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Branding Universities using Social Media: how brand value is created

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Abstract

In the age of globalisation, universities need to sell their brand. During the COVID-19 pandemic, educational institutions have started to develop social media more than ever before, as social media has become the only method of communication with prospective and current students. The purpose of this article is to identify the specifics of brand value creation in higher education by analyzing social networks and drawing on the experience of M.Narikbayev KAZGUU University. The leading university was selected on the basis of the «Atameken» ranking. Social network analysis tools such as trendHERO, Jagajam, Yandex.Metrika were used for data collection. The research results are divided into four categories: Instagram analysis (audience, type of audience, gender), Facebook analysis (reposts, likes, posts), Twitter analysis and VKontakte. The results of the study can be a good example for other universities in creating an image. This paper aims to understand what the social media strategy should be based on.

Keywords: universities, university brand, social media, Instagram, social marketing

Introduction

While universities perform many different tasks and roles, at the end of the day, all universities are businesses. Therefore, in order for the university to function effectively, various development tools specific to for-profit companies can be applied to them.

Tuition fees are the most reliable and meaningful form of funding for an institution. The money earned by the university goes towards creating better facilities for students. These include dormitories, canteens, simulators, air conditioning and so on. In addition, scholarships and other support for vulnerable students cost money and reduce the number of students paying full tuition.

Universities depend on the competence and reputation of their teachers. Good teachers often have attractive employment options and they expect competitive salaries if they want to stay at university. University lecturers are highly educated and many have skills and knowledge that may be in demand, especially from competitors. Human knowledge continues to expand, so a true university must constantly add new departments and new teachers to keep up with the competition. In view of this, the size of a university's profits depends directly on the quality of its educational services and university facilities.

Universities face serious challenges associated with long-established business models. The cost of providing higher education services continues to rise and fewer and fewer students are either able or willing to pay the price. Competition between institutions for students has increased.

To ensure financial sustainability, universities are experimenting with changes to their business models. Historically, many universities have stuck to their mission, no matter how narrowly defined, and have simply done better at what they do well. Today, most universities, need to think very seriously about going beyond their missions. There are some universities that have made very big changes to their business models and recreated themselves as very different from other universities. One in particular is M.Narikbayev KAZGUU University, which was a relatively traditional university offering bachelor's and master's degrees. It then launched an online program that had a significant reach, while the traditional program also continued. A business school, special MBA, DBA, Mini MBA, and Executive MBA programs were established.

Changes in M.Narikbayev KAZGUU University's business model in relation to measures to increase enrolment and net tuition revenue include changes in pricing policies; the addition of new programs to increase institutional attractiveness; and the recruitment of new student groups, including part-time, transfer and international students. Most universities that have succeeded in increasing their student revenue streams have expanded their missions, and many have gone well beyond their original pathways.

In the 21st century, the age of digitalisation and the age of technology, there have been so many changes that have affected higher education as well. Universities necessity to market themselves more than ever before. As tuition fees rise and business courses become popular, students and their families are becoming increasingly cautious in their research into cost for money. Nowadays, university branding is much more than just a logo, as the market changes more and more every day.

The main motivations for promoting university brands can be seen as increasing student enrolment, raising prestige, and increasing profits. Nowadays, branding is done in a variety of ways, but social media promotion has a lot of advantages. Here, applicants can ask basic questions about enrolment and future prospects and get a comprehensive answer, which will increase their loyalty and be a factor in their enrolment.

The university's marketing strategy also needs to be reviewed if the university is experiencing a decline in students, prestige and enrolment. Such a strategy needs to be adjusted to the conditions in which the university exists. For instance, the marketing strategy should be in line with the new promotion tools of the university, forms and programs of study.

A university should promote its brand, logo and name, rather than make money through a rigid advertising campaign. For example, sponsoring competitions can draw attention to an educational product without over-activating the university. Also, social networking sites such as Facebook and Google+ offer a way to promote products and services in a more relaxed environment. This is direct marketing at its best. Social media connects to the world of potential students who can look at the university from a different perspective.

In light of the recent events surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic, universities from around the world have had to change their branding strategies. During the quarantine, social media has become the university's main method of communicating with its prospective students. When it comes to attracting students, a university with a well-respected brand has a huge advantage. But to stand out, a university needs more than a catchy slogan.

Core brand values can shape and sustain brand loyalty. Peters T. conducted empirical research concludes that functional value, symbolic value and experience value have regional differences in the context of brand loyalty[1] . Tangate M. notes that the functional value of retail sites, consumer brand, and relationship experiences play a significant role in building loyalty through empirical research.

There are many actions you need to take to reaffirm your presence: create content, interact with the community, develop your brand.

It is not necessary to be present in all social media to create brand value. On the other hand, it is important to be in the right places. It is important to identify the social media used by the target audience. In doing so, it is worth being aware of the specifics that each social chain comes with its own tools and practices. For example, corporate accounts provide more opportunities than regular accounts to create brand value. They also allow you to track results with analytics tools. Each platform offers its own analysis tools. Therefore, the importance of understanding the brand value creation process in social media is becoming relevant[2] .

The issue of branding has become increasingly important in marketing. For at least one simple reason: The economic world is dominated by often fierce competition, partly as a result of globalisation.

The key values of universities are: academic integrity, future employability and, perhaps most of all, the value of the student experience. But university customers today are not only students, but also their parents. In a difficult economic climate, parents are asking more and more insightful questions at open days, while applicants sit with their heads down.

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[1] Peters Tom (2015). WOW-ideas. 15 principles of innovation management; Eksmo Moscow.
[2] Kennedy Dan (2014). The marketer's secret weapon. Find your unique advantage, turn it into a powerful advertising message and deliver it to the right customers; Hippo. Moscow.

Successful branding for this dual audience depends on several key factors: positive student testimonials; synergy between marketing and branding; and attracting academics to the side, linking market success to academic freedom. Without consensus within the university, branding or rebranding may not be effective. But professors don't like to think of students as customers. They may resist thinking of themselves as part of a commercial brand. Academic freedom is often associated with success in the marketplace, but getting the message across to academics can be difficult[3].

Brand identities, such as the perception of the university as a regional centre with a fantastic student life, resonate with existing students N.A. Zhmireva points out that university identity is primarily shaped within communities[4]. However, a more important task may be the differentiation of universities in the outside world.

Marketing and branding need to be woven into university life. It is possible to radically change people's perceptions of the university through marketing. Many universities have multiplied applications through rich marketing and encouraging students to create advertising campaigns, as at M.Narikbayev KAZGUU University. Successful branding is not just about the logo, its importance lies in positioning the university in the market.

Universities looking to successfully brand themselves should: focus on their core values such as: academic integrity, which links teaching, research and scholarship; business-friendly courses with employability; and positive student experiences; be focused on communication with parents as well as students; involve academics as much as possible; their enthusiasm can often pay big dividends; highlight student statements in university marketing materials; maximise the use of.

It's impossible to avoid social media these days. Everyone (or almost everyone) spends half their day on networks (including mothers and even grandmothers). In 2020, the average user spent 2 hours and 24 minutes a day on social media. In 2020, 50.1% of the time spent on mobile devices was done using

[3] Klein Naomi (2012). People versus Brands; The Good Book. Moscow.
[4] Zhmyreva N.A. University brand in the context of improving the effectiveness of educational services // Bulletin of Tambov University. - 2017. - № 4. - C.78-85.

social media apps[5] . And since the golden rule of marketing is to find people where they already are, social media is the perfect place to reach your target audience and communicate your brand value message.

Ensuring that the university stands out is vital to successfully attracting students. Nowadays, if the institution is not well known or has not established itself well enough, then branding is an integral part of the university's marketing strategy.Creating a strong identity is the best way to attract students, as it helps to reinforce any promotional messages and contributes to the distinction that separates the institution from others.

The branding and slogans for most universities are remarkably similar. They tend to refer to the fact that the institution is unique, or different, or right for the student, without any specific reference to why this is so. University marketing needs to clearly state exactly what makes it an ideal place for students, and they need a solid brand identity to do this. For an institution to stand out, you need to focus on what it is that sets it apart from others and create a brand identity around that.

The digital world offers more and more ways to capture consumers' attention, while also increasing their ability to react if that attention is abused. As a result, today's brands are obliged to provide something useful, entertaining or memorable.

For institution, this means asking: what 'products' (lectures, academics, scholarly articles, equipment) can be provided that are relevant to the audience? What kind of experiences do such products generate? And who exactly is the university's audience? Universities should consider several groups: the existing corps of academics and students who, through their day-to-day experience of the university - ideally, should accumulate enough enthusiasm to identify and maintain their university "brand". In a world of growing online social networks, any such peer-to-peer recommendation has increasing influence.

Universities must use new channels of communication that are not only familiar to this group, but also allow for richer interaction: interactive virtual tours of the campus. In each case, the emphasis is on

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[5] Deyan G. How Much Time Do People Spend on Social Media in 2021? // https://techjury.net/blog/time-spent-on-social-media/

providing the university with a 'brand experience' rather than simply communicating its brand message. The latter may seem reductive or hyperbolic; the former is often richer and more likely to elicit word-of-mouth support.

To implement any of these principles, short-term demands, competing domestic interests or other entrenched attitudes will probably have to be overcome.

Research Aim

Brand positioning helps determine how the university is perceived in the minds of its most important audiences. To be sure of success, university positioning must be clearly differentiated from competitors, be easy to understand and advocate what is compelling and authentic .

University branding on social media should be based on digital communication. But for successful social media branding, it is necessary to create an effective strategy. After selecting the social media in which the university brand will be present, it is also worth taking care of high-quality content: choose texts whose tone reflects the branding, adapting to each of the chosen networks. Therefore content cannot be duplicated and a specific style must be chosen for each social media outlet: professional on Linkedin, intimacy on Facebook, playfulness on Instagram.

Thus, university branding is carried out to increase awareness and expand the number of students in future periods. University branding, by increasing visibility, leads to an increase in the university's popularity and an influx of new applicants. Given that young people spend a lot of time on social media, branding on this digital platform is justified.

In addition to promoting the brand of the university, close attention should be paid to the quality of educational services. The university should be represented by the best professors, the studies should be non-corrupt in full academic integrity.

M.Narikbayev KAZGUU University is the best example of matching quality with price. This university is the best example of an excellent marketing strategy and branding practice. M.Narikbayev KAZGUU University has been ranked first in the country for several years in terms of: student employability, degree of satisfaction, faculty profile, partners.

For this reason, M.Narikbayev KAZGUU University has been chosen as a key reference point for the study in order to examine its development strategy in detail. This study can be used as a great tool for any university to use as an example of how the educational service of a university/college/school/educational centre should be promoted.

Based on the above, the aim of the study was formulated.

The aim of the study is to identify the specifics of creating brand value in higher education based on the experience of M.Narikbayev KAZGUU University. To show how successful experience in social network like Instagram helps to attract more new students and makes alumni come back, as well as to position itself as #1 among higher education institutions in Kazakhstan.

The purchase of educational services is different from the purchase of any other good, because the customer wants to make sure that the educational service will be profitable in the long term. It is therefore relevant to examine the creation of brand value in an educational service.

Research questions

Based on the above, the following *research questions* were formulated:

1. What is the specificity of branding in social media?

2. What are the stages in the process of brand value creation in social media?

3. is a brand's presence on social media beneficial for branding, and to what extent?

4. Which social networks are the most appropriate for creating brand value for a university?

5. How to create a branding strategy for the university?

6. What type of content do they produce and how often do they publish? Do they actively engage with their users?

Since we see familiar names in the rankings of the best universities every year, it is very difficult for low ranked universities to compete in the market. These universities can use the example of

M.Narikbayev KAZGUU University to promote and improve the image of their institution using new channels such as social media.

1. Literature review

1.1 Social media branding

Branding and e-reputation are pervasive concepts in marketing. These realities make up the daily lives of community managers and advertisers alike. This is because objectives, target media and media and even the nature of the institution have a significant influence on the brand design and strategies to be implemented. One of the most common mistakes made by those who start a business or engage in it professionally is the incorrect allocation of resources. Mainwaring S. points out that "there must be clearly defined priorities. And it is just as true that advertising does not matter until the product or service for which it is intended is successful"[6] .

The logo is the most popular element of branding. Particularly in social media, where the customer's attention must be grabbed very quickly, it is the logo that represents a real lead. M.V. Akulich notes that "it is easy to understand that brand design concepts are largely based on visual elements, which have the most impact on objectives"[7] .

What makes social media special is that it really does remove all the traditional barriers to the work of marketers and community managers. It is no longer necessary to have a strong geographical base, to have entire teams of experts or significant funds. A.V. Kataev points out that "only with a set of specific tools can a university generate interest in social media. It will be able to develop a significant audience and effectively use the weight of its influence to promote its products, sell them or simply get closer to its customer base"[8] .

A university can create a cohesive online presence that its audience will enjoy. If the university has decided to use social media promotion, branding on one of them should be a priority. S.A. Fink points out that "Strengthening the brand on Instagram can help guide the content creation strategy and create a

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[6] Maynwaring S. It's time for action. How to make the world a better place using the power of social media, Translator: N. Zarahovich, MIF 2012. C.74.

[7] Akulich M. V. Internet-marketing: Textbook for bachelors [Text] / M. V. A^rn. M. Dashkov and K, 2016. C.89.

[8] Kataev A. V. Internet-marketing: manual / A. A. V. Kataev, T.M. Kataeva. - Rostov-on-Don; Taganrog: Publishing house of Southern Federal University, 2017. C.85.

more beautiful Instagram feed. Branding is very important when it comes to social media platforms like Instagram"[9] .

When a university creates a professionally designed Instagram feed that follows voice and brand design guidelines, you gain more trust from your followers. If you think carefully about the content the university shares and how its look matches the website and other social media profiles, audiences can take notice. Audiences appreciate this consistency and the fact that they can identify the university brand through its content.

If Instagram branding is consistent with the university's overall brand, the target audience can recognize content across multiple platforms. Using a consistent color and font scheme in branded graphics is a great way to help a university's audience immediately identify whether a particular message is coming from a particular university. [10]

There are a number of features to consider when it comes to branding on social media - firstly, "the logo and cover photo (if applicable) should be consistent across the board to help with instant brand recognition" [11]. When it comes to an Instagram profile, there can seem to be a large number of profile elements missing for customisation, with the exception of content being uploaded to the feed and stories. However, there are a few elements present that need to be branded, such as the profile picture, username, bio and Instagram story highlights. The best way to start an Instagram branding strategy is to look at the content that the university creates. V.A. Smolina notes that "a better strategy needs to be created to ensure that the content has the same look and feel across the board" [12].

In addition, you need to maintain consistency so that you appear regularly in your subscribers' feeds and they continue to engage with the university's content. You also need to supplement your

[9] Fink S.A. Features of Internet promotion on Instagram // https://cyberleninka.ru/article/n/osobennosti-internet-prodvizheniya-na-ploschadke-instagram

[10] Instagram for business: 40 hacks and ready-made solutions - M.: Internet Marketing, 2017. 82 c.

[11] Holmogorov V. Internet marketing. A short course. 2nd edition. SPb: Peter, 2002. 272 c.

[12] Smolina V. A. SMM from scratch. Secrets of promotion in social networks / V.A. Smolina. - Vologda, Infra-Engineering, 2019. C.80.

Instagram feed content with stories that match the brand look and feel you've established to help keep your brand in mind and further stimulate interest . [13]

The most important recommendation to ensure that Instagram contributes to the university's brand is to "create a social media style guide for the marketing team" [14]. This includes color schemes, fonts and guidelines, graphic suggestions and more.

Brand is thought to come from the Latin " brend" - to brand, or from the Scandinavian "brandr" - to burn, to burn out. Since ancient times, a brand could only be awarded to goods of high quality. The stigmatised object is isolated from the similar ones, acquiring individuality. Branded products have always been sold at a higher price. The brand adds extra value to the overall product (i.e. to the unbranded product).

Salzman M., Matatia A., O'Reilly Ann describe a brand as "a set consisting of a product that meets the functional needs of consumers as well as the added value that makes customers feel very satisfied that this brand is of higher quality and fits them better than similar brands offered by competitors" [15].

1.2 Brand and brand management in Higher education

Brand management or brand management is the process of building and managing a brand that promotes the sale of products.

The main elements of marketing in this process are brand ideas, market analysis, shaping strategy and organising advertising campaigns.

The term was coined in 1931 by Neil McElroy, who was then an employee of Procter & Gamble. He proposed the introduction of a new position to manage a company's reputation called brand manager. Since then, the concept of brand management has become ubiquitous.

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[13] Tilda Education. What internet marketing consists of [Electronic resource] // Internet marketing from scratch. - URL: https://tilda.education/courses/marketing/internet-marketing-beginning/
[14] Ingate Brand #1: how to increase online visibility. // Internet Marketing, 2014. 21 c.
[15] Salzman M., Matatia A., O'Reilly Ann. Get people talking about you. How to generate demand with word of mouth. M.: Williams, 2017. C.90.

Brand management is a major factor influencing the growth of sales and value of goods. Thus, the brand manager deals with the management of financial reporting as well as other management processes.

The brand manager is the central link in the matrix project management system for brand development. His/her functions include planning, organising and controlling marketing activities as well as supervising all processes at the various management levels and have a significant impact on the brand strategy under his/her control. In addition, he defines the direction of all brand strategy implementation, implements management and advisory activities, and is responsible for brand development by coordinating internal brand processes and decisions.

During his/her activities, the brand manager interacts with a large number of functional departments. By participating in the planning and management of the promotion of the educational service, he gets closer to the real business situation, which allows him to improve some elements of the brand strategy.

The involvement of the brand manager in the strategic management of the university is related to the educational service delivery functions. Because of the high responsibility of brand managers, business managers provide them with financial functions, allowing them to shape the ROI and profitability of the brand.

Today, brand management is the core of strategic management, integrating the main strategies around them. This is due to the fact that a large number of universities see their main objective not as increasing profitability but as increasing equity value, which makes it possible to view the brand as the company's main intangible asset.

Currently, a brand is a brand with an established image. The technology for brand formation and implementation has been called branding.

A brand helps to:

- Identify, i.e. know a service when it is mentioned;

- to break away from the competitors, i.e. to distinguish the educational services of the university from the masses;

- create an attractive image for consumers, which generates trust;

- focus different emotions that are associated with educational services;

- decide to go to university and validate the choice, i.e. get satisfaction from the decision made;

- To form a group of loyal customers who associate their lifestyle with the brand. [16]

A core brand value needs to be created, and this should not just be based on demand, but also on the advantages and disadvantages of competing universities. At the same time, the brand should reflect the mission, vision and academic policy, which consists of four components, respectively the physical dimension, the emotional dimension, the symbolic meaning and the value. The physical dimension mainly refers to the usefulness and value of an educational service, the emotional dimension of such a service impresses consumers, so that brand consumers will form emotional support or emotional dependence. The symbolic value dimension can be a set of values, attitudes or other characteristics to form a specific image in order to win consumer acceptance. In addition, an necessary source of core brand values is the core values of the corporate mission. The corporate mission answers the question "who am I", it is based on the activities and specificity of the university, is the starting point of the corporate brand and the driving force that includes the interests of requirements and corporate social responsibility. The corporate vision answers the question "where am I going", which determines the direction of entrepreneurship, and the values of the spiritual aspect, the attitudes and orientation towards customers, employees, competitors, society.

There are also different views that the core values of a brand include six and eight elements. Peters T. points out that "six elements suggest that the corporate connotation of the brand, namely core brand values should include specific attributes of the educational service, functional and emotional benefits as well as a sense of enterprise value, brand culture, brand personality and target consumers" [17] . Radaev V.V. points out that "the eight brand elements are based on the fact that personality, fit, culture, symbol, mission, trust, habits and consistency are the eight areas that make up the core brand values" [18]. The six

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[16] Aaker D. Brand leadership: a new concept of branding / D. Aaker. Moscow: Grebennikov, 2016. C.80.
[17] Peters Tom. WOW ideas. 15 principles of innovation management. Moscow: Eksmo, 2015. C.76.
[18] Radaev V. V. Who owns the power in consumer markets. Relations between retail chains and suppliers in contemporary Russia. Moscow: Higher School of Economics (State University), 2016. C.56.

boundaries are not as clear, as S. Razuvaev points out, "than the eight elements, which reflect core brand values, reflect functional characteristics" [19].

Although there are different views on the dimensions of core brand values, however, the current situation is that most scholars believe that core brand values are a three-dimensional concept. In empirical research related to core brand values, many scholars have investigated core brand values and brand loyalty, brand extension and other relationships between variables, core brand values are introduced as variables of different types in research.

Core brand values can shape and maintain brand loyalty. Sloan P. conducted empirical research came to the conclusion that "functional value, symbolic value and experience value have regional differences in the context of brand loyalty" [20]. Stephen R. Covey notes that "the functional value of retail sites, the consumer brand, and the relationship experience play a significant role in building loyalty through empirical research"[21]. Stephen R. Covey proposes an understanding of brand loyalty as perceived brand quality, brand emotion, and brand reputation. Thus, the functional value and emotional value of a brand can bring brand loyalty. On the existence of a relationship between affective value and brand loyalty, scholars have also conducted a large amount of research. Tracy Bryan tested three core dimensions of the brand affective attachment scale, 'love', 'passion' and 'connection', which have excellent predictive validity in relation to brand loyalty [22]. Bonthour Anne, Leyoux Jean-Marc suggested that with "the creation of emotional value, customer loyalty can be increased in the context of analysing the constituent factors of emotional brand value"[23]. Symbolic value also plays an important role for brand loyalty. Thomas G. says that "if consumers buy a brand in order to have status, values, identity, then core brand values play an important role and this easily builds brand loyalty"[24].

[19] Radaev V. V. Who owns the power in consumer markets. Relations between retail chains and suppliers in contemporary Russia. Moscow: Higher School of Economics (State University), 2016. C.56.

[20] Sloan P. The art of thinking outside the box. Moscow: Companion Group, 2015. C.115.

[21] Stephen R. Covey. The Eighth Skill. From Efficiency to Greatness. Moscow:Alpina Publisher, 2015. C.203.

[22] Tracy Bryan. The power of the brand. The art of standing out from the crowd of competitors and dominating the market. Moscow: SmartBook, 2017. C.402.

[23] Bonthour Anne, Leiu Jean-Marc. Brand Rejuvenation. Moscow: Companion Group, 2016. C.78.

[24] Thomas G. 4D Branding. Cracking the corporate code of the networked economy. Moscow: Stockholm School of Economics in St. Petersburg, 2016. C.59.

Some scholars have studied the relationship between core brand values and brand extension. Feigin G.F. expresses the view that "core brand values are the centre of decision-making for brand expansion. Success in brand development, in turn, further strengthens and extends the existing brand connotation into core values"[25] . Leini T. A., Semenova E. A., Shilina S. A. empirically show that "brand personality conformity has a significant impact on the assessment of consumer brand extension through experimental research and confirmatory factor analysis" [26]. Brand personality plays an important role in shaping corporate branding and consumer attitudes towards the brand. The results show a positive influence on brand extension evaluation (including brand extension attitudes and willingness to buy an educational service), and also demonstrate that brand personality has a more significant influence than category fit. Solovieva D. V., Afanasieva S. V. analyze the relationship between the dimensions of core brand values and brand extension, and demonstrate the emotional dimension and symbolic dimensions of brand value that determine brand extension success and cross-border opportunities (very bad style)[27] .

We can conclude that examining the impact of core brand values on other marketing variables further confirms the importance of core brand values on brand building when we treat core brand values as an independent variable. If a brand can deliberately source from the perspective of core brand values, actively build consumer brand relationships, and emotionally connect with consumers, then consumers are likely to form relatively high brand loyalty and also accept brand extensions more easily. In particular, the main tangible values of the M.Narikbayev KAZGUU University brand are the brand name, the quality educational service itself, and the intangible values are the reliability of the university and the added value in the form of the university's prestige

[25] Feigin G.F. Management in the context of globalisation. SPb.: SPbGUP, 2012. C.89.
[26] Leini T.A., Semenova E.A., Shilina S. Brand Management: A Practical Textbook. Moscow: Dashkov & K, 2015. C.76.
[27] Solovyova D. V., Afanasyeva S. V. Analysis of methods of brand position assessment // Marketing and Project Management of Organizations: Collection of scientific works / Edited by A.G. Budrin et al. Vol. 4. SPb: SPbGIEU, 2016. C. 17-23.

Methods

2.1 Methods

The method chosen for the research part of the paper is content quantitative analysis. Content analysis is defined as a research method for quantitative, systematic and objective description of the visible content of communication. Content analysis is highly structured, defining the procedure and rules by which the text is accessed, as well as the categories to be measured. Along with a high degree of structure, the method also has a high degree of verifiability. [28]

2.2 Measures and Data Collection

The content analysis output quantifies the occurrence of predefined characters in the text under study, allowing the results to be visualized in graphs and tables.

In order to formulate the assignment and sample selection for content analysis, it is important to determine what content we are focusing on, in which media, over what period and on which research units we will be investigating. The coding (or recording) unit here is the individual posts on the university's social media page.

The study sample consists of posts published on the university's social media pages between December 2018 and March 2021. [29]

In the presented content analysis, the coding units are considered in terms of several parameters: form, content, product, event, relevance, PR, emotional element, competition .

The categories of form are divided according to formal features: text, link, video, photo, graphic, photo album, survey or a combination specified in the coding book. Most of the properties are self-explanatory, only the less clear properties are explained for clarification. In the photo sub-category there

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[28]   Maxwell a Carboni. Social Media Management: Exploring Facebook Engagement Among High-Asset Foundations. Nonprofit Management & Leadership [online]. 2016, 27(2), 251-260 [cit. 2019-04-23]. DOI: 10.1002/nml.21232. ISSN 1542-7854. Dostupné z: https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1002/nml.21232

[29] Scherer Helmut, 2011. Úvod do metody obsahové analýzy. In: WINFRIED, Schulz, Helmut SCHERER, Lutz HAGEN, Jakub KONČELÍK a Irena REIFOVÁ. Analýza obsahu mediálních sdělení. 2. přepracované vydání. Praha: Univerzita Karlova v Praze, Karolinum, 2011, 2004, s. 29-50. ISBN 80-246-0827-8.

are posts supplemented with photos without editing in a graphics program. Unlike graphics, posts are explicitly edited in a graphics program - posters with captions, cartoonish visuals, internet memes and the like. The photo album category provides a post which publishes a photo album with several photos.

2.3 Content of social media posts

The second parameter concerns the content of the post itself. The content is subdivided into the following five categories. Their characteristics are supplemented with examples of the categories below. An Internet meme can be in the form of a picture, video, gif or photo. Memes are characterized by viral distribution (copying, sharing or imitation) and the associated popularity, through which individual memes can become distinct cultural phenomena.

The type of contribution that focuses on the product of the HEI is therefore the promotion of study programmes. This category also includes calls for applications or videos directly promoting study at the university.

Event includes invitations to events organised by the university, i.e. direct branding activities of the university itself. This includes, for example, talks, sporting events, university balls, information meetings or open days.

A post of the "relevance" type is one that communicates current events in the area, but from a communicative point of view does not directly support the brand of the university.

Contributions of the "PR" type aim to promote the brand of the university. These are posts related to media mentions, links to the university's own media or news from the university environment directly aimed at promoting the brand. At the same time, there are mentions of the university's participation in events that it does not organise.

The posts belonging to the "emotive" category are characterised by their amusing nature, do not directly support the brand and are by their nature significantly adapted to the social media environment -

they are primarily memes of various types. Their aim is, above all, to increase engagement; the university brand is here shifted from the position of an educational institution to that of a "witty friend".[30]

Contest entries include an invitation to take part in the competition announced on the social network. At the same time, the winner will also be announced here. The competition is used to promote the brand; the prizes are most often items with the university's logo or items from school partners.

Social media posts are divided into three subcategories: own posts, where the page is the direct author, shared from the sub-brand page, where we find posts shared on the main page of the university from faculties, departments, branches, clubs, institutes and other parts of the university, the third subcategory is the contributions shared from other pages.

It is possible to divide social media posts into two groups in terms of tone - formal and informal. Formal posts are characterised by written language, a rebuke or non-address by the user and are very factual. In the university environment, they are mostly a formal statement from the university, such as appointing new deans and the like.

Informal posts, on the other hand, are more relaxed, use less writing, common language and users are moved by it. This includes humorous posts, of course. Informal posts use emoji to a greater extent, but this is not the decisive factor.

Due to the fact that universities have Russian and Kazakh speaking students, permanent or exchange students and other programmes, posts can be in different languages. Posts in a foreign language include messages with a longer message in the foreign language, not just including a foreign language expression, such as a greeting.[31]

Emoji are digital images or icons widely used in text messages, emails and in the social media space. Although one of the most widely used groups of emoji is the face emoji, which means less formal communication, you can use an emoji depicting an arrow or a national flag, for example. In this case,

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[30] Sedláková Renata, 2015. Výzkum médií: Nejužívanější metody a techniky. Praha: Grada Publishing a. s. ISBN 80-247-3568-7.

[31] Malečková Radka. Reakce (Reactions) na Facebooku mění pravidla. In: Sunitka [online]. Praha: Sun Marketing - reklama na internetu [cit. 2019-04-05]. Dostupné z: http://www.sunitka.cz/c/1007-reakce-reactions-na-facebooku-meni- pravidla

while it is a matter of adding an interesting element to the text of the post, the author does not consider such an emoji to clearly define the informality of the post and considers the overall tone of the post.

Character count is also a component of the analysis. A short post is one for which you don't have to unfollow it with a click, it's intact at first glance. For a long one, on the other hand, the action of unrolling the continuation is necessary in order to be able to read it in its entirety.

In the category of reactions to a post there can be reaction emoji, number of comments and number of likes. For example, the so-called "button" reactions in this breadth were introduced by Facebook at the beginning of 2016, before that only the "Like" button (thumbs up, first in the picture) was possible, which remained the default. In order for a user to select another of the responses, they must click on the "This is me" icon. For example, you can hover over it and other options will appear. These are (from left): super (heart symbol), ha-ha (laughing smiley), awesome (amazed smiley), I'm sorry (sad smiley) and it annoys me (angry smiley) [32].

With the "author comments" category, you can find out to what extent the university takes advantage of the interactivity of social media and responds to comments under posts. The comments here are divided into two groups: those written by the university itself and those coming from social network users. Comments are divided into positive, neutral, negative and questions. The aim is to find out what is the general prevailing atmosphere of the debate about the university's contribution.

The use of hashtags and emoji is also a category of analysis. Here we can consider whether universities use two aspects specific to social media - hashtags, which make it easier to find related posts, and emoji, which indicate a more relaxed communication style and visual sophistication in the text of the post.

In order to measure the success of individual posts, including in terms of individual categories, a formula needs to be established to allow for the most objective evaluation. For all posts, their engagement

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ratio for that reason is calculated, i.e. the level of user interaction with a given post. The concept of engagement includes the number of comments, the number of reactions to buttons, and the number of reposts of the post.

There are relatively many approaches to calculating engagement rate, but the research is to some extent limited to accessing only publicly available information. For example, it is not possible to compare engagement with the reach size of an individual post, a method often used by Facebook page administrators. Another significant limitation of this study is the public inaccessibility of information about which posts are so-called sponsored posts, i.e. their impact and expected engagement is funded by the university. Thus, the impact of this fact cannot be taken into account when evaluating the data.

Since the aim of this paper is to subsequently synthesise all the data obtained, it is necessary that the calculation of the involvement rate should be universal and not contain variables that depend only on the conditions of the individual universities. For this reason, the calculation is not tied to the number of subscribers to the individual university websites, but rather through a relationship to the simple average number of responses to the individual posts. Based on this relationship, it is subsequently determined whether it is above average or below average and average engagement.

Since visual content is more appealing in terms of engagement, it is assumed that universities are aware of this and publish such content in the first place. At the same time, a post that combines text and a photo contains complete information and invites the user to respond directly on the social network, rather than diverting their attention, for example through a link, elsewhere .[33]

Funny posts, which mostly directly invite users to respond, should elicit the highest level of above-average engagement. This hypothesis is used to determine whether such posts fulfil their purpose even on university social media pages.

To capture the attention of current subscribers and attract new ones, you need to publish unique content, not just share. That is why most posts on university websites are expected to be authored.

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[33]Gessler Kurt, 2016. Stop mindlessly following character count recommendations on Facebook posts. In: Medium [online]. Medium Corporation, 13. 10. 2016 [cit. 2019-04- 15]. Dostupné z: https://medium.com/@kurtgessler/stop-mindlessly-following- character-count-recommendations-on-facebook-posts-e01103b4d349

Universities use social media to promote their own brand, and shared posts should fit this purpose. Under this assumption, universities share more posts from marked pages than from other marked pages.

Informal written content is closer in language to the main target groups - current and prospective students - so higher engagement with informal content is also expected.

As contest posts serve to highlight content on social media as well as to increase engagement, they are expected to be the exclusive type of posts published and not one of the frequent ones.

Emoji are typical of social media and the general Internet environment. Universities are believed to adapt their content to the platform and thus publish rather emoji-containing posts.

Data collected by trendHERO, Jagajam, Yandex.Metrika tools were collected in XLS file, then transferred into tables and converted into figures. The main variables that were used were the total number of subscribers, the number of posts and likes, activity by country and city, audience engagement, and activity time.

3. Social media analysis

3.1. Analysis of M.Narikbayev KAZGUU University s Instagram profile

This subsection contains an analysis of data obtained from M.Narikbayev KAZGUU University's social media pages. With the help of trendHERO (https://trendhero.io/app/instagram), we were able to conduct a statistical analysis of the M.Narikbayev KAZGUU University Instagram page. The analysis of the Instagram page was conducted over the past six months.

Figure 1 below shows the indicators of the university's audience.
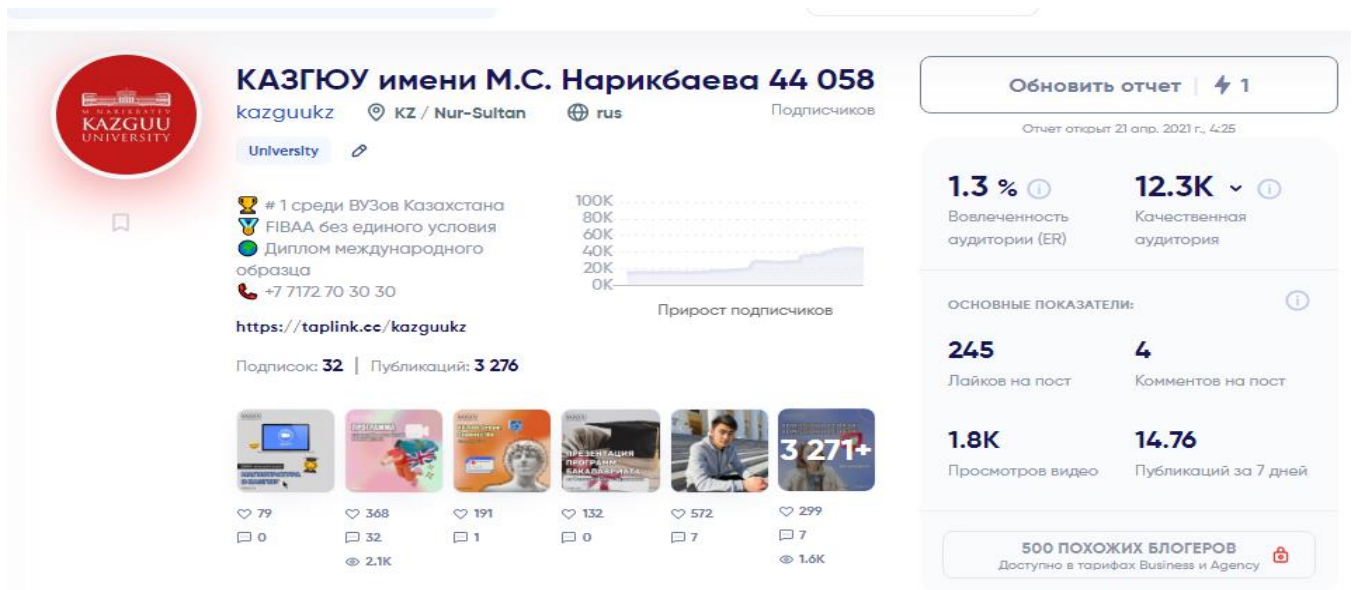
Figure 1 - Main indicators of M.Narikbayev KAZGUU University target audience on Instagram

The number of followers of M.Narikbayev KAZGUU University in Instagram is 44,058 people, (Nazarbayev University 37400 people, KBTU 15000 people, KIMEP 13600 people) subscribed 32. In total, KazGUU published 3,276 posts on this social network. Involvement of the account is 1.3% . Among its subscribers there are 12300 quality audience. Among them 11126 personal accounts and 1270 commercial accounts. The average number of likes is 245, the average number of video views is 18000. Figure 2 below shows the following figures for the Instagram page.
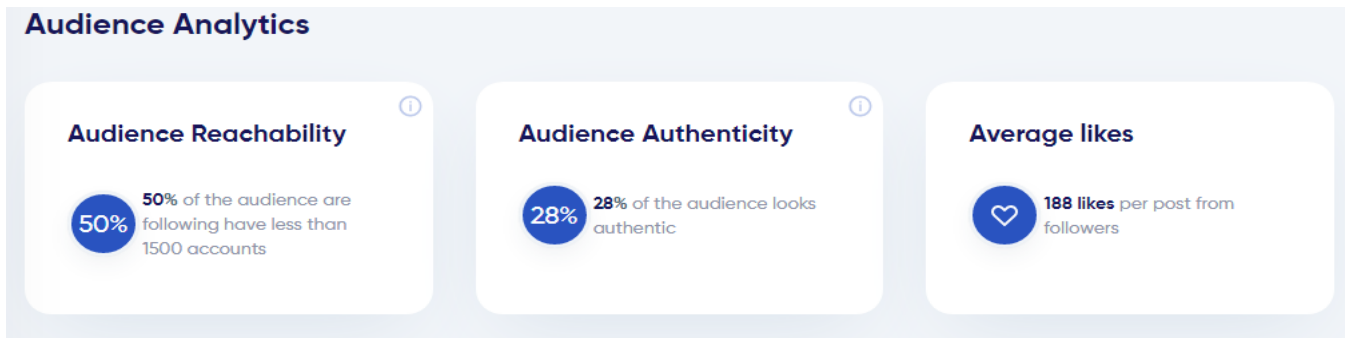
Figure 2 - M.Narikbayev KAZGUU University's audience on Instagram

According to Figure 2 The average number of likes is 188, audience authenticity is 28%, and audience accessibility is 50%. 50% of the audience has more than 1500 subscriptions, which means that their feed is likely to be overloaded and they will not see new posts and publications.

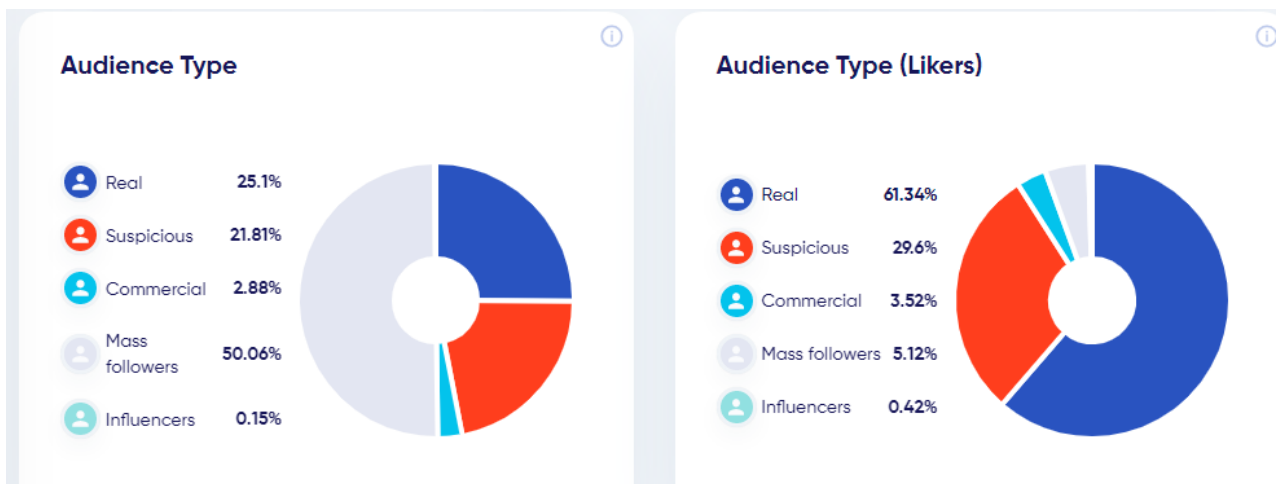Figure 3 below shows the genuine audience and engagement.

Figure 3 - Indicators of genuine audience and average engagement of Instagram page

According to the figure, the followers of 25.1% real audience, mass followers 50.06%, commercial 2.88%, Influencers 0.15%, suspicious 21.81% (some people have a second account).Involvement of the account 1.3%.

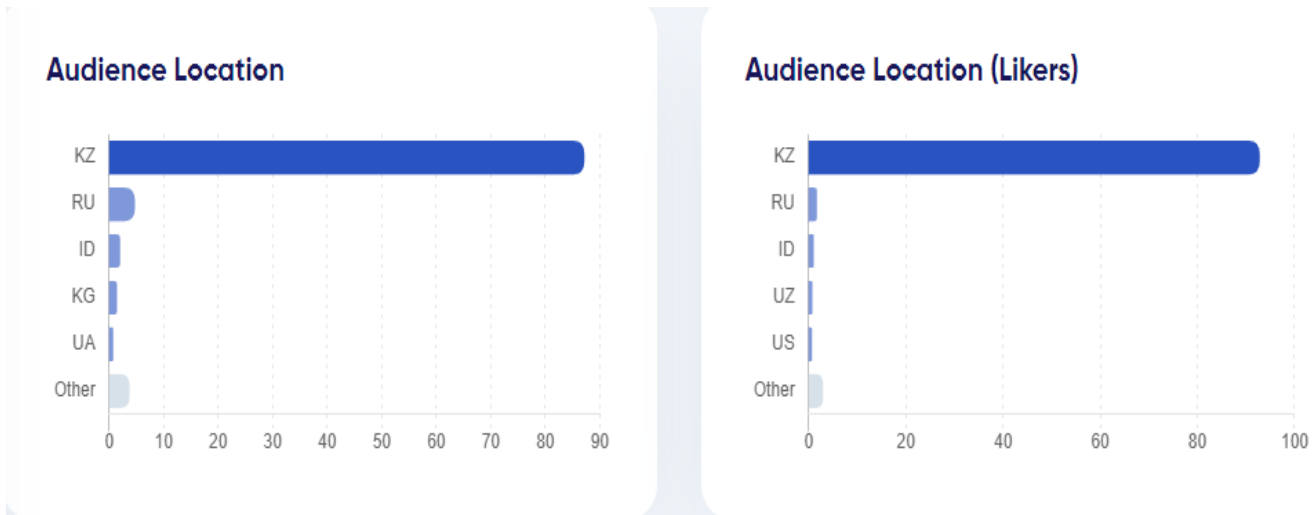The following figure 4 shows a map of M.Narikbayev KAZGUU University Instagram page.

Figure 4 - Audience by country of M.Narikbayev KAZGUU University on Instagram

According to data of the figure, most of the page of the University is viewed in Kazakhstan (87.22%). However, there are views in such countries as Russia (4.8%), Kyrgyzstan (1.5%), Uzbekistan (0.77%), Turkey and Georgia.
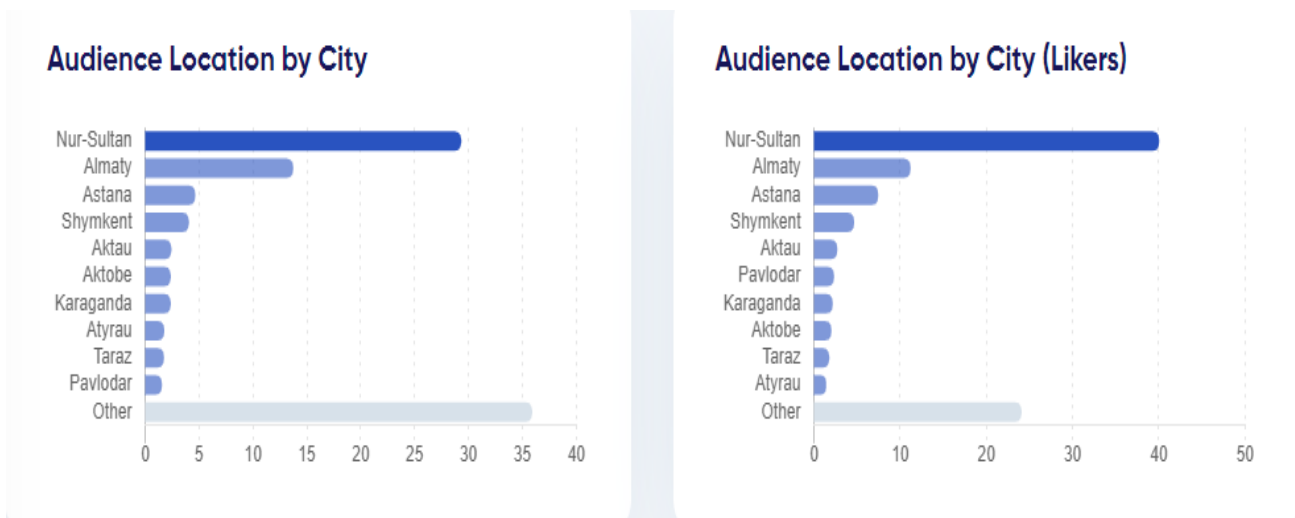
Figure 5 below shows the audience by city

Figure 5 - Audience by city

The following Figure 6 shows the languages of the University's Instagram profile page.

As can be seen, the most popular posts are in Russian (77.1%) and English (10.4%). The remaining 10.5% are in Kazakh, as the system does not recognise it (it is Ukrainian) this share belongs to the Kazakh language.

Figure 7 below shows the gender composition of the university's subscribers.
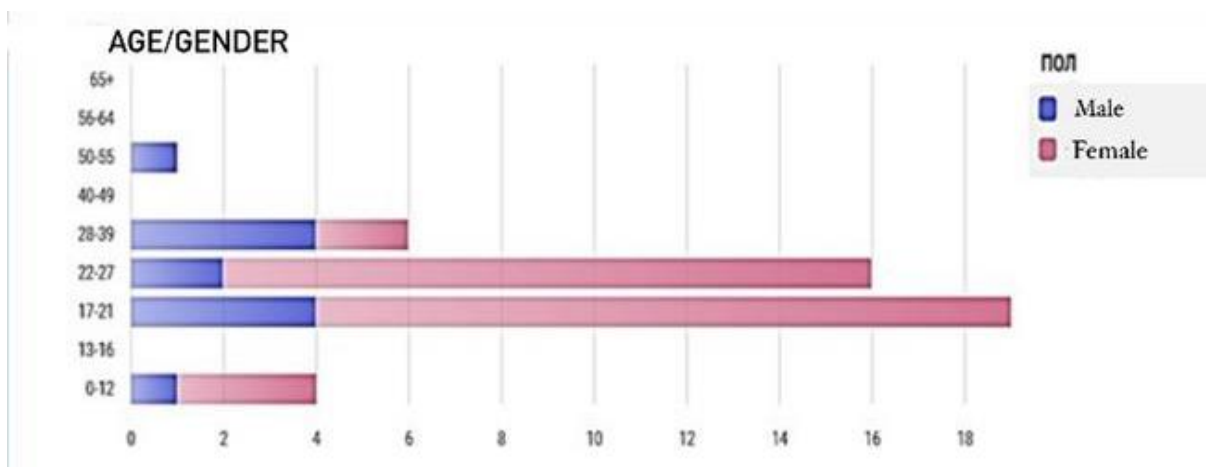

Figure 7 - M.Narikbayev KAZGUU University on Instagram

It can be seen that most of the followers of the page of the University are women aged 17 to 39 years.

Further, Figure 8 shows the gender statistics of the university's likes.

Audience Gender (Likers)
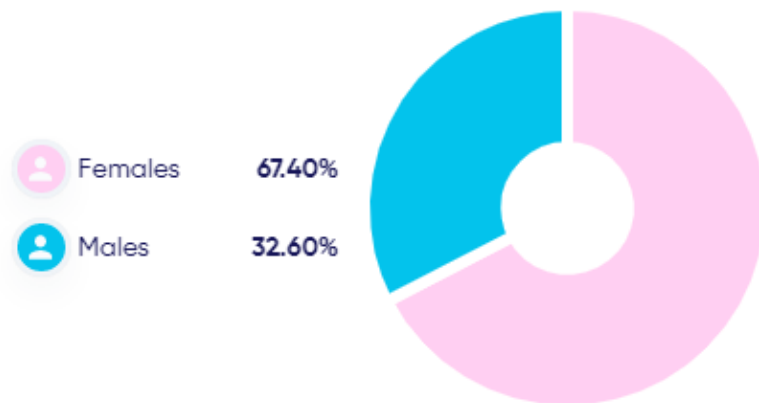
Females   67.40%

Males   32.60%

Figure 8 -Gender of M.Narikbayev KAZGUU University Instagram followers

The most liked audience of the university are women (67.40%), and men make up 32.60%. It is also worth noting that most followers are under 500 followers.

The gender composition of M.Narikbayev KAZGUU University's commenting audience on Instagram is presented in Figure 9.

GENDER AUDIENCE (COMMENTATORS)
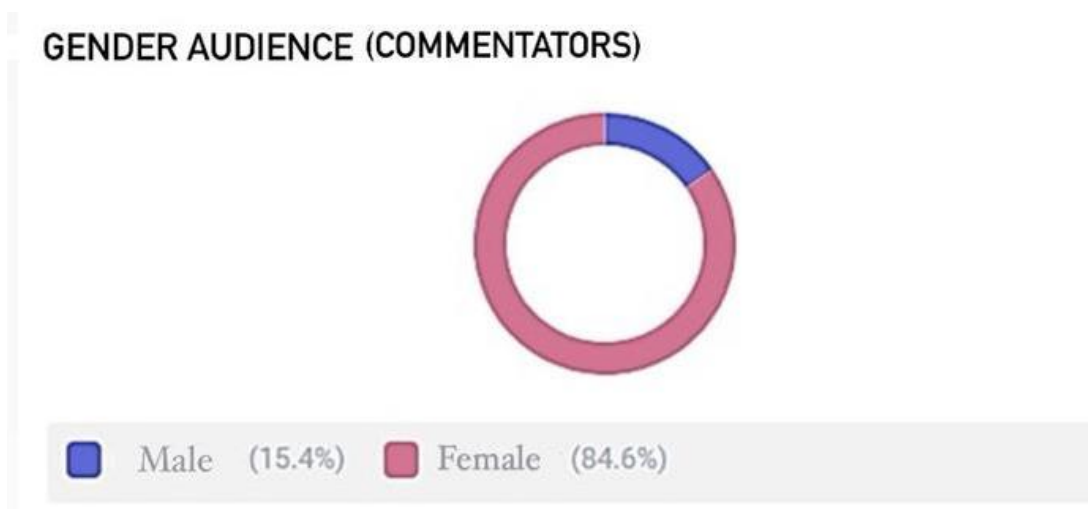
Male (15.4%)   Female (84.6%)

Figure 9 - Gender composition of M.Narikbayev KAZGUU University's commenting audience on Instagram

The figure shows that most commenters are women (84.6%), men constitute 15.4%.

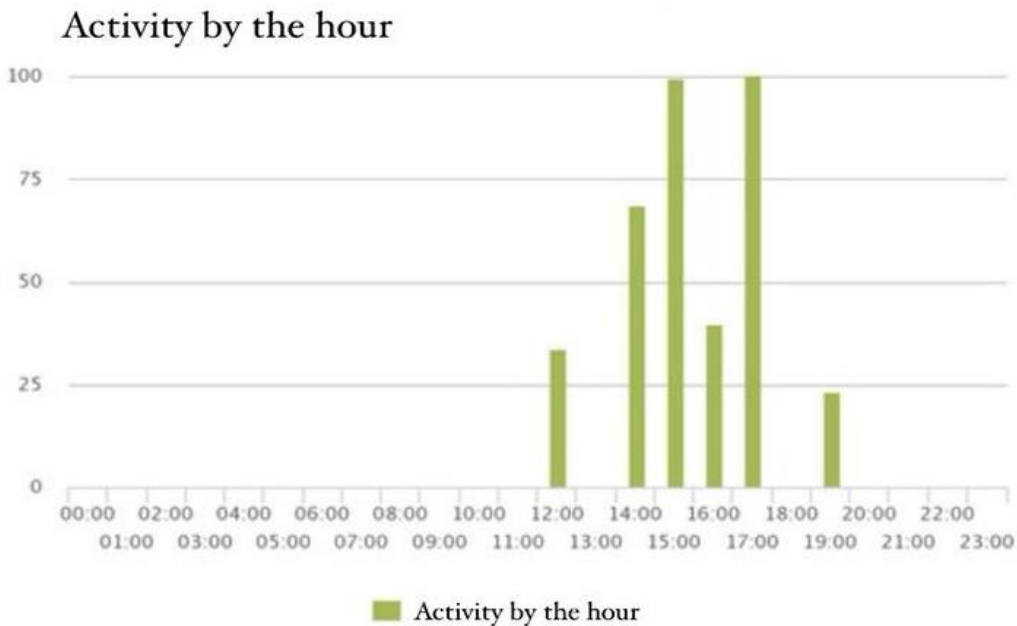Also, Figure 10 shows the activity on the Instagram page

Figure 10 - Audience activity by hour

The figure shows that most of the subscribers view the page from 5pm to 9pm. At that, the most active hours are from 2pm to 5pm, and active days are Saturday and Sunday.

3.2 Analysis of the M.Narikbayev KAZGUU University Facebook page.

We also studied the M.Narikbayev KAZGUU University Facebook page through the service https://app.jagajam.com/ru/suite/.

Table 1 below shows statistics of the university's Facebook page from March 21 to April 20.

Table 1 - Statistics of the University's Facebook page from March 21 to April 20, 2021

Date	Text length	Number of subscribers	Lykes	Reposts	Number of reactions	ER
21.03.2021	2891	3960	4	0	4	0.1010%
22.03.2021	468	3960	5	1	6	0.1515%

23.03.2021	1111	3961	7	3	10	0.2525%
24.03.2021	1764	3935	5	2	7	0.1779%
25.03.2021	3309	3936	2	0	2	0.0508%
26.03.2021	4495	3937	5	0	5	0.1270%
27.03.2021	1689	3939	4	0	4	0.1015%
28.03.2021	486	3940	3	0	3	0.0761%
29.03.2021	1325	3941	5	0	5	0.1269%
30.03.2021	1816	3942	7	0	7	0.1776%
31.03.2021	548	3943	21	3	26	0.6594%
01.04.2021	610	3944	8	1	10	0.2535%
02.04.2021	760	3945	9	0	9	0.2281%
03.04.2021	1762	3947	9	2	11	0.2787%
04.04.2021	2695	3948	7	1	8	0.2026%
05.04.2021	866	3949	5	2	7	0.1773%
06.04.2021	944	3950	5	1	6	0.1519%
07.04.2021	1260	3951	4	0	4	0.1012%
08.04.2021	1284	3952	5	0	5	0.1265%
09.04.2021	2444	3954	5	0	5	0.1265%
11.04.2021	2512	3956	4	0	4	0.1011%
12.04.2021	1995	3957	4	0	4	0.1011%
13.04.2021	806	3958	8	1	9	0.2274%
14.04.2021	916	3959	5	2	7	0.1768%
15.04.2021	2365	3960	5	0	5	0.1263%
16.04.2021	1860	3962	3	0	3	0.0757%
17.04.2021	2951	3963	8	0	8	0.2019%

18.04.2021	2402	3964	5	0	5	0.1261%
19.04.2021	907	3965	4	1	5	0.1261%

The number of reactions, likes, comments on the Facebook page is not high. Figure 10 shows that in the analysed period the number of followers was increasing and the text length of the posts is in the same range.
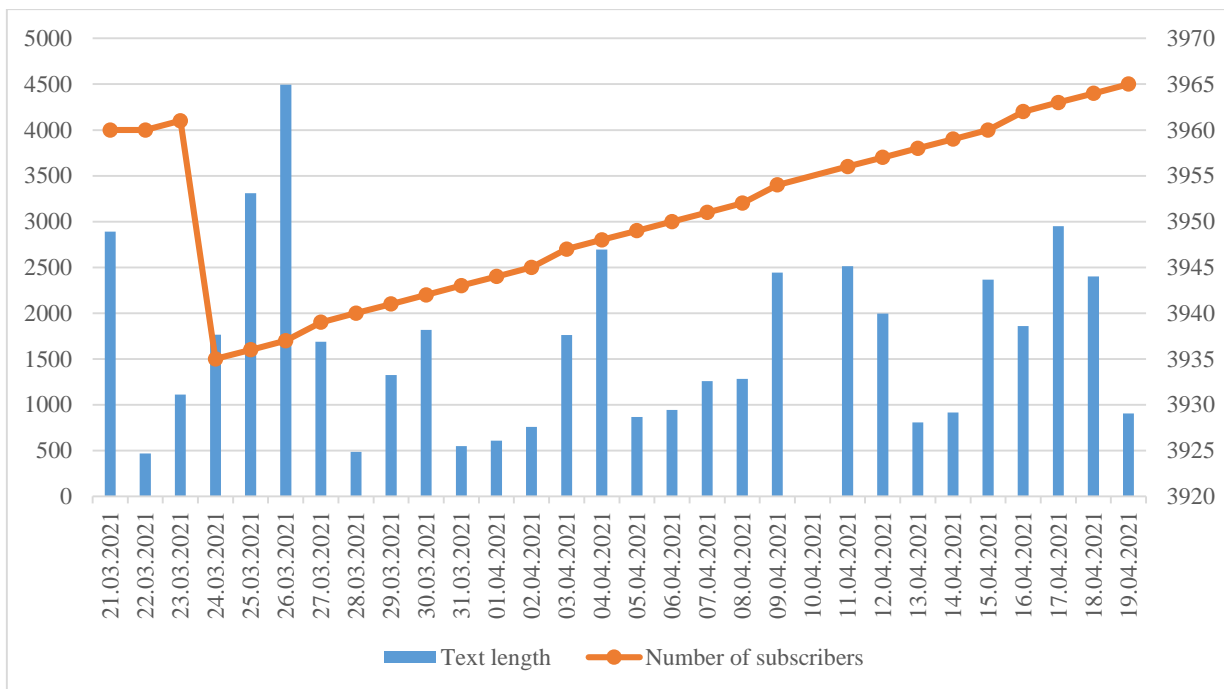

Figure 11 - KazGUU on Facebook

The number of followers of the University Facebook page increased from 3960 to 3965 during the analyzed period.

3.3 Attendance of M.Narikbayev KAZGUU University website and social networks VK and Twitter

The M.Narikbayev KAZGUU University website has links to social media. Therefore, we also analyzed the website of the University using the service https://app.jagajam.com/ru/suite/.

Figure 12 shows the statistics of attendance of the university website.

Figure 12 - Attendance of M.Narikbayev KAZGUU University official website

During the year the website of M.Narikbayev KAZGUU University was visited 691.2 thousand times, per month - 57.6 thousand. Further Figure 13 shows social traffic of M.Narikbayev KAZGUU University website.

Figure 13 - Social traffic of M.Narikbayev KAZGUU University official website

The largest audience coming from social network Instagram - 35%, then Whatsapp- 29%, VKontakte is only 3.28%.

It should be noted that the page of the University in the social network VKontakte has 8,868 subscribers - Figure 14.
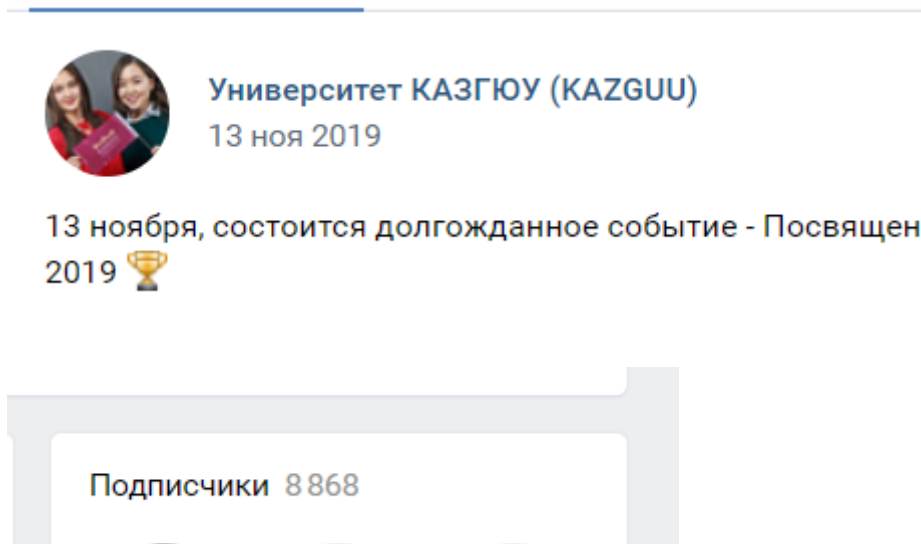
Figure 14 - M.Narikbayev KAZGUU University VKontakte page data

The last posting was made on 13 November 2019 (8868 followers). That is, the page is almost inactive on this social network.

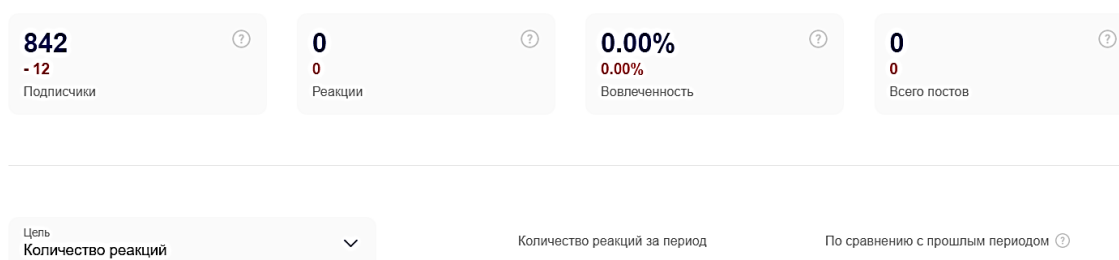The university also has Twitter. Figure 15 shows the statistics of Twitter of the university.

Figure 15 - M.Narikbayev KAZGUU University Twitter

The University's Twitter has been inactive for the last six months, with only 842 followers and a decrease of 12 followers.

Thus, M.Narikbayev KAZGUU University mainly uses the social network Instagram to promote the university.

Results and recommendations

Based on our analysis of M.Narikbayev KAZGUU University brand promotion in social media, we concluded that the University has the largest presence in Instagram and Facebook. This has a positive effect on brand awareness, as Instagram and Facebook are the most popular social networks in Kazakhstan - Figure 16. This segment needs to be developed further, noting that the target audience is predominantly female, who view the University's page on weekends in the evening

Figure 16 - Social media ranking on Instagram, 2021 (%)[34]

Brand recognition positively affects the well-being of M.Narikbayev KAZGUU University:

- KAZGUU named after M.S. Narikbayev was included in the top 3 universities in the 2019-2020 ranking of educational programmes according to the research of the National Chamber of Entrepreneurs "Atameken".

- M.Narikbayev KAZGUU University was included in the top 50 universities of the world, surpassing a number of famous American and European universities.

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[34] Popular social networks in Kazakhstan named // https://24.kz/ru/news/social/item/458691-nazvany-populyarnye-sotsialnye-seti-v-kazakhstane

Based on our analysis, we formulated recommendations for promoting the M.Narikbayev KAZGUU University brand value in social media.

M.Narikbayev KAZGUU University brand can look relevant, fresh and trendy thanks to social media. They can not only stimulate the attraction of students, but also increase the recognition of the name of the university as a brand and improve the reputation of the university. In addition, social networks are an additional channel of communication between current and future students, staff, partners and alumni of the institution.

4.1 Recommendations for university brand promotion

The following recommendations for the promotion of the M.Narikbayev KAZGUU University brand have been formulated.

Awareness of the potential of social media is the first step to increasing influence on the Internet. However, it is equally important to follow the unspoken rules of conduct in social media.

1.Speak the right language.

It would seem obvious not to use foul language or make inappropriate statements. In addition, messages or statements on behalf of the university should not be too negative, aggressive or rude.

Politeness is mandatory regardless of whether the post or personal opinion is posted on Facebook or it is a response to a complaint on Twitter - the general tone and individual words used must be appropriate to the status of the university. This is not to say that humour has no place here and should be boring. However, attacks on other universities on social media or harsh responses to criticism may give the impression that the university page is run by a layperson.

Staying on top of your chosen strategy can be particularly challenging if the university has many accounts on different platforms. But there are various networking tools, such as Hootsuite, which can help the administrator manage different accounts, limiting the ability of others to publish something on the pages without their approval.

2. Different audiences of M.Narikbayev KAZGUU University should be presented with different information.

Representing the university on different platforms is not easy in itself, even more difficult when there are multiple accounts on each network. The "one account per site" principle saves time, but the audience is not segmented, which means that publications will be received well or, more likely, without any interest. The fact is that the position a graduate needs is also unlikely to be in demand by a candidate or potential research partner of the university.

When developing a strategy to promote M.Narikbayev KAZGUU University in social media, it is wise to think about different behaviours for each of the target groups. Use account management tools and allocate time to edit publications and create content for different audiences.

3. Answer questions.

If a person does not answer questions or phone calls during face-to-face contact, they will be rude. The same goes for social media contacts.

Social media is a great way to start a dialogue with your audience. It is better to treat this tool not as a mouthpiece through which you try to shout down everyone who can hear, but as a kind of telephone. Leaving calls or simply mentioning the university unanswered means missing an opportunity to better understand your target audience.

4. Use more hashtags.

Put #hashtags on networks wherever possible (e.g. Twitter, Facebook and Google+). Otherwise, content that is posted may simply get lost in the flood of information. Consistent hashtags and, more importantly, relevant content will help existing and potential M.Narikbayev KAZGUU University subscribers easily find specific publications.

5. Find news.

If the page is not updated regularly, it feels like there is nothing important going on at the University or nothing to tell your subscribers. Of course, creating and publishing meaningful and useful content every day takes a lot of effort, but it's important if you want effective SMM. Again, automation

tools like Hootsuite or TweetDeck can be extremely useful. You can use them to, for example, schedule the publication of various posts for the coming week.

6. Publish what's important.

Don't be tempted to publish something for the sake of the post itself. One should only take the initiative when it is in the best interest of the audience, because people have subscribed to the page precisely to find out what the university sees fit to say on important topics. No matter how incredible the effort, it is worth refraining from republishing, not to destroy the users' trust in the university brand.

Information should be relevant, but not necessarily new every time. It is useful to share updated or changed content, as long as it still meets the needs of the audience. It is also much better than writing a post on a topic that is irrelevant or not interesting enough. Of course, unique content is ideal. It should be the basis for promoting M.Narikbayev KAZGUU University in social media and the foundation of the SMM strategy, but don't limit yourself to them. The use and dissemination of processed material from other sources also allows online communication and networking with other institutions and organisations.

Conclusion

The following conclusions can be formulated on the basis of the conducted research.The theoretical aspects of university branding in social media have been analysed. It has been established that a university can create a cohesive online presence that its audience will enjoy. When a university creates a professionally designed Instagram feed that matches the voice and brand design guidelines, it gets more trust from its followers. If Instagram branding aligns with the university's overall brand, the target audience can recognise content across multiple platforms. The most important recommendation for ensuring that Instagram contributes to the university's brand is to 'create a social media style guide' for the marketing team.

Using online services, it was possible to conduct an analysis of M.Narikbayev KAZGUU University's social media. Based on the analysis of M.Narikbayev KAZGUU University brand promotion in social networks, we came to the conclusion that the university has the largest presence in Instagram. This segment should be developed further, paying attention to the fact that the target audience is mainly women, who view the page of the University on weekends in the evening.

Based on our analysis, we have formulated recommendations for promoting the university brand value in social media. The university brand can look relevant, fresh and trendy through social media. Staying with the chosen strategy can be especially challenging if the university has many accounts on different platforms. But there are various networking tools, such as Hootsuite, that can help an administrator manage different accounts, limiting the ability of others to post something to the pages without their approval.

When shaping the university's social media promotion strategy, it is wise to think about different behaviour for each of the target groups. Use account management tools and allocate time to edit posts and create content for different audiences.

When the page is not updated regularly, it feels like there is nothing important going on at the University or nothing to tell subscribers. Creating and publishing meaningful and useful content every day takes a lot of effort, but it is important if you want effective SMM. Using and sharing processed

material from other sources also allows online communication to begin and connections to other institutions and organizations to be made.

Universities need to establish communication with prospective and current students. It is worth investing university resources in an effective social media strategy these days. This can be an opportunity to promote the university, can be a competitive advantage for universities that do not have a well-known brand.

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Brand	The image of a product or service, a set of values associated with an organisation's product or service
Branding	The process of creating a sought-after image of a product or service
University branding	The process of creating and promoting the image of a higher education institution
Brand Management	The process of creating and managing a brand that contributes to the sales of products
Social networks	Online platforms for communication, dating, entertainment
Instagram	An application for sharing photos and videos, as well as for socialising.
Facebook	World's largest social network
Vkontakte (VK)	Russian social network for communication, photo sharing and games.
Twitter	A social network for public messaging.
Content	Informational content of posts
Content analysis	Content analysis of the site or posts on social networks
Likes	A way to show your approval on social networks
Emoji	A universal language of ideograms and emoticons to convey emotion and sentiment to the reader of a post
Audience reach	Percentage of subscribers who have fewer than 1,500 followers. The higher this percentage, the better. Subscribers with more than 1,500 subscriptions have a crowded feed and probably won't see the post.
Engagement Rate (ER)	The percentage of the audience that comments or likes a post, i.e. is engaged with the content
Quality Audience	Real and commercial Instagram accounts, as well as Influencers.