

# Brands of the academic world in the modern era: conceptual approach

## Marcas del mundo académico en la era moderna: enfoque conceptual

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#### ABSTRACT:

The article presents a description of conceptual approach to the study of the phenomenon of the "brand of the academic world", their appearance and development, the impact on the socio-economic space of the academic world and the consequences of such influence, as well as the development of a system for measuring the brands of objects of the academic world, identifying ways and means mechanisms for engaging brands of the academic world in the economic turnover.

**Keywords:** academic world, brands, brand management, modern era

#### RESUMEN:

El artículo describe el enfoque conceptual para el estudio del fenómeno de las "marcas del mundo académico". El estudio examina su apariencia y desarrollo, el impacto en el espacio socioeconómico del mundo académico, indica las consecuencias de tal impacto. El artículo proporciona enfoques para el desarrollo de un sistema para medir marcas de objetos del mundo académico. Se consideran los modos y mecanismos de involucrar a las marcas del mundo académico en la rotación económica.

**Palabras clave:** C

## 1. Introduction

The article presents a description of conceptual approaches to the study of brands of the academic world in the framework of a large interdisciplinary study "Brands of the academic world in the era of digital transformations: typology, economic assessments and comparisons, capitalization and management", which will conduct by a group of scientists of the Southern Federal University in 2019.

The purpose of this research is a scientific analysis of the phenomenon of the "brand of the academic world", their appearance and development, the impact on the socio-economic space of the academic world and the consequences of such influence; as well as the development of a system for measuring the brands of objects of the academic world,

identifying ways and means mechanisms for engaging brands of the academic world in the economic turnover.

The problem of the correlation of the social space of the academic world and the symbolic space of its brands, which is intensified in the modern era of digital transformations, is discussed. Brands of the academic world are considered as mechanisms that can serve as a universal appraisal and measurement tool of the institutions of the academic world.

The question of the need to develop adequate tools and methods for measuring and measuring the brands of subjects and institutions of the academic world is being considered.

Particular attention is paid to the actual theoretical and practical task – the involvement of various types of brands of the academic world in the economic turnover, their capitalization, increasing the efficiency of managing the portfolio of brands of the institutions of the academic world, primarily Universities and scientific organizations.

In the modern global information world, market-competitive relations dominate at all levels and in all spheres of social life. In this case, two important trends conflict with each other. The first trend is a striving for unification (standardization) of various aspects of the life of a society at all its levels. The second trend is the pursuit of uniqueness, specificity, features, recognition. At present, these contradictions are particularly acute in the functioning of a specific part of society – the academic world.

In modern conditions, most of the processes for creating new knowledge are standardized. Thus, for the academic world, the problem of using special forms of consolidating intellectual, epistemic identity, primarily for economic reasons, becomes extremely relevant.

This contradiction is partially resolved through the emergence and functioning of such a phenomenon as a brand. Brands of the academic world are mental-emotional constructions through which objects of the academic world are represented in the public consciousness. These are the structures of the symbolic space of the academic world. It is the brands that today act as a kind of "attractors" of the attraction of resources in the academic world.

Currently, there are a number of new phenomena and problems that require scientific reflection. First, this is the problem of the correlation of the social space of the academic world and the symbolic space of its brands, which is intensifying in the modern era of digital transformations. Secondly, brands become mechanisms that can serve as a universal appraisal and measurement tool of the institutions of the academic world. Thirdly, brands of subjects and institutions of the academic world require the development of adequate tools and methods for their measurement and self-measurement. Fourthly, the actual theoretical and practical task is to involve various types of brands of the academic world in the economic turnover, their capitalization, increase the efficiency of brand portfolio management of institutions of the academic world, and above all - universities and scientific organizations.

The purpose of the research "Brands of the academic world in the era of digital transformations: typology, economic assessments and comparisons, capitalization and management" is a scientific analysis of the phenomenon of the "brand of the academic world", their appearance and development, the impact on the socio-economic space of the academic world and the consequences of such influence, as well as the development of a system for measuring the brands of objects of the academic world, identifying ways and means mechanisms for engaging brands of the academic world in the economic turnover

## **1.1. The relevance of the research**

Relevance is determined primarily by the lack of modern scientific knowledge about a relatively new phenomenon - the brands of the academic world, the characteristics of their formation and involvement in the economic turnover, their impact on the socio-economic space of the academic world, on the redistribution of resources within a given world, etc. P. The analysis of the estimated and measuring potential, which is incorporated in the brands as symbolic constructions of social reality, as well as the selection of appropriate tools and methods for the economic realization and capitalization of the academic brands taking into

account the peculiarities of the period of digital transformations of modern society and the economy, is also quite relevant.

The practical aspect of the relevance of the project's theme relates to identifying and systematizing the approaches and methods for measuring and measuring the brands of various subjects of the academic world, developing recommendations on the formation and management of brands of academic institutions.

Finally, the scientific significance of the research is enhanced by its potential for the development of interdisciplinary practices in social and humanitarian research. In this case, interdisciplinary interaction takes place within the framework of disciplinary practices and programs of economics and sociology with the decisive role of the economic approach.

## 2. Methodology

The research topic is directly related to the scientific areas, the main of which are (1) the academic world and (2) brands and brand management. The main concepts and approaches within the framework of these scientific areas that we use in our research are shown in Table 1.

**Table 1**

The main methodological concepts and approaches used in the research

### Unit 1. Academic World

#### 1.1. Science in General

Basic structures of science (Woolgar, 1991)

Philosophy of science (Feyerabend, 1966; Toulmin, 1977)

*Science as a social institution* (Cole, 2004; Merton, 2011; Ziman & Crane, 1969)

*Science as a social system* (Mullins, 1972)

*Strong Programme* (Barnes, Bloor, & Henry, 1996)

*Relativistic Program and The influence of non-scientific interests* (Barnes et al., 1996; Mulkay, 1976)

Knowledge production (Fourcade, 2007)

#### 1.2. Sociology of Scientific Knowledge (SSK)

*Constructivist Program, and Ethnographic approach* (Knorr-Cetina, 1981; Woolgar, 1991)

*The social construction of technologies* (Latour, 2005a; Pinch & Bijker, 1984)

#### 1.3. Study of Science and Technology (STS)

*Actor-Network Theory (ANT)* (Callon, 2010; Latour, 2005b, 2005a; Law & Lin, 2015)

#### 1.4. Managing Science in General

(Abramo, D'Angelo, & Di Costa, 2009)

Research of productivity, indices and ratings (Buter, Noyons, & Van Raan, 2004)

#### 1.5. Economics of Science

(Kornai, 1979; Solow, 1957; Stiglitz, 2004; Kleiner, 2015)

#### 1.6. Academic Organizations (Universities)

University as a metaphor (Collins & Evans, 2002; Fuchs, 2005; Knorr-Cetina, 2007; Moscovici, 1988; Seeman & Goffman, 1964)

University model (Baldrige, Curtis, Ecker, & Riley, 1977)

*Institutional approach* (McLendon, Hearn, & Deaton, 2006)

*Neo-Institutional approach* (McLendon et al., 2006)

*Power at the University* (Birnbaum & Edelson, 1989; Kerr, 2001; Rosovsky, 1990)

Management issues (Weaver, Spratt, & Nair, 2008)

### **1.7. Higher School Economics**

(Fourcade & Khurana, 2013; Hastings & Weinstein, 2008; Weaver et al., 2008)

Educational services market (Dragut, 2011; Ivy, 2008; Verger, BonaL, & Zancajo, 2016; Weaver et al., 2008)

### **1.8. Academic Community**

*The Invisible College* (Griffith & Mullins, 1972; Storer & Crane, 1974)

*Epistemic communities* (Haas, 1992)

*Scientific collaborations* (Ghasemian, Zamanifar, Ghasem-Aqae, & Contractor, 2016)

*Open science* (Bartling & Friesike, 2014)

*Scientific networks* (Powell, White, Koput, & Owen-Smith, 2005)

Academic globalization (Altbach, 2004; Cornell University, 2018)

Academic scientists market (Stensaker, 2012)

Academic career of scientists (Carpi, Ronan, Falconer, & Lents, 2017; Dietz & Bozeman, 2005; Sauermann & Roach, 2012)

## **Unit 2. Brands**

### **2.1. Brand Theory**

Independent methodology (Aaker, 2006; Lindström, 2005; Temporal & Lee, 2000; Bazhenov & Bazhenova, 2017)

### **2.2. Marketing**

Research the entire organization (Drucker, 1985; Kaplan & Norton, 2007)

Marketing justification of strategic programs for the development of territories (Bennett & Savani, 2003)

University brand research (Aaker & Joachimsthaler, 2000)

The study is based on the methodology of the systems approach, which allows considering the phenomena in their systemic unity and interaction. The methodological basis of this research in the framework of the system approach is the theory of socio-economic systems (Kleiner, 2008, 2015). Within the framework of this theory, the "academic world" is represented as an interaction of four types of socio-economic systems: (1) object (institutions, including universities, scientific schools, scientific journals, etc., as well as individual scientists), (2) project (scientific projects, scientific events, etc.), (3) process (production of "scientific knowledge", scientific communication, etc.) and (4) environment ("scientific environment", "academic atmosphere", institutional environment, et cetera).

In turn, the academic world itself interacts with systems of a different nature: "society" ("socium"), the state and "business". For these systems, the academic world can be represented by its brands: the university's brand, the scientist's brand, the scientific journal's brand, etc.

Thus, the brand becomes a kind of "optics" through which the academic world is "visible" in the modern world. In this case, the metaphor "optics" ("optical system") is used to designate such a system that is capable of carrying out distinction operations in accordance with its own cognitive style (Fuchs, 2005). What is the "cognitive style" of academic brands? It is clear that this "cognitive style" is a style of market exchange, and the brands themselves are complexes of intellectual, economic, psychological, emotional, symbolic

relationships between “sellers” and “consumers”.

The interdisciplinary approach is most appropriate to the subject and task, it plays an important role in the development of the research methodology. Under the interdisciplinary approach, we understand this principle of scientific research, which meets at least the following requirements: (1) interdisciplinary research includes "representatives" of two or more scientific disciplines, and at the same time provides an increment of scientific knowledge on each of them; (2) a detailed description of the prerequisites, conventions, rules of inference and verification of results.

A special methodological role for interdisciplinary research is played by the principle of historicism (considering the phenomenon in the context of their temporal dynamics) and the principle of methodological triangulation (using various sources of data and interpretative perspectives).

An important theoretical and methodological basis for the study were the provisions of the socio-constructivist approach, institutional economics, scientometrics, and the theory and practice of branding, in particular, the structural models of brand identity used in brand management. For the study of the academic world in the variety of interrelations of its elements in the project, the provisions of actor-network theory and a number of other theoretical structures of micro-sociology will be used.

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## **3. Results**

### **3.1. Scientific novelty of the project**

Primarily the subject of the research determines the scientific novelty of the research. We explore the brands of the academic world, as a reflection of this world in the public consciousness, as a structure of the symbolic space of the academic world, as universal constructions that can serve as a universal evaluative tool of the institutions of the academic world. The novelty of the problem is reinforced by the focus on current trends in the development of society and the economy, their “digital transformations”.

Secondly, the novelty of the research is determined by the methods of solving a scientific problem. We use an interdisciplinary approach, which must meet clear identification signs: (a) use the theoretical and methodological tools of two or more scientific disciplines and at the same time provide an increment of scientific knowledge on each of them; (b) a detailed description of the prerequisites, conventions, rules of inference and verification of results.

The research strategy of the project is a combination of two areas of analysis of the object – the academic world: 1) the social space of the academic world itself and 2) its reflection in the symbolic space of the brands of this world, as well as finding the correlation between these spaces.

In addition, elements of scientific novelty are present in the adaptation of the theory of brand capitalization in relation to the brands of the academic world.

### **3.2. Expected results of the project and their scientific and applied significance.**

The project will provide the following theoretical and practical results: (1) the theoretical scientific construct “brands of the academic world”, reflecting the specifics of their appearance and development, their influence on the social space of the academic world and the consequences of such influence; (2) a theoretical model of representation in the brands of various institutions and subjects of the academic world; (3) a system for measuring brands of objects of the academic world; (4) tools for measuring and quantifying brands of institutions of the academic world; (5) recommendations for improving the economic performance of the brand of the basic institutions of the academic world; (6) proposals for improving the management of the brand portfolio of such institutions; (7) final conclusions and expert recommendations for relevant institutions in the management of the scientific and academic sphere, to improve the mechanisms of the "academic world" in terms of its resource endowment.

## 4. Conclusions

The results of the research project are contributions to the development of the theory of processes and phenomena of social and economic life. In particular, such as the social structure of the academic world and its dynamics, the brands of the academic world and their impact on the economic and social space of the academic world, the possibility of their use as evaluation tools in the system of social management. Undoubtedly, the results of the project contribute to the development of interdisciplinarity as a relevant scientific direction.

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