

doi: 10.52370/TISC26305RP

THE UNIVERSITY STUDENT AND MARKETING: A VISION OF RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE TOURISM SECTOR

*Rodolfo Pérez Lavandera¹; Gressler Vladimir Ramos-Giral²;
Yanlis Rodríguez Veiguela³*

Abstract

The universities have recognized the importance of promotion in the education and tourism sectors. For instance, universities have transformed their vision from student recruitment to a holistic marketing approach. This has caused the issue of marketing on student confidence and student sentiment, has gained more expectations in recent years by universities and the tourism sector. The study aims to systematize the theoretical and practical references that link confidence and student sentiment to marketing approaches in higher institutions. The findings identified a small number of studies, which differ from the interest in other sectors and businesses. Concerning student confidence and student sentiment, the paper highlights the employment opportunities, internship, personal branding, storytelling and collaborative project-based learning. Furthermore, these aspects are fairly linked with obtaining employment opportunities and enhancing vocational capabilities.

Key Words: *Marketing, Student Confidence, Student Sentiment, Higher Education, Tourism Sector.*

JEL classification: *M31, I23*

¹ Rodolfo Pérez Lavandera, PhD student, Transilvania University of Brasov and University of Artemisa, B-dul Eroilor nr. 29, 500036, Braşov, Romania, +40755850255, rodolfo.perez@unitbv.ro

² Glessler Vladimir Ramos-Giral, PhD student, Transilvania University of Brasov and University of Holguín, B-dul Eroilor nr. 29, 500036, Braşov, Romania, +40755851045, glessler.ramos@unitbv.ro

³ Yanlis Rodríguez Veiguela, PhD, First Vice Rector, University of Artemisa, 8th Street, between 7 y Campo, Consejo Popular Abraham Lincoln, Artemisa, Cuba, +535 2847631, vicerrectora1@uart.edu.cu

Introduction

Higher education institutions (HEIs) recognize the significance of promotion due to increasing global competition and the university realm. An extensive literature has been developed on marketing practices from the business sector to the higher education sector (Gordillo et al., 2020; Hemsley-Brown & Oplatka, 2006). This currently requires HEIs to meet the needs of students. To achieve this, a product should be designed that aligns with the expectations, perceptions and sentiments of students, as in the tourism sector.

According to Ivy (2008), marketing in the university sector is becoming increasingly necessary, since universities offer degrees that meet students' needs. The primary goal of HEIs must be to consistently provide excellence in teaching and learning, as well as to integrate university processes to achieve the professional qualifications needed in a global economy. However, as the number of these institutions grows, it is important to adopt strategies that differentiate their offerings from competitors and help them achieve their goals.

Therefore, it is important to study and interpret students' decisions by segmenting them into groups based on specific characteristics and the students as consumers (Guilbault, 2018). The universities should support a market orientation in their objectives. It is considered appropriate to foster and strengthen the relations between the HEIs and the students.

The relationship between marketing and student sentiment should be related to the social responsibility that students demonstrate in their future working lives (Burns et al., 2013). Another interesting topic is how student confidence can be boosted with marketing strategies from the perspective of the tourism sector. Thus, it is necessary to systematize the theoretical and practical references that link confidence and student sentiment to marketing approaches in higher institutions. Hence, a selection of articles from the databases of Scopus, Web of Science, Latindex and Dialnet was analyzed.

Theoretical Discussion

It is important to address higher education marketing from a perspective that increases student confidence and student sentiment. This will create closer relationships between and facilitate greater student and institutional

development. Students are products of their environments and generate feelings toward institutions, along with levels of confidence that are capable of identifying, creating and defending (Allison et al., 2020).

This is consistent with the concept offered by Allison et al. (2020) regarding student confidence and student sentiment in the case of higher education, which reaffirms the need to implement various marketing strategies to strengthen these relationships with students and HEIs.

In the same vein, a positive outcome was the employment of students in the workplaces where they completed their internships. This was facilitated by the signing of specific contracts developed during the internship period among the university, the companies and the students (Lozano-Nieto, 1998). It was recognized that the experience provided a clear vision of their future and allowed them to identify their strengths upon completing their regular courses and the weaknesses that needed to be improved to obtain employment. In general, the employment opportunities that universities guarantee their graduates are an effective way to boost student confidence and increase enrollment rates in each of the HEIs. Therefore, from a marketing perspective, the strategies should be carefully designed to address this issue.

According to McDougal et al. (2021), the activity of storytelling and personal branding contributes to developing multiple competencies in the workplace. For example, creativity, analytical thinking, problem-solving and communication skills are essential for university students.

Another effective way to boost student confidence is through learning. We need increasingly better-prepared university students to solve the problems generated by a society that has shifted toward knowledge to achieve economic and social well-being, which is named the knowledge society.

Furthermore, collaborative project-based learning raises student confidence. It helps students develop everyday life skills, such as time management, teamwork and managing responsibilities (Juliet, 2020). This type of learning can be linked to marketing strategies related to social responsibility (Akova & Kantar, 2021; Barna et al., 2025), co-creation (Nie & Zarei, 2023) and management to develop skills in students as future decision-makers.

Social marketing is a topic that has gained preference among students. In the case of social responsibility issues, it is considered necessary to establish an interrelationship (Azmat et al., 2023). For example, studies on gender highlight the equality among students and the need to understand the preferences of each gender (Alabi et al., 2019).

In the same vein, alcohol was identified as a serious issue that universities are facing worldwide. The study revealed how university students have been abusing addictive substances across America and other regions. Therefore, it is important to address this issue and prevent it from occurring within the university community. From a marketing perspective, the HEIs offers an opportunity to mitigate and inform students about this issue (Thompson et al., 2013).

However, closely related to student confidence is the sentiment that they can generate in their university life and after finishing their studies. Sentiment can be related to students' level of social responsibility, loyalty and commitment to HEIs (Al-Dwish & Aljohani, 2024; Alfayoumi et al., 2021; Burns et al., 2013).

The study conducted by Burns et al. (2013, p. 457) has declared: “It is widely assumed that Jesuit universities are reaching their objective of developing concern for social responsibility and social justice in their students (...). Given the centrality of social responsibility to Jesuit educational philosophy. However, surprisingly little empirical research has looked into whether Jesuit colleges and universities have actually been able to reach this objective”.

Political orientation has also been shown to influence students' feelings (Burns et al., 2013). Hence, greater research on marketing and student sentiment is needed in higher education. This contrasts with what is happening in the marketing of products and other services (Sabin, 2007).

The students' decision-making processes are very broad and depend on many internal and external factors. One aspect relates to university admissions, where aspects related to prices, reputation, image, social responsibility and the relevance of the teaching staff are evaluated (Brown et al., 2009). Consequently, it should be noted that pursuing these courses and their completion generate feelings of trust and identity that lead to a lasting relationship with these institutions, leading to the development of repeat studies at the same institution or the

recommendation of others, such as family and friends (Alabi et al., 2019; Allison et al., 2020; Juliet, 2020; Pearce & Sutton-Brady, 2003).

When systematizing these trends and marketing strategies, it is necessary to address the conclusions of the paper.

Conclusion

The search identified a small number of documents, which differ in other realms and institutions. These references and trends on student confidence highlight the employment opportunities, internships and the necessity to apply personal branding and storytelling to increase employment opportunities, as an effective tool.

Other effective ways to boost student confidence are through the learning and teaching process, employing reflective journals, portfolios, peer and self-assessment, online and oral presentations, research projects, grade contracts and debates, as well as collaborative project-based learning.

Social marketing has gained preference to boost student confidence. Nonetheless, the issue of student sentiment has not been thoroughly studied, highlighting the level of social responsibility, loyalty, commitment to HEIs and the political orientation of students.

Furthermore, there are practical implications. Firstly, the research contributes to understanding the aspirations and needs of students, as well as improving their relationship with HEIs. Secondly, the marketing strategies and actions proposed by the university administrators and educators based on student confidence and student sentiment allow for interrelation with other trending topics in universities, such as co-creation, relationship marketing and social responsibility.

Finally, the marketing strategies and actions proposed for the higher education sector have the particular feature of extending into the tourism sector, as they have gradually gained preference in activities related to academic tourism. Therefore, it is considered that this interconnection contributes to developing capacities in the tourism sector at both the regional and national levels.

Future research should conduct longitudinal studies to evaluate the impact of marketing strategies, which will enable comparisons among institutions and regions.

References

1. Akova, S., & Kantar, G. (2021). Effects of voluntary activities of university students on reputation management strategies of universities: Sample of public university. *Journal of Public Affairs*, 21(1). <https://doi.org/10.1002/pa.2149>
2. Alabi, O. J., Seedat-Khan, M. & Abdullahi, A. A. (2019). The lived experiences of postgraduate female students at the University of Kwazulu Natal, Durban, South Africa. *Heliyon*, 5(11), e02731. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2019.e02731>
3. Al-Dwish, G. M., & Aljohani, A. N. (2024). Sentiment analysis of Saudi Arabian university students by using ml algorithms. *Advances and Applications in Discrete Mathematics*, 41(5), 393–410. <https://doi.org/10.17654/0974165824027>
4. Alfayoumi, B., Alshraideh, M., Al-Sharaeh, S., Leiner, M., & Aldajani, I. M. (2021). Analyzing the Sentiments of Jordanian Students towards Online Education in the Higher Education Institutions. *International Journal of Advanced Computer Science and Applications*, 12(11). <https://doi.org/10.14569/IJACSA.2021.0121108>
5. Allison, L., Blair, J., Jung, J. H., & Boutin, P. J. (2020). The Impact and Mediating Role of Personal Brand Authenticity on the Self-Actualization of University Graduates Entering the Workforce. *Journal for Advancement of Marketing Education*, 28(2). <https://doi.org/10.63963/001c.150600>
6. Azmat, F., Lim, W. M., Moyeen, A., Voola, R., & Gupta, G. (2023). Convergence of business, innovation, and sustainability at the tipping point of the sustainable development goals. *Journal of Business Research*, 167, 114170. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2023.114170>
7. Barna, M., Bilyk, O., Lepeyko, T., Shikovets, K., Lemeshchenko, N., & Popovychenko, H. (2025). Corporate social responsibility of educational innovators in financial management and digital marketing

strategies. *Financial and Credit Activity Problems of Theory and Practice*, 4(63), 644–663. <https://doi.org/10.55643/fcaptop.4.63.2025.4860>

8. Brown, C., Varley, P., & Pal, J. (2009). University course selection and services marketing. *Marketing Intelligence & Planning*, 27(3), 310–325. <https://doi.org/10.1108/02634500910955227>

9. Burns, D. J., Gupta, P. B. & Burns, S. D. (2013). Are business students at Jesuit universities more socially responsible? *Social Responsibility Journal*, 9(3), 454–464. <https://doi.org/10.1108/SRJ-03-2012-0031>

10. Gordillo, L. D. J., Domínguez, B. M., Vega, C., De La Cruz, A., & Angeles, M. (2020). El marketing educativo como estrategia para la satisfacción de alumnos universitarios. *Propósitos y Representaciones*, 8(1), 3. <https://doi.org/10.20511/pyr2020.v8nSPE1.499>

11. Guilbault, M. (2018). Students as customers in higher education: The (controversial) debate needs to end. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 40, 295–298. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2017.03.006>

12. Hemsley-Brown, J. & Oplatka, I. (2006). Universities in a competitive global marketplace: A systematic review of the literature on higher education marketing. *International Journal of Public Sector Management*, 19(4), 316–338. <https://doi.org/10.1108/09513550610669176>

13. Ivy, J. (2008). A new higher education marketing mix: The 7Ps for MBA marketing. *International Journal of Educational Management*, 22(4), 288–299. <https://doi.org/10.1108/09513540810875635>

14. Juliet, M. P. (2020). Students' reflections on collaborated project-based learning in the Department of Ecotourism. *Tourism and Leisure*, 9(1), 1–14.

15. Lozano-Nieto, A. (1998). Internship Experiences in Biomedical Engineering Technology: An Overview of Students and Prospective Employers Perceptions. In *ASEE Annual Conference Proceedings* (pp. 3.368.1-3.368.4). <https://doi.org/10.18260/1-2--7235>

16. McDougal, E. R., Syrdal, H. A., Gravois, R., & Kemp, A. F. (2021). The power of story: using storytelling to increase students' confidence

and competence in applying marketing concepts. *Marketing Education Review*, 31(2), 119–124. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10528008.2020.1853573>

17. Nie, Z., & Zarei, H. (2023). A cross-cultural study on the career counseling service ecosystem: Implications for higher education marketing. *Journal of Marketing for Higher Education*, 36(1), 100–126. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08841241.2023.2242805>

18. Pearce, G. & Sutton-Brady, C. (2003). International Business Theatre (IBT): An alternative evaluation method for enhancing student learning in international marketing. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, 28(1), 3–15. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02602930301686>

19. Sabin, P. C. (2007). On Sentimental Education among College Students. *Teachers College Record: The Voice of Scholarship in Education*, 109(7), 1682–1704. <https://doi.org/10.1177/016146810710900712>

20. Thompson, E. B., Heley, F., Oster-Aaland, L., Stastny, S. N., & Crawford, E. C. (2013). The Impact of a Student-Driven Social Marketing Campaign on College Student Alcohol-Related Beliefs and Behaviors. *Social Marketing Quarterly*, 19(1), 52–64. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1524500412472668>