

REVIEW

by the official opponent of the dissertation submitted by the doctoral candidate Liang Rui on the topic " Research on the Implementation path of University Brand Strategy" submitted for the academic degree Doctor of Philosophy in the field of specialization 073 "Management" in the knowledge domain 07 "Management and Administration."

Relevance of the research topic. The relevance of the research topic lies in the increasing importance of implementing university brand strategy as a key aspect of university management, particularly in the context of the necessity to expand international relations. Changing trends in higher education and the growing global competition demand that universities adopt effective brand strategies to attract international students, talented faculty, and research investors. Exploring the toolkit for implementing brand strategy allows for the identification of key factors influencing the university's image formation and its international attractiveness. Specifically, understanding the impact of policy on brand conception, maintaining a balanced relationship between quantitative and qualitative aspects in constructing a talent brand, and acknowledging the role of cultural and academic branding within contemporary educational paradigms are crucial for the ongoing development of universities. Against the backdrop of expanding Ukrainian-Chinese relations, investigating the implementation of brand strategy becomes exceptionally important, as it can contribute not only to enhancing the appeal of Ukrainian universities to Chinese students but also to strengthening collaboration in the fields of science and culture between both countries. Developing effective tools for implementing brand strategy can be a step toward improving the status and reputation of universities in the global education market and laying the groundwork for long-term international cooperation. This underscores the exclusive significance of constructing rational mechanisms for developing the image and brand of higher education institutions and their management systems. Therefore, Liang Rui's dissertation topic is timely and relevant.

The presented dissertation research has been conducted in accordance with the plan of scientific research at Sumy National Agrarian University on the topic "Management of Competitiveness of Enterprises on the Principles of Innovative Marketing" (registration number 0119U100250). Within the framework of this research, the author has identified theoretical and methodological foundations for the formation and development of mechanisms for managing the strategic development of marketing activities with a focus on building a powerful brand. Specific studies have been carried out within the scope of Chinese scientific projects commissioned by the Henan province:

Research project in humanities and social sciences at Henan University (No. 2022-ZZJH-158);

Research project in humanities and social sciences at Henan Normal University (No. 2022-ZDJH-0099);

Social Science Planning Project (No. 2021BZZ004).

The author has defined fundamental principles and priorities that should be considered in managing the strategy for shaping the marketing policies of universities in China.

The degree of validity of scientific provisions, conclusions and recommendations, their reliability. A qualitative analysis of the dissertation indicates that the candidate has conducted a sufficiently profound exploration of the theoretical framework outlined in the research task. The bibliography comprises 195 references, including works by leading national and international scholars. The dissertation is characterized by a clear adherence to the author's chosen logical and structural scheme in presenting materials and research findings. The formulated objective and defined research tasks allowed the candidate to successfully apply the employed methodological and methodical tools. The content of the dissertation fully corresponds to the chosen research topic. The recommendations provided in the dissertation have undergone practical testing, as evidenced by relevant documentation. Therefore, the scientific positions, conclusions, proposals, and

recommendations obtained during Liang Rui's dissertation work are sufficiently well-founded and credible.

The degree of novelty of scientific provisions. The scientific novelty of Liang Rui's dissertation lies in providing a new solution to the scientific problem of studying the toolkit for implementing university brand strategy based on principles of sustainable development.

The research's scientific contribution is considered pivotal in shaping innovative theoretical and methodological approaches and offering specific practical recommendations for the successful implementation of university brand strategy. Among these findings, particular attention is devoted to identifying the key factors determining the psychological state of students as consumers of educational services. This concept defines the perception of the quality of university education as the primary goal of the brand, ensuring the unique identification of the university brand image and serving as a fundamental basis for its consolidation and positioning in the higher education market.

A significant aspect of the scientific conclusion is the reflection of the university brand, which not only nuances the quality of educational services but also considers other key characteristics. This entails considering the social reputation of the university and anticipating employment prospects for its graduates. Highlighting these aspects reveals a systematic approach to creating a brand strategy, impacting crucial areas such as external perception, relationships with stakeholders and potential students, as well as interaction with the job market.

This study stands out for its uniqueness in approaches to studying and understanding university brand strategy, and its conclusions make an important contribution to the development of integrated approaches to effective management of educational branding concepts.

Completeness of the presentation in the open press of the scientific provisions of the dissertation. Liang Rui's dissertation topic has been supported by the publication of 9 scholarly works, including 4 scientific articles in domestic professional publications, 2 of which are indexed in the Scopus scientific databases,

and 2 publications in conference proceedings. The content of the published scientific positions does not raise doubts, lacks contradictions with the fundamental principles of economic sciences, and sufficiently reflects the essence and content of the dissertation research materials. The scientific novelty and main research results, proposed for defense, have been adequately disseminated in open print. The requirements for the necessary number of articles in scientific professional publications have been met. The content of the abstract corresponds to the content of the dissertation.

Compliance of the dissertation with the established requirements. Liang Rui's dissertation on the topic "Research on the Implementation Path of University Brand Strategy" consists of an introduction, three chapters, conclusions, and proposals, presented in 210 pages, including 178 pages of the main text, with 22 tables, 26 figures, and appendices.

In the first chapter, the primary concept of the research is defined, the current state of the study is analyzed, the foundations of theories and methods are outlined, and the research direction of the work is specified. The work explores concepts and types of brand management as part of marketing science, focusing on the definition and development process of university brands. A systematic review is conducted, relevant literature and data are gathered, current theories of brand management in higher education are summarized, and the research direction is identified. Additionally, the basics of relevant theories and methods are presented, oriented towards classic theoretical models closely related to this research, such as marketing and brand management theories, providing necessary theoretical and methodological support for the study.

The second chapter analyzes the current situation of building the brand of Henan Institute of Science and Technology from four dimensions of analytical structure, revealing certain objective problems in constructing its brand. Four aspects are proposed for consideration: 1) the guiding effect of brand construction is too obvious, lacking long-term planning based on connotative development; 2) the quantity of brand components exceeds quality, requiring more attention to the

implementation of high-level talent; 3) construction of cultural brands based on infrastructure inheritance; 4) the construction of academic brands should be rooted in society, emphasizing the construction of innovative academic brands.

The third chapter proposes ways to improve brand management in higher education institutions. Implementing brand strategy in traditional undergraduate universities is undoubtedly the most effective way to enhance their competitiveness. The realization of a brand strategy contributes to gaining a competitive advantage. Implementing brand strategies in universities requires internal integration. The implementation of a university's brand strategy contributes to the identification and selection of consumers. The structure of brand generation for Chinese universities can mainly include four dimensions: government dimension, teacher-student dimension, cultural heritage dimension, and research and social service dimension.

Liang Rui's dissertation on the topic "Research on the Implementation Path of University Brand Strategy" aligns with the subject-object scope, content, and nature of scientific results corresponding to the standard of education 073 - management. The volume and formatting of the dissertation meet the requirements of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine.

Comments on the dissertation. Despite the sufficiently high theoretical and methodological level of preparation in the dissertation, attention should be drawn to certain shortcomings and debatable positions:

1. The author would benefit from deepening the justification of definitions such as "university brand," "university image," and "university trademark" by identifying their place in the organizational-economic mechanism of marketing management in an educational institution, considering the peculiarities of the legislation of the People's Republic of China.

2. While justifying the methodological approach to managing the implementation of the university brand strategy (section 2.3 of the dissertation), the author vaguely defines management tools, focusing primarily on functional branding strategies.

3. The author's methodological approach to the hierarchy and interrelation of specified innovative mechanisms for building the university brand (subsection 2.3) creates scientific interest. However, it requires a more in-depth specification of means and measures to mobilize elements of scientific and innovative potential.

4. It is not entirely clear how the author views the correspondence between existing opportunities and plans for implementing the brand strategy in the modern university environment. The assessment of whether real limitations and peculiarities in the management process are considered for the successful implementation of the brand strategy, as well as the challenges that may arise and how the author proposes to address them, should have been discussed in the dissertation.

5. Considering that the training in the postgraduate program and the defense procedure take place in Ukraine, it would be useful to detail how specific scientific conclusions and recommendations can be highlighted for Ukrainian universities in response to the requirements and expectations of the Chinese education market.

Conclusion on the compliance of the dissertation with the requirements of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine. The dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy by Liang Rui is a completed, original scientific work dedicated to addressing the current scientific and practical task of developing theoretical and methodological provisions and practical recommendations for the formulation of theoretical and applied principles of strategic brand management for higher education institutions. The dissertation work, titled "Research on the Implementation Path of University Brand Strategy," complies with the requirements of the Order of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine No. 40 dated January 12, 2017, "On Approval of the Requirements for the Dissertation," the Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine No. 44 dated January 12, 2022, "On the Procedure for Awarding the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy and Canceling the Decision of the One-time Specialized Academic Council of the Higher Education Institution, Research Institution on Awarding the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy," with amendments made according to the Cabinet of Ministers Resolution No. 341 dated March 21, 2022. The author, Liang Rui, deserves the award of the academic

degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the specialty 073 – Management (field of knowledge 07 – Management and Administration).

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