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## COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF STRATEGIES FOR POSITIONING THE LEADING UNIVERSITIES IN THE UK IN THE INTERNATIONAL INFORMATION SPACE

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*Today the issue of competitiveness of higher education institutions is becoming more and more important. Given this paradigm, it is advisable to analyze the positioning strategies of leading UK universities on indicators of "prestige of higher education institutions among consumers of educational services or users of educational products" with indicators of the index of academic reputation; reputation index of institutions of higher education among employers; brand recognition and "economic and international activities" with indicators of economic impact, financial support for education, internationalization of the university. In the course of scientific research, the author analyzed in detail the special, scientific and pedagogical literature, information from the media, radio, television, data from Internet sites and social networks. To achieve these goals, general and special methods of scientific research were used: theoretical, monumental and problem-based analysis of special literature and Internet resources. The article provides a comparative analysis of the positioning strategies of the leading universities in the UK, namely: Oxford, Cambridge, Edinburgh, Bristol and Manchester universities on global indicators. After analyzing the five leading universities in the UK, we concluded that the main methods of positioning universities include stories, conversations, presentations and information and reference methods. It was determined that the main forms of positioning are based on consultations, seminars, conferences, research, creating courses and paying great attention to students with disabilities. Each university has created its own programs to improve the quality of education. All of them are aimed at helping talented students, but not financially secure; students who have outstanding academic results and international students. All leading universities have their own official pages and websites, which*

**Key words:** leading university, index, reputation, internationalization, economic influence, financial support, prestige of the HEI, educational services, educational product.

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## ПОРІВНЯЛЬНИЙ АНАЛІЗ СТРАТЕГІЙ ПОЗИЦІОНУВАННЯ ПРОВІДНИХ УНІВЕРСИТЕТІВ ВЕЛИКОБРИТАНІЇ В МІЖНАРОДНОМУ ІНФОРМАЦІЙНОМУ ПРОСТОРИ

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На сьогоднішній день все більш актуальним є питання конкурентоспроможності закладів вищої освіти. Враховуючи дану парадигму доцільним є аналіз стратегій позиціонування провідних університетів Великобританії за індикаторами "престижність закладів вищої освіти серед споживачів освітніх послуг чи користувачів освітнім продуктом" з показниками індекс академічної репутації; індекс репутації ЗВО серед працевлаштуваних; впізнаваність бренду та "економічна та міжнародна діяльність" з показниками економічний вплив, фінансова підтримка навчання, інтернаціоналізація університету. В ході наукової розвідки, автором було детально проаналізовано спеціальну науково-педагогічну літературу, відомості засобів масової інформації, радіо, телебачення, дані Інтернет сайтів та соціальних мереж. Для досягнення поставлених цілей використано загальні й спеціальні методи наукового дослідження: теоретичний, монументальний і проблемно-цільовий аналіз спеціальної літератури та ресурсів мережі Інтернет. В статті зроблений порівняльний аналіз стратегій позиціонування провідних університетів Великобританії, а саме: Оксфордського, Кембриджського, Единбурзького, Брістольського та Манчестерського університетів за глобальними індикаторами. Зробивши аналіз п'яти провідних університетів Великобританії, дійшли висновку, що до основних методів позиціонування університетів відносяться розповіді, бесіди, презентації та інформаційно-довідковий метод. Визначили, що основні форми позиціонування базуються на проведенні консультацій, семінарів, конференцій, наукових досліджень, створенні курсів та приділенні великої уваги студентам з обмеженими можливостями. Кожен університет створив свої програми для підвищення якості освіти. Всі вони спрямовані на допомогу талановитим студентам, але фінансово не забезпечені; студентам, які мають видатні академічні результати та іноземним студентам. Всі провідні університети мають свої офіційні сторінки та веб-сайти, на яких висвітлюється актуальна інформація щодо роботи закладів вищої освіти, їх планів та перспектив.

**Ключові слова:** провідний університет, індекс, репутація, інтернаціоналізація, економічний вплив, фінансова підтримка, престиж ЗВО, освітні послуги, освітній продукт.

### **Introduction of the issue.**

Modernization of higher education institutions (HEIs) is an integral part of improving the quality of education, but requires considerable investment. Therefore, modern HEIs should take care of the prestige of their institution, which will help increase not only the image of the university, but also economic and international activities. Given this paradigm, it is appropriate to analyze the positioning strategies of leading universities on the indicators of "prestige of higher education institutions among consumers of educational services or users of educational products" and "economic and international activities".

**Current state of the issue.** The works of D. Aaker [1], J. Kotter [5], A. Kharkivska [4] and others are devoted to the study of the strategies of

positioning of higher education institutions, in particular to the strategic perspectives. The study of the brand, the image of organizations was paid attention to by B. Simonin [16], P. Temporal [17], R. Riezebos [15] and others.

### **Outline of the unresolved issues brought up in the article.**

It should be noted that a small number of scientific works are devoted to the study of the problem of positioning strategies of leading universities in the international information space. It would be appropriate to pay more attention to this issue.

**Aim of the research** is to make a comparative analysis of strategies for positioning the UK's leading universities in the international information space on global indicators "the prestige of higher

education institutions among consumers of educational services or users of educational products" and "economic and international activities" and identify their strengths and weaknesses with the aim of further application of the identified effective means by domestic universities.

**Results and discussion.** The main strategic priorities of HEIs within their market activity, modern unstable environment, intensification of competition between them are to achieve a stable position in the market of educational services by developing new directions of educational and scientific activities, expanding the range of services [4].

In the conditions of fierce competition in the market of educational services, the correctness of the chosen strategy, academic mobility, both internal and foreign policy of the HEIs play an important role in the positioning of universities.

In previous scientific research, we defined the concept of global indicators "Prestige of HEIs among consumers of educational services or users of educational products" and "economic and international activities" with their indicators. The next step in our study will be the analysis of the leading universities in the UK on the global indicator "the prestige of free economic education among consumers of educational services or users of educational products", which has the following indicators: index of academic reputation; HEIs reputation index among employers; brand recognition.

First, we are going to consider Oxford University. The index of academic reputation and the index of reputation of free economic education among employers can be found in the QS World University Rankings [14]. Both of these indicators are 100, and are determined by surveying consumers about the achievements of the university and surveying employers, respectively. To ensure such high results, Oxford

employs PR managers who create large-scale advertising campaigns to ensure effective long-term partnerships and cooperation with employers, including work with the Industrial Strategy Foundation, which was created to fund and support research in various areas of Britain.

Oxford University is positioned in the world as a well-known educational and research brand, so it also contributes to a high reputation index of the university, which is certainly taken into account by PR managers when creating a positioning strategy. Brand recognition is maintained through the spread of attributive features of HEIs; OUP activities, which launches new academic channels, social media.

Next we will analyze the University of Cambridge. As in Oxford, the "academic reputation index" and the "index of the reputation of freelancers among employers" of the global indicator "the prestige of freelancers among consumers of educational services or users of educational products" in Cambridge are 100 [11]. After all, a team of experienced PR managers is working on creating the image of Cambridge and its positioning strategy. The university has a department of strategy management, which performs the functions of communications in various areas.

The strategy of positioning the university, according to the indicator "index of academic reputation", is based on the coverage of the names of outstanding graduates; modern world-famous researchers working in Cambridge and promoting the personal qualities of teachers: "Our teachers are individual and unique. Each has a unique personality and offers additional courses to meet the needs of study groups and individuals in many areas. Together, they offer a rich and comprehensive set of learning opportunities. Cambridge is so rich in academic disciplines that you are sure to find the course you are looking for. And

if not, we can try to create it for you! " [3].

On the website of HEIs, in the section "For business", a large-scale advertising campaign is conducted, which contributes to the high achievement of the indicator "index of reputation of HEIs among employers". It aims to encourage employers to cooperate. The slogan of this section is "Find out about the services we offer and who to contact to discuss your specific requirements."

Cambridge has The Careers Service [18], which aims to help graduates find employment with the best companies.

In terms of brand recognition, Cambridge, by its very name, is a global brand. After all, it is one of the oldest and most recognizable universities in the world. His slogan is: "Cambridge's ideas shaped the world. Now the university must shape its future. Sincerely, Cambridge." This slogan is printed on all handouts of conferences, symposia and other events. Also, the recognition of the university brand in the international information space is significantly increased by bloggers involved in the process of positioning Cambridge by PR managers.

Edinburgh University's positioning strategy is also at a high level. According to the QS world ranking, the indicators of the global indicator "prestige of HEIs among consumers of educational services or users of educational products", "academic reputation index" is 97.3, and "free economic reputation index among employers" – 94 [12]. Such results of indicators, the university was able to get thanks to the correctly chosen marketing activities of PR-managers. According to the official website of the HEIs: "We are among the top ten universities in the UK and the top 100 universities in the world for the employment of our graduates – our graduates receive an average salary of £ 49,500 for five years after graduation. Edinburgh graduates are also some of the best employers in the UK" [19].

A business school has been established in Edinburgh, which is one of the top 100 best business schools in the world. This information is also posted on sites in the international information space, which increases the interest not only of students wishing to study in the relevant school programs, but also potential employers.

The names of well-known graduates and professors of The University of Edinburgh, information about which can be found in the world-famous dictionaries of the Oxford Dictionaries, promote the university's brand and increase its reputation; social networks Facebook, twitter, linkedin. The activities of the institution are covered in films and videos commissioned by the administration of the HEIs and the students themselves.

The indicators "academic reputation index" and "index of reputation of HEIs among employers" of the global indicator "prestige of free economic education among consumers of educational services or users of educational products" of the University of Manchester are 94.6 and 98.5, respectively [13].

Like all leading universities, Manchester advertises the names of its famous graduates and faculty.

The positioning of the university includes the dissemination of information that the university is one of the most popular among the best employers in the UK (The Graduate Market in 2018, High Flyers Research) [7]. After graduation, a significant number of graduates remain in the city, because there are attractive employment conditions for international corporations, companies and organizations.

The brand of the University of Manchester is associated worldwide with the formation and development of social responsibility in the subjects of the educational process. The brand of the university is also recognized by the phrase "Carbon Literate Organization" (Carbon Literate Organization). The

University of Manchester is the first free university in the world to receive a certificate for this program.

The University of Bristol has an index of "academic reputation index" of 75.6 and "index of reputation of HEIs among employers" 89.4 according to the global indicator "prestige of free economic education among consumers of educational services or users of educational products" [10].

With such high results, the UWE Bristol Media Relations team motivates future students to study at the University of Bristol. Information on the results of world rankings by indicators is posted on the news site [6].

PR managers, implementing the strategy of positioning the University of Bristol, present it as the best, presenting the "National Awards for Excellent Learning". These awards are advertised on TV, in newspaper articles, on social networks and on the university website. No less important for the prestige of the HEIs is the work of the general university web radio. The YouTube channel of the university constantly uploads videos promoting important events in the life of the university and prominent personalities of the institution. Only the University of Bristol makes films about its famous and successful graduates. Also, the UWE Bristol Media Relations team created information and propaganda pages of the site: "Providing talent for your business is our business", "Why choose a UWE Bristol graduate?", "Employer reviews", "Vacancies in employment", "About internship", which, of course, contributes to the confirmation of the index of academic reputation and the index of reputation of HEIs among employers. In addition, social networks constantly advertise all the important activities of the university, aimed at attracting not only students but also employers. The brand recognition of the University of Bristol, as in other leading universities, is also influenced by the names of famous graduates.

Next, we analyze the leading universities in Western Europe on the global indicator "economic and international activity" with such indicators: economic impact, financial support for education, internationalization of the university.

The high efficiency of the "economic impact" indicator of Oxford University is confirmed by a significant contribution to the economy of the country and the world. This information is actively advertised in all media: "Economic revenues from the University of Oxford to the UK budget amount to about 5.8 billion pounds and contribute to the labor market of more than 50 thousand workers. Worldwide, the impact is £ 7.1 billion" [9].

OUP successfully develops, prints and successfully implements methodological support for schools whose program is constantly updated. Also, the phonetic series "Reading. Records. Other", which aroused great interest among readers and made a significant contribution both financially and in the positioning of the OUP brand.

In 2018, the university funded the BiGGAR Economics – Economic Impact study at Oxford University. The study analyzed the main costs of the university, including staff, students, research, volunteering, tourism, health and more. The BiGGAR Economics – Economic Impact study found that each pound of Oxford's income brings in £ 3.30 to the country's economy, and invests £ 2.3 billion a year in its region's economy, as well as 33.7 thousand jobs.

Thus, the findings of the study unequivocally proved that Oxford makes a significant contribution to the economy not only at the local but also at the national level.

As for the "financial support for education" indicator, there is financial support for students in Oxford, i.e. scholarships, for low-income families. Almost one in four UK students receives a scholarship. Depending on the category of students and their needs, the

university offers different types of scholarships.

There is also the Oxford-Princeton Alliance, which includes a Global Leadership Scholarship Program and a Student Exchange Program. All interested people who subscribe to the Oxford news receive an e-mail invitation to participate in the competition for a scholarship.

Oxford University positions itself as one of the most international educational institutions, as it employs and educates many foreign teachers and students. For example, in the 2018-2019 academic year, 48 % of academic staff worked at the university and 41 % of students of different nationalities studied. Therefore, the rate of "internationalization of the university" in Oxford is high, which constantly puts it in the lead in international rankings.

As part of its international activities, Oxford has launched a free website in Kenya, published an atlas for Zambia, and developed new methodological support for educational institutions in Lesotho and Namibia. The university has created distance learning programs for Asian teachers. OUP China has developed a mobile educational platform for teachers, with videos on the use of educational resources, called "Approach".

The Oxford Headway and Let's Go courses are very popular. These are online lessons conducted by highly qualified professionals through a satellite line using OUP content. Such classes comply with the international CEFR standard and are sold worldwide.

Let's analyze the positioning strategy of another leading university in the UK – Cambridge. According to the indicator "economic impact" of the global indicator "economic and international activities of HEIs", we can say with confidence that the University of Cambridge also makes a significant contribution to the economy, as its total income is 112 million pounds, as evidenced by Internet resources [11].

Cambridge is rightly considered the world's leading university and to support its brand, it constantly holds charitable events with the participation of investors, employers, famous graduates, government officials and the media, which is covered on the website of Cambridge University Press [2]. The university employs the best teachers and researchers from all over the world, which is the main investment of HEIs.

Regarding the "financial support for education" indicator, although Cambridge is considered one of the most expensive educational institutions not only in the country, but in the world, its positioning strategy is aimed at supporting low-income students. Because of this, scholarships for gifted students cover part of the cost of tuition, and sometimes even full tuition and living expenses. Such financial support and the programs that provide it, in particular Gates Cambridge Scholarship, Cambridge International Scholarships and others, are widely advertised on the Internet: LinkedIn, facebook, Instagram, YouTube and on the official websites of the Free Economic Zone.

PR managers also position financial support at Cambridge colleges. This includes funding for methodological support, equipment, direct training, as well as scholarships, incentive prizes and grants.

As for the indicator "internationalization of the university", the positioning of Cambridge, by the way, like Oxford, keeps the course on internationalization. After all, out of 19,000 students, 7,049 are foreigners from more than 130 countries. Among the university's graduates are about 62,000 non-UK professionals working in more than 190 countries, as evidenced by the university's website and other social networks, including Twitter. Cambridge has International Summer Schools with more than 50 countries, which certainly contributes to the internationalization of the institution. The activities of these schools and

invitations to them are constantly advertised on Facebook and YouTube. No less important fact of internationalization is the extensive advertising campaign for communication of graduates, developed by PR-managers on social networks; foreign tours of choirs, theater groups, sports teams, etc.

Next, we will analyze the strategy of positioning the University of Edinburgh on the global indicator "economic and international activities of the HEIs" and its three indicators.

The University of Edinburgh has a total income of £ 69 million, which confirms the significant economic impact of HEIs on the development of Scotland. PR managers widely advertise the university's cooperation with some of the largest companies RockStar North and Skyscanner.

The indicator "financial support of education" is confirmed by the information on the official website of the university and the Internet about the provision of scholarships and grants to gifted students. The University of Edinburgh provides a limited number of grants for outstanding academic performance, and together with charitable foundations funds the most promising research projects.

Regarding the internationalization of the HEIs, the positioning strategy of the University of Edinburgh is represented by the slogan "Impressive world community!!! Our ambitious internationalization strategy ensures that the teaching and research we provide offers global benefits. Students from two thirds of the world study here" [8]. Out of 30,000 university students, about 11,000 are citizens of other countries, almost 180 countries. PR-managers are actively working in this direction, advertising the activities of the university to attract foreign students and partners from abroad.

An analysis of the positioning strategy of the University of Manchester on the indicator "economic impact" of the global indicator "economic and international

activities of the HEIs" showed that the total revenue in 2017 amounted to 1 billion pounds.

A significant contribution to the development of the economy was the implementation of the largest project, the flagship engineering campus of Manchester. This project allowed not only to employ local residents, but also to involve specialists from different regions of the country.

PR-managers have developed and published an electronic journal of the University of Manchester, which covers all areas of the university that have a social focus.

The University of Manchester has created a project that has supported vulnerable groups, including children. Also, in order to preserve organic agriculture, university scientists have implemented an ecological project for growing cocoa.

The indicator "financial support of education" is characterized by the offer of tuition and career growth at a reduced rate, and during the study period the interest is paid by the university, as reported on the official website of the university in the section "Study / masters".

Also, the article in the e-journal contains a lot of information about charitable organizations and foundations that provide financial assistance to promising research and development. The article was written by PhD students, who managed to raise more than 45 thousand pounds from 52 different charitable foundations.

Following the goals of the strategic goal, the university provides scholarships and promotions to gifted but financially disadvantaged students, students with disabilities, etc. Particular attention should be paid to the President's Award for Research (PDS), which is a leading university funding initiative for the top 100 postgraduate students, regardless of nationality. And this, at the same time, is a confirmation of the positioning of the strategy

according to the following indicator "internationalization of the university". After all, the University of Manchester has students of 154 nationalities. Of the total number of students, which is more than 37 thousand, 14,519 are citizens of other countries, as stated on the official website of the university. Such a high number of foreign students is facilitated by the Merit Scholarship introduced at the university, which helps students from underdeveloped countries to get an education.

After analyzing the positioning strategies of the University of Bristol on the indicator "economic impact" of the global indicator "economic and international activities of the HEIs" it was found that the total income of the university is 608 million pounds.

The University's Vice Chancellor, Professor Steve West, said in a report entitled "The Economic Impact of the University of the West of England": "In 2014-2015, UWE Bristol contributed more than £ 400 million to the West of England's GDP. This is equivalent to 1.3% of the city and region's production."

In support of the positioning goal, the UWE Bristol Media Relations team created a "Campus of Renewal" page on the official website of the university, which contains a promotion of financial investments of the university for its own construction and overall development of the region.

Financial support for education is widely advertised at the University of Bristol. The UWE Bristol Media Relations team has created a "Meeting and Funding" website, which is publicly available and informs all stakeholders about the cost of tuition, funding and scholarships, support for students from low-income families, and more. The development of UWE Bristol in terms of "financial support for education" is through the promotion of funding from the university budget for projects of students, staff and especially gifted students; annual grant from the

university, which supports the work of the Student Union "Green Team".

As for the indicator "internationalization of the university", 4715 foreign students study at the University of Bristol. There is a financial assistance program in the HEIs to attract people from different countries to study.

**Conclusions and research perspectives.** Thus, analyzing the five leading universities in the UK on the indicators of "academic reputation index" and "index of reputation of HEIs among employers" of the global indicator "prestige of higher education institutions among consumers of educational services or users of educational products", we see that hold Oxford and Cambridge universities, thanks to the large number and creativity of activities aimed at developing their institutions. Although the University of Bristol has a fairly high score on the Academic Reputation Index and the Employers' Reputation Index, in order to improve it, it should pay more attention to positioning with a focus on positioning the university, as well as on quality school education and knowledge dissemination among the population, to meet the needs of the subjects of the educational process in intellectual, cultural and ethical development.

In general, it can be said that all five universities, through their research, make a significant contribution to the development of the economy and society. Scholars and students have ongoing financial support for their research. An essential aspect of motivation for scientific discoveries is the prizes and awards of scientists. All universities have personal websites, are constantly in touch with the media, publishing their news about scientific achievements.

The main methods of positioning universities include stories, conversations, presentations, information, and reference method. All these methods are widely used in public speeches; on the official websites of the HEIs; in advertising of establishments, in



social networks. Almost all leading universities use the method of concluding cooperation agreements with various companies and organizations, which contributes to the promotion of HEIs and the successful employment of their graduates.

The main feature of positioning the leading universities is the promotion of their own brands. These are the attributive features of Oxford, and the Oxford Dictionaries, the Oxford Library. Oxford and Cambridge are the oldest universities in the world; The University of Edinburgh is known for its business school; The University of Manchester is one of the Carbon Literacy organizations and is associated with the formation and development of social responsibility in the subjects of the educational process. For all universities, the method of using well-known university graduates is important. Their achievements are covered on the websites, on TV, in the media and on social networks.

Modern realities encourage the development of volunteering. Leading HEIs do not stay away from this direction. In particular, the Universities of Oxford and Manchester are actively involved in charitable activities, and the University of Bristol promotes a healthy lifestyle among students and staff.

All HEIs promote cultural heritage sites by posting on their websites information about exhibitions in museums and libraries, and routes to cultural heritage sites located on the territory of these institutions. Also, to promote the university, some institutions are actively using slogans, web banners. The University of Bristol has a media liaison office. The leaders of the British HEIs, Oxford and Cambridge, have set up a career service where students receive information on further employment.

After analyzing the five leading universities in the UK on the global indicator of "economic and international activity", we concluded that the main forms of positioning are based on

consultations, seminars, conferences, research, courses and a lot of attention to students with disabilities.

Each university has created its own programs to improve the quality of education. All of them are aimed at helping talented students, but not financially secure; students who have outstanding academic results and international students.

The universities of Oxford, Cambridge and Manchester offer educational programs for people with disabilities. International summer schools established by Cambridge University contribute to the internationalization of Cambridge. The University of Edinburgh has established the University Students' Association, which consists of about 280 societies. The University of Manchester regularly awards its students for new discoveries, and the University of Bristol awards for good learning.

In the perspective of further research, the analysis of the leading universities of Ukraine according to these indicators.

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