

UDC 339.138

DOI: 10.34671/SCH.BSR.2020.0402.0012

## МОДЕЛ ЗА ИЗМЕРВАНЕ НА ЛОЯЛНОСТТА КЪМ БРАНДА В СИСТЕМАТА НА ВИСШЕТО ОБРАЗОВАНИЕ

© 2020

Димитрова Теофана Валентинова, PhD, доцент

Десев Кирил Вълков, PhD, асистент

Пловдивски университет „Паисий Хилендарски“

(4000, България, Пловдив, ул. „Цар Асен“ № 24, e-mail: [teofana.dimitrova@uni-plovdiv.bg](mailto:teofana.dimitrova@uni-plovdiv.bg))

**Анотация.** Концепцията за разработване, изграждане и развиване на бранда е вече широкоприета в академичните среди, с оглед на задълбочаващата се висококонкурентна среда в системата на висшето образование. Проследяването и изучаването на студентската лоялност към бранда придобиват изключително важно значение, защото те могат да предоставят идеи за управленски решения, свързани със задържането на студентите (противодействието на *изтичането* им към други висши училища), намаляването на процента на отпадане на обучаемите и привличането на нови студенти – потребители на предлагания образователен продукт. В статията се представят някои аспекти от маркетинга и брандинга в сектора. Предлага се и авторски концептуален модел за измерване на студентската лоялност към бранда в системата на висшето образование, включващ седем операционализиращи променливи – асоциации към бранда, разпространение и достатъчност на информацията за бранда, възприемано качество, студентски опит, доверие в бранда, студентска ангажираност към бранда и удовлетвореност от бранда.

**Ключови думи:** висши училища, брандинг на висшето училище, студентска лоялност към бранда.

## MEASUREMENT MODEL OF BRAND LOYALTY WITHIN THE HIGHER EDUCATION SECTOR

© 2020

Dimitrova Teofana Valentinova, PhD, associate Professor

Desev Kiril Valkov, PhD

Plovdiv University “Paisii Hilendarski”

(4000, Bulgaria, Plovdiv, “Tsar Asen” St., № 24, e-mail: [teofana.dimitrova@uni-plovdiv.bg](mailto:teofana.dimitrova@uni-plovdiv.bg))

**Abstract.** The concept of brand establishment, building and development has been already widely accepted among the world of education and research because of the fierce competition within the higher education system. Following and researching students’ loyalty towards educational brands are of extremely high importance, because they are able to offer ideas of management decisions concerning the stopping of students leakage and holding them back, also decreasing the percentage of dropouts from higher schools and of course attracting new students who are the consumers of the educational product. This paper reveals some marketing and branding aspects of the educational sector. An own proprietary conceptual model for measuring of student brand loyalty within the higher education system is also presented. It consists of seven operationalizing variables including brand associations, brand information dissemination and sufficiency, perceived quality, student experience, brand trust, student brand engagement and brand satisfaction.

**Keywords:** Higher Education Institutions, Higher Education Institution Branding, Student Brand Loyalty.

## ИЗМЕРЕНИЕ МОДЕЛИ БРЕНДОВОЙ ЛОЯЛЬНОСТИ В СФЕРЕ ВЫСШЕГО ОБРАЗОВАНИЯ

© 2020

Димитрова Теофана Валентинова, PhD, доцент

Десев Кирил Вълков, асистент

Пловдивский университет им. Паисия Хилендарского

(4000, Болгария, Пловдив, ул. «Царь Асен», № 24, e-mail: [teofana.dimitrova@uni-plovdiv.bg](mailto:teofana.dimitrova@uni-plovdiv.bg))

**Анотация.** Концепция создания, строительства и развития бранда уже получила широкое признание в мире образования и научных исследований из-за жесткой конкуренции в системе высшего образования. Отслеживание и изучение лояльности студентов к образовательным брендам чрезвычайно важно, потому что они могут предложить идеи управленческих решений, касающихся прекращения утечки студентов и сдерживания их, также уменьшая процент отсева из вузов и, конечно, привлекая новых студентов, которые являются потребителями образовательного продукта. Эта статья раскрывает некоторые аспекты маркетинга и брандинга в сфере образования. Также представлена собственная запатентованная концептуальная модель для измерения лояльности студенческих брендов в системе высшего образования. Он состоит из семи операционных переменных, включая ассоциации брендов, распространение и достаточность информации о бренде, воспринимаемое качество, опыт учащихся, доверие к бренду, вовлеченность студентов в процесс обучения и удовлетворенность брендом.

**Ключевые слова:** высшие учебные заведения, брандинг вуза, лояльность студенческого бренда.

### 1. Marketing in higher education sector

Today higher education institutions (HEIs) are faced with an ever so vicious competition (both nationally and internationally) to attract high quality students and academic staff [1], decreasing government funding, powerful development of the information and communication technologies... To address these changes the HEIs could adopt two approaches – of the *indifference*, counting on proven with time management decisions or simply a well working intuition; of the *awareness*, adopting a more market oriented logic of management. Practicing the so called marketing conception of management surely is not new for the sector of higher education (HES) and doesn't come down only to “functional activities such as advertising, public relations and selling” [2]. It presumes a redefining of the institutional goals, reorganization of all the carried out activities in correspondence

with the new logic, professed by the marketing philosophy. It is determined by the following imperatives:

- Meeting the needs and necessities of the consumers of the educational and scientific products is to be a fundamental goal of higher education institution (HEI).
- HEI to be able to conduct a complex of marketing actions, as to achieve this contentment (including conducting marketing research; defining target markets; identifying the needs of the target customers; perfecting promotional activities; seeking alternative ways of distribution of educational services and scientific results, etc.).
- Constant analysis and control to be carried out upon the practiced marketing activity.
- The organization units in HEI (both vertically and horizontally) should put integrated efforts towards giving high value to the customer of the educational and scientific

products. In this sense the management of HEI must periodically publish results for the marketing performance of the institution, so that the interested inner stakeholders are convinced of the benefits of such actions, as well as to be acquainted with their progress.

As B. Andrić, H. Budić and V. Pismis have marked, marketing in the field of education has several distinctive characteristics [3]:

- product must be looked as a total product (it is in the form of intellectual service);
- cost of product/service is mostly paid indirectly;
- word of mouth is the best way of promotion;
- determination for consumption a product/service is influenced by rational rather than emotional motives;
- gained loyalty to the educational institution is rarely leaved in a horizontal direction;
- and it is very solid in the vertical direction.

Here, of course, the following clarification should be made having in mind some statements, that marketing for HES should be different from the marketing for the business sector. It should be clear, that marketing as a theoretical platform is one and the same for every economic activity. Its application has unlimited range, but its practical realization requires that the specifics of some sectors have to be taken into account, especially for those for which a certain government involvement is characteristic – higher education, health care, energetics, etc.

Furthermore, HEIs provide the training and development of highly qualified specialists, they do not manufacture them. The student is not a product, but rather the consumer of the educational product. What's more, in some HEIs students and PhD students are the main participants in the education process, i.e. an active side in the process of making the educational product. The system of higher education (SHE) is called to:

- inspire and encourage the capacity of people to develop their abilities;
- prepare the students for their social and civil role;
- increase the common knowledge through conducting fundamental scientific research;
- preserve and keep the roots of the global intellectual, scientific and cultural heritage...

Although SHE might be defined as extremely ungainly, bureaucratic and closed, in recent years one can observe a process of *awareness*. More and more HEIs begin to implement marketing ideas in their activities [4, 5]. Despite this fact it seems that few institutions have complete, coordinated marketing plan and in the best case their marketing comes down to ad-hoc activities [6, 7].

## 2. Branding in higher education sector

Researchers generally agree that one of the most important functions of the higher education marketing team is to build the institutional brand [6] and that the HE sector has much to gain from the benefits of successful branding [5, 8, 9]. In this case it is understandable, that HEIs ever so have been increasingly interested in developing their differentiated brands [10]. It is noticeable, that when searching for competitive advantages of the various educational institutions, the focus is shifted from the attributes of the product (for example product assortment or quality of the developed educational product) towards increasing the public authority and building of high brand loyalty. This process, of course, is completely justified with view to the fact, that the educational programs, offered by the different universities, and the educational disciplines included in them are all too similar. This policy of similarity may be a matter of management decision, but it might as well reflect the requirement of the accreditation bodies in many countries, for the approval of uniform rules of academic recognition of education periods and practice abroad, linked with the mobility of students.

Regardless of the increasing interest of the HEIs in branding, and despite the fact, that branding efforts in academia are easily observable, still the researcher's interest in this field is limited [9, 11, 12]. The analysis of over 50

contemporary scientific articles in English, with focus on the different sides of HE branding, demonstrates the presence of too many gaps in relation to terminology correctness in the description and explanation of basic concepts, as well as the lack of uniform position in regard to what exactly is a brand of a higher education institution. This is how, for example, L. Nicolescu (having systematized the different views on the matter) offers four important specific characteristics of branding in the higher education sector [4]:

1) "When talking about branding in higher education, the relationship between concepts such as brand, reputation and image has to be considered. Branding and reputation share common grounds, but they are not identical. Reputation is generally seen as something that is more naturally built over time, while a brand is more constructed. Reputation is seen to be the collective presentation of past images of an institution established over time, while image (and based on it the brand) is the immediate set of meanings associated with a particular institution. Reputation is also seen by universities' chief executives, to better reflect reality than brand does. For universities reputation is their very being and what they actually sell every day. So reputation, rather than branding is a more suitable concept for the higher education sector.

2) Branding is associated usually with the creation of images with the purpose of increasing sales. In higher education the purpose of developing a brand is not to sell products and services, but to communicate 'corporate identity' in order to promote attraction and loyalty. It is suggested that the concepts of institutional image and reputation can be interpreted differently in higher education compared to other sectors, as usually a good reputation for a company is associated with increased sales, while in higher education high reputation is often linked with minimal 'sales', as the more prestigious an university is the fewer students accepts in its educational programs.

3) The higher education sector encounters challenges in branding due to the high degree of uniformity of the sector and consequently the difficulty to differentiate and create unique images for most higher education institutions.

4) The fact that higher education has multiple stakeholders, makes the branding effort much more complex and a 'multiversity' perspective that shows multiple images at the same time is recommended by some".

The authors of the current article can make the following commentary, relating to the suppositions, brought out by Nicolescu, for the specific nature of higher education branding.

The conclusions of the researcher are a result of her principle eyesight and her position is worthy of respect, but different from her interpretation of the basic concepts would come to certain disagreements. Let us state our reasons:

On 1). Yes, when laying out every position it is necessary to make a correct distinction between the concepts brand, reputation and image and to trace their scope. But one shouldn't miss another concept, directly linked to the previous – identity. Identity is a constant characteristic, which doesn't alter in time. It is reality such as it is.

Contrary to identity, image is the created notion (purpose-built 'image') and is a subject to modification, update and upgrade (through convincing communication), adequate to the placed corporate goals. Forming an image is an original 'form of self-presentation', in which the strong sides of the organization are emphasized [13].

Reputation is the assessment, the opinion of the set notion [14], a sum of all 'momentary pictures' of the image and their reception, piled throughout the years. Reputation is a summarizing notion for the identity of the organization in the eyes of the recipients. Reputation is an external notion.

The brand has to correspond to the identity, but has to be mobile, combinative and to be liable to modification towards the goals of the organization in a concrete moment and for a period of time, having positive impact on the reputation. It is a complex symbol construct, tasked with denotative (marking, distinguishing a given phenomenon) function and con-

notative (supplementing, prompting, evoking feelings and attitude to the phenomenon) function. In this sense the brand of the HEI includes the name of the institution, its logo, slogan, human capital, academic and scientific achievements of the teaching staff, the methods of education, administrative service, material-technical and information base, the belonging to the academic community, the promise of professional realization, etc. Upon which components the brand image of the HEI will be built (image of the educational service, image of the management, image of the staff etc. [15]) is an object of careful planning. The important thing is, that in the field of higher education the concepts brand image and institutional image are overlapping, as opposed to in the private sector, where often the built brand is not connected in any way with the name and assets of the manufacturer (for instance how many of the consumers connect the brand Bershka with Spanish Inditex group or the brand George Killian's Irish Red with Molson Coors Beverage Company). The creation of an adequate brand image of the educational institution is a priority task for the specialists, who deal with its branding. And this process may be characterized by differing duration and intensity. The consumers of the educational product do not come into contact with the real product prior to purchase and consumption. Consumption comes after the choosing of an institution. That is to say, long before they can make use of the educational product itself, the future consumers come into contact with the brand image of the HEI and on the basis of this already built notion, purpose-constructed image, they make their educated choice. And if this is so, then the reputation is a consequence of the set HEI image. So, we cannot agree with the statement, that reputation, rather than branding is a more suitable concept for the higher education sector.

On 2). The apprehension, that "branding is associated usually with the creation of images with the purpose of increasing sales", a "in higher education the purpose of developing a brand is not to sell products and services, but to communicate 'corporate identity' in order to promote attraction and loyalty" is rather limited and somewhat confusing. The branding goals can have divergent or single way action. In the business sector the branding also targets to communicate 'corporate identity' in order to promote attraction and loyalty. Furthermore, similar to marketing, the theoretical principles of branding are valid for all sectors of the economy. But with HES it is obligatory that the specifics of the educational product have to be taken into account. We consider that it is a result of the pedagogical and scientific research work, and from this process the education-supplementing and administrative work cannot be excluded. In this sense the educational product in SHE does not consist only of the offered education program, but rather is a complex of goods and non-goods with material and/or non-material character. It is a result of purposeful human labor and represents a composite whole of the education documentation (education plans, education programs, qualification characteristics etc.); education process; administrative service; material-technical and information base; textbooks and school aids/appliances; knowledge and skills (theoretical, practical, foreign language skills, computer skills, ability independent and creative problem solving, for correct verbal and written thought expression, communications skills etc.); social environment (student dormitories and canteens; attendance of exhibitions, libraries, theaters; tourism); conferences, seminars, workshops, student mobility.

On 3). Yes, the branding in the HE sector is colliding with a number of difficulties when it comes to creating unique images for the various higher education institutions. And yes, it works with uniform constructs: "excellence", "quality", "achievement" – none remotely unique". But this is valid for other objects of branding as well – sports teams, music performers, politicians, political parties, whole countries, cities, tourist destinations etc. Metallica is a brand, the Statue of Liberty is a brand, Paris is a brand, Trump is a brand, just as America is a brand itself.

On 4). Yes, the HE sector has multiple stakeholders. But which sector doesn't? And yes, in this case different branding efforts are required for the different concerned sides, but this does not mean building of multiple images at the same time.

3. Student brand loyalty – conceptual model for measuring

One of the main goals for every educational institution of the higher education sector is to enhance student loyalty. Therefore, HEI might expect a number of benefits, among which a readiness to improve its reputation and education quality, student retention, and financial support from alumni [16], continue to support his or her academic institution even after graduating by providing research projects, through word-of-mouth promotion to other prospective students, and by offering cooperation such as student placements or visiting lectures [17]. Despite the shown benefits, the researches dedicated to student brand loyalty (SBL) are still scarce.

Similar to the conception of brand loyalty, student loyalty to the HEI brand involves simultaneously an attitudinal component and a behavioral component. For us student brand loyalty includes not only a repeated purchase of the offered educational product, but also the presence of a positive cognitive-emotional attitude towards the institution, accompanied by a volitional aspect. Examples for manifestation of loyalty are: knowing of the historical circumstances of the origin of the institution; pricing tolerance; certainty in the correctness of the made educational choice; willingness to recommend the HEI; inclination for making suggestions for the improvement of the educational documentation, methods for teaching, etc. Loyalty should be delimited from momentum, which does not presume emotional commitment.

There is no doubt among the academia, that there is a need for measuring the SBL. But often the research-workers encounter a number of difficulties and have to take into account many considerations – for example to work out the operationalizing variables (indexes) for loyalty, how to interpret the term *student* in the context of loyalty [18], over what time periods should the observation of the metrics be made.

The identification of the operationalizing variables is a key moment in composing the general construction for measuring of the SBL. Based on the reviewed literature, we suggest a conceptual measurement model, containing the following seven variables:

- Brand associations;
- Brand information dissemination and sufficiency (BIDS);
- Perceived quality;
- Student experience;
- Brand trust;
- Student brand engagement; and
- Brand satisfaction.
- Brand associations

According to Aaker and Keller brand association refers to all the thoughts in consumers' minds related to a brand [19]. It reflects truly or untruly the reality, the apparent or the hidden meanings, which the users correlate to the brand. The association should be positive, in order to guarantee a positive attitude of the consumer towards the brand. Precisely the positive associations with the brand can provide a competitive advantage of the organizations and to impede the entering of new-comers in the field. Brand association includes product attributes, customer benefits, uses, users, life-styles, product classes, competitors and countries [20].

In the context of higher education brand associations of students can be formed by their contacts with lecturers, civil servants, graduate students, employers, parents, etc. (who in fact represent different internal and external stakeholders for HEI), advertising messages and PR activities of HEI, price of the educational service, publicly announced contacts of HEI with celebrities, etc. They can represent motives for making a certain education choice, facilitate the processing and interpreting the information about the brand of the educational institution, etc. Knowledge of brand associations

can serve as a starting point for defining the offered educational product, taking actions to extend the brand – for example by opening a branch of the HEI on foreign territory.

*Brand information dissemination and sufficiency*

It is universally accepted ‘information dissemination’ to be understood as to distribute or broadcast information [21]. A ‘information sufficiency’ is to be accepted as “person’s sense of how much information he or she needs to cope with...” regarding the availability to make an informed decision [22]. For the purposes of the offered model in this paper, we assume that BIDS includes the used communication channels of the brand and the subjective assessment of the students regarding the level of sufficiency of the information about the brand.

*Perceived quality*

Perceived quality is an important element of the adoption of the brand. Aaker explained that perceived quality provides value by providing a reason to buy, differentiating the brand, attracting channel member interest, being the basis for line extensions, and supporting a higher price [20].

The perceived quality of the educational product is not real, but rather reflects the subjective assessment of its intended consumer – the student. That is to say it cannot be normatively defined, because it is related predominately to beliefs, thoughts, feelings and experiences. Different components of the educational product can be a subject to assessment – administrative service (speed, responsiveness, competences), fairness when evaluating the students, actual relevance of the library units, methods for presenting of the educational content, level of renewal of the material-technical base, support from governing bodies, level of provided social and living conditions (hostels, scholarships), alleviation for students with physical disabilities and chronic conditions, level of internet access in the buildings of the institution, access to educational practices and experiences, etc.

*Student experience*

Academics and the student experience are foundational elements of any higher education institution and are key elements of its brand promise [23]. Some institutions provide positive student experience, exceeding the traditional expectations, regarding the student as a legitimate participant (constructor) in the process of creation of the educational product.

*Brand trust*

Brand trust is “the willingness of the average consumer to rely on the ability of the brand to perform its stated function” [10]. The trust of the students in the brand of the HEI is usually associated with the university’s stability, integrity and reliability. Increased trust is likely to lead to positive experiences and evaluations, which consequently help increase quality perceptions, generate positive word-of-mouth effects, and reduce sensitivity to cost and tuition changes [24].

*Student brand engagement*

The concept of ‘student engagement’ has enjoyed considerable attention in the literature since the mid-1990s [25]. Academically, consumer brand engagement has been defined variously. Aspects like ‘participation in’, ‘connection with’, ‘a multifaceted state of mind’ (comprising cognitive, emotional and behavioral elements) as well as context-specificity seem to be central to the construct of consumer brand engagement [26]. We consider that there can be identified at least two drivers of student brand engagement, a namely ‘interest’ and ‘participation’. Interest (expressing emotional engagement) is an *affective reaction* to the components of the brand of the HEI, which makes it distinctive and unique. Participation (expressing simultaneously cognitive and behavioral engagement) is a readiness to invest personal resources with purpose of *inclusion* in and expression of the sense of *belonging* to the academic community.

*Brand satisfaction*

Customer satisfaction and the methods for its analysis

take up an essential place in marketing literature. It is universally accepted for it to be regarded as a complex construction, including ‘response’, ‘focus’, ‘specific time of manifestation’ and ‘dynamics’. In the sector of higher education it can manifest itself as regarding the present students (who can recommend the brand of the institution to acquainted candidate students), as well as regarding past students of the institute or the institute alumni.

The influential and potent members of the institute alumni can be supportive and useful in terms of providing financial assistance together with providing employment opportunities for the current graduates of the institute as well as contributing significantly towards improving the image of the institute through positive word of mouth communication. Quite similar to customers showing loyalty for products or services they prefer, through repeat purchases, these acts of alumni members show their loyalty towards their institution [27].

Satisfaction with the brand of the HEI can be evaluated on an individual level by separate variables (for example satisfaction with the way of teaching of a given educational program, the timetable of the learning process, the offered opportunities for internal and international mobility, the available base for sports, etc.), but also can be traced on an aggregated level (general satisfaction). Moreover it should be clear, that the conclusions from the analysis of brand satisfaction should not be absolutized. This is, because brand satisfaction is not related to a specific manifestation of behavior. That makes it imperative to seek the connection between brand satisfaction and student loyalty to the HEI brand.

Following extensive literature we propose conceptual measurement model for SBL, which attempts to build upon the existing knowledge in the field and could serve as a starting point for the specialist, occupied with the branding of the HEI.

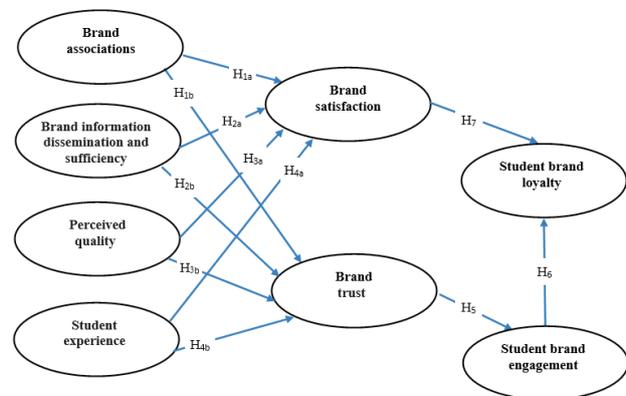


Fig. 1. Proposed conceptual measurement model for SBL

Hypothesis 1a. There is a positive relationship between brand associations and brand satisfaction.

Hypothesis 1b. There is a positive relationship between brand associations and brand trust.

Hypothesis 2a. There is a positive relationship between BIDS and brand satisfaction.

Hypothesis 2b. There is a positive relationship between BIDS and brand trust.

Hypothesis 3a. There is a positive relationship between perceived quality and brand satisfaction.

Hypothesis 3b. There is a positive relationship between perceived quality and brand trust.

Hypothesis 4a. There is a positive relationship between student experience and brand satisfaction.

Hypothesis 4b. There is a positive relationship between student experience and brand trust.

Hypothesis 5. There is a positive relationship between brand trust and student brand engagement.

Hypothesis 6. There is a positive relationship between

brand engagement and student loyalty.

Hypothesis 7. There is a positive relationship between brand satisfaction and student loyalty.

The current paper is a part of Project on Strategy for Building Brand Image of Plovdiv University "Paisii Hilendarski" – contract No СИПО-19, financed by the Scientific Research Fund of the Plovdiv University "Paisii Hilendarski".

#### REFERENCES:

1. Ansoglenang G., S.A. Awugah, J.D. Thompson. *Conceptual Tools for Building Higher Education Institutions Corporate Image and Reputation*, // *American Journal of Educational Research and Reviews*. 2018. 3:28, pp. 1 – 16.
2. Maringe F., P. Gibbs. *Marketing Higher Education Theory and Practice*, B: Open University Press, 2009.
3. Andrljic B., H. Budic, V. Pismis. *Customer Satisfaction as a Marketing Concept in Higher Education*, // *Scientific Annals of the "Alexandru Ioan Cuza" University of Iasi Economic Sciences*. 2013. 60 (1), pp. 1 – 10.
4. Nicolescu L. *Applying Marketing to Higher Education: Scope and Limits*, // *Management & Marketing*. 2009, Vol. 4 (2), pp. 35 – 44.
5. Hemsley-Brown J., T.C. Melewar, B. Nguyen, E.J. Wilson. *Exploring Brand Identity, Meaning, Image, and Reputation (BIMIR) in Higher Education: A special Section*, // *Journal of Business Research*, 2016. 69, pp. 3019 – 3022.
6. Beneke J.H., B. BusSc, M. BusSc. *Marketing the Institution to Prospective Students – A review of Brand (Reputation) Management in Higher Education*, // *International Journal of Business and Management*. 2011. Vol. 6 (1), pp. 29 – 44.
7. Arfendo P., D. Kartini, Sucherly, Y.M. Oesman. *Marketing performance as implication of brand image mediated by trust*, // *Management Science Letters*. 2020. 10, pp. 741 – 746.
8. Nguyen B., X. Yu, T.C. Melewar, J. Hemsley-Brown. *Brand ambidexterity and commitment in higher education: An exploratory study*, // *Journal of Business Research*. 2016. 69, pp. 3105 – 3112.
9. Rauschnabel P.A., N. Krey, B.J. Babin, B.S. Ivens. *Brand management in higher education: The University Brand Personality Scale*, // *Journal of Business Research*. 2016. 69, pp. 3077 – 3086.
10. Tran K.T., P.V. Nguyen, H. Thi Sa Do, L. Thi Nguyen. *University Students' Insight on Brand Equity*, // *Management Science Letters*. 2020. 10, pp. 2053 – 2062.
11. Palmer A., N. Koenig-Lewis, Y. Asaad. *Brand identification in higher education: A conditional process analysis*, // *Journal of Business Research*. 2016. 69, 3033 – 3040.
12. Erisher W., H.H. Obert, G. Frank. *Brand Reputation Management within the Higher Education Sector: A Review of the Literature on Higher Education Brand Reputation Management*, // *International Research Journal of Marketing*. 2014. 2(1), pp. 1 – 8.
13. Dimitrova G., V. Stanev. *Korporativnijat imidzh kato konkurentno predimstvo*, *Scientific Works of the Union of Scientists in Bulgaria – Plovdiv*. 2017. Series A. Public sciences, art and culture, Vol. IV, pp. 83 – 86. (In Bulg.).
14. Stanev V., G. Dimitrova. *Korporativnijat imidzh v konteksta na konkurentosposobnostta*, *Scientific Works of the Union of Scientists in Bulgaria – Plovdiv*. 2017. Series A. Public sciences, art and culture, Vol. IV, pp. 79 – 82. (In Bulg.).
15. Stanev V. et al. *Strategija za izgrazhdane na publichen obraz na Plovdivski universitet "Paisiy Hilendarski"*, Pld: Siela, 2020. (In Bulg.).
16. Heo C.Y., S. Lee. *Examination of student loyalty in tourism and hospitality programs: A comparison between the United States and Hong Kong*, // *Journal of Hospitality, Leisure, Sport & Tourism Education*. 2016. 18, 69 – 80.
17. Erdoğmuş İ., S. Ergun. *Understanding university brand loyalty: the mediating role of attitudes towards the department and university*, // *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*. 2016. 229, 141 – 150.
18. Hennig-Thurau T., M.F. Langer, U. Hansen. *Modeling and Managing Student Loyalty: An Approach Based on the Concept of Relationship Quality*, // *Journal of Service Research*, 2001. Volume 3, No. 4, pp. 331 – 344.
19. Foroudi P. et al. *Perceptual components of brand equity: Configuring the Symmetrical*, // *Journal of Business Research*, 2018. 89, pp. 462 – 474.
20. Farjam S., X. Hongy. *Reviewing the Concept of Brand Equity and Evaluating Consumer*, // *International Journal of Management Science and Business Administration*, 2015. Vol. 1. Issue 8, pp. 14 – 29.
21. Joseph J.L., *Intelligence and Security Informatics. Handbook of Research on Public Information Technology*, Hershey, New York, 2008. pp. 378 – 385.
22. Griffin R.J., K. Neuwirth, S. Dunwoody, J. Giese. *Information sufficiency and risk communication*, // *Media Psychology*, 2004. 6, pp. 23 – 61.
23. Robert C. Lockwood R.C., J. Hadd. *Building a Brand in Higher Education: Why business practices - particularly brand strategies - are becoming essential in today's universities*, // *Galiup Management Journal*, 2007. 12, pp. 1 – 6.
24. Sung M., S. Yang. *Toward the Model of University Image: The Influence of Brand Personality, External Prestige, and Reputation*, // *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 2008. 20:4, pp. 357 – 376.
25. Trowler V. *Student engagement literature review*, York: The Higher Education Academy. 2010

26. Dwivedi A. *A higher-order model of consumer brand engagement*, // *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 2015. 24, pp. 100 – 109.

27. Paul R., S. Pradhan. *Achieving Student Satisfaction and Student Loyalty in Higher Education: A Focus on Service Value Dimensions*, // *Services Marketing Quarterly*, 2019. Vol. 40. Issue 3, pp. 245 – 268.