

PRELIMINARY READINGS (1)



Photo: Carmen Santamaría

STAFF TRAINING IN JOENSUU

INTERNATIONAL ATTRACTIVENESS OF UNIVERSITIES

ACTIVITY PREPARED BY PROF. DR. CARMEN SANTAMARIA

Dear course participant,

We have prepared this presentation in order to guide your reading of an article on the topic of “Logos And Visual Identities Of Academic Institutions”. More presentations will deal with interesting articles and book chapters on some of the following topics:

- ▶ Marketization Of Higher Education
- ▶ The Effectivity Of Slogans
- ▶ Online Marketing Of Academic Institutions
- ▶ Country/City Reputation And Higher Education Marketing
- ▶ Student Mobility And Student Choices



Reading activities will facilitate informed discussion of interesting topics related to this course. You can also find reading self-assessment forms that will facilitate your personal monitoring of your own learning process.

The amount of time estimated for the reading activities before our training in Joensuu is of 2-3 hours.

We hope you enjoy these readings while gaining perspective on the topics!



▶ Logos and visual identities of academic institutions

READING:

Alessandri, Sue Westcott, Sung-Un Yang, and Dennis F Kinsey. “An Integrative Approach to University Visual Identity and Reputation.” *Corporate Reputation Review* 9, no. 4 (2006): 258–70. doi:10.1057/palgrave.crr.1550033.

Reading activity (1)

For this reading activity we need scan reading only, of pages 259-261 finding replies to these questions:

1. What are the arguments for the convenience of a multiplicity of identities of universities?
2. How can a university 's reputation be defined?
3. How can a university 's reputation be formed?

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- ▶ Universities, like people, have a number of different identities, which are contingent (depend) on context, audience and how these organizations or people see themselves in relation to others.

Corporations usually choose to standardize their visual identities (cost efficient). However, the idea of multiplicity in corporate identity strategy, which refers to the idea that organizations develop differing images depending on the audience interpreting the corporate identity, is gaining appeal. (P. 260)

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- ▶ Depending on the perspective, the concept of organizational reputation has been defined, in general, as:
 - ▶ (a) assessments that multiple stakeholders make about the company ' s ability to fulfill its expectations (Fombrun and Van Riel, 2003)
 - ▶ (b) a collective system of subjective beliefs among members of a social group (Bromley, 1993, 2000, 2002),
 - ▶ (c) collective beliefs that exist in the organizational field about a firm ' s identity and prominence (Rao, 1994 ; Rindova and Kotha, 2001)
 - ▶ (d) media visibility and favorability gained by a firm (Deephouse, 2000)
 - ▶ (e) collective representations shared in the minds of multiple publics about an organization over time (Grunig and Hung, 2002 ; Yang and Grunig, 2005). The intersection between such definitions is that the reputation of an organization refers to perceptions of the organization shared by its multiple constituents over time. (P. 261)

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- ▶ A university 's reputation can be defined as *collective* representations that the university 's *multiple* constituents – various internal and external constituents, including the media – hold of the university over time.



Applying general principles of reputation formation (Bromley, 1993, 2000 ; Caruana, 1997 ; Gotsi and Wilson, 2001 ; Fombrun and Shanley, 1990 ; Grunig and Hung, 2002), the researchers propose that a university ' s reputation can be formed on the basis of (a) direct or indirect / mediated experiences and (b) information received through a variety of channels of communication and symbols. Since information is acquired from university symbols (eg, logos, architecture and other visual attributes), in particular, a university ' s reputation can be significantly related to the visual identity of the university. (P. 261)

According to previous academic literature, the identity of an organization has an inseparable link with the organization ' s reputation. (P. 261)

Our comments

Dear participants,

You can find below some ideas you agree with and other you disagree with together with some reasons why and my comments.

▶ Participant:

- ▶ I agree with the idea that identity and reputation of a university are interrelated.
- ▶ I disagree with the idea that a university's identity is mainly understood as its visual identity. In my opinion, the identity of a university should also be viewed through its achievements in various aspects of life-academic, scientific, cultural etc.

▶ Teacher:

- ▶ Good observations, as quality is an important factor to be considered

▶ Participant:

- ▶ Recognition that an organization, including university, has multiple identities which are contingent on context, audience and how these organizations see themselves in relation to others (p.260) – I agree - the identities and therefore means of communication and promotion will be little different depending on the context. It will be different for domestic students, international students, research community, professional organizations, employers, etc.
- ▶ The need for different visual images for different university audiences. Also, idea that colleges and universities can employ a variety of graphical elements that speak at smaller segmented audiences (p.260) - I agree - different audiences need different approaches.
- ▶ About distinctiveness of the organization in the minds of its stakeholders- the more distinctive the Nike or Apple logos are to their stakeholders, the more distinctively positioned are the companies, products/services in the minds of stakeholders the more favourable reputations of the companies (p.262) - I disagree or only partly agree- these companies offer or have offered some unique products on the market, and visual identity is only one part of it.
- ▶ I would have expected that more people (especially in a country like the US) find images related to sports and athletics representative, but it may be because of the small sample size.

▶ Teacher:

- ▶ Good observations, as context and audience are important elements to be considered. I agree that size of sample may be the cause

- ▶ Participant:
- ▶ I agree that images play a major part in perception and increasingly so when the method of viewing a website has changed considerable (tablet, smart phone). We have found that image rich content is very appealing to students in particular along with short video sound bites.
- ▶ I feel that the article is a little too specific (obviously this was its aim) in that it is looking at USA collegiate universities which will mean the findings in other countries could well be quite different. I also believe that the high fees in the UK has a larger bearing on students choices and defines how they view and judge Universities and this aspect needs to be taken into account.
- ▶ The judgement of university choice is not starting from an equal playing field, ie if a UK student was to look at all European/International Universities there are many variables to consider.
- ▶ I feel that the USA system is too individual to apply to other countries and so the findings of the survey will need to be treated with caution/care. It is interesting however to provoke thought on this area and how this has changed over the years from the 1970's when Universities were seen very much as a centre of academia and not a business.
- ▶ Teacher:
 - ▶ Good comments and remarks showing the importance of context and audience as essential elements to be considered and noting differences between European and USA universities.



▶ Participant:

▶ Agree:

- ▶ a. Identity of an organization has an inseparable link with the organization's reputation
- ▶ b. Universities are somewhat different than other organizations

▶ Disagree:

- ▶ a. Reputation of universities in Poland are not based on athletic programs (article refers it to USA) as we not put pressure on it (e.g. sport) at all.
- ▶ b. The visual identity of an university does not express the essence of an university

▶ Teacher:

- ▶ Good remarks showing the importance of context and audience as essential elements to be considered and noting differences between Polish and USA universities.



▶ Participant:

▶ Agree:

- ▶ a. Universities need to establish a consistent marketing strategy or strengthen the already existent in order to differentiate from the other Universities.
- ▶ b. The visual identity of a University is related with the organization reputation.
- ▶ c. The idea that a group of people or a community have about a certain University is a result of several factors, where we can include the visual identity and university reputation.

▶ Disagree:

- ▶ a. Despite the importance of the visual identity of a University – name, logo, architecture... - I believe that nowadays, with all the impact and importance of social media, the presence of a University in platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, twitter... will contribute, much more, to the reputation and image of the institution. The marketing strategy used in these social media platforms should be aligned with the university's identity.
- ▶ b. In my opinion should be given more importance to the university's public behaviour as part of the university's identity, since Universities are active agents of the society, that contribute very much to the social and economic development of the community, city and region where they are integrated with.

▶ Teacher:

- ▶ Good remarks showing the importance of social media and public behaviour of universities.

THANKS FOR YOUR TIME AND DISCUSSION!

We hope this reading activated interesting concepts and ideas and that you can continue discussion with your colleagues, walking further in the way to knowledge



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