THE IMPACT OF CONSUMER PSYCHOLOGY ON UNIVERSITY BRAND CHOICE

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**Purpose.** The purpose of this study is to how the university brand wins the psychology of college students, and discusses the decision-making behavior of college students’ school choice and university brand based on consumer psychology.

**Results.** According to the results of the analysis, university brand wins the consumer psychology of college students through university brand value. The key factor that university brand affects the consumption psychology of college students is that education is regarded as the primary purpose of the brand. University brand is carried by people, and students and staff are the significant identification of university brand image and the fundamental guarantee of establishing this brand. University brand is a kind of brand that needs late effect evaluation. University brand reflects the educational quality and characteristics of the university, reflects the social reputation of the university, and represents the employment prospects of graduates. The university brand represents competitiveness. College students, as consumers, will consider the influence of college brand on future employment, and their choice of college will also affect its brand. College students’ brand selection can be divided into three time points and four development stages.

**Scientific novelty.** This article combines knowledge related to psychology and management, thus contributing to an interdisciplinary understanding of the university brand; analyzing many products, consumers cannot accept all of them, so the brand plays an important role in the consumer behavior of students.

**Practical value.** This article analyzes how university brand wins the psychology of college students, the key factors for the university brand to win the psychology of college students, and discusses the decision-making behavior of college students’ school choice and university brand based on consumer psychology. The strategy provides a certain theoretical basis.

**Key words:** university brand selection, consumer psychology, brand value.

**Introduction.** With the acceleration of the process of higher education marketization and globalization, the research on university brand continues to heat up. Due to the aggregation effect and halo effect, brand plays an important role in the market of colleges and universities seeking for students, running schools, talents and technology. Therefore, many universities have begun to implement brand strategy, attach importance to brand construction and build university brand. The scholars of university brand research believe that university education service is one of the basic outputs of universities. Students are the direct consumers of university education and the main body of education service consumption (Hill, 1995). The process of students receiving education is the process of obtaining educational services (Deming & Yan,
As a social service industry, university brands are also facing the process of being selected by consumers. The market competition of higher education has entered the era of brand competition. The creation and ownership of brands by universities play an increasingly important role in the construction and development of universities. The high value university brand occupies the market with its strong market penetration ability and scale expansion ability. The future direction of brand competition is the focus of the university.

**Review of literature.** *Publication activity regarding the university brand.* The results show a growing trend of university brand research in the world (Figure 1), with publication activity growing in recent years and dominated by research from scientists from the United States, United Kingdom and China.

![Figure 1. Trend of university brand research in the world](image)

*Source:* author’s own development based on Scopus.

According to the Scopus database, the following scientists have the largest number of publications on university brand: C. Chapleo and A. Stephenson (Figure 2). They investigate, in particular, the following questions: what defines “successful” university brands (Chapleo, 2010); exploring rationales for branding a university (Chapleo, 2011); what is the secret of successful university brands (Chapleo, 2013a; 2013b; 2017); an innovative model to measure university brand image (Alcaide-Pulido et al., 2021); does brand identification transform alumni into university advocates (Stephenson & Yerger, 2014a); brand identification and alumni donation behaviors (Stephenson & Yerger, 2014b); social identity perspective on the role of branding in higher education (Stephenson & Bell, 2014); how pretrial expectations and anticipated obstacles impact university brand identification (Stephenson & Yerger, 2016); college choice and the university brand (Stephenson, Heckert & Yerger, 2016).
Value of university brand. The university brand includes three interrelated aspects. First, the student brand mainly refers to the recognition of the society through high-quality students. Secondly, the brand of teachers is the core resource of university institutions. The core task of university brand building must be to introduce and cultivate brand of teachers. Third, school brand refers to that when the student brand and teacher brand develop to a certain scale and become the image of the school and the society or the employer’s recognition of the students has risen to the trust of the school, the reputation of the school will have obvious brand characteristics and become a brand. Students, university and faculty constitute the embodiment of university brand value (Figure 3).
The role of university brand value. The value of university brand lies in the fact that the brand is easy to spread the image of the university rapidly (Anctil et al., 2008). University brand is the reflection of a university’s social status. It is the condensation gradually accumulated in the process of the establishment and development of a university (Balmer et al., 2003). It’s social acceptance across time and space. The establishment and management of the brand of colleges and universities is an important part for the university to enter the university market. Building the brand of colleges and universities is a powerful means to form the advantage of education service (Curtis et al., 2009). In education, a prestigious school means a top class and authority. In the tech world, elite schools mean cutting-edge and advanced. Being elite in the investment world means economic growth. University brand value role for university faculty is famous brand to attract the best talent, including the scientific community has become famous master of middle-aged backbone and the passion for teaching and scientific research quality, young people seem to want to in the scientific culture, famous university institutions give them created a chance to learn from each other, can greatly improve the efficiency of teaching and scientific research (Judson et al., 2009).

The value of university brand for students lies in the fact that the brand represents certain quality and characteristics, which is convenient for students to identify and register according to the university brand (Sojkin et al., 2012). Choosing university institutions and majors with good social reputation and high popularity is the main way for students to reduce the risk of purchase.

The university product is the university service the process that the student receives education is the process that obtains education service. Restricting the university supply product to a service reflects the transformation of the university supply view (Tavares et al., 2013). School management has long been about students and parents revolving around teachers and teachers revolving around principals and principals revolving around leaders. In fact, education is a service that provides a special service for students. For schools, the consumers of education are students at the first time when education happens, that is, the direct consumers of education are students (Chapleo, 2011). Emanuel & Adams (2006) pointed out that university institutions have several different service markets, including professors, administrators, students, parents and future employers, among which students may be the key customers of education services. Hill (1995) also emphasized that students are the primary customers of education. Therefore, the university management in China should serve students at the most fundamental level.

Materials and methods. The purpose of this study is to how the university brand wins the psychology of college students, and discusses the decision-making behavior of college students’ school choice and university brand based on consumer psychology.

This study uses the literature method to analysis university brand wins the consumer psychology of college students through university brand value and uses the induction method to summarize and analyze university brand reflects the educational
quality and characteristics of the university, reflects the social reputation of the university, and represents the employment prospects of graduates. During the analysis of publication activity regarding the university brand, we used material from the Scopus database. The university brand represents competitiveness. From a methodological point of view, college students’ brand selection can be divided into three time points and four development stages.

Results and discussion. Key factors of brand influence on consumer psychology. Every consumer is only willing to choose and accept some brands when buying. Enterprises can only grasp the psychological gap of target customers through brand information output of brand strategy, or dig the psychological resources of target customers more effectively than competitors, so as to occupy the important position of the psychological resources of target customers. This subtle psychological change is only the perception of consumers, no objective facts. Consumers rated leaders as most trustworthy for innovation, product quality and business style. This is the real force that guides buying, not the so-called objective facts. For consumers, there is only one consumption standard, that is to recognize your brand value, that you are the industry, the same product leader. Such products can tap into the psychological system of consumers and get priority.

Identify your competitors. Brand strategy establishes the influence of competitors on consumer psychology, analyzes the profit sources of competitors themselves, formulates effective competitive strategies for competitors, and turns profit space into its own business. Brand strategy clarifies profit sources by clarifying competitors, so as to win consumers’ favor, win loyal customers and form consumers’ consumption habits.

Break consumer psychology. The space of commercial competition actually lies in the psychology of consumer’s choice. Grasping consumer psychology is the way to success of brand strategy. Once in the minds of consumers, businesses own them and make a profit. The essence of brand strategy is to transform consumers’ perception of advanced competitors into their attention and recognition of the new brand, so that the new brand quickly enters consumers’ psychology and becomes consumers’ choice and application choice.

Pay attention to segmented consumer psychology. Once a company has established the niche consumer psychology it needs to occupy, it needs to stay focused, because that’s all the value of the brand to the consumer. Brand strategy, by focusing on the segmentation of consumer psychology, ensures the continuous increase of consumer psychological identity and actively promotes the evolution of consumer behavior. In the face of increasingly fierce competition in the market environment, enterprises must constantly push forward evolution, consolidate competitive advantages, and maintain a strong position of brand in customer psychology.

The enterprise brand shaped by brand strategy is the basic unit of enterprise competition. In consumer psychology, the unit of storage and memory is brand. If a brand strategy focuses on one type of brand, it has an expert advantage in consumer
psychology. On the contrary, if the brand strategy involves too many fields, it is easy to cause psychological confusion of customers. Confounding brand recognition in consumers’ minds is often regarded as less trustworthy than professional brands, which will eventually be abandoned by consumers’ minds and cause damage to brand value.

Key factors of university brand influencing college students’ consumption psychology. University brand is the popularity and reputation formed in the long-term development process of a university, and it is the overall impression and evaluation of the running level, discipline construction, teaching quality and scientific research level in the public mind, as well as the degree of satisfaction and praise held by the public. As a social organization, a university is engaged in the activity of cultivating people through people, which is the essence of the university brand service that distinguishes it from other brands and casts the educational characteristics of the university brand (Wright, 1996). Education is the primary purpose of the university brand. The university brand is carried by people, and students and faculty are the significant marks of the university brand image and the fundamental guarantee for the establishment of the university brand. The higher the level and realization of these carriers, the higher the social recognition, the stronger the brand effect of the school, and thus the greater the value of the brand. University brand is a brand that needs late effect evaluation. The future orientation of education determines the tardiness of school brand evaluation. University brand reflects the educational quality and characteristics of university institutions, and the social reputation of university institutions represents the employment prospects of graduates. University brand represents competitiveness. Students choose universities employers choose students according to the university brand.

College brand selection based on consumer psychology. The influence of college students’ consumption behavior on university brand. College students, as consumers, will consider the influence of college brand on future employment, and their choice of college will also affect the brand of college. College students according to their characteristics, motivation, experience and values, etc., to choose the university education of the university of information screening, selection of consumer behavior, this kind of consumer behavior is usually influenced by many factors, these factors may come from the college students' family, nationality, reference groups, and may come from the social environment, It is affected by the social, economic, regional and job markets. After college students enter the university, the higher education system, the way of admission and the constraints of regulations will have an impact on their educational consumption behavior, and even affect their values of choosing university brands. On the other hand, college students’ educational consumption behavior and the characteristics of university famous brand, specialty construction and other mutual influence, university brand marketing affects college students’ choice of college brand education consumption behavior, and affects the establishment of university brand.

The process of college students choosing college brands. By combining college brand with consumer psychology and behavior, it can be found that college students’
College brand selection can be divided into three time points and four development stages. The three time points are graduation from high school, before college, and after college. The four development stages are pre-selection stage, selection decision-making stage, selection evaluation stage and selection stage. The four development stages are separated by three time points, while university brand awareness and brand image play an important role in the stage of pre-selection and decision-making, perceived quality plays an important role in the stage of selection evaluation, and brand loyalty plays a role in the stage of re-selection (Figure 4).

Figure 4. The process of college students choosing college brands

Source: author’s own development.

Conclusions. The results show a growing trend of university brand research in the world, with publication activity growing in recent years. University brand wins the consumer psychology of college students through university brand value. The key factor that university brand affects the consumption psychology of college students is that education is regarded as the primary purpose of the brand. University brand is carried by people, and students and staff are the significant identification of university brand image and the fundamental guarantee of establishing university brand. University brand is a kind of brand that needs late effect evaluation. University brand reflects the educational quality and characteristics of the university, reflects the social reputation of the university, and represents the employment prospects of graduates. The university brand represents competitiveness. College students, as consumers, will consider the influence of college brand on future employment, and their choice of college will also affect the brand of college. College students’ brand selection can be divided into three time points (graduation from high school, before college, and after college) and four development stages (pre-selection stage, selection decision-making stage, selection evaluation stage and selection stage).

This article combines knowledge related to psychology and management, thus contributing to an interdisciplinary understanding of the university brand; analyzing many products, consumers cannot accept all of them, so the brand plays an important role in the consumer behavior of students. Future research is expected to provide further analysis of how to develop a university brand based on empirical evidence.
References


