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COMPONENTS OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION BRANDING IN SHAPING THEIR INVESTMENT ATTRACTIVENESS

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Abstract: *The article explores the role of branding components in shaping the investment attractiveness of higher education institutions (HEIs) amidst martial law and economic instability in Ukraine. Based on the analysis of financial indicators and practical case studies of leading Ukrainian universities (NUWEE, MSU, KSE, UCU), it is substantiated that branding serves as a strategic driver for attracting financial resources from the state, business, international funds, and students.*

The study systematizes the key components of branding—academic reputation, economic activity, international partnership, and social responsibility—which ensure the conversion of HEIs' intangible assets into real investment inflows. Particular attention is paid to the strategic management of reputation capital, allowing universities to diversify income sources and ensure a high level of investment resilience. It is argued that the integration of the institution into socially significant projects (specifically ecological and security-related) becomes a tool for verifying its expert potential for external stakeholders.

Based on the findings, scholarly and practical recommendations for improving branding strategies are formulated, aimed at strengthening the investment profile of HEIs through the development of digital communications, intensification of scientific partnerships, and implementation of the "Service Learning" concept.

Keywords: *investment attractiveness, higher education institution, HEI branding, investors, reputation capital, competitiveness.*

The branding of higher education institutions (HEIs) in Ukraine has become an important mechanism for strengthening investment attractiveness under conditions of martial law and economic uncertainty. Limited public funding and the growing need for external financial support encourage universities to develop stronger institutional positioning and build sustainable relationships with different groups of stakeholders and investors.

This study identifies and systematizes the main components of HEI branding that influence investment attractiveness, including academic reputation, economic activity, international cooperation, and social responsibility. These components contribute to the transformation of institutional reputation into practical investment opportunities and long-term partnerships.

The paper distinguishes between direct investors, such as the state, private sector organizations, international foundations, territorial communities, charitable donors, and partner universities, and indirect investors, including students, employers, and civil society organizations. In this context, branding is considered not only as a communication tool but also as a strategic instrument for institutional development.

The experience of several Ukrainian universities demonstrates different approaches to strengthening investment attractiveness through branding. National University of Water and Environmental Engineering emphasizes expert specialization and participation in the “NetZero” project. Mariupol State University focuses on institutional resilience and the preservation of university identity under relocation conditions. Kyiv School of Economics applies an ecosystem-based approach aimed at expanding private investment initiatives, while Ukrainian Catholic University develops value-oriented philanthropy through the implementation of the “Service Learning” model.

Particular attention is paid to digital communications, participation in international rankings, and grant activities aligned with ESG principles. The study also shows that involvement in socially significant projects strengthens external trust and confirms the expert potential of higher education institutions.

It is concluded that the investment attractiveness of HEIs largely depends on their ability to align institutional branding strategies with the expectations and interests of different investor groups, thereby supporting financial sustainability and long-term competitiveness in the educational and research environment.

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