

Strategy of formation of the brand of university in modern educational space

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ABSTRACT

The complex of tools is presented in article for formation of a brand of university which will distinguish him from analogs in the market and will provide effective advance of higher education institution in modern educational space. Relevance of research is caused by sharply increased demand for educational services in the market of the higher education. The competition has become aggravated so that universities are compelled to apply more actively everything marketing to adapt for market conditions. Former tools becomes not enough in this connection to the forefront there is a creation and maintenance of an attractive and memorable brand of higher education institution. In article the role and a university place in modern educational space are described. During research specific features of branding and communications in the sphere of educational services, and also the key factors influencing formation and development of a brand of university have been marked out. Based on the allocated factors, ways of improvement of instruments of formation of a brand of the university, providing effective advance of higher education institution and its competitiveness have been offered.

KEYWORDS:

the brand of the higher education organization, marketing of educational services, educational services, instruments of branding.

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1. ВВЕДЕНИЕ

The modern market of higher education is characterized by the surging demand for educational services. The competition has increased dramatically and universities have been enforcing more actively to apply marketing in order to adapt to market conditions. PR and advertising, which were earlier favored, become insufficient, thereby attracting target audience tools (applicants, students, employers, bodies of state authority, investors) are growing in breadth and complexity. The issue of establishment and maintenance of an attractive and memorable university brand has come to the fore.

The aspects of university brand development and promotion are reflected in domestic and foreign literature, but there remains a need for recommendations, that would be suitable for practical application.

The purpose of the article is to offer a set of tools for university brand development, that will allocate it among others on the market and provide an effective promotion in the modern educational area.

2. THE ROLE AND PLACE OF UNIVERSITY IN THE MODERN EDUCATIONAL AREA

The market of educational services plays a fundamental role in the modern economy. The educational level, in other words, the qualification obtained by the future professionals is directly linked to the quality of the labour force on the labour market, because amount of knowledge and skills is

increasing with education level. All this leads to growth in the number of goods and services, which are produced by employee, and also improvement of quality. All these lead to growth of the income of the organization and, consequently, the wages and quality of life of the employee, which in turn lead to an acceleration in the rate of economic growth of the country.

The following global tendencies of the higher education development market should be allocated as the most significant [Kuskin, 2018]:

- 1) the growth of the educational services market;
- 2) educational services market becomes widespread, everyone has equal educational opportunities and chances;
- 3) the appearance on the educational services market new players and diversification of the market's territorial structure;
- 4) globalization of higher education;
- 5) universalization of the content of all types of education, which cannot be stopped in the era of the information revolution and the spread of the Internet;
- 6) the increase in the variety of educational activities conducive to the development of students' skills.

Interesting point of view on the process of universities' transformation and their transition to the so called third generation university model was presented by J. G. Wissema [Wissema, 2016]. He believes, that this transformation is a result of several factors. So the first one is to find alternative sources of funding for cutting edge research as the cost of research work exceeds the amount of funds allocated by the state. Consequently, the leading universities are seeking opportunities for cooperation with high-tech companies. Furthermore, there is a tendency for reduction in independent fundamental studies conducted by companies and the transfer of this function to the leading universities. Thus, worlds of

scientific and applied researches, which were once divided, have become increasingly linked.

The second factor is globalization. If earlier universities were regional monopolies, in fact, the competition between universities for the best students, lecturers, contracts for conducting scientific researches is growing now due to the expansion of educational opportunities in other countries. The universities, which are able to concentrate the best international practices, cooperate with organizations, which are conducting applied researches, attract students, lecturers and corporations are winning this competition. The second generation universities were aimed at “pure science” and not intended to implement practically acquired from research a know-how. The third generation universities are aimed at implementation and commercialization of knowledge produced by them.

The third factor is development of universities’ activities commercial constituent due to changes in government policies in higher education in much of the world. But it’s not enough for the third generation universities to be engaged in scientific research and implement educational programs. The government is awaiting from them an active participation in deriving benefits from new knowledge that they create, and provide funds for support of relevant activities. Thus, universities are becoming a tool for economic growth in the knowledge economy.

The fourth factor is the change of science forms organization, the transition from monodisciplinary character to multidisciplinary one. Most scientists are starting to come together and work on the specific research field. This factor closely related to creation of new masters programs. It also provided the opportunity to reflect on the search of new organizational forms instead of division into departments, that may affect the work of interdisciplinary teams. It will be necessary to create new positions for process management of drawing benefits from a know-how in universities. The university authorities face the task of being efficient under circumstances of increasing challenges.

The fundamental changes in internal and external environment of university and also its aims are inevitable. Previously in order to adjust to a new trend it was enough to create a new department, but character of modern changes require a fresh view on the model of university, its paradigm shift and not just some adaptation [Budyldina, 2018].

The results of the universities questionnaire, which make it possible to identify the key stakeholders are presented in the monograph [Development strategy., 2008]. The opportunities of receiving financial and material resources, credibility of cooperation, different informal links, etc were taken into account while carrying out this research. The analysis of the data provided shows the following counterparties’ location – in order of reducing important (the average mark of importance on scale of 1 to 5):

- applicants: students of state –funded education form(4,2), students of commercial education form (4);
- federal government (3,45);
- graduating students (3,45);
- students of additional education structures (3,15);

- Russian educational, scientific and business community (3,1);
- foreign educational community (3); local authorities (2,1);
- foundations, parents of applicants and students, the market for development work and consulting services (were not mentioned even once).

The author concludes that in general, the universities selected for the analysis, correctly perceive the relative importance of stakeholders. The exception relate to those counterparties, that have a passive attitude and don’t present a clearly defined system of claims on universities [Development strategy., 2008].

In this study, applicants and their parents, students and representatives of labour market and state are going to be identified as key stakeholders. Parents of the applicants were not mentioned in the universities questionnaire in this research, but they often make a decision concerning selection of educational institution. Therefore, their inclusion in the group of stakeholders seems to be necessary.

We should consider trends related to the change of the role and place of universities in Russia taking into account abovementioned global trends.

The key objective of Russian universities in the age of great challenges is to train professionals of higher qualification, who have not only the sum of fundamental scientific knowledge and modern practical skills, but are also able to compete successfully with graduates of the world’s leading universities, participate equally in shaping the intellectual, technological and cultural agenda of the global development. Accomplishment of this task requires a budget financing of higher education, a significant support of business and also usage of new sources of funding for the education system.

The networks’ forms of universities interaction have proved to be successful. It allows universities to combine their efforts in the development and implementation of joint programs, organize interuniversity courses, barrier-free access to quality educational and library resources, and also provide students with the opportunity to participate in interuniversity projects and research activities [Korshunov and others., 2019].

The development of one digital educational environment of Russian universities contributes to effective realization of networks’ forms. As of 2015, several Russian universities are implementing the project of the modern educational platform “Free Education”; it includes more than 680 online courses at present. The opportunities of the educational platform allow to use the current capacities of e-learning and distance learning educational technologies. The transfer of educational process mainly in the electronic environment creates a new challenge for university corporations – maintaining a balance between new forms of knowledge transfer and the quality of their assimilation [Korshunov and others., 2019].

The development of lifelong education is an important growth factor of educational and intellectual potential of citizens of our country in the digital era [Stein, 2018]. The American philosopher A. Toffler, who is the author of the

term “information society”, wrote “The illiterate of the 21st century will not be those who cannot read and write, but those who cannot learn, unlearn, and relearn.” The participation of the population in lifelong education is considered to be one of the indicators of the level of the country's economic development. However, Russia remains considerably behind the majority of the developed countries in this process. The coverage of the adult population of Russia by lifelong education is only 15%, whereas the European average – 40-50% [Stein, 2018].

In this regard, universities face the important task of creating and developing educational programs for people of different ages with different levels of education, which will stimulate them to master new knowledge, retrain, to be creative and professional.

In recent years, university rankings have become one of the key tools for making strategic decisions in higher education. They play a significant role in upholding national interests in the educational sector and building the reputation of Russian universities. The rating is one of the most important tools of attracting applicants: the higher the position of the university in the rating, the more attractive it looks for the applicant (potential consumer) and employer (final consumer). There are three the most influential ratings at the present time: The Academic Ranking of World Universities (the Shanghai Ranking), QS World University Rankings and Times Higher Education World University Rankings.

States are developing the necessary set of instruments for quality assessment of such services producers by creating a single market of educational services, one of which is university ranking. Therefore we can state that rankings are one of the main instruments of universities positioning, which help to attract the best lecturers and receive additional funding.

Today, serious changes are being observed in the Russian education system. Formation of educational services market is characterized by the increase in the number of educational organizations and variety of educational services, on the one hand, and sharply increased demand for educational services of higher education, on the other hand. Consequently, we can observe the growing competition on the educational market, which in turn leads to the fact that educational organizations, in an attempt to adjust to market conditions, begin actively to introduce marketing tools into their work. Universities understand the need for efficient positioning and promotion of their brand. The problem of differentiation from competitors is complicated by the diversity of the profile of consumers of educational services [Alvesson, Spicer, 2016]. This is a reason for brand development strategy to be aimed at differentiation from competitors, in which the university will be able to take a unique position that is significant for all or majority of the consumers. In this regard, the interest in development of the strong educational brand will grow as competition intensifies.

3. THE SPECIFIC FEATURES OF BRANDING AND COMMUNICATIONS IN THE FIELD OF EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

The modern market of higher education is characterized by a significant increase in the intensity of competition between universities. Competition for state-funded places, for applicants, including those willing to study on a contractual basis, for highly qualified personnel, for attracting additional funds - all these force universities to look for additional advantages. Competition leads to understanding of its uniqueness importance.

Educations is a typical confidential product. The applicant can't assess the quality of educational service in university enrolment. The graduates also need some time after usage of this product (graduation from university) in order to assess the level of received education, its accordance with modern requirements, qualification of pedagogical staff, organization of educational process.

Universities are starting to exploit management technologies, tools for development of an attractive image and competitive brand of the educational institution. We understand the brand of the educational organization taking into account understanding of meaning of constituents of this term. First of all, let's us consider some general definition of brand.

D. Aaker states, that brand positioning is an inevitable part of the brand identity, which is “a unique set of brand associations that the brand strategist aspires to create or maintain. These associations represent what the brand stands for and imply a promise to customers from the organization members” [Aaker, 2003]. Aaker diversifies very clearly definitions such as brand's positioning, brand image and brand identity: “Brand positioning is the part of the brand identity and value proposition that is to be actively communicated to the target audience. Brand image shows, how brand is perceived by consumers now, at the present time”. Identity reflects how it should be perceived by consumers according to educational organization. In accordance with Aaker, there are four brand identity perspectives; the brand as a product, the brand as organization, the brand as person and the brand as symbol. This division helps to simplify the process of development and assessment of brand positioning and also enhance the quality of these processes. He also considers, that identity is a basis of communicational policy and defines a competitive advantage. Let's consider communication later.

Development of educational organization's brand has its own specific features. Let's consider brand models, proposed by Russian scientists.

According to M. Seliukov and N. Shalygina, the main constituents of university brand are staff capacity, organization of educational process, emotional attractiveness, infrastructure [Seliukov, Shalygina, 2012]. It is worth noting the fact how different the degree of attention paid to human resources by domestic universities in comparison

with foreign ones. The information about highly qualified teaching staff, information about the work of employees are rarely mentioned on the websites of Russian universities. Professors are the main pride of the foreign universities and characterize the prestige not of a particular department, but of the entire institution as a whole. In any case, this model is not complete, since it lacks the main link - the consumer.

T. Mitrofanova and K. Knysh state that brand is “a combination, on the one hand, of the physical, tangible properties of the university and its services, and on the other hand, intangible values that have formed in the minds of consumers. These values are the result of the impact of the marketing communications of the university or the experience of using its educational services” [Mitrofanova, Knysh, 2010]. The authors consider that the constituent parts of brand are “visible” features such as name, logo, pedagogical staff and “invisible” – demand for graduates, favourable climate, its reputation, etc. Thus, this brand model is based on a real image, and the opinion of consumers creates an emotional image around this basis.

According to B. Stensaker [Stensaker, 2018], the most important constituents are the degree of concurrence of consumers expectations to real situation in the university, its strong points, durability period, the period during which the university will be able to maintain the current brand position. In our study, we are of the opinion that, the following components are more indicators of the success of the brand than its constituents.

The graduates of the leading world’s universities are one of the main constituents, that ensure the financial stability, business steam, flow of information. The work with graduates begins while they are still students. For example, the purpose of the famous Ivy League and other students community is to accumulate social capital and bring people together. These social tools are very important for the economy, since high positions in business are often occupied by those people who have passed through such networks. This network is weak or absent in Russia and this is a big disadvantage for universities. The work with students should begin from the third year and gradually intensify. We should learn to distinguish leaders and create a comfortable environment for them. Development of certain culture, when people start to value belonging to a certain community, subsequently brings benefits such as financial support, commissions of researches etc.

The organization of the educational process is also a constituent of the strong educational brand. In order to develop an attractive brand it is necessary to improve educational services in accordance with following directions [Bolotov, 2018]:

- ensure that professionals training system is consistent with demands of labour market;
- development of individual educational trajectory of students;
- adaptation of educational process to changes on the labour market;
- rapid response, including an introduction of new disciplines, opening of new programs;
- lifelong learning, including dual education;

- global educational online-platforms, blended learning, which helps student to gain knowledge both independently online and in person with a lecturer;
- gamification (use of game mechanics and elements in non-game situations).

The emotional attractiveness also plays an important role in the development of brand. For example, the significant role plays “local patriotism” in the international practice. Universities often actively emphasize their location, close connections with the life of their region, presenting all this visually on their websites and creating an attractive emotional image in the presentation of applicants.

The presented analysis allows to define the following peculiarities of the brand development.

1. The fundamental elements are situated at the centre of the model that the organization itself builds. The organization should not passively coexist with the existing brand, but actively convey it to the masses using communications, including marketing. The search of such models is a process of positioning which is an important component of any educational brand model.

2. The perception of an educational organization brand from inside (pedagogical staff, employees) is determining the perception of the brand by external audiences. The staff members convey their perception of the brand to others and influence the perception of the brand by the consumer. We should consider its implementation of internal communications.

3. The importance of communication means should be presented in the brand model. The perception of the brand spreads from a consumer to a consumer through interpersonal communications also.

4. The brand positioning should take into account continuity of work with graduates. A graduate does not become a successful graduate immediately after graduation - at least a decade must pass before a university can refer to the success of its graduate students.

5. The great attention should be paid to rankings. The consumer’s opinion about university is based on indirect information, presented in the news, from relatives, acquaintances, read in the Internet, newspapers, etc. Only a few can visit Doors open Day due to territorial factor. It is impossible in Russia to try to study in different universities and choose the best for yourself. This is a reason for the majority of consumers to make a mind about success of university with the help of different rankings.

6. The model of the educational brand should meet the needs of different consumer groups and without violating its integrity and universality.

The promotion of educational services of university depends directly on adequately chosen communication channels and introduction of the modern marketing tools. The brand can have a profound philosophy, values, but if they cannot be conveyed to the consumer, they are meaningless. The problems of awareness, interests, preferences, etc are being solved in the process of communication.

The scientific communication industry is currently showing explosive growth in Russia. More and more

stakeholders are showing interest in emphasizing the special role of research and innovation activities in the economic, social and cultural life of the country due to the reorganization of Russian science. The educational organizations become more involved in the process of transfer and exchange of scientific information with community groups. Universities are becoming more aware of the importance and potential of science for the information agenda, working with target audiences and achieving key indicators, so these changes concern them to a special extent.

4. THE STUDY METHODOLOGY OF TOOLS FOR UNIVERSITY BRAND DEVELOPMENT

In order to assess the effectiveness of the proposed set of tools and understand whether it would ensure the development of a brand and increase a university's awareness, it is necessary, first of all, to clarify an image of a university's brand among the main target audience (students) and identify the most significant factors of its formation. To this end, there was the field study conducted. The aims of this study were:

- to establish the causes of undertaking higher education, that have the biggest impact on applicants;
- to evaluate the significance of criteria for selecting university by applicants;
- to identify associations of students as consumers of the educational services concerning definition "university brand";
- to study students opinion concerning the most important constituents of the educational brand.

The qualitative methodology unlike quantitative one allows to identify factual beliefs and try to reflect on it. The benefit of qualitative research of a educational brand is a possibility to ask clarification questions in the process of interview, which has contributed to obtaining more further information. In all, 34 interviews were conducted with students of Financial University under the Government of the Russian Federation. The interview questions concerned the process of choice of university, understanding of meaning of the word "brand", connection of this definition with universities.

The developed questionnaire contained the preamble, which briefly explained the purpose of the study, a notification about the anonymity of the study, and a request for assistance in its implementation by filling out a questionnaire of five main questions of closed, open and combined types. The small amount of questions in the questionnaire was compensated by their informativeness, the presence of a large number of answer options, as well as the ability to offer their own answers. The decision was taken due to the following social and psychological peculiarities of young audience: restlessness and unwillingness to spend time on large amounts of information.

Short questions with a multiple choice of answers alternated with questions where the respondents were asked to give detailed answers or rank the proposed answers options according to their importance, which made it possible to avoid monotony in the questionnaire. The presence of a free space for the answer demonstrated to the respondents the author's respect for their opinions and their personal experience and absence of limitation by the researcher vision of the question. The respondents were thanked for their time at the end of the questionnaire.

The open questions of the questionnaire were processed first. The separate sheet was proposed for each open question. The answers to the corresponding question from each questionnaire were displayed. Then, for each question, its "closed" questions were proposed. All variants of close in meaning answers were combined into several meaningful groups. For example, when the question about the necessary components of a successful university brand was closed, one group included the answers "good pedagogical staff", "competent lecturers", "responsible work of the teaching staff", "great lecturers", "pedagogical staff". Then closed questions were processed.

All received answers were grouped and collected in tables to calculate the average and other statistical characteristics at the stage of statistical processing of the data. The graphical presentation of the results was produced using charts as well as "word clouds" (visual representation of a weighted list of keywords).

A number of external studies devoted to the assessment of the brand of educational institutions were studied and analyzed during preparation for the thesis research. A number of assumptions were highlighted during analysis of external studies and verified during our own research.

5. KEY FACTORS THAT AFFECT FORMATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF A UNIVERSITY BRAND

A number of researches on universities were studied and analyzed, including brand assessment during preparation for the work. The majority of students are concerned about the interest, professionalism and age of lecturers, the presence and state of the boarding facilities, the position of the university in the rankings and eminent graduates. The list of "exciting" questions also includes issues related to the scientific life of the university, its international relations, classmates, dismissal of students, scholarships and paid education¹. A good reputation of a university (presence in the top rankings, presence of eminent graduates, demand by employers) is an expression of the importance of a brand while choosing a university. All these characteristics have a direct relationship with the further employment of students. Thus, it can be assumed that students make their choice based on factors that give the greatest confidence in the

¹ Russian universities through the eyes of students (2018) // RIA Novosti URL: https://ria.ru/abitura_rus/20180219/1514698142.html.

future (good job, promising position, high salary, etc.). This assumption will be verified in the course of the study.

In order to assess a brand of a university, the following indicators are usually used: the prestige and reputation of a university, student satisfaction with the quality of education, the cost of training and the quality of teaching, dedication to a university, the intention of students and graduates to recommend this university to their friends and acquaintances, etc.

The analysis revealed the following data concerning the reasons influencing the acquisition of education (Fig. 1). Almost half of the respondents want to fulfill his/her potential in an interesting profession; a significant part - 23.5% - consider the university as a good place for networking and getting useful connections; 29.4% of respondents believe that without higher education they will not be able to achieve a good position in society; 2.9% receive higher education solely for the sake of their parents. These results confirm the assumption that the factors that give the greatest confidence in the future (good job, promising position, high salary, useful connections) are decisive for applicants.

Answers to the question: "What was your reasons for choosing a university?" - are shown in fig. 2. The leading position is occupied by university advertising (40%), second place – advice from friends and acquaintances (30%), third – advice from parents and attendance of Doors Open Day.

The respondents were asked to mark on a scale from 1 to 5 the significance of the proposed criteria (obtained as a result of the study of the "Social Navigator" and "Typical Applicant") in order to obtain data on applicants criteria for choosing a university. The results are shown in Fig. 3.

According to the study, students consider a good reputation of the university and a possibility of free education to be the most important criteria - these criteria scored 4.6 points. The next one is a pedagogical staff, the significance of which was 4.3 points. Students assess the location of the university, an interesting student life and a good material and technical resources approximately the same - at the level of 3.7 points. Most of the obtained data coincided with the results of the research of the IIA "Russia Today"², however, the respondents of the described study rated the importance of a good reputation of a university (presence in the top ratings, presence of eminent graduates, demand for employers) and a possibility of free education valued more.

Then, there is the question about interrelation between the good reputation and its brand. Answering the question: "What do you mean by the phrase " university brand "?" - the respondents most often named recognition (13 times), a good reputation (9 answers), people's image of the university (10 answers). Let's consider the most interesting definitions for our research:

The image of a higher educational institution in the minds of society, which forms a desire to study, work, engage in research activities, and implement business projects on its basis.

The set of characteristics of the university, reviews about it, fame, others people picture of the university, which is associated not only with the educational process.

The quality of the educational services delivery, the recognition of the university, star graduates, comfortable learning.

The set of signs that allow you to identify a university among others: logo (coat of arms), name, slogans, souvenirs, badges and other attributes.

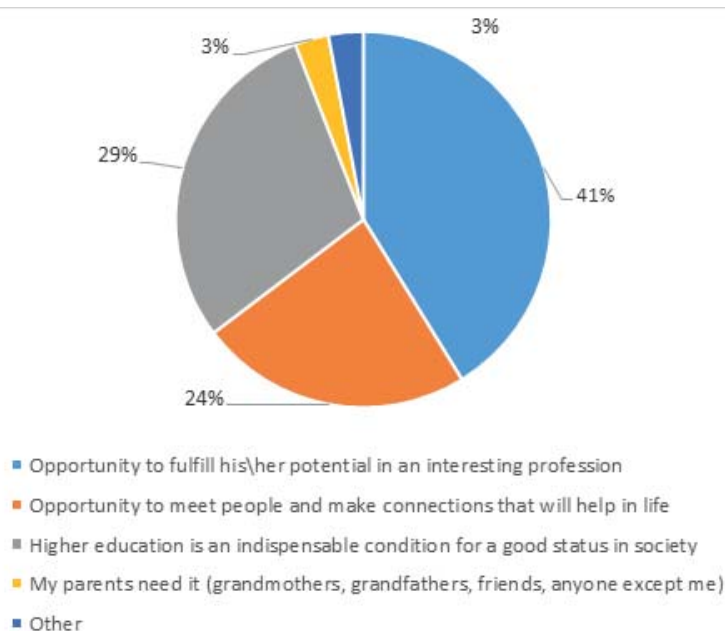
The expression of the individuality of a university, its difference from others: logo, symbols, anthem, students, teachers, places in the ratings, reputation.

The last question was about constituents of a successful university brand. The great attention was paid to necessity of participation and holding various events, international conferences, etc. (10 responses) and also use of the latest PR-techniques, high-quality advertising and modern marketing tools (6 responses). The respondents indicated such criteria as: employment, active scientific activity, a good material and technical resources of a university and its rich history. The most important constituents are successful graduates (16 responses), a qualified pedagogical staff (15 responses) and a qualitative education (20 responses).

In conclusion in this respect, the obtained results of the research are the following:

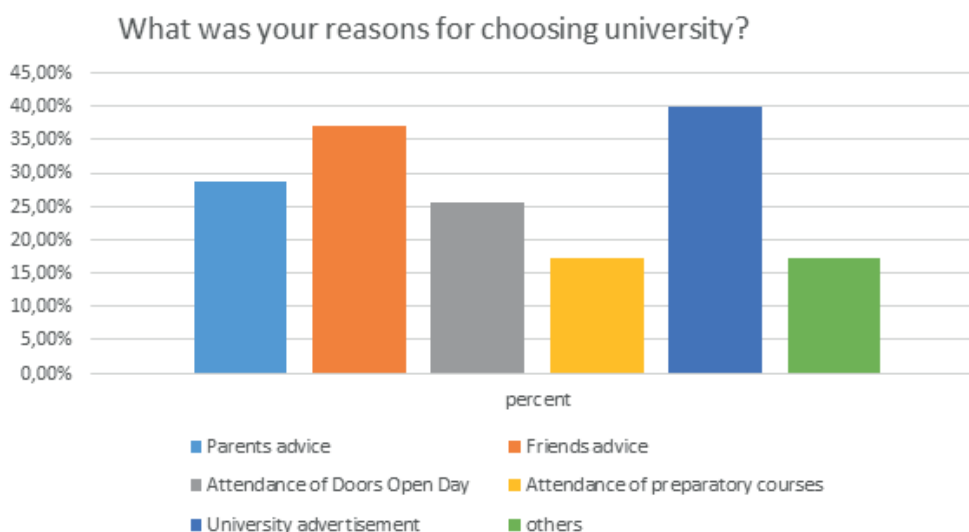
- confirmation of the most of our assumptions about the main constituents of a successful university brand (successful graduates, qualified faculty and qualitative education);
- assessment of the significance of the criteria that applicants rely on when choosing an educational institution;
- the reasons affecting the higher education by applicants, allowing them to form their value expectations.

Fig. 1. Reasons for Obtaining of Higher Education(% responses)



² URL: <https://na.ria.ru/20180219/1514698142.html>.

Fig. 2. Reasons for Choosing a University (% responses)



This research allows to present the following recommendations for university brand strategy building.

1. Appreciate history. History is an inevitable part of the oldest universities brands. Interesting and notable events in the life of the university allow marketers to create a corporate identity that includes the history of the place. The brand of the oldest universities has often already formed spontaneously during the long work of the university and due to the high quality of the provided services. Thus, sometimes it is simply necessary to strengthen and maintain it.

2. Don't lose graduates from your sight. Many respondents indicated that the most important thing in building a successful brand is people who show by their example that it was the university that gave them the main impetus in life, spurred their interest in knowledge, science, and daily work. The power of a university brand lies in your students minds: what they have learned, heard, felt or seen as

a result of their experiences. Ultimately, your students define what your brand stands for.

3. To maintain the high standards concerning pedagogical staff. The quality of education and interesting lecturers are phrases that were mentioned in 50% of responses. Lecturer is an inevitable part of a university brand.

4. Pay attention to material and technical resources. It is important for students to have good conditions in their boarding facilities, new academic buildings, modern scientific laboratories, etc. What at first glance may appear not important (they do not go to the university for accommodation) ultimately, may turn out to be the factor that will become decisive for an applicant. Location of a university also plays an important role.

5. Don't forget about interesting student life. Students also come to a university for new acquaintances, useful connections and contacts.

Fig. 3. Assesment of Criteria for Choosing a University Significance (on a 5-point scale)

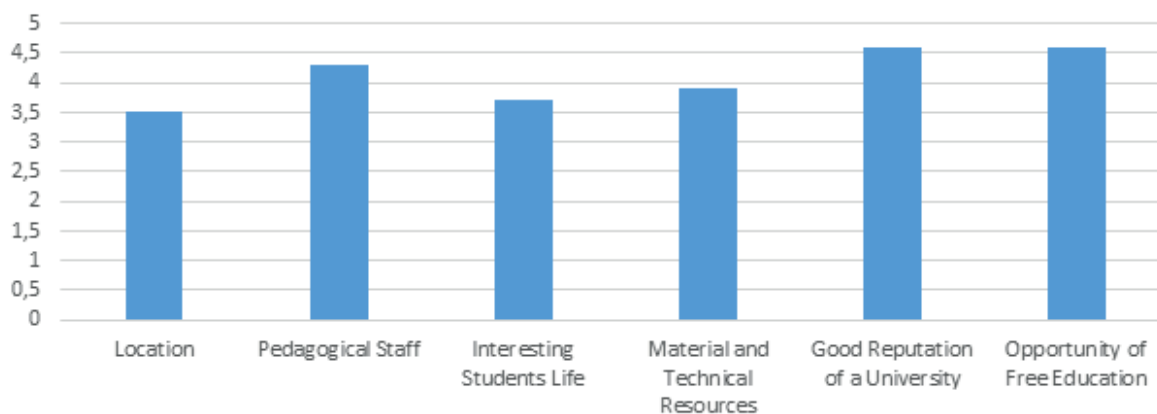


Fig. 4. The Word Cloud
«Constituents of a Successful University Brand »



The study confirmed most of the assumptions about the key constituents of a successful university brand: successful graduates, qualified faculty, and qualitative education. The most common reasons for choosing a university are advertisements, advice from friends, acquaintances, parents, and attendance of Doors Open Day. The most important criteria are: a good reputation of the university and a possibility of free education, the faculty, the location of a university, an interesting student life and a good material and technical resources.

6. CONCLUSIONS

This research was done in order to develop the strategy of university brand formation in the modern educational environment and provide the effective promotion of the university, based on the factors that have the greatest influence on the brand consumers and ensure their loyalty, as well as distinguish the brand from competitors.

The increased intensity of competition between universities is the most important distinguishing feature of the modern higher education market, which forces universities to seek additional advantages that emphasize their uniqueness. One of those advantages is a strong brand.

The work on improvement of the brand formation tools should be carried out in those areas that are of greatest interest to the target audience or are unique for the university. It is necessary to understand what exactly are the key factors influencing the formation of the brand in order to determine these directions. The peculiarities of an educational brand formation include the importance of communication means, the long-term nature of work with graduates, exposure to the influence of ratings, focus on the interests of various consumer groups.

According to the author, a development of a brand in the educational environment should proceed from the strengthening of the role of the pedagogical staff, successful graduates, educational services and emotional image of the university taking into account the specifics of its market and social characteristics. This will create objective prerequisites for increasing the competitive position of the university in the educational environment. The emphasis on these

components takes into account the versatility of the brand's consumer profile and implementation of its activities both in the labor market and in the educational services market.

Correct positioning, well-chosen brand formation tools that emphasize its uniqueness, and a significant strengthening of the role of communications will increase the competitiveness of the university and strengthen its position in the educational environment.

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