defined by reciprocal understanding. This means that both parties build specific expectations that they believe the other party must fulfill to uphold the contract.

Therefore, the student psychological contract is defined as subjective understanding of the mutual exchanges between students, staff, and their respective HEIs. Koskina (2013) describes this as a tripartite exchange relationship where staff is considered as individuals who are ambassadors of HEIs and have the obligation to ensure fulfillment of students' expectations. Koskina (2013) supports this notion by observing that students consider HEIs as abstract entities represented by their staff. In this view, staff are the most crucial element in ensuring that the student psychological contract is upheld. Like other forms of the psychological contract, the student psychological contract constitutes unwritten promissory (i.e., transactional) and non-promissory (i.e., relational and ideological) expectations, which form an informal agreement between students, HEIs, and staff.

Ideological Psychological Contract

The literature suggests that the teaching process should be guided by a specific ideology that assists staff to fulfil their obligations while ensuring that students' expectations are met. This helps staff to develop relevant behaviours, and students to build expectations that form the basis for choosing HEIs. The ideological psychological contract highlights key obligations relating to an organisation's philosophy, mission, core values, and principles (Vantilborgh et al., 2012) that must be upheld by staff.

Thompson and Bunderson (2003) define an ideological psychological contract as a person's commitment to support a valued cause beyond self-interest. It is implicitly exchanged in the relationship between the person and the organisation. The ideological psychological contract guides an organisation to fulfill its ideological obligations. Hence, it is bound to formulate organisational strategies in line with its core values, principles, and mission. Koskina (2013) notes that, in the exchange relationship between students and staff, the ideological psychological contract takes the form of ethics, core values, integrity, etc., which students expect staff members to honour in discharging their duties. Blau (1964) suggests that an ideological psychological contract provides ideological rewards, an alternative incentive that differs from economic and socio-emotional rewards. It offers rewards in terms of moral behaviour, ethics, integrity, and professionalism, which are crucial in the workplace (Kim et al., 2018; Vantilborgh et al., 2012). Thompson and Bunderson (2003) state that an ideological psychological contract exists in organisations that strongly emphasise principles or values. Therefore, ideological dimensions enable parties in the contract to share moral behaviour, which enhances both parties' commitment and emotional attachment in the exchange relationship.

Transactional Psychological Contract

Rousseau (2001) defines a transactional psychological contract as a formal contract with well-defined conditions and principles. It usually includes distinct clauses and phrases that specify each party's obligations and is legally enforceable as its agreements and requirements are clear and explicit. For example, in the student psychological contract, fees and other charges are considered as part of a transactional psychological contract because the relationship between students and HEIs is upheld when students fulfill their obligations by paying fees, and HEIs fulfill theirs by delivering quality education (Koskina, 2013). However, this form of relationship is short-term or interim, with specific agreements between two parties, i.e., a person and an organisation.

Relational Psychological Contract

Relational psychological contracts are built on flexibility, good faith,

and implicit promises between an individual and a given organisation (Rousseau, 2001). They are considered long-term contracts that build strong, lifelong mutual relationships between employees and an organisation. In the student psychological contract, the relational psychological contract covers the relationship between staff and students. It facilitates the learning process and knowledge dissemination (Pearce and Rousseau, 1998). Staff play roles as mentors, advisors, counsellors, and leaders to help students fulfill their expectations (Bordia et al., 2010). As a result, the relational contract has a significant impact on both individual satisfaction and turnover intention.

University Brand Love

The nature of the emotional connection a person develops with another person is the same as the emotional connection a person develops with his/her favourite brands (Carroll and Ahuvia, 2006). Consumer psychology suggests that this connection is based on the love relationship between customers and their preferred brands (Wallace et al., 2014). It is theorised that the student psychological contract establishes an exchange relationship between students and staff, which is expected to prompt university brand love (Webber et al., 2013; Vianden and Barlow, 2014; Dennis et al., 2016). This implies a sense of passion, consecration, affection, and excitement towards the university brand and testimonies to recommend it (Vianden and Barlow, 2014; Dass et al., 2020). It can further be explained as emotional behaviour expressed by students whose expectations have been fulfilled by their HEI (Dass et al., 2020).

However, it is vital to differentiate between satisfaction and brand love, as the latter implies emotional feelings or affective behaviour. Satisfaction is transaction-specific, characterised by short-term responses due to fulfillment of customer needs and wants. This difference is relevant because the study theorised that the student psychological contract has long-term effects through the mutual relationship between students as customers and staff as service providers on behalf of HEIs. This often goes beyond student satisfaction to build strong emotional feelings in the form of university brand love. Therefore, university brand love is not transaction-specific but relational-specific, which in this study was believed to be an antecedent of an exchange relationship between students and staff (Bowden, 2011; Dass et al., 2020; Rojas-Méndez et

al., 2009). Sternberg's (1986) theory of love posits that it is an advanced stage of friendship expressed by intimacy, passion, and commitment. It is thus proposed that the student psychological contract elicits students' love of the university brand (Vianden and Barlow, 2014). Therefore, it is hypothesised that:

> H$_1$: The ideological psychological contract (IPC) has a positive influence on university brand love (UNBL).
>
> H$_2$: The transactional psychological contract (TPC) has a positive influence on UNBL.
>
> H$_3$: The relational psychological contract (RPC) has a positive influence on UNBL.

University Brand Evangelism

In the modern world, brand evangelism is perceived as powerful marketing communication (Meiners et al., 2010). Evangelism, which has its roots in Christian doctrine, gives birth to evangelists. The term *evangelist* originates from the Greek word *euangelion,* which denotes "*a nominated or anointed person who has been sent to convey good news*" (Brettler and Levine, 2020; Ndekha, 2016). Thus, an evangelist is sent to preach or spread the good news (MacArthur and MacArthur, 2011). Evangelism is a form of reciprocation by evangelists to appreciate a spiritual relationship with God (Andrews, 2009) that is based on love. Evangelists are motivated to share goods news to express their love for God and their spiritual neighbour (Park, 2002). In doing so, they use personal testimonies and experiences with God to convert non-believers (Ahonen, 2017). This usually includes spreading word of the devil's evil deeds while emphasising the consequences of being a sinner as a way of vindicating their decision to become believers (Hewitt, 2014).

A brand evangelist is thus an unpaid salesperson who preaches or evangelises about a given brand to convert, proselytise, or recruit prospective customers (Doss, 2015). This study defined a university brand evangelist as a student eager to evangelise or preach about his/her preferred university to build a favourable corporate image (Ghani and Ibrahim, 2018; Kinyongoh, 2019). This will help his/her university to achieve identification and differentiation, increasing student enrolment, collaboration with the corporate sector, and job opportunities for

graduates. A corporate brand image can also help a university to boost its world ranking.

To become a university brand evangelist, a student must develop a strong love for the university brand due to mutual exchange relationships with staff and the HEI (Vianden and Barlow, 2014). Such evangelists are expected to purchase the university brand, disseminate positive referrals, and disapprove of competitors of their favourite university by engaging in oppositional brand loyalty towards the unchosen university brand despite having no experience of it (Becerra and Badrinarayanan, 2013). The objective is to ensure that the favourite university brand is seen as superior to other university brands, and to assist students to manifest self-glorification as students of the chosen brand (Marticotte et al., 2016).

There is limited research on how brand evangelism is constructed in HEIs (Kinyongoh, 2019). The study aimed to extend knowledge on the branding of HEIs by exploring the student psychological contract as the predictor of brand evangelism (Ghani and Ibrahim, 2018; Erdoğmuş and Ergun, 2016). Given the nature of HEIs, a holistic approach involving multiple stakeholders, settings, and context is necessary (Idris and Whitfield, 2014; Sataøen, 2015). Therefore, it is hypothesised that:

H_4: UNBL has a positive influence on University Brand Purchase Intention (UNBPI).

H_5: UNBL has a positive influence on University Positive Brand Referrals (UNPBR).

H_6: UNBL has a positive influence on University Oppositional Brand Referrals (UNOBR).
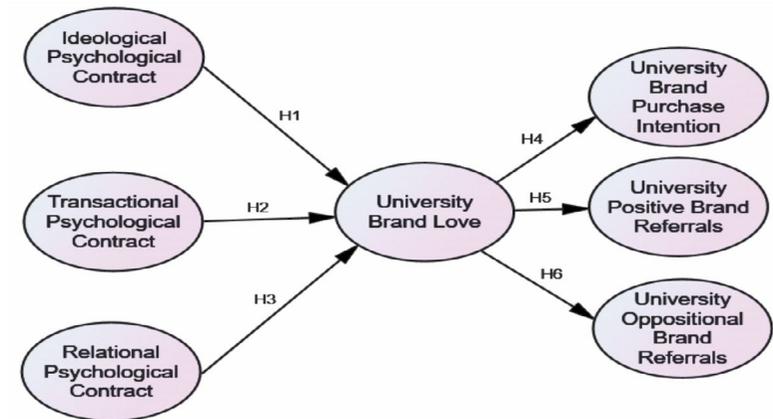

Figure 1: Conceptual Model

3.   Methodology
Study Site

The study involved students in two colleges of higher education in Dodoma, the capital of Tanzania. A cross-sectional survey research design was deemed appropriate because data were collected at one point in time and place from a dispersed population of the selected colleges (Rindfleisch et al., 2008).

Sample Size and Survey Administration and Procedures

The 451 respondents were selected using systematic sampling and simple random techniques. Students were first organised into strata according to their degree programmes, and thereafter, a random sample was drawn from each stratum. A proportionate allocation technique was adopted in which the same sampling rate was applied to all strata, thereby ensuring that the percentage distribution of the selected sample among the strata was identical to the corresponding distribution of the population. Data were collected using self-administered semi-structured questionnaires. Structural Equation Modelling (SEM), a powerful advanced data analysis technique, was used to carry out statistical analysis of the relationships of complex models with variables defined or explained by multiple measures (Hair et al., 2010; Kline, 2015).

Measure

Like most previous studies, this study conceptualised the student psychological contract and University Brand Evangelism (UNBE) as second-order constructs. In other words, the constructs were not treated as unidimensional but as multidimensional. It is widely accepted that the benefit of conceptualising constructs as second order is to present them as multidimensionality explained by multiple first-order constructs. Therefore, the student psychological contract as a second-order construct was explained by three first-order constructs, namely the IPC, TPC, and RPC. The study adopted measures proposed by Koskina (2013) and Knapp and Masterson (2016) to measure these three dimensions. In addition, UNBL was measured by scales adopted from Albert et al. (2008).

As a second-order construct, UNBE was explained by three first-order constructs, namely UBPI, UBPR, and UOBR. These three first-order constructs were measured using scales adopted from Ghani and Ibrahim, (2018), Becerra and Badrinarayanan (2013) and Kinyongoh (2019). However, the measures were modified to fit the higher education context and other important methodological issues. For instance, the statement "*In the near future, I will probably buy this brand*" was modified to read, "*In the near future I will continue buying services and products offered by this university.*" A statement such as "*When my friends are looking for beauty products, I would tell them not to buy any other brands*" was modified to read, "*When my friends are looking for a university to pursue higher education, I would tell them not to join other universities.*" The variables were captured using a 5-point Likert-type scale from 1 - strongly agree to 5 - strongly disagree.

Measurement Model

As noted earlier, the student psychological contract was operationalised as a second-order construct constituting IPC, TPC, and RPC. Therefore, Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was conducted to evaluate the dimensionality of the proposed measures of the IPC, TPC, and RPC. Furthermore, CFA was carried out to examine the distinctiveness of all proposed multiple-item variables.

The findings in Table 1 show a perfect fit of the three-factor hypothesised model because the selected fit index falls within the acceptable range. It is recommended that the value for CFI, GFI, AGFI, TLI should be close to 1 (see Hooper et al., 2008), RMSEA should be < 0.1 (see McDonald and Ho, 2002), and c^2/df should be < 3 (see Byrne, 1998). The three-factor model was distinctive when compared with the other three alternative models, i.e., two-factor models. Therefore, all three proposed variables of the student psychological contract were retained for further analysis.

Table 1: Results of Confirmatory Factor Analysis for the Measures of the Study Variables

	x^2	d.f.	CFI	GFI	AGFI	TLI	RMSEA
Three-factor Model	41.573	24	0.989	0.981	0.963	0.984	0.040
Two-factor Model: Ideological Psychological and Transactional Psychological Contract combined	229.025	26	0.878	0.889	0.809	0.831	0.132
Two-factor Model: Ideological and Relational Psychological Contract combined	903.842	26	0.473	0.722	0.518	0.270	0.274
Two-factor Model: Transactional and Relational Psychological Contract combined	320.847	26	0.823	0.840	0.724	0.755	0.159

Note: GFI - Goodness of Fit Index, AGFI - Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index, RMSEA - Root Mean Square Error of Approximation, CFI - Comparative Fit Index, TLI - Tucker-Lewis Coefficient.

The factor loadings loaded above the threshold of > 0.5 (Said et al., 2011) and Composite Reliability for IPC, TPC and RPC was 0.873, 0.702, and 0.833, respectively, above the recommended value of > 0.7. This means that the measurement items were good measures of the variables. The aggregate value of the Cronbach Alpha Coefficient (α) for all nine items was 0.733, while for specific constructs it was 0.856 for IPC, 0.7 for TPC, and 0.825 for RPC, above the threshold of 0.7 (Santos and Reynaldo, 2013; Tavakol and Dennick, 2011). Furthermore, the IPC, TPC and RPC have a value of Maximum Reliability MaxR (H) of 0.945, 0.711, and 0.871, respectively, above the threshold of > 0.7 (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). This indicates the internal consistency and reliability of the data.

The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for IPC, TPC and RPC was 0.703, 0.5, and 0.627, respectively, which is above the proposed threshold of > 0.5 (Floyd and Widaman, 1995). Thus, convergent validity was

achieved. To test discriminant validity, the value of the square root of AVE was compared with the value of intercorrelation between the variable and other variables. The value of AVE was also compared to the value of Maximum Shared Variance (MSV). The rule of thumb is that the value of the square root of AVE should be greater than the value of intercorrelation between the variable and other variables. Furthermore, the value of MSV for each variable should be less than its respective AVE value (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). The results in Table 2 indicate that discriminant validity was achieved because the value of the square root of AVE was greater than the value of intercorrelation between the variable and other variables. The value of MSV was also less than its respective AVE value.

Table 2: Discriminant Validity Using Fornell and Larcker's Procedures

	CR	AVE	MSV	MaxR(H)	IPC	TPC	RPC
IPC	0.873	0.703	0.161	0.945	**0.839**		
TPC	0.702	0.500	0.161	0.711	0.401	**0.664**	
RPC	0.833	0.627	0.027	0.871	0.136	0.163	**0.792**

Note: The bolded diagonal represents the square root of AVE.

Hypotheses Testing

The findings presented in Table 3 below show that all dimensions of the student psychological contract influence UNBL. Statistically, the IPC influences UNBL with (β = 0.348; p < 0.05; t >1.96), the TPC influences UNBL with (β = 0.504; p < 0.05; t >1.96) and the RPC influences UNBL with (β = 0.085; p < 0.05; t >1.96). Therefore, hypotheses 1, 2 and 3 were approved. Furthermore, UNBL positively influenced three dimensions of UNBE as follows: UNBPI with (β = 0.889; p < 0.05; t >1.96), UNPBR with (β = 0.570; p < 0.05; t >1.96), and UNOBR with (β = 0.438; p < 0.05; t >1.96); hence, hypotheses 4, 5 and 6 were approved.

Table 3: Tested Hypotheses

Tested Hypotheses	Relationship Between Variables	Estimate	Standard Error	t-value	p-value	Decision
H$_1$	IPC→UNBL	0.348	0.048	7.323	***	Approved
H$_2$	TPC→UNBL	0.504	0.079	6.371	***	Approved
H$_3$	RPC→UNBL	0.085	0.029	2.960	.003	Approved
H$_4$	UNBL→UNBPI	0.889	0.083	10.698	***	Approved
H$_5$	UNBL→UNPBR	0.570	0.055	10.314	***	Approved
H$_6$	UNBL→UNOBR	0.438	0.062	7.029	***	Approved

Notes: *** denotes p< 0.001
Model fit indicators: χ^2/df = 2.814 (χ^2 = 514.940; df = 183), GFI = 0.901, AGFI = 0.876, RMSEA = 0.063, CFI = 0.935, TLI = 0.925

Testing the Strength of the Mediator Variable

The strength of mediation was tested using the Sobel Test, and the results were interpreted by considering Baron and Kenny's (1986) procedures and conditions for testing simple mediation. These procedures and conditions are: (a) the independent variables should influence both the dependent variables and mediator variables, (b) the mediator variables should influence the dependent variable, (c) the effect of the independent variables on the dependent variables should decrease when the mediator variable is introduced in the regression equation.

Overall, the regression equation's findings point to a highly significant relationship between the student psychological contract and UNBL. Furthermore, the mediator variable, i.e., UNBL significantly influences the dependent variable, i.e., UNBE. However, as shown in Table 4, when the mediator variable is introduced in the regression equation that estimates the relationship between the student psychological contract and UNBE, the effect decreases slightly. These results imply that UNBL partially mediates the relationship between the student psychological contract and UNBE.

Table 4: Sobel Test Statistics

Relationship Between Variables	Coeff	s.e	t-value	Sig(two)
SPC→UNBE	.4668	.0953	4.8991	.0000
SPC→UNBL	.1207	.0357	3.3786	.0000
UNBL→UNBE	1.5271	.1033	14.7762	.0000
SPC→UNBL→UNBE	.2825	.0792	3.5671	.0004

Notes: 000 indicates p < 0.001

4. Discussion and Implications

The literature shows that the student psychological contract makes a significant contribution to student satisfaction in HEIs (see Knapp and Masterson, 2017). This study enriched knowledge of the student psychological contract in relation to HEIs' branding, especially UNBE. It examined the student psychological construct as an antecedent of brand evangelism, an advanced form of behaviour in response to satisfaction. Therefore, if HEI staff uphold the student psychological contract by fulfilling students' expectations, students are likely to reciprocate by expressing love for the university brand *en route* to brand evangelism.

As stated earlier, HEIs build their promises through their mission, core values, and principles; therefore, it is necessary to ensure that members of staff fulfil their obligations while observing HEIs' ideological dimensions. The IPC motivates students to contemplate a specific philosophy they would love to see exhibited by staff. When staff adhere to these dimensions of the IPC during the execution of their duties, they influence students to reciprocate by building love for their HEI. Such love motivates them to share their experience with prospective students through brand evangelism.

It was also found that emotional relationships between staff and students in the form of the RPC motivate students to develop love for the HEI brand. This induces a sense of being respected and cared for in students. Under the RPC, staff act as advisors, mentors, leaders, and counsellors. Thus, HEIs should empower their staff to develop skills and behaviour to uphold exchange relationships with their students. This should go further than knowledge transfer; it should also help students to build an emotional attachment to staff and the HEI. As suggested by the theory of love, such attachment between students and staff is expected to build emotional love of the HEI that motivates the student to respond through positive behaviour such as brand evangelism.

Although the student psychological contract emphasises relational benefits, the study's findings highlight the importance of fulfilling expectations developed from the TPC. They show that students expect to receive services equivalent to what they pay in fees and other charges. Under a TPC, students fulfill their obligations by paying fees, and HEIs have to deliver services which are relatively equivalent to what students pay. Based on the fees charged, students develop expectations of what they will receive in return, as promised by the HEI. Therefore, HEIs should set their fees and other charges in line with their promises and student expectations. Fulfilling these expectations can motivate students to develop strong emotional bonds with their HEI in the form of UNBL.

Recommendations to Management

Given that the higher education sector is subjected to on-going change, scholars recommend that exchange relationships between staff and students should be part of HEIs' strategic decisions (see Knapp and Masterson, 2017). Management should thus ensure that such relationships exist between students and staff members as this form of relationship has effects that go beyond student satisfaction. This requires reform of the policy, legal and regulatory frameworks governing the higher education sector to ensure clear descriptions of the role of staff as representative of HEIs. It is necessary because, despite major restructuring of the sector, most HEIs still operate as non-profit organisations. This limits them in gaining a competitive edge because the relationship between staff and key stakeholders in profit-oriented organisations differs significantly from that in not-for-profit organisations. As HEIs strive to benefit from exchange relationships by promoting brand evangelism, a market-based approach must be adopted, which requires major changes to how they relate to their stakeholders, particularly students.

In commercialised and marketised settings, exchange relationships between students and staff consider students as customers of HEIs and staff as service providers. Thus, gaining a competitive edge requires engagement with students as critical assets. Therefore, HEIs should ensure that their staff, who are key actors in exchange relationships, are self-driven and self-motivated in fulfilling their obligation to meet students'

expectations as customers of HEIs. They should establish programmes that involve students as primary stakeholders of HEI branding to motivate them to engage in brand supportive behaviour such as brand evangelism. However, these programmes should have attributes that relate to the exchange relationship between HEIs, their staff, and students.

5. Limitations and Areas for Further Research

The study's findings should be interpreted considering the following limitations that open avenues for further research. Firstly, the study involved respondents from two public colleges of higher education in Tanzania; it is therefore recommended that further studies involve respondents from more than two colleges. It is also recommended that further studies should engage both private and public colleges of higher education. Secondly, this study adopted a quantitative approach. Future studies could adopt a mixed methods approach to gain a more holistic understanding. A comparative study that examines the psychological contract with new students and existing students in relation to UNBE would provide a broader picture of the student psychological contract as the predictor of UNBE among students of HEIs.

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