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JAMOATCHILIK BILAN ALOQALAR: UNIVERSITET GLOBAL REYTINGI VA REPUTATSIYASINI OSHIRISH KALITI**СВЯЗИ С ОБЩЕСТВЕННОСТЬЮ: КЛЮЧ К ПОВЫШЕНИЮ ГЛОБАЛЬНЫХ РЕЙТИНГОВ И РЕПУТАЦИИ УНИВЕРСИТЕТА****PUBLIC RELATIONS: THE KEY TO ENHANCING UNIVERSITY GLOBAL RANKINGS AND REPUTATION****Zaripova Dilobarxon Muso qizi** 

O'zbekiston Jurnalistika va ommaviy kommunikatsiyalari universiteti tayanch doktoranti

Annotatsiya

Oliy ta'lim tizimining raqobatbardosh landshaftida universitetning obro'si va global reytingi talabalarni qabul qilish, malakali o'qituvchilarni jalb qilish va institutsional hamkorlikka ta'sir qiluvchi muhim omillardan biridir. Ushbu maqolada universitet reputatsiyasini boshqarish va mustahkamlashda jamoatchilik bilan aloqalar (PR) ning hal qiluvchi roli ko'rib chiqiladi. Bunda universitetlar ijobiy imidjni yaratish, global ko'rinishni oshirish va asosiy manfaatdor tomonlar o'rtasida ishonchni mustahkamlash uchun foydalanilishi mumkin bo'lgan samarali PR strategiyalarini o'rganiladi. Maqolada universitet yutuqlarini namoyish etish, jamoatchilik bilan aloqalar va xalqaro miqyosda universitet brendini mustahkamlash uchun ommaviy axborot vositalari bilan aloqalardan foydalanish muhimligi ta'kidlangan. Shuningdek maqolada barqarorlik va yaxshi obro'-e'tiborga erishish va global reytinglarga o'rinlarni yaxshilash uchun PR vositalaridan foydalanish bo'yicha amaliy tavsiyalar berilgan.

Аннотация

В конкурентной среде высшего образования репутация университета и его глобальный рейтинг являются важными факторами, влияющими на прием студентов, привлечение квалифицированных преподавателей и содействие институциональному сотрудничеству. В данной статье рассматривается решающая роль связей с общественностью (PR) в управлении и укреплении репутации университета. Исследуются эффективные PR-стратегии, которые могут быть использованы для создания положительного имиджа университетов, повышения их глобальной видимости и укрепления доверия среди ключевых заинтересованных сторон. Подчеркивается важность использования средств массовой информации для демонстрации достижений университета, взаимодействия с общественностью и укрепления бренда университета на международной арене. Кроме того, представлены практические рекомендации по использованию PR-инструментов для достижения устойчивости, повышения репутации и улучшения позиций в глобальных рейтингах.

Abstract

In the competitive landscape of higher education, a university's reputation and global ranking are crucial factors influencing student admissions, attracting qualified faculty, and fostering institutional collaboration. This article examines the decisive role of public relations (PR) in managing and strengthening university reputation. It explores effective PR strategies that can be utilized to create a positive image for universities, enhance global visibility, and build trust among key stakeholders. The importance of utilizing mass media to showcase university achievements, engage with the public, and strengthen the university brand on an international scale is emphasized. Additionally, practical recommendations for leveraging PR tools to achieve sustainability, enhance reputation, and improve positions in global rankings are provided.

Kalit so'zlar: Jamoatchilik bilan aloqalar (PR), universitet obro'si, global reyting, oliy ma'lumot, PR strategiyalari, brendlarni boshqarish, ommaviy axborot vositalari bilan aloqalar, manfaatdor tomonlarni jalb qilish, akademik faoliyatdagi professionallik, institutsional hamkorlik

Ключевые слова: Связи с общественностью (PR), репутация университета, глобальный рейтинг, высшее образование, PR-стратегии, управление брендом, связи с медиа, вовлечение заинтересованных сторон, профессионализм в академической деятельности, институциональное сотрудничество.

Key words: Public relations (PR), university reputation, global ranking, higher education, PR strategies, brand management, media relations, stakeholder engagement, professionalism in academic activities, institutional collaboration.

INTRODUCTION

The integration of various cultural, educational, and socio-economic relations between the world community and countries is being evaluated in all aspects of education, including the pedagogical and managerial processes of higher education institutions. In the context of the Information Service, establishing communication with students and teachers, organizing a quality education system, and implementation are crucial.

It has been proven that in high-ranking universities worldwide, forming the image of higher education institutions and increasing their reputation in the international stage is important. This includes establishing constant communication with partners, consumers, students, and professors, as well as using effective PR technologies to boost university rankings.

For instance, the University of Oxford consistently ranks among the best universities globally. The University's strong PR service believes that continued coverage of its historical significance, academic excellence, and the impact of scientific research, along with PR campaigns highlighting innovative research and global collaborations, will enhance its reputation and contribute to its high standing in rankings by experts [1].

Additionally, the Polytechnic University of Hong Kong (PolyU) rose from 159th to 57th in the QS World University Rankings, a growth attributed to the University's robust PR strategy. This strategy effectively highlighted the University's research successes, strategic collaborations, and societal impact, thereby enhancing its global reputation.

PolyU has placed great importance on innovation and entrepreneurship, increasing its visibility and value among academic partners and employers through projects such as "GBA PolyVentures 2025", social initiatives, international cooperation, and active media engagement. By contributing to solving global problems and widely promoting comprehensive research and academic programs, PolyU has successfully established itself as a leading global institution, as reflected in its improved ranking [2].

Kelly A. Campbell at Western Michigan University studies the mission of public relations services operating within universities in both internal and external contexts in his PhD thesis on "PR and Internal Communication in Higher Education". According to Campbell, the internal PR service of a university is responsible for introducing university teachers to students, making strategic plans for the university, studying various problems faced by students and professors in the educational process, and implementing the university's internal management policies [3].

On the other hand, the external PR mission of the university encompasses managing financial communications, foreign relations, and maintaining good communication with parents and partners, all of which contribute to enhancing the university's reputation.

LITERATURE ANALYSIS AND METHODOLOGY

In higher education, the concept of PR and the use of PR technologies became popular in the mid-20th century. Universities in the United States and Europe began to understand the importance of managing their public image and communicating effectively with stakeholders. During the 1950s and 1960s, PR practices at universities primarily focused on internal relations, alumni relations, and fundraising. However, by the 1970s and 1980s, the concept of PR in higher education had become more complex. Universities began to hire specialized PR professionals and establish dedicated PR departments. The growth of media and increased competition between institutions led to strategic approaches such as media communications, marketing, and branding. Later, research on effective methods, goals, and objectives of PR activities in higher education began to appear in academic journals, exploring topics such as crisis communication, image management, and stakeholder engagement.

Public relations (PR) plays a vital role in shaping the reputation of higher education institutions. Universities utilize PR strategies to manage their public image, communicate with stakeholders, and enhance their global rankings. The significance of PR in higher education has been well-documented in various studies.

According to Baty (2024), the Times Higher Education World University Rankings incorporate performance indicators that reflect teaching, research, knowledge transfer, and international outlook, all areas significantly influenced by effective PR strategies [4]. PR campaigns that highlight these aspects can greatly enhance a university's visibility and reputation.

SRV Media (2024) emphasizes that PR activities such as media relations, social media engagement, newsletters, and community involvement are crucial for managing and enhancing the public image of educational institutions [5]. These activities not only improve the institution's standing but also attract high-quality students and faculty, contributing to better rankings.

Admittedly, **Dr. Richard Cook**, External Benchmarks Manager at the University of Sydney, elaborates on the importance of university rankings and the role of PR in enhancing visibility and reputation [6].

This article employs a mixed-methods approach to analyze the role of PR in enhancing university reputation and global ranking. The methodology includes both qualitative and quantitative research methods.

Comprehensive review of existing literature on PR strategies in higher education and their impact on university rankings will be conducted. Sources will include academic journals, industry reports, and case studies. Detailed case studies of universities with successful PR strategies, such as the University of Oxford and PolyU, will be examined. These case studies will analyze the specific PR activities employed and their outcomes on university reputation and ranking.

Data will be collected from academic databases, university reports, and rankings publications such as Times Higher Education and QS World University Rankings. This data will provide a baseline for understanding the correlation between PR activities and university rankings. Content analysis will be used to identify common themes and patterns in the qualitative data from literature reviews, case studies, and interviews. This will help in understanding the qualitative impact of PR strategies on university reputation.

The article aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the role of PR in enhancing university reputation and global ranking. By combining insights from literature, case studies, and empirical data, the research will offer practical recommendations for higher education institutions looking to improve their standings through effective PR strategies.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

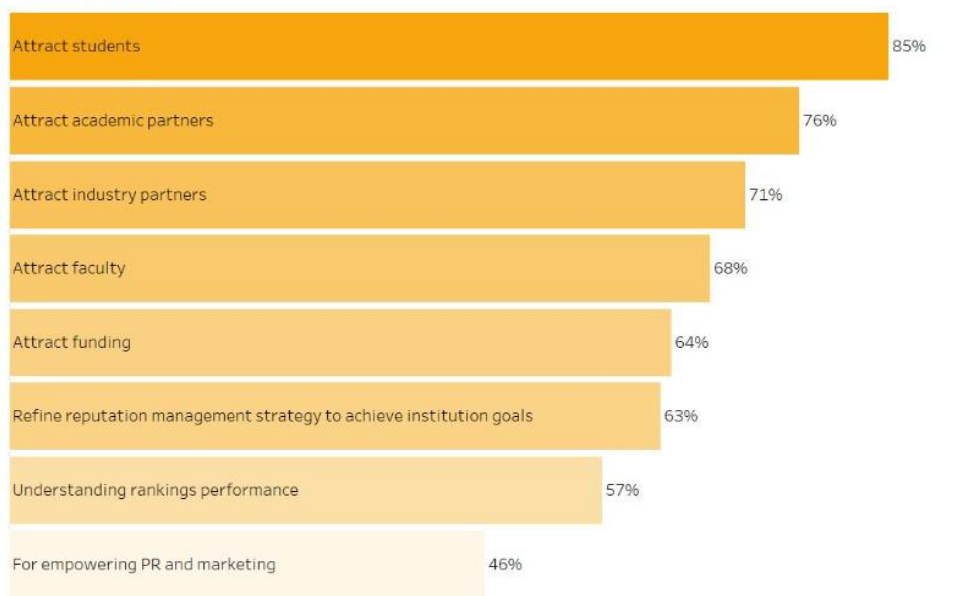
University rankings have become significant in higher education worldwide [7]. Most universities strive to achieve top positions in global rankings because these rankings provide benchmarks for comparing the quality of education, research output, and overall institutional performance. They help universities assess their strengths and weaknesses relative to peer institutions, encouraging continuous improvement and adherence to high standards. Moreover, universities participate in rankings and pursue higher ranks to gain greater visibility, attract high-quality students and faculty, and secure more resources from stakeholders [8].

In the top universities of the world, significant attention is paid to the formation and enhancement of the institution's reputation. The university's reputation is perceived as public opinion about the educational institution. Generally, the role of university reputation is crucial in improving the quality of education, enhancing economic and social standing, and establishing relationships with domestic and international economic and academic partners.

The top 50 universities from 471 around the world, including 18 from the QS World University Rankings (according to the 2024 estimate), were assessed to understand the role of university reputation. The results of a survey involving respondents from universities ranked up to the 200th place revealed that university reputation is a key factor in various areas: attracting 85% of students, 76% of academic partners, and 71% of economic partners. Additionally, reputation plays a significant role in opening and organizing faculties (68%), securing economic investments (64%), improving reputation management strategies to achieve institutional goals (63%), and several other aspects like understanding ranking performance (57%) and empowering PR and marketing (46%) respectively [9].

Picture 1

Why is it important for your institution to track and assess its recognition for excellence?

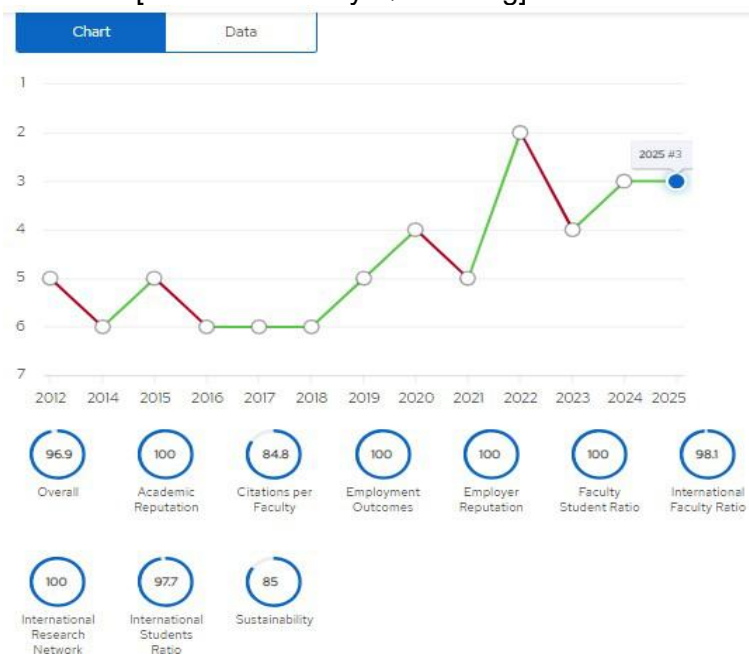


[The survey results from 50 universities to understand the role of university reputation]

It can be seen from this chart that university reputation plays a very important role in establishing contacts with interested parties. Moreover, university reputation serves as the main bridge in developing and connecting the academic and professional training activities of the institution. Academically, university reputation is considered a key factor in improving the diversity and quality of potential research partners, facilitating faculty exchange with institutions sharing common goals, enhancing the coverage and impact of scientific research, and attracting high-potential and talented students. Additionally, in terms of training professional personnel, a strong reputation contributes to improving graduates' results and overall outcomes.

It is widely recognized that Oxford University is one of the leading universities in the world.

Picture 2 [Oxford university QS ranking]



Oxford University maintains its leading position through effective Public Relations (PR) by strategically managing its reputation, promoting its achievements, and engaging with its diverse audiences. Oxford has a globally recognized brand associated with excellence in education, research, and history which can be assessed 100 in the chart above. The PR team ensures that the university's brand is consistently represented across all platforms, from marketing materials to online presence [10].

The university maintains strong relationships with media outlets to ensure positive coverage of its activities, achievements, and contributions to society. This includes press releases, interviews, and media events that highlight Oxford's research breakthroughs, academic programs, and notable faculty. By leveraging these PR strategies, Oxford University has been able to achieve a perfect score of 100 for its international research network.

Besides, Oxford produces high-quality content that showcases its strengths and accomplishments. This includes articles, videos, social media posts, and newsletters that highlight the university's impact on various fields, student and faculty achievements, and campus events. Indeed, Oxford University's effective PR strategies not only bolster its international research network but also enhance its international faculty-student ratio leading to high scores of 100, 97.7 and 98.3, respectively.

In addition, engaging with alumni is crucial for maintaining Oxford's reputation and influence. The university's PR team organizes events, reunions, and communication campaigns to keep alumni connected and involved. Successful alumni stories are also shared to inspire current and prospective students.

In the face of challenges or controversies, the PR team plays a vital role in managing the university's response. This includes timely and transparent communication, addressing concerns, and mitigating negative impacts on the university's reputation. According to Ciaran Martin, Professor of Practice in the Management of Public Organisations at the Blavatnik School of Government, effective crisis management necessitates learning from past experiences to improve future responses. Martin highlights the importance of coordination, capacity, and capability in managing crises, emphasizing the need for a well-coordinated approach across different government layers and improved resource allocation at the local level to handle crises effectively [11].

Furthermore, Associate Professors Anette Mikes and Marc Ventresca from the Saïd Business School underline the significance of risk management and rapid innovation during high-stakes crises. They suggest that effective crisis communication should foster an open, no-blame culture and balance competing priorities such as health and the economy, ensuring clear and timely dissemination of information. The Collaborating Centre for Oxford University and CUHK for Disaster and Medical Humanitarian Response also stresses that good communication in crises must be both effective and sensitive, utilizing available resources and engaging all stakeholders, including the media. This approach ensures that communication is proactive and realistic, addressing the extraordinary conditions of a crisis [12].

By maintaining active and positive engagement across social media accounts, the university's website, and other digital platforms, Oxford effectively reaches a global audience, sharing news and promoting its values and achievements. Furthermore, the PR team focuses on highlighting academic excellence and cutting-edge research, promoting significant research findings, academic programs, and collaborations with other institutions. This gives a great impact on academic and employer reputation, as well as employment outcomes, gaining perfect scores from QS system. This strategic promotion positions Oxford as a leader in innovation and knowledge, reinforcing its prestigious status in the academic world. By effectively leveraging these PR strategies, Oxford University continues to uphold its prestigious position as a world-leading institution in education and research.

It can be demonstrated that effective Public Relations (PR) strategies significantly enhance a university's reputation and position. Hong Kong Polytechnic University (PolyU) exemplifies this trend, having achieved notable success within a relatively short period. PolyU's ascent in the QS World University Rankings, culminating in a rank of 57 in 2025, showcases the impact of well-

executed PR strategies. The university's overall score of 72.1 is a testament to its efforts in various key areas [13].

With an academic reputation score of 68 and a high citations per faculty score of 94.9, PolyU has effectively utilized PR to promote its research achievements and faculty expertise. This visibility in academic circles has led to increased recognition and collaboration opportunities.

PolyU's score of 64.5 in employment outcomes and 35.6 in employer reputation highlight the university's strong connections with industry. Strategic PR efforts, such as showcasing successful alumni and hosting industry events, have reinforced PolyU's image as a hub for employable graduates. Achieving a perfect score of 100 in international faculty ratio and 91.9 in international student ratio, PolyU has successfully positioned itself as a global institution. PR campaigns promoting its diverse and inclusive environment, along with support services for international students, have played a crucial role.

Picture 3 [PolyU QS ranking]



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PolyU's commitment to sustainability, reflected in its score of 77.4, has been effectively communicated through PR initiatives. Highlighting sustainability research and campus initiatives has not only enhanced the university's reputation but also attracted like-minded students and faculty.

Generally, Hong Kong PolyU's success demonstrates how strategic PR can significantly boost a university's reputation and global standing. By effectively promoting research output, engaging with industry, and highlighting diversity and sustainability, universities can achieve rapid advancements in their rankings and overall perception.

CONCLUSION

It can be concluded that effective public relations (PR) is pivotal in enhancing the reputation and global ranking of universities. By strategically managing communication, promoting achievements, and engaging with diverse audiences, institutions like Oxford University and Hong Kong Polytechnic University (PolyU) have significantly improved their standings in the QS World

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University Rankings. Oxford's comprehensive PR strategies have maintained its prestigious reputation, while PolyU's rapid ascent highlights the transformative impact of well-executed PR efforts. These examples illustrate that universities can achieve remarkable advancements in reputation and ranking by leveraging PR to highlight their strengths and foster global engagement.

It is proved that Universities should develop a robust communication plan that highlights their research achievements, academic programs, and faculty expertise. Regular updates and positive news stories help build a strong, consistent brand.

In addition, Universities had better establish and maintain strong relationships with media outlets to ensure positive coverage of university activities. Proactively sharing press releases and facilitating interviews with key faculty can boost visibility.

Next stage should be investing in a dynamic and engaging online presence. Regular updates on social media platforms, an informative website, and interactive content can attract a global audience and engage current stakeholders.

Furthermore, in order to maintaing its reputation and ranking, universities have to actively engage with alumni through newsletters, events, and success stories. Because, alumni can act as ambassadors, enhancing the university's reputation and facilitating new opportunities for collaboration. Plus, **universties have to** develop a comprehensive crisis management plan that includes transparent and timely communication to handle crises effectively can mitigate negative impacts and maintain trust. By implementing these recommendations, universities can harness the power of PR to enhance their reputation, achieve higher rankings, and establish themselves as leaders in the global academic community.

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