

International branding in higher education: Different perspectives by institutional experience and institutional size

Son T. Pham

Educational Leadership EdD program, Cohort 21

INTRODUCTION

University brand helps to create an image that reveals educational value-added quality, which leads to positive perceptions about the brand that is crucial for the university's survival (Aaker, 1991; Keller, 2003). However, branding in HE, as an area that may be controversial, has so far received limited examination among academics (Brookes, 2003; Chapleo, 2010; Hemsley-Brown & Oplatka, 2006). In addition, globalization in higher education has led to mobility of resources, assets, and work forces (Javani, 2016). The purpose of this study was to determine the differences in international brand performance (academic, faculties and students) between institutional experience and institutional size, based on a primary dataset of a survey on 1000 universities worldwide, collating the expert opinions of over 94,000 individuals in the higher education (data source from QS World University Rankings, www.topuniversities.com).

METHODS

The dataset of 1000 universities was grouped by their size (number of their students): small (<5K), medium (<20K, large (<35K), very large (>35K), as well as grouped by their age (<10, 10-20, 20-30, 30-40, >40 years). This study utilized the secondary analysis of existing dataset method. A two-way MANOVA was run with SPSS to determine whether there are overall group differences along these three measures (scored from 0 to 100): international academic reputation, faculty and students. International brand performance index of a university is measured by many indicators, such as Academic Reputation, Employer Reputation, Faculty/Student Ratio, Citations per faculty, etc. However, in this project, I choose 3 measures to represent 3 main aspects of international brand index:

- International academic reputation: regarding to teaching and research quality at the world's universities.
- International faculty: based on a multinational environment, facilitating exchange of best practices and beliefs.
- International Students: measured on international sympathies and global awareness: soft skills increasingly valuable to multinational employers.

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Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Size	1000	1	4	2.94	.80
Experience	1000	1	5	4.23	.89
International Academic Reputation	589	3	100	36.96	25.66
International Faculty	673	2	100	51.66	33.13
International Students	691	1	100	45.50	30.78
Valid N (listwise)	506				

FINDINGS

Using Pillai's trace, there were significant effects on brand elements by institutional size, $V = 0.05$, $F(9, 1458) = 2.48$, $p < .01$, and by institutional experience, $V = 0.1$, $F(12, 1458) = 4.02$, $p < .001$. The model indicated the significant effect on each of the brand performance elements: international academic reputation, $F(19, 506) = 8.55$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .25$, international faculty, $F(19, 506) = 1.59$, $p = .05$, $\eta_p^2 = .06$, and international students, $F(19, 506) = 2.24$, $p = .002$, $\eta_p^2 = .08$.

Paired samples tests were also run and showed up there were significant differences between institutional experience and size on international academic reputation, $t(588) = 21.60$, $p < .001$, on international faculty, $t(672) = 21.80$, $p < .001$, and on international students, $t(690) = 22.13$, $p < .001$.

CONCLUSION

The study showed there were significant differences in brand performance index elements by institutional size and experience. Interestingly, the youngest groups of university seemed leading in academic reputation, and the largest size groups carried minimum international faculty performance. Further, allocation of marketing resources to focus for international branding should be considered carefully by each institution based not only on its positioning strategy, but also on its size and on its experience on the global market. Implications for future research are that whether the global tertiary education market could be segmented by institutional experience and why the group of universities from 30 to 39 years of operation seems not to be active in each of brand performance elements.

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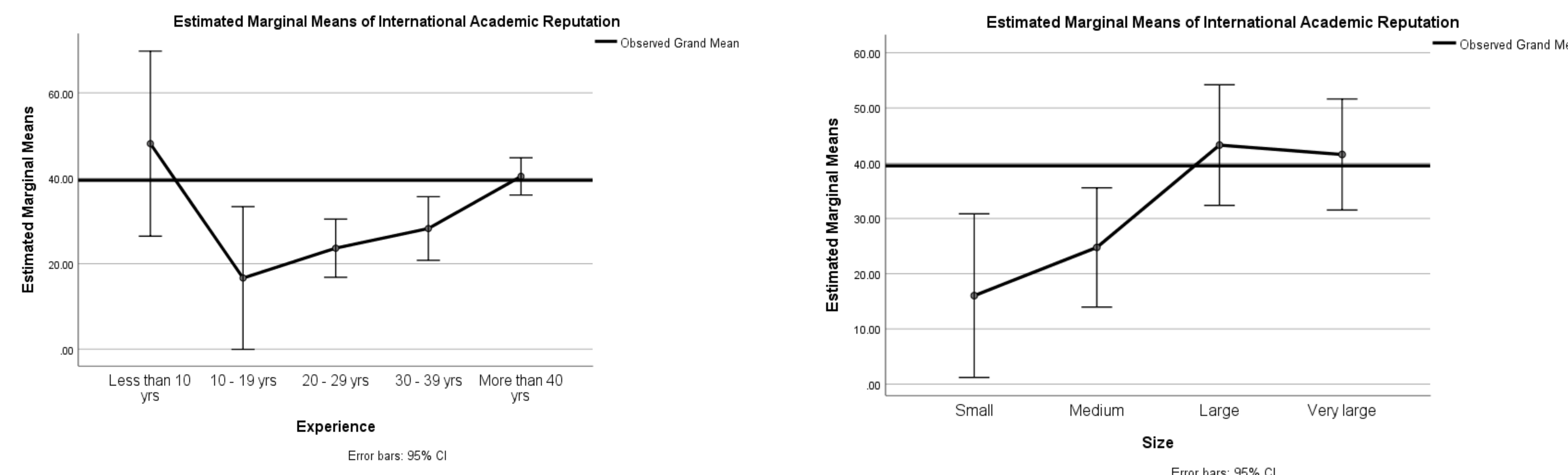


Figure 1. International Academic Reputation by experiences and by size

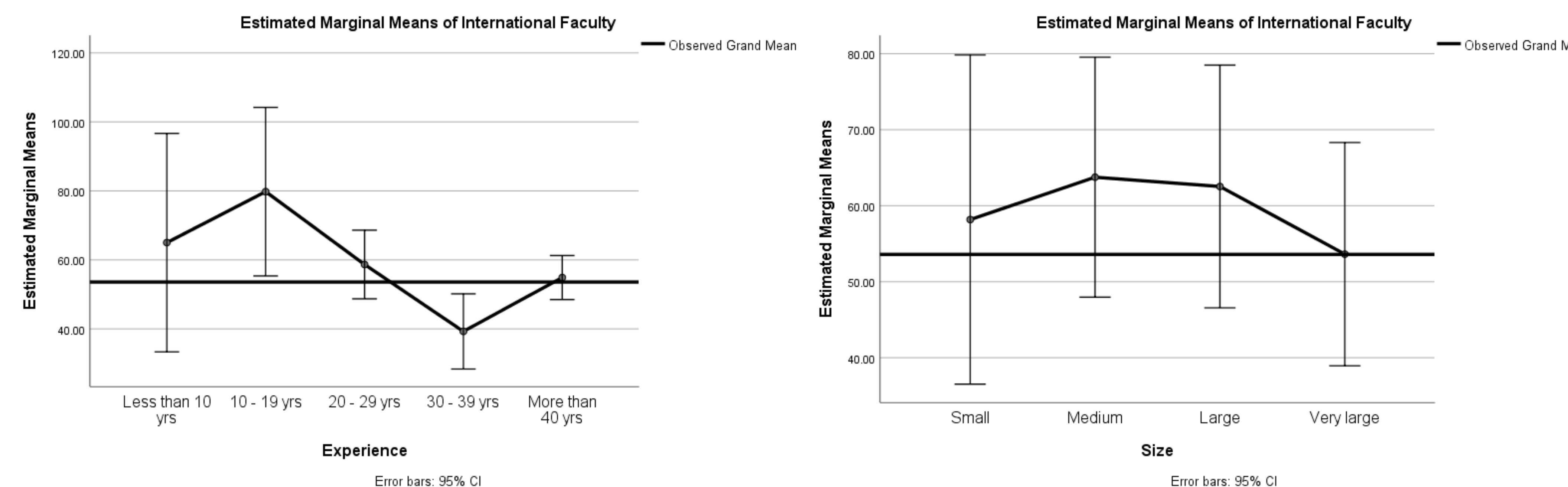


Figure 2. International Faculty by experiences and by size

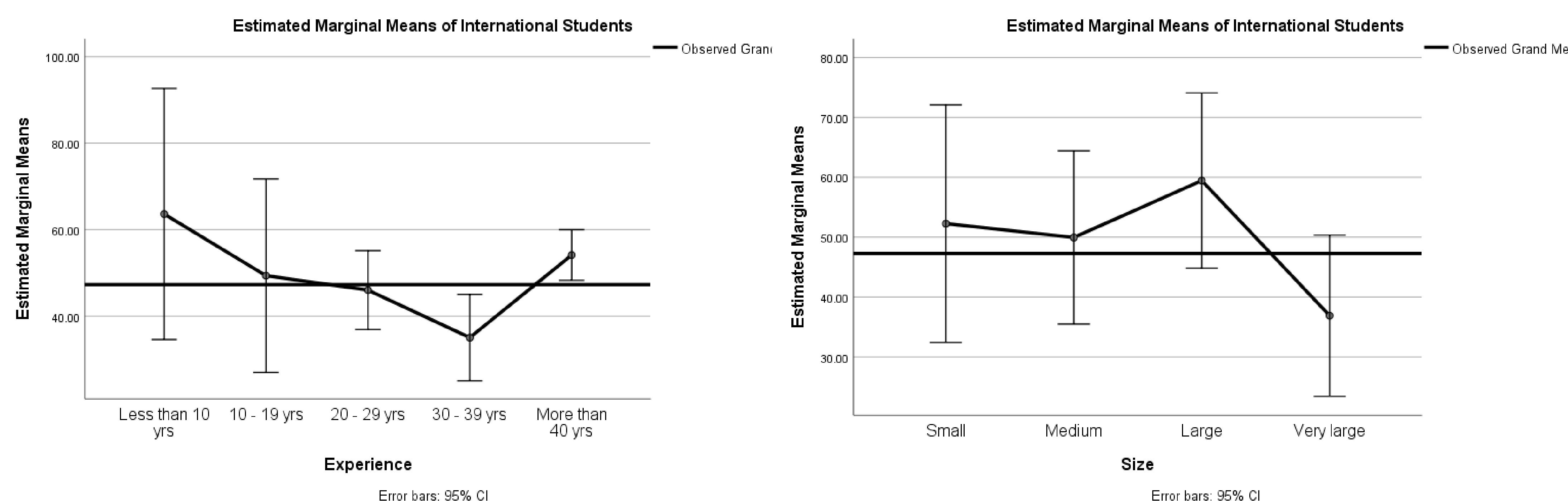


Figure 3. International Students by experiences and by size