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Abstract

Diese Studie untersucht die Bedeutung und der Rolle der Hochschulwebsite und ihrer Markenbildung im Prozess der Hochschulwahl. Sie taucht tief in den Entscheidungsprozess über die Universität ein und untersucht den Einfluss der Website als erster zentraler Berührungspunkt bei der Informationssuche auf das Markenimage bei der Wahl einer Universität für das eigene Studium.

Nach früheren Untersuchungen ist die Website einer Universität eine der einflussreichsten Informationsquellen während des Hochschulauswahlprozesses. Der Eindruck von der Universität hängt stark von der Bewertung der Universitätswebsite ab. Studierende entscheiden in der Regel aufgrund ihres ersten Eindrucks von der Website, ob sie eine Universität in Betracht ziehen. Die Bedeutung der Website und die Wirksamkeit des Übergangs zur Markenidentität unterstreichen die Wichtigkeit der aktuellen Forschung.

Im theoretischen Teil der Arbeit werden die Konzepte Markenimage und Markenidentität analysiert. Für den empirischen Teil werden Webseiten der Universität Wien und der Fakultät für Wirtschaftswissenschaften und Statistik als Hauptgegenstand für die Bewertung der digitalen Markenidentität ausgewählt.

Die Hauptforschungsfrage der Studie ist, ob die digitale Markenidentität der Universitätswebsite erfolgreich durch die Website übertragen wird. Es wird auch untersucht, wie das Image durch Website-Elemente wie Design, Layout und Inhalt vermittelt wird.Um diese Frage beantworten zu können, wurde die Methode der qualitativen Befragung gewählt und es wurden Interviews mit Digitalexperten und zukünftigen Universitätsstudenten durchgeführt und ausgewertet.

Die Ergebnisse der Studie sind sehr umfangreich. Zusammengefasst konnte durch die empirische Untersuchung gezeigt werden, dass Hochschulwebsites das Branding hinreichend effizient übertragen.

Abstract

This study investigates the meaning and role of the university website and its branding during the process of university selection. It dives deep into the decision-making process about the university and explores the impact of the website as a first central touchpoint in information search on brand image when choosing a university for one's studies.

According to previous research, the university website is one of the most influential sources of information during the university selection process. Impression about the university is strongly dependent on the university website evaluation. Students usually decide if they want to consider university as an option based on their first impression of the website. The importance of the website and the effectiveness of the brand-identity transition emphasizes the importance of current research.

In the theoretical part of the work brand image and brand identity concepts are analysed. For the empirical part, webpages of the University of Vienna and the Faculty of Economics, Business, and Statistics are chosen as the main subjects for digital brand identity evaluation.

The main research question of the study is if the digital brand identity of the university website is successfully transferred through the website. It is also investigated how the image is conveyed by website elements as design, layout and content. To be able to answer this question, a method of qualitative interview was chosen and interviews with digital experts and future university students were conducted and analysed.

Results of the study are very extensive, but empirical exploration showed that university website transfer branding quite efficiently.

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1. Introduction

The choice of higher educational institution (HEI) is an important decision for school graduates pursuing higher education goals. The decision process is complex and typically characterized by high personal involvement of the future student (Le et al., 2020, p. 810). Much information is needed, and a credible source providing relevant information in an attractive and comprehensive way is required. Higher Education Institutions increasingly competing for students need to provide touchpoints that are low-treshold in character, contain the relevant information and convey it in appealing, emotive way. Potential future students represent the target group, to which HEIs intend to convey a brand image that reflects their brand identity. Today, the Internet is undeniably one of the main sources used by future students during the decision making and website is one of the main touchpoints used by students, which represents HEIs brand image. The importance of the website during the information search by students is also emphasized by both American and European researchers (Obermeit, 2012, p. 218). This has drawn increasing attention to the websites and raised more questions about their role and influence in different fields. In educational field websites are important sources of information and frequently the most decisive and influential factor. Approximately 94% of prospective students state that they visit the HEI's website to learn more about the institution (Schimmel et al., 2010, p. 2). The HEI website serves as the primary means of communication with students and other stakeholders (Ghorbanzadeh, 2022) and an essential tool during the recruitment process (Meyer & Jones, 2011). During the HEI selection process, students usually perceive information on the website as reliable and trustworthy, and their first impression of the HEI is usually based on this information. The first impression about the HEI website is extremely important because it determines whether visitors will develop trust in the institution and consider it as a possible future choice (Ghorbanzadeh & Sharbatiyan, 2022). Evaluation of the website also usually precedes a personal visit to the building (Schimmel et al., 2010, p. 2). Universities today strive to provide their website visitors with an image of the HEI helped by high-quality graphical and informational content that is tailored to a variety of HEI stakeholder groups (Marzie Astani, 2008, p. 461). Aside from providing information and functionality, the HEI website plays a significant role in the creation of a pleasant interactive experience and transferring the HEI brand image. The perception of the HEI by future students is directly influenced by the brand image transmitted through the website (Ghorbanzadeh, 2022).

This work concentrates on the importance of branding and online communication, in particular the role of HEI website as a part of the brand. The website is the digital touchpoint and static channel of communication, with its elements conveying the creator's self-image, the identity of the brand, and indicating how the brand wants to be perceived by stakeholders (Tőkés, 2022, p. 132). Elements such as multimodal content, image, sound, text, and audio-visual, aesthetics of website design, a user-friendly interactive experience, and their management are important parts of digital brand management. They are also responsible for the perception and understanding of brand identity embedded by the brand's creator (Tőkés, 2022, p. 137).

Spry & Pich (2021, p. 182) state that positive brand image can be a determining factor in a student's choice to attend a particular HEI, and that it is therefore important to understand students' associations with the HEI's brand in the context of its image. The terms 'brand identity' and 'brand image' are often used interchangeably, as there is much misunderstanding between these two concepts. In practice, concepts are connected, but different and should be aligned. Authors emphasise the importance of narrowing the gap between identity and image and creating coherence among stakeholders, as corporate image can be the most effective form of differentiation (Spry & Pich, 2021, p. 182). Brand failure in the market is frequently caused by a communication gap between brand identity and image during the communication and decoding processes. As both consumers and channel members form mental images of the brand during the process of brand identity perception decoding, according to Roy & Banerjee (2014, p. 209) communication gaps may occur in the case of a mismatch between the encoding and decoding (Roy & Banerjee, 2014, p. 208). According to De Chernatony (1999), as cited by Janonis et al (2007, p. 75)., it is critical to minimize the gap between brand identity and brand reputation and image. When there is a lack of consistency, the message is misinterpreted by the audience during the decoding process. Many authors emphasize the importance of closing the identity-image gap to achieve coherence and the most effective brand differentiation (Spry & Pich, 2021, p. 182). To summarize, considering that the brand image is a mental construct in the mind of the consumer and created by successful positioning and transmission/decoding of brand identity characteristics, the study suggests that brand identity characteristics are embedded into the website by its creators and can be identified only through the target audience's external perception.

To understand the role of the website of HEI and its role in branding, case study was conducted, and University of Vienna and its Faculty of Business, Economics and Statistics were taken as

main object. With the central attention on the website as the touchpoint during the information search and the mean of brand image transfer, this study is based on three research questions:

Research question 1: Is brand identity of the University of Vienna successfully transmitted in terms of establishing a consistent brand image in potential future students by means of a. the University of Vienna-Website, b. the Website of the Faculty of Business, Economics and Statistics?
Research question 2: Which impact had the various dimensions of the website in transmitting the (intended) brand image (= brand identity): a. design, b. layout and interactive experience, c. content.
Research question 3: Which effects of the website of the University of Vienna and the website of its Faculty of Business, Economics and Statistics on brand image (as perceived by the target group) can be observed: a. congruent, b. complementary, c. inconsistent.

This research was inspired by the latest study by Tőkés (2022), in which the authors explored the digital brand identity of the Zara fashion brand, based on analysis of the official brand page, the corporate website of the brand's owner Inditex Group, and its Instagram page. Taking into consideration that brand image is no less important in the educational sphere than in fashion field, it was discovered that no prior research into the digital identity of higher educational institutions based on a digital touchpoint evaluation has been conducted. Hence the decision was taken to conduct the analysis of the higher educational digital image based on the main website of the university and relevant pages.

The current case study compares **a.** the **formulated** brand identity (= **intended** brand image) from the perspective of the University of Vienna based on analysis of the content of the University of Vienna brochure and expert interview with PR specialist with **b.** brand image **perceived** by potential future students based on analysis of content of the interviews with target group members.

To explain the effects and effectiveness of creating the (intended) brand image, website is described in its various aspects (based on respective empirical data). The website in this work is described as: a) communication tool of a HEI (perspective of the University of Vienna), b) touchpoint and c) source of wide range of information in decision making

and university choice (perspective of the target group or "customers" = potential future students).
In analysis and description is proceed in a systematic way:
a. design
b. layout and interactive experience
c. content

The research topics discussed in the study and the main aims:

1. The importance of the university website and its elements for brand identity.
2. Evaluation of the website elements responsible for the transmission of digital brand identity and their perception.
3. Evaluation of the University of Vienna and Faculty of Business, Economics, and Statistics brand identity attributes communicated by the university.
4. Consistency of a) intended (by the university); b) contended (on the website); and c) perceived (by students) digital brand identity of the 1) University of Vienna; and 2) the Faculty of Business, Economics, and Statistics to determine whether there is a mismatch between the desired identity created by the university, the way it is transferred through the website, and the brand image as reported by target audience.
5. Identification of possible issues in brand identity transmission.
6. Recommendations for digital brand identity improvement.

The relevance of the study is that as nowadays marketing is increasingly adopted in the higher education sector, exploration of the factors of choice and sources of information used by students is crucial. According to Veloutsou et al. (2005, p. 289), for university to become a desirable option, positive representation and perception is necessary. Future students, advisers and general stakeholders must have a clear understanding of what the university is about and what it offers. For this reason, the self-image presented by university is highly important and requires more research. Communication of the self-image of the university through its website, and its layout and perception of it by the target audience is the main field of interest of this research.

The motivation behind this study is that understanding the decision-making process behind university choice, and evaluating the website as one of the most used marketer-controlled

information sources during the pre-purchase stage of the decision-making process (Simões & Soares, 2010, p. 371), would be an important contribution to the recruitment strategies of the university. Understanding perception is important in times of significant growth and development of communications and computer sciences. Assessment of the image perception of HEI by potential students transmitting via the webpage would help to better understand irrational and emotion-based factors behind the decision-making process which are largely unexplored. Current research would also enhance comprehension of the behavioural intentions of prospective students, helping university managers responsible for the tailored content design of the communication channels to target the segment of pupils leaving school more efficiently, easing the decision-making process and significantly reducing the risks associated with this important decision. Besides, congruent choice may give students confidence about the choice made, and provide them with motivation, enthusiasm, and long-term satisfaction. Roy & Banerjee in their research also mention a lack of research focus on issues caused by inconsistencies related to "place," one of the four Ps of the marketing mix (Roy & Banerjee, 2014, p. 209).

The study consists of two parts: theoretical and empirical. The theoretical part offers a theoretical overview of HEI branding. The process of decision-making in HEI selection and consumer behaviour in the prepurchase phase were considered, including the behavioural models of choice, factors of choice, and information sources and their types. The website, its meaning and importance for the HEI and future students, and its communicative function were also discussed. Due attention was given to the website and its connection with brand image. The findings of numerous researchers about website features and website design were mentioned in the study, too. Finally, the concept of brand image, brand identity, their relationship, and the communication gap which can occur in the absence of consistency between identity and image and be a major problem were also highlighted. The theoretical part involved trying to provide all the necessary information to comprehend the complexity of the HEI selection process and the final choice, focusing primarily on the concept of brand identity and brand image, transmitted through the website, as one of the most popular and influential digital marketer-controlled information sources.

Empirical part of work is based on the description of the Case Study about University of Vienna and the Faculty of Business, Economics, and Statistics, which is conducted with the aim to get deeper insights and a better understanding of the various aspects relevant for designing

websites as touchpoint and source of information for potential students that successfully convey the brand - thereby positively influencing "customer" choice.

Case study consists of the analysis of the formulated brand identity (= intended brand image) from the perspective of the University of Vienna based on analysis of the content of the University of Vienna brochure and expert interview with PR specialist and the brand image perceived by potential future students based on analysis of content of the interviews with target group members. Each step of the study is described in detail during the work. Findings, conclusions, and recommendations can be found in the end of the work.

2. Theoretical and Conceptual Background

2.1. Higher Educational Institution (HEI) Branding

According to Krutov & Iakovlev (1984, p. 17), higher educational institutions are different types of educational institutions with the main goal to ensure the country with highly educated employees. HEIs play vital role not solely in education, but also in scientific field, whilst nowadays also being R&D centers.

According to the Federal Ministry Republic of Austria website, Austrian market of higher education is divided by 4 sectors: twenty-two public universities, twenty-one universities of applied science, seventeen accredited private universities and fourteen university colleges of teacher education. Austrian HEIs are teaching approximately three hundred ninety thousands of students, who are choosing one of the sectors of the HEI. The number of the HEI is increasing, especially it refers to the universities of applied science and public universities. Hence, competition on educational market is intense (Federal Ministry Republic of Austria Education, Science and Research, 2023).

As a consequence of increased competition, branding becomes more and more important, also for established institutions with a long tradition (such as, eg., the public University of Vienna). In the modern world, the image of the brand is one of the means of brand differentiation and a guarantee of customer trust. This statement also applies to the higher educational institution (HEI) brand. A HEI brand is more than just a logo, slogan, or motto. Rather, it is the perception of the brand that the public forms about a particular HEI and that is triggered by the stimuli associated with the HEI.

Nowadays, brand image is also a crucial factor in choosing a HEI. In addition, it is also beneficial for stakeholders' relationship development and solid network creation. A deep understanding of the brand image of the HEI, its stakeholders, their behaviours, and needs is required for efficient management and improvement of marketing strategy and positioning. In this sub-chapter, HEI branding is discussed in detail, with a focus on the role of branding in the HEI selection process and customer interaction. Furthermore, other important concepts are mentioned and examined (Iqbal et al., 2012., p.2-3).

2.1.1. Branding from an HEI Perspective

In this study HEI branding is analysed from two different perspectives: that of the higher educational institution (HEI) and of the customer. First, branding is discussed from the HEI 's perspective. HEI branding is not a new concept, but nowadays it is used massively in the face of strong competition in the education market (Joseph et al., 2012, p. 2).

Effective HEI branding is a strategy-oriented framework for coordinating and integrating the messages and experiences of the higher education institution (Javani, 2016, p. 227). Its usage and development are highly beneficial, and there are several reasons why this is the case. In the past, branding was actively used to make prospective students and their parents aware of the HEI or to provide key stakeholders with relevant brand messages. This is still relevant for universities today, however, there are also other new benefits of branding. For instance, nowadays branding of higher education institutions includes improvement of rankings, quality, brand awareness, strengthening of current brand associations or even rebranding (new image creation) (Joseph et al., 2012, p. 2).

According to Javani, (2016, p. 227), promoting differentiators such as history, educational quality, HEI culture, etc. is another important task of branding and has a positive impact on the image of the HEI and its perception, leading to more opportunities and better brand competitiveness. Efficient branding creates a more attractive image which in turn is more appealing to its customers than that of its rivals.

Branding is also crucial for positioning, targeting and growth (Javani, 2016, p.227). Promotion of the HEI as powerful and successful will have a strong effect on the improvement of HEI and faculty staff, enhanced media attention, different types of investment (for example in R&D) and strengthening partnerships. Successful branding leads to an increase in enrolment applications from highly motivated students, their further professional development, together with the attraction of recognized and professional staff (Joseph et al., 2012, p.3).

According to Joseph et al., (2012), branding can also be compared to the effectiveness of marketing outcomes, i.e., the extent to which the HEI meets the needs of its stakeholders.

To understand a HEI's branding, another important question should be: Who is the target audience of HEI or "to whom does the HEI sell?". Typically, HEI needs to promote itself and sell its product to multiple target markets, using different strategies, and some of the target audiences have already been noted above. For HEI, there are two primary target markets: internal and external. The representatives of the internal market are faculty members, HEI staff, and officials. The primary goal of internal communications is to create a value proposition, consistency, and motivation for participants in the internal market (Koku, 2022, p.4).

In his book, Koku (2022) presents the external market with the help of the upstream-downstream model with two-way communication between the HEI and other institutions. The model is simplified, as stated by the author, because real-life processes are usually far more complex. Upstream communication includes alumni associations, government, and other funding agencies, and its main goal is to raise and increase financial resources. Potential students and parents belong to downstream agencies, and potential employees and other businesses belong to downstream communication. Its main goal is to recruit students and open up career opportunities for them (p.5).

2.1.2. HEI Branding from Customer Perspective

Looking at HEI branding from the point of view of customer, the most important functions it fulfils here are risk mitigation, the promise of quality, the provision of a symbolic image, key associations creation, and the building of relationships (Joseph et al., 2012).

When talking about the strategic development of HEI branding, one should ask what the HEI is selling to its customers, in other words, what is the main product (Koku, 2022, p.3). Koku (2022, p.2) in his book “Marketing Higher Education” states that the main goal of the HEI is to build intellectual capital and develop students' intellectual abilities through lectures and research practises. At the beginning of the 20th century, the answer to the question of what is the main product of the HEI would be knowledge , but much has changed since then.

Today, in addition to knowledge, universities also offer other complementary services, such as the campus, lecture halls, classes, laboratories, libraries, and so on. This means that knowledge is no longer the only HEI product. Nowadays, the HEI is also a provider of the place, which

can be considered a part of the branding that influences perception of the HEI and its reputation (Koku, 2022, p.2).

Mariutti et al., (2022) in their study discuss HEI branding from the perspective of place branding management. They note that place branding is a part of place marketing and is considered a complex process. The main interest of place branding research lies in the concepts of brand image and reputation.

According to Javani, (2016, p. 227) the issues that researchers are concerned with at the theory level are those of brand identity and image.For establishment of successful brands, both brand image and brand identity are essential (Domic, 2022, p. 964). Successful institutions conduct brand management based on identity reflection, definition of brand elements, and expression of uniqueness. Development of the brand identity, brand positioning among customers, and the brand image thus acquired, improve results for the brand in a modern competitive environment (Janonis et al., 2007, p. 69). Park et al. (1986), as ciated by Roy & Banerjee, 2014, p. 208), also state that the choice of brand identity and how it is used, as well as the image obtained and the extent to which the identity can be transferred, are defining factors for success.

During the process of brand image development, three interconnected elements play the most important roles: brand identity, positioning of the brand, and brand image. As brand image and identity concepts have been explained above, positioning is another important concept worth mentioning.

Positioning can be defined as the process of communicating brand identity to target audiences through the selection of unique brand features that give the brand a competitive advantage over other brands. According to the findings of various brand identity models, as mentioned by Janonis, there is complete agreement that brand identity must be transferred to the target audience of the brand. However, brand image is not identified as the result in some models (Janonis et al., 2007, p. 75).

Roy & Banerjee, (2014, p. 208) mention that communication with audiences happens through the delivery of brands with the help of suitable marketing channels. As a result, to achieve an efficient brand identity transition, all three phases, which includes work with marketing

managers, marketing channels, and audiences, must be coordinated and harmonized. Harmonization is one of the goals of marketers. It should be emphasized that the role of marketing channels as intermediaries in this case is critical.

During the process of decoding of brand identity and perception formation, both customers and members of the channel are forming an image of brand in their minds. Roy & Banerjee, (2014, p. 209) state that due to a mismatch between the encoding and decoding processes, communication gaps occur, and these gaps between the identity and image of the brand are common possible reasons for brand failure in the market (Roy & Banerjee, 2014, p. 208). According to De Chernatony (1999), as cited by Janonis et al., (2007, p.75), it is critical that the gap between brand identity and brand reputation and image is minimized. Roy & Banerjee (2014, p. 209) mention that the gap between image and identity is also a huge threat to brand blurring and can sometimes cause changes in value systems, which are the foundation of an already existing brand identity. Hence, consistency and continuity are critical components of successful brand communication, and their absence results in ineffective brand identity delivery. In cases of lack of consistency, the message is misunderstood by the audience during the decoding process.

The measurement of the gap between the identity and image of a brand is a priority, with the aim being the brand's success and realization of actions needed to narrow this gap. The success of the results of the measures taken is defined by the accuracy of the measurements. The authors also note a lack of attention in the research given to problems caused by inconsistencies related to "place," one of the four Ps of the marketing mix. The marketing channel, which is the brand-controlled information source, in which identity is decoded by the audience, can contribute to the occurrence of communication gaps (Roy & Banerjee, 2014, p. 209).

The terms "brand identity" and "brand image" are often mistakenly used as synonyms, but although these concepts are interrelated, they have different meanings (Spry & Pich, 2021, p. 182). A more detailed explanation of these concepts will be provided below.

2.2. Brand Identity

Authors including J.L. Kapferer, D. Aaker, L de Chernatony, L. Keller, etc. were the first researchers to make a huge impact on the development of brand identity concepts. The concept

of brand identity was mentioned by the European author Kapferer for the first time in 1986. This innovation quickly triggered a worldwide reaction and enhanced an interest in this important concept. In brand management literature, the word "equity" is usually used instead of "identity" (Roy & Banerjee, 2014, p. 208).

Janonis et al., (2007, p. 70) state that brand identity conception relates to all aspects that give meaning to a brand and make it unique. Aaker (1991), as cited by Roy & Banerjee, (2014, p. 208), defined brand identity as a summary of brand meanings embodied in the form of a product, person, symbol, or organization. Without a clear and distinct identity, the brand's values, vision, and strength cannot be understood, and neither internal nor external communication is possible.

De Chernatony (2002), as cited by Roy & Banerjee (2014, p. 208), stated that identity comprises a moral image, values, and goals that together make up the core of originality and differentiate the brand from competitors. Aaker (1991), as cited by Roy & Banerjee (2014, p. 208), in his work mentioned that brand identity also includes the emotional benefits that empower a brand and helps to deliver brand's message efficiently to the customer. However, the service or product must also be functional to satisfy the customer. A brand add-on is an opportunity for customers to express themselves through the purchase and use of products, a so-called self-expressive function, which is connected with managers trying to create self-congruent image of the brand with certain targeted segment (Kapferer, 2000, as cited by Roy & Banerjee, 2014, p. 209)

2.2.1. Sources of Brand Identity

Janonis et al., (2007, p. 70) summarizes that the brand identity concept consists of meaning, uniqueness, aims, values, and personality, and this enables brands to be effectively promoted and presented to gain competitive advantage. Janonis et al., (2007, p. 71) also identify sources of brand identity as:

1. *Good:* Brand proposes product or service, but this is not its only function. Brand identity is a part of the product itself and is implemented during the production and distribution processes. Brand identity is able to evoke emotions and associations in customers' minds.
2. *Name:* Name is the primary identifier for the brand and can significantly influence brand perception by customers as well as the memorability.

3. *Personage:* Real or fictional character use can also be a part of brand identity and help in creating memorable brands. A persona can serve as a brand's emblem, and as such, must be consistent with the brand's values and main message.
4. *Visual symbols and logotypes:* Visual elements serve as representations of the brand and are responsible for its visual identity and memorability. It may be helpful during the development of a brand's culture and must transmit brand values.
5. *Brand developer:* The personality and values of the creator of the brand can often be reflected in the identity of brand.
6. *Communication and content:* Brand exists only when it communicates. Brand opens its essence through communication. It explains who is serving whom and what relationships are persuaded. Today, thanks to technology, there are a plethora of ways in which information can be conveyed both visually and in audio format in the specific style of the brand. The culture, values, history, personality, and other important aspects of brand identity are transmitted and decoded through communication (Janonis et al., 2007, p. 71).

2.2.2. Brand Identity Prism of Kapferer

The brand identity prism proposed by Kapferer (1992, 1998, 2003) is one way to present and analyse the identity of the brand and the composition of the brand identity components with which it can be analysed, as shown in Figure 1 (Zwakala & Steenkamp, 2021, p. 288).

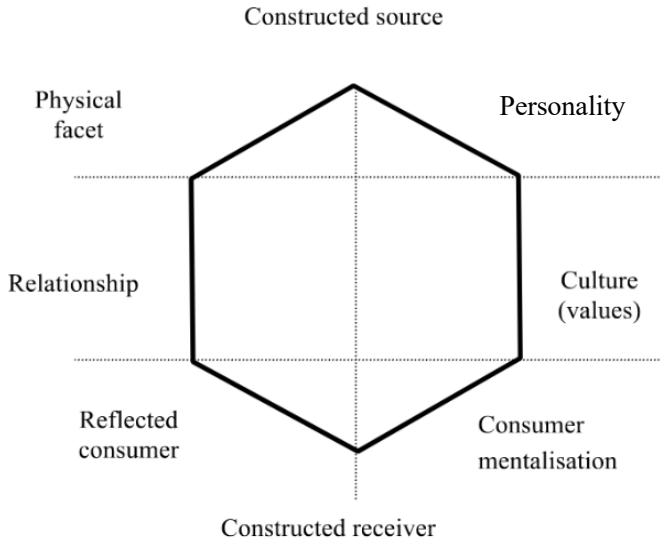

Figure 1: Brand identity prism (Azoulay & Kapferer, 2003).

Kapferer's brand identity prism consists of 6 elements: physical appearance, personality, culture, customer self-image, customer reflection, and relationship.

Physical appearance and personality characterize the image of the sender; reflection and the self-image of the customer characterize the image of the recipient. The left-hand side of the vertical segment (appearance, relationship, and customer reflection) deals with the brand's external performance and is visible, while the right-hand side of the vertical segment (personality, culture, and customer self-image) deals with the brand's internal filling or "soul".

More details about the meaning of each element of Kapferer's prism are given below:

1. *Physical appearance:* External features and specialties that allow a brand to be distinguished and recognized. Construction of physical appearance is the selection of certain physical factors that define what a brand is, its main functionality, and its physical form.
2. *Personality:* An important factor in conveying the character of a brand. This element represents how a brand communicates about its products with customers and is reflected in the specific human qualities it entails.
3. *Culture:* The goals, values, and culture of an organization are frequently at the heart of a brand's culture.
4. *Relationship:* The brand is at the heart of every business and exchange transaction. The element that most emphasizes the behaviour associated with brand behaviour is the relationship. The appropriate question here is how the brand provides its service.
5. *Consumer reflection:* The goal of brand communication is to make it clear to whom the communication is offered. Reflection makes it simple to determine which brands' products are designed for which types of customers. Reflection is frequently confused with a target market; however, reflection and its communication are about who customers want to be, not who they are.
6. *Consumer self-image:* "self-image" refers to a person's thoughts, feelings, and perceptions of themselves in relation to other objects within socially defined boundaries. Self-image is the characteristic with which customers identify themselves and with which they would like to be associated when consuming branded products (Zwakala & Steenkamp, 2021, p. 288).

2.2.3. Approach to Brand Identity by Burmann

There is another approach to the understanding of brand identity in the literature. Unlike Krapferer, Burmann et al., (2018) proposes components of brand identity identification including vision, personality, values, competence, origin, and benefits (Burmann et al., 2018).

The identity concept is complex. According to Keupp et al. (1999, p. 217), as cited by Burmann et al., (2018, p. 32), the key achievement of identity formation is the consolidation of all partial identities present in a person into a meta-identity, and the formation of a brief core identity as a common interface. Individual identities, according to the literature, can be divided into distinct identities and diffuse identities. Table 1 shows the distinctions between the individual's diffuse and clear identity. Understanding identity and its components is critical because it can be used in identity-based brand management.

In the section "Transfer (human identity) to brand identities", six components of identity theory are identified. These components were used to analyze brand identity and enable accurate brand description, analysis, and projection.

Characteristics of:		Transfer to brand identities	Question	Explanation
Diffuse human identity	Clear human identity			
Many non-differentiating identity characteristics	Few differentiating identity characteristics	Performance program	*What do we market?*	The basic nature of brand work determines how the brand is usable by the customer and what the employees are working on.
Risk-averse, "fearful" Preservation of the status quo	Role conflicts are actively used, to further develop and consolidate own identity	Personality	*How do we communicate?*	The verbal and nonverbal communication style of a brand is defined by its personality.
Adoption of others' beliefs	Shaping own beliefs	Values	*What do we believe in?*	What the brand and its representatives believe in is defined by its brand values.
Values Strong orientation towards the environment	Formation of a clear, own Vision	Vision	*Where do we want to go?*	Long-term identity design is shaped by competencies and motivated by brand vision.
Low self-confidence	High self-confidence	Competences	*What can we do?*	Brand competencies establish and anchor specific competitive brand advantages based on a company's resources and organizational capabilities.
Lack of awareness of past achievements and accomplishments	Past achievements and accomplishments motivate to do new things	Origin	*What do we come from?*	The origin of a brand is the foundation of its identity. A brand has no point of reference for self-reflection if it is not linked to its origin.

Table 1: Differences between diffuse and clear identity. Transfer of human identity to brand identity (created based on Burmann et al. (2018, p. 31-45)

The origins and vision of the brand serve as the foundation for the development of the other components. The significance of these two identity components, which point in time to the future or the past, can be deduced from a perspective based on resources and competencies (Burmann et al., 2018, p. 32).

2.3. Brand Image

According to the literature, brand image is an important concept in marketing research, and there are two ways to look at this concept:

- from the company's perspective,
- and from the customer's perspective.

From the company's perspective, the main objective is the management of brand marketing, brand identity, creation of brand identity, monitoring of brand image understanding and perception, and its alignment with target customers. A successful brand image transfers the meaning of the brand initially created by the company while the customer consumes its good or service. Nowadays, with a huge number of possibilities available on the market, customers are aiming to find something authentic and something they feel like relating to. In the event of incorrect decoding of identity and message created by the brand, the company has significant chance of losing out to competitors with similar brands (Janonis et al., 2007, p.73).

The brand image concept gained researchers' attention for the first time in the middle of the 90s, and there were struggles with the formulation of its meaning, measurement, structure, and value. Statements by numerous authors mentioned by Woodside et al., (2009, p. 40) describe the brand image concept from several points of view:

a) associations:

- attributes and associations customers have with the brand
- individual associations attached to the brand
- meaningfully organized set of associations

b) thoughts and feelings of customers about the brand

c) complete mental picture of the brand

Based on Woodside et al., (2009, p. 40), we can say that brand image can be seen as a mental construct in the customer's mind. Kapferer (2000), as cited by Roy & Banerjee, (2014, p. 208), states that brand image is the most efficient means of communication with customers, illustrating the importance of a brand identity. Roy & Banerjee, (2014, p. 208) also noticed that the brand's image perception is created during the customer's decoding of the brand identity, which is transferred through the communication channel. During this process, associations are formed in the minds of customers, and the result is the brand image.

2.3.1. Brand Image Measurement

When it comes to **measuring brand image** as an external element of brand identity, there are two objects of analysis when collecting data on image:

a) examining image in relation to the brand's competitors
b) and examining customers' perception of image.

The most common methods of analysis are laddering techniques and surveys. Cognitive and social methods are used to investigate customer perception and image evaluation, as well as brand association obtainment. When attempting to evaluate the image, according to Roy & Banerjee (2014), the primary focus is on such elements as perceptions, cognition and attitudes:

- *Perception:* Perception occurs after the information is obtained by sensory organs, absorbed, and processed. Perception formation is the process by which meaning is created while patterns are identified and some elements in intertwining are recognized.
- *Cognition:* The recognition process is the process by which customers gain an understanding of what they have perceived by constructing mental representations.
- *Attitudes:* The way in which people generally evaluate themselves, others, things, and problems that arise is attitude. Attitudes are strongly connected with emotions and are influence people's behaviour. Attitudes can cause reactions.

Analysis of short-term advertising and other forms of communication leads to image evaluation, whereas analysis of long-term brand actions and the motivation behind these actions leads to reputation evaluation. Choosing brand image research with an explorative qualitative approach and extraction of free associations is considered to be efficient approach (Heding et al., 2009).

Brand associations can be considered another method of measuring of brand image. According to Woodside et al., (2009, p. 40), associations play a key role in brand image understanding. *Associations* are subjective perceptions of reality that may or may not correspond to objective reality. They are responsible for adding value to the customer's experience by assisting them in processing or retrieving information about the brand, differentiating and positioning the brand in their minds, and providing reasons to making decision about the brand. Roy & Banerjee, (2014, p. 208) declare that associations are made up of emotional dimensions and are perceived quality dimensions. Aaker (1991), as cited by Roy & Banerjee, (2014, p. 208), also mentioned that brand managers must define which associations they want to deliver for capture by the target audience. It can also be considered the desired positioning.

2.3.2. Brand Image and Self-congruence

It is important to note that nowadays consumption is more than just buying a functional product; it is also how people define and express themselves. As a result, one of the most important tasks for managers is to create an image that is congruent with the target customer's self-image (Roy & Banerjee, 2014, p. 209).

Customers' choices are motivated by the symbolic value of the brand, and brand selection is heavily influenced by the person's perception (Shafiee et al., 2022, p. 49). The use of brands as a means of expressing one's identity and lifestyle speaks to the brand's self-expression function. When selecting a product and analyzing the signals emitted by the product image, customers seek the image in their set of schemes that is most similar to their own self-concept (Cătălin & Andreea, 2014, p. 104).

Self-concept is a multidimensional psychological construct that influences the nature of one's cognitive, emotional, and motivational experiences. It can also be explained by individuals' ideas, feelings, and attitudes toward themselves. Self-concept is a synthesis of one's perceptions, or how a person sees themself in terms of characteristics, attributes, qualities, values, relationships, and so on, that they perceive as related to individual identity. The three main components of self-concept are self-image/self-identity, self-esteem (self-value), and behaviour (García-Martínez et al., 2022, p. 2-3).

Another important concept that underpins the choice mechanism is self-image congruence. Sohail & Awal (2017) in their work examine the concept of self-congruence and note that it is the agreement between the perceived customer's image and the perceived brand's image. According to research, this factor may be one of the most influential during the consumption decision-making process (Sohail & Awal, 2017, p. 135).

Sheeraz & Qadeer (2018, p. 600) mention that self-congruence belongs to the theory of cognitive consistency and support which states that customers buy a product or service that reflects their personality. According to the theory of self-expression self-expansion, customers buy brands that can support or build their self-image.

2.4. Characteristics of Customer Behavior during the Decision-making Process of HEI Selection

2.4.1. Description of Decision-making Process about the HEI

Moving away from brand image and identity concepts, due attention should be given in this work to the analysis of the decision-making process about HEI with the aim of a better understanding of customer behaviour. Decision-making about the choice of education services usually begins with the customer’s recognition of the need for a degree and ends with the purchase of a service (Le et al., 2020, p. 810). According to the literature, the decision-making process about service differs from tangible product purchases by higher complexity and higher level of risk containment, and during the process customers tend to require far more information than in the first case (Simões & Soares, 2010, p. 372).

The complexity of this process can be explained by several distinguishing features of educational services. First, choosing a HEI is a one-time decision with a long consumption period (typically 3–4 years), and the final choice has a long-term impact on the student's professional future and the development of their personality. Second, a HEI educational service is classified as a credence service because its characteristics are difficult to evaluate immediately after the decision has been made, as educational service results are usually evident only several years after the education program has been completed (Le et al., 2020, p. 810).

As the decision about which HEI to choose and attend is normally very important to prospective students, the importance of the choice for students and their level of involvement is consequently high. As a result, the process of HEI selection is classified as a high-involvement process, and the higher the level of involvement, the higher the perceived risks, and vice versa (Simões & Soares, 2010, p. 375).

Obermeit (2012, p. 212) also classifies HEI selection as extensive problem solving with the goal of evaluating and eliminating perceived risks. The high level of perceived risks is the reason for the student's high level of involvement in the process described, and the requirement for extensive information search during the decision-making process.

The following are some potential risks that may arise during the HEI selection decision-making process (Simões & Soares, 2010, p. 374):

- Financial (the risk that the money spent will not be worth it and will not meet the customer's expectations)
- Functional/performance (the risk that the performance of the service or product will not lead to the desired level of satisfaction)
- Physical (the risk that the purchase and usage of the product or service will harm the customer's health)
- Psychological (risk of ego deterioration)
- Social (risk of the negative perception of the customer by society caused by the purchase of product/service)
- Time/convenience (the risk of potentially losing time, effort, and convenience as a result of poor service/product performance) (Simões & Soares, 2010, p. 374).

2.4.2. Customer Journey and Prepurchase Phase

Lemon & Verhoef (2016, p. 76) in their work describe the concept of customer journey, acording to which decision which HEI to attend can be analysed and observed from the standpoint of the customer experience. According to the literature, people are motivated not only by the purchase of a product or service, but also by the level of satisfaction they receive.

As previously stated, in the field of education, HEI selection is a complex process that includes three stages: prepurchase, purchase, and post purchase. Each stage has its own significance and

goal. The primary behaviors at the first stage are need recognition, consideration, and search; at the purchase stage, choice, ordering, and payment; and at the post-purchase stage, consumption, usage, engagement, and service requests.

Obermeit (2012, p. 212) also mentions the three-stage choice model, which consists of a predisposition phase, a search phase, and a choice phase. The predisposition phase is based on aspirations and expectations of a higher education service, the second phase includes the selection of important attributes for future students, and the last phase includes the final choice. The predisposition phase is the most relevant for this research, as this is the phase when website evaluation and perception formation occur. All actions taken during the first stage depend on the customer's specific needs and expectations (Simões & Soares, 2010, p. 374). All customer interactions with the brand, product or service category, and environment prior to making a purchase decision, are included in the prepurchase stage (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016, p. 76).

2.4.3. Information Search and Sources at Prepurchase Phase

Given the complexity of the selection process, the high risks, and the level of involvement, it should be noted that students who are interested in the possibilities offered by the higher education market conduct extensive information searches exactly during the prepurchase stage of the customer experience journey. This stage's research, as well as the information sources used in it, is important because their use is highly influential during the recruitment phases (Le et al., 2020, p. 811).

According to Tri D. Le's article, there are several ways to categorize different types of information searches used by students during HEI decision-making, and they are usually based on the research context. There are two types of information searches: internal (memory) and external *(*Le et al., 2020 p. 211).

According to (Simões & Soares, 2010, p. 376) an internal informational search occurs in the customer's memory and is based on prior knowledge and experiences with the product or service. External information, in turn, is based on the collection of new information based on customer personal and non-personal experiences, but from external sources. According to (Le et al., 2020, p. 211), other types of information searches include impersonal and personal

searches, as well as direct, media, and social searches. The author also emphasizes the significance of Word of mouth.

Another important topic that should be thoroughly examined and researched is information sources. They can also be divided into internal and external sources, with external sources classified as interpersonal, media, neutral, and retailer; direct, interpersonal, marketer-controlled, reseller information, and independent third-party (Simões & Soares, 2010, p. 376).

Researcher Fondevila-Gascón (2012, p.1) states in his article that during the HEI selection process, information sources can be empirical, interpersonal, independent, and commercial, with active or passive information research. To empirical they attribute campus visits, open doors events, information school sources, HEI experimental practices, and virtual visits through the Internet. Interpersonal relationships include family, friends, internet friends, and other friends. School professors, tutors, school orientations, school friends, HEI recruitment personnel, HEI students, professors, gatekeepers, and bloggers are examples of interpersonal people. Independent information sources include study guides, the Internet, print and digital media, institutional prospects, and educational materials. Finally, the broadest category includes press, radio, television, cinema aids, reviews, outdoor advertisements, information prospects, displays, the Internet, and direct marketing (Fondevila-Gascón, 2012, p.1).

Veloutsou et al. (2005) proposes another categorization: controllable, non-controllable and partly controllable and non-controllable sources, which are described in more details further.

2.4.3.1. Controllable information sources

A variety of university promotional materials are used to promote educational services and reach their target audience. As they are created and distributed by the institution, brochures, institutional letters, and booklets, and promotional videos are classified as controllable sources. The university's controllable materials can be printed, in the form of video, or digital (web-based). They are all written in the same style and contain up-to-date information. Among these sources, the university brochure is one of the most useful for gathering information about the university's courses. It is important to note that, despite being used by students, these traditional sources have little influence on the students' decisions. The personal visit to the university has the most influence on the student's choice. The ability to attend university open days provides

students with the opportunity to learn more about the university and get a sense of its atmosphere. They are also useful for successful students who have been accepted to more than one university and want to compare their options while visiting the university. Another option for students who want to study abroad is to attend an educational fair (Veloutsou et al., 2005, p. 281).

2.4.3.2. Non-controllable information sources

Non-controllable information sources are another category of sources. Friends and family, who are also considered "significant others," can be included in this category, and their influence on future student decisions is usually the strongest due to their high level of trust and authority over the student (Veloutsou et al., 2005, p.282). Le et al., (2020) also mention the importance of friends and parents' influence. However, the extent of the influence of "significant others" is widely debatable in the literature. Opinions of counsellors, other students, teachers, and staff of the university are also often considered by students during the decision-making process and can be classified as non-controllable sources as well (Veloutsou et al., 2005, p. 281).

Other non-controllable sources of information in the field of higher education are populist media, such as TV, magazines, the internet, and advertisements. Government-produced quality assurance and research standing publications also belong here. Non-controllable sources are important because they influence the unconscious perception of the public, which also influences the reputation of the educational institution (Veloutsou et al., 2005).

2.4.3.3. Partly controllable and non-controllable sources

The final category in Veloutsou et al., (2005) research is partly controllable and non-controllable sources, and the Internet is one of the best examples of this type of source, which, as stated by Obermeit (2012), is undeniably the primary source of information today.

Fondevila-Gascón (2012, p.2.) research mentions that the Internet is the leading source of information for college students to acquire information about college throughout the search phase. According to Veloutsou et al., (2005, p. 281) Internet can provide both market-driven information, such as the web pages of the higher education institution, and non-controllable sources, such as information about the university from other providers. As more

communication options develop with digital advances, previously common information formats are being replaced by more innovative ones. HEIs are now actively using the Internet for both their advertising and educational purposes. The final choice of prospective students is usually influenced by all sources of information related to HEI as for example website (Veloutsou et al., 2005).

2.5. Website as Pivotal Mean of HEI Choice

2.5.1. Importance of HEI Website

Educational research shows that market-oriented sources of information developed by HEIs are the most reliable source of information for prospective students. Here, the HEI website, which is the main focus of this study, plays an important role. Especially the relevance of this role is emphasized by the fact, that other online information providers are generally outside the control of the HEI and may be inaccurate (Simões & Soares, 2010, p. 379).

Today the HEI website serves as one of the most influential portals for communication with students and other HEI stakeholders (Ghorbanzadeh, 2022, p.3) and a very important tool during the recruitment process (Meyer & Jones, 2011). Historically, starting with the time when the Internet gained universal acceptance, universities were among the first organizations that actively developed and used websites. While the original goal was just to build an online presence, many educational institutions are currently using websites for HEI promotion and include powerful content with combined information about the school and its educational resources (Marzie Astani, 2008, p. 461)..

Typically, website planning consists of two parts: the first is determining the goals and required resources, and the second is specification of target audience, site details, technology, and results evaluation. Goals should be set in the first stage, and target groups identified and researched later.

Identification and understanding the target audience of the brand is the key to successful website design creation which is directly connected with brand image of the institution and the way it will be perceived (Marzie Astani, 2008, p. 461). Each target segment has different expectations and requirements for the HEI websites, but they all want to have quick and easy

access to information of interest. The information most communicated through the HEI website is information about academic programs offered by HEIs, educational facilities, student affairs, research opportunities, campus facilities, etc (Leung & Kim, 2022, p. 4).

The HEI website has two types of target audience: primary educational institutions, i.e., academics, staff and students; and secondary educational institutions, i.e., public and educational institutions (Marzie Astani, 2008, p. 461).

2.5.2. Prospective Students as Major Target Group of HEI Website

Students are arguably one of the largest and most important target groups of the HEI website and prospective students make up a significant part of this category. According to the study of Schimmel et al., (2010, p.7), approximately 94% of prospective students refer to the HEI's website to learn more about the educational institution they are interested in. Students visit website for different reasons the most common of which are to get the information important for them and to form the impression about the HEI.

HEI websites are now an important touchpoint and information-gathering tool in the customer's decision-making process, and the so-called “virtual face” of the institution (Schimmel et al., 2010, p.7). Especially important is the first impression given by HEI website as reported by Ghorbanzadeh & Sharbatiyan (2022), because it determines whether visitors will develop trust in the institution and consider it as a possible future choice, especially for those with no previous experience of the institution (Ghorbanzadeh & Sharbatiyan, 2022).

According to Schimmel (2010) home page of the website plays an important role and it has to provide an access to the relevant information within first minutes of usage, for example, information about educational programs, course offerings, locations, and accreditation, etc. (Schimmel et al., 2010, p.4).

The quality of the webpage together with its content impact the impression, which is formed in customers’ minds. The first impression of the HEI is formed electronically based on the website and is highly influential, because the website visit usually takes place before a future student visits the campus in person (Schimmel et al., 2010, p.4).

A study by Meyer & Jones confirmed that usually prospective students attend HEI websites to find important enrolment information about future educational opportunities, including college programs, admissions, and financial aid. The authors' main finding is that students tend to abandon college options when they experience a negative online experience of not being able to find the information they need. Therefore, the importance of website quality is emphasized at the prepurchase phase and for general selection process (Meyer & Jones, 2011).

Important to notice that not only the availability of the information is influencing the perception students get from the website usage. As it has been numerously stated, branding plays highly influential role here. Both brand image and brand identity are required for the establishment of successful brands and in the modern environment, website is a tool for brand representation (Domic, 2022, p. 964).

2.6. HEI Brand Concept and Website. Construction Elements

As the main goal of higher education branding is to attract attention and increase the attractiveness of the HEI, the academic brand is without doubt a critical tool for success in modern competitive environment, reflection of stakeholders' feelings about the institution and perception of it (Ghorbanzadeh & Sharbatiyan, 2022). A positive brand image is formed when the mental picture in customers' minds evokes positive associations, and some unique brand aspects can be easily recognized by customers. From here, it is logical to state that the brand image of the HEI is the feature responsible for its differentiation from competitors. Besides, it is a tool that assists groups of interest in making any decisions about the institution and provides students with some assurance of trust, the promise of needs satisfaction, and of educational quality.

Any decision about the choice of the HEI is influenced by both tangible and intangible dimensions. Tangible relates to the functional, such as financial terms, geographical location, the building of a HEI, facilities, etc. while intangible refers to the emotional. Here it is important to emphasize that decisions are not made based solely on functional characteristics and brand image as a part of the emotional dimension is decisive here (Ghorbanzadeh, 2022, p. 2).

The website is the digital touchpoint and static channel of communication which, through its elements, conveys the emotional brand dimension and desired creator's self-image, the identity of the brand, and enlightens how the brand wants to be perceived by stakeholders (Tőkés, 2022, p. 132).

Elements such as multimodal content, image, sound, text, and audio-visual, the aesthetics of website design, a user-friendly interactive experience, and their management are important parts of digital brand management and are also responsible for the perception and understanding of brand identity embedded by the brand's creator (Tőkés, 2022, p. 137).

In "The Digital Brand Identity of Fast-Fashion Brand Zara. A Case Study", its author Tőkés explains the importance of a positive digital experience, pointing out that because of the digital transformation, customers are only going to interact with the brand in real life if their online experience was positive and their perceived website's quality was high. The main object of the mentioned research is Zara and its homepage. In this study, academic websites are perceived as a HEI's brand homepage and a reflection of its essence, just as Zara's brand homepage is a reflection of the fashion brand (Tőkés, 2022, p. 137).

To be able to create an appealing website which can guarantee a positive perception and efficient transition of brand essence, it is important to understand what elements are responsible for it and how. As the main question of the study, which impact various dimensions of the HEI website in transmitting the the (intended) brand image (note: = brand identity), further attention will be paid to the elements, which according to the literature are strongly connected with brand identity concept.

2.6.1. Features

According to research by Marzie Astani (2008, p. 461), a HEI website must be customer-centric and meet the needs of its target audiences in order to fulfil its "virtual face" goals. An attractive and inviting website includes numerous functional features. For example, research emphasizes the significance of features such as *information content, navigation, and usability* (Marzie Astani, 2008, p. 462).

According to Soegoto (2018, p.1), the future choice of the student is influenced by *attractiveness, easy navigation and usefulness of the information* contained on the website. Soegoto (2018) also emphasizes the importance of the HEI website design, which can also be used to improve competitive advantage of the institution.

Siripipattanakul et al. (2022, p. 531) notes the importance of website quality and its influence on individual website perception. According to the authors, *website quality* can be explained by how customers assess websites and their main features, such as overall excellence, suitability, and goal fulfilment (online purchase). Evaluation of website quality can be based on assessment of three aspects: information quality, interaction quality, and usability.

In their latest research "The role of website features in the branding of higher educational institutions", Ghorbanzadeh & Sharbatiyan (2022) stated that an efficient website has several distinguishing features, such as *availability, usability, and information*, which also help users obtain a positive first impression about an organization and the HEI brand. *Availability* can be characterized as efficient technical website performance and the provision of access to numerous website groups through efficient design. *Usability* is the extent to which the website is convenient and user-friendly.

Physical characteristics, functional aspects, information search, and problem-solving effectivity are the parts of usability evaluation. The use of visually appealing and entertaining content or external media also a part. The design of *information* is about the characteristics of the information. The information on the website must be correct, reliable, and comprehensive to provide satisfaction. Text, colour, sounds, graphics, videos, and animation are all examples of information types found on a website.

2.6.2. Quality

Academic website design of a good quality has significant influence on brand equity, the image and reputation of the institution and hence is actively used as an efficient marketing instrument to attract visitors, improve engagement and retention (Ghorbanzadeh, 2022).

Today, customers' choices are highly dependent on the online medium and their impression of the brand while visiting the website. Customers are usually going to interact with the brand if

their overall impassion about it is pleasant and the online experience of interaction is positive. The chance of getting a positive impression is higher with a high-quality website. This is because customers perceive higher-quality websites to be more trustworthy. Besides, a website of good quality usually improves a positive attitude towards the brand, leads to positive perception, aids in the development of trust between the brand and the user (Tőkés, 2022, p. 137). Tőkés (2022), when talking about quality digital brand management, emphasizes the importance of such elements of website design as user-friendliness, aesthetic attractiveness, relevance and usefulness of created and published content, SEO, etc. An earlier study by Rosen et al. (2004) also mentioned several characteristics that distinguish a quality website: specific content, its quality, website appearance (aesthetics), and technical adequacy. The effectiveness of a website is determined by the quality of its information and its organization. Further website elements related to quality and responsible for brand identity perception will be described in more details.

2.6.3. Design and Interactive Experience

Rosen et al. (2004, p. 15) explore the quality and effectiveness evaluation of website design. Considering that the effectiveness of a website is determined by the quality of its information and its organization, user experience with the website is another factor that determines whether users obtain positive impression and return to the website. Given that the internet is the primary source of information, *information processing theory* should be considered during the website design process. In 1982 and 1998, authors Kaplan and Kaplan developed a framework based on cognitive psychology principles to consider information processing theory, which attempts to identify dimensions for designing an effective information provider website. The motivation for the research was to understand how to create environments that are both encouraging and attractive for visitors. The study was inspired by the questions of the amount of information, combination of text and visuals, selection of content, and layout required for efficient website design. It was thought by the authors that this framework would help to explain how to satisfy an individual's desire to understand and explore a physical environment. Building their frame around cognitive maps which compare each website element to a physical environment element, the authors were also trying to understand how people's minds process information when they use a website. During their research, Kaplan and Kaplan discovered that people perceive web environments similarly to real environments and that users prefer environments

that adhere to several principles that assist them in meeting their current and future needs (Rosen et al., 2004, p. 15).

Researchers also discovered that website users evaluate the website based on several aspects: coherence, complexity, legitimacy, and mystery. These aspects are the part of the preference network created by Kaplan and Kaplan and can be used by web developers to create efficient and understandable website. *Coherence* is the degree to which the repetition of elements and textures makes a physical landscape orderly. The richness or variety of elements in the environment is defined as *complexity*. *Legibility* is a later element characterized by distinctiveness and memorable elements that serve as landmarks to help visitors find their way. The *mystery* is a factor that encourages people to explore the space by giving them the impression that there is much more to be discovered if they continue. According to research, this is the least important to the user compared to previous factors (Rosen et al., 2004, p. 17-18). The institution's website design image must be efficiently and clearly reflected for the user to understand the purpose of the website from the start. The consistency of each web page is another important factor that influences user perception because it is impossible to predict where the customer will begin their website evaluation. This can be accomplished effectively by analyzing the website from the customer's point of view (Leung & Kim, 2022, p.5).

2.6.4. Content

Content, its quality, visual and technical characteristics together with the informational richness of the webpage are the first characteristics that identify a website’s quality, as mentioned by Rosen et al. (2004, p. 16). Fresh, interesting, detailed, and up-to-date content is a characteristic of a good-quality website. Filling a website with information relevant to stakeholders’ needs and interests, benefits the development of brand loyalty. Information clarity is another feature that plays an integral role in forming impressions about the brand (Tőkés, 2022, p. 137).

According to Rosen et al., (2004, p. 16) content is one of the most important factors that users interact with to encourage repeat visits to websites. Making the right choices about content use on the webpage is critical to effective web design creation because it influences the cognitive and emotional perception of the website by its users.

Elements	Description
Text	One of the most used techniques of sorting and transmitting information in everyday life. Text is the type of information conveyed by using words and special symbols. Textual information gives space for imagination. It is mostly used to present knowledge in a descriptive manner, for example: definitions, concepts, principles, titles, menus, etc.
Image	Visual multimedia material in form of photographic image or creative graphics and one of the most often used type of content at the website.
Animation	Succession of graphic pictures with continuous motion changes, including special effects such as zooming, rotating, morphing, and fading in and out. Many unintelligible materials may be explained vibrantly and interestingly by using animation to depict abstract concepts.
Sound	One of the easiest and familiar audial methods for individuals to communicate information and emotions. According to its expression, sound in multimedia may be separated into three categories: explanation, music, and effect.
Video	Video is the type of multimedia material which can provide users with rich amount of information and is frequently used to demonstrate development of anything. Video is quite comparable to movies and televisions that we are accustomed with.

Table 2: Types of content (Liu, 2021)

2.6.5. Aesthetics

Leung & Kim (2022, p. 5) mentioned that the visual attractiveness of the website design has a great impact on the user's first impression when they look at the various websites of organizations. They also mentioned that aesthetics is judged by users even if observed for very short time period. New website users naturally evaluate visual aspect of the website and strong opinion is usually formed within the first few seconds, especially where the website is lacking in professionalism and aesthetics. The website topic should be reflected, and its purpose should be easily and immediately understood.

Rosen et al. (2004, p. 15) also emphasises the importance of aesthetics. The aesthetic visual design of the website is the factor that enhances the user's interest in the website's content. The level of trust in the content is usually much higher following a positive impression of the visual aspect of the website, partly because visitors perceive an aesthetically appealing website design as easier to use (Tőkés, 2022m p. 137).

Researchers have also discovered a strong relationship between usability perception and interface. It has also been stated that the first impression of a website's visual appeal is formed within a matter of seconds. Finally, visual appeal has a strong influence on the perception of

website usability, which is one of the most important aspects of website design, quality, and efficiency (Altaboli & Lin, 2011).

According to Altaboli & Lin (2011), there are two types of aesthetics: a) classical, b) expressive.

a) Classical aesthetics emphasizes clear and orderly design, with a focus on clear interface usability and design rules and guidelines.

b) Expressive aesthetics, conversely, is primarily concerned with the designer's original and creative self-expression, with the primary goal of challenging design conventions.

3. Using the HEI Website as A Branding Tool

3.1. Embedding Brand Identity in the Website

In the modern world, the image of the brand is one of the means of brand differentiation as well as a guarantee of customer trust and this statement also applies to the brand of higher educational institution (HEI). A HEI brand is more than just a logo, slogan, or motto, it is rather the perception of the brand that the public forms about a particular HEI and it is triggered by the stimuli associated with the HEI (Iqbal et al., 2012., p.2-3).

Nowadays, brand image is not only beneficial for stakeholders' relationship development and solid network creation, but also a crucial factor in choosing a HEI (Iqbal et al., 2012., p.2-3). Spry & Pich (2021, p. 182) also reiterates that positive brand image can be a determining factor in a student's choice to attend a particular HEI. Any decision about the choice of the HEI is influenced by both tangible and intangible dimensions. Tangible relates to the functional, such as financial terms, geographical location, the building of a HEI, facilities, etc., while intangible refers to the emotional. It should be noted that decisions are not made based solely on functional characteristics; emotional dimension is as well influencing the choice and brand image is one of its factors (Ghorbanzadeh, 2022, p. 2).

According to the Schimmel et al. (2010, p.7) nowadays HEI brand image and its reputation is highly dependent on the website it manages. Besides being an important touchpoint and information-gathering tool during the customer's decision-making process, HEI website is also so-called “virtual face” of the institution and the reflection of brand’s essence. Due to the educational research, the market-oriented sources of information developed by HEIs are the most reliable source of information about the institution. The relevance of HEI website as a source is emphasized by the fact, that other online information providers are generally outside the control of the HEI and may be inaccurate and are unable to transfer the brand image more efficient that the brand itself (Simões & Soares, 2010, p. 379). Ghorbanzadeh (2022) adds up that the perception of the HEI by future students is directly influenced by the way brand image transmitted through the HEI website.

From the communication theory point of view, the HEI website, as well as the website in general, can be observed as a human-created communication field where messages are

exchanged. According to communication theory, the creation and exchange of meaning and the transmission of information are at the core of human communication. In psychology, communication is the delivery of a message to the recipient, which trigger recipient's feelings and thoughts when receiving the message (Meyer & Jones, 2011). In case with the HEI website brand identity is playing a role of the "message" embedded into the website, which is "decoded" during the interaction of the customers with the digital touch point (Janonis et al., 2007, p. 69). Clear and distinctive transfer of the brand identity is essential for the understanding of the values of brand, its vision, and strength and without it internal nor external communication is impossible (Roy & Banerjee, 2014, p. 208).

Successful institutions manage their brands by reflecting on their identity and defining their brand elements. Brand elements are used by marketers to express a brand's uniqueness and emphasize certain features which will be remembered by customers and associated with the brand. The development of the brand's identity, its positioning among customers, and following brand image evoked positively influence the results of the brand in a modern competitive environment (Janonis et al., 2007, p. 69). Park et al. (1986) cited by Roy & Banerjee (2014, p. 207), also states that the choice of brand identity, the extent of its transfer as well as the image obtained are defining success factors. Aaker (2010) cited by Tőkés (2022, p. 138) emphasizes that clearly defined brand identity and its main values are in the core of the strong brand. Janonis et al. (2007, p. 70) mentions that brand identity concept encompasses all aspects that give a brand meaning and differentiate it from others. Tőkés (2022, p. 138) in his article explains the brand identity is the concept developed by brand owners and is based on the defined attributes through which brand presents itself.

With the aim to transmit the brand identity and create a desired brand image, HEIs are providing their website visitors with high-quality graphical and informational content tailored to and targeted at a variety of HEI stakeholder groups (Marzie Astani, 2008, p. 461). Website of HEI can be compared to the brand page of the institution because it communicates to customers what the brand is about. This process of brand identity conveying with the aim of creation of a certain brand identity in customers' minds is based on the usage of variety of website elements such as multimodal content (images, sounds, texts, audio-visuals) as well as aesthetics and user-friendly interactive experience, etc. (Tőkés, 2022, p. 137). These elements and their transfer is responsible for the way brand is precepted externally by target groups (Roy & Banerjee, 2014, p. 208).

As it has been previously mentioned, there are several approaches on how brand identity can be analysed and the one described in this work are approaches of Krapferer and Burnmann. The main idea of this study proposes that brand identity components, which in together create a general picture, are embedded into the website through the various elements and subsequently decoded by the target audiences during the process of the website usage. Brand identity created and transmitted through the website implies a certain brand image managers are willing to obtain as a result.

3.2 Evoking (an intended) Brand Image

Development and management of marketing and brand image are one of the primary goals of the company. The company must aim to create and deliver brand identity efficiently. The public needs to understand the meaning and main message of the brand correctly. In case of incorrect decoding of brand identity communicated the following brand image is going to be inconsistent with the initial idea. As result the risk of losing competition with similar brands may occur (Janonis et al., 2007, p. 73).

Roy & Banerjee (2014, p. 208) explain brand image as the customers' perception formed through the consumption of brand message via communication channel and decoding of transmitted brand identity elements. Brand image, according to (Woodside et al., 2009, p. 40), can be viewed as a mental construct in the minds of customers. Intended brand image in its turn is desired brand image marketing managers want to obtain in result. Author also emphasizes that associations play an important role in brand image comprehension. The idea that brand image can be a key driver in influencing a student to attend a specific higher educational institution was supported by numerous researchers. As a result, it is critical to comprehend students' associations with the higher educational institution's brand in relation to its image (Spry & Pich, 2021, p. 182).

Roy & Banerjee (2014, p. 208) mention that communication with audiences happens through the delivery of brands with the help of suitable marketing channels. As a result, to achieve an efficient brand identity transition, all three phases, which includes work with marketing managers, marketing channels, and audiences, must be coordinated and harmonized. Harmonization is considered to be one of the goals of marketers and for its achievement It

should be emphasized that the role of marketing channels as intermediaries in this case is critical (Roy & Banerjee, 2014, p. 208). During the process of decoding of brand identity and perception formation, both consumers and members of the channel are forming an image of brand in their minds. Roy & Banerjee (2014, p. 209) state that due to a mismatch between the encoding and decoding processes, communication gaps occur, and these gaps between the identity and image of the brand are common possible reasons for brand failure in the market (Roy & Banerjee, 2014, p. 208)

According to De Chernatony (1999), as cited by Janonis et al., (2007, p.75), it is critical that the gap between brand identity and brand reputation and image is minimized. Roy & Banerjee (2014, p. 209) mention that the gap between image and identity is also a huge threat to brand blurring and can sometimes cause changes in value systems, which are the foundation of an already existing brand identity. Hence, consistency and continuity are critical components of successful brand communication, and their absence results in ineffective brand identity delivery. In cases of lack of consistency, the message is misunderstood by the audience during the decoding process. The measurement of the gap between the identity and image of a brand is a priority, with the aim being the brand's success and realization of actions needed to narrow this gap. The success of the results of the measures taken is defined by the accuracy of the measurements. The authors also note a lack of attention in the research given to problems caused by inconsistencies related to "place," one of the four Ps of the marketing mix. The marketing channel, which is the brand-controlled information source, in which identity is decoded by the audience, can contribute to the occurrence of communication gaps (Roy & Banerjee, 2014, p. 209).

According to De Chernatony (1999), as cited by Janonis et al (2007, p. 75), it is critical to minimize the gap between brand identity, brand reputation and image. According to Roy & Banerjee (2014, p. 209), the gap between image and identity is also a major threat to brand blurring and can sometimes cause changes in value systems, which are the foundation of existing brand identity. As a result, consistency and continuity are essential components of effective brand communication, and their absence results in ineffective brand identity delivery. When there is a lack of consistency, the message is misinterpreted by the audience during the decoding process. Many authors emphasize the importance of closing the identity-image gap to achieve coherence and the most effective brand differentiation (Spry & Pich, 2021, p. 182).

4. Case Study: University of Vienna - Faculty of Business, Economics and Statistics

4.1 Study Aims

University of Vienna and its Faculty of Business, Economics and Statistics was chosen as study object for conducting the case study the aim of which is to provide the answer to the questions if the brand identity of the HEI is successfully transferred through the website and which impact had the various dimensions of the website in transmitting the (intended) brand image. University of Vienna is usually the first HEI mentioned when it comes to the choice of the higher education in Austria. According to OeAD (2017), University of Vienna is one of the biggest universities in Europe, founded in 1365, which can be differentiated by rich history, diversity and scientific research in its core (OeAD, 2017). According to "Facts and Figures about the University of Vienna" Brochure of July 2023, approximately 84, 600 of students are getting an education in the HEI, with 63% of who are women and 28, 000 who are internationals; Referring to "Degree programmes in numbers" of winter semester 2022/2023, there are 84,579 students studying on 186ßdegree programmes, with 12,614 first-year students. 17, 419 International students of the HEI belongs to 120 nations; approximately 7,535 academics are engaged in research development with one third of staff coming from abroad; 15 faculties and 5 centres functioning; and approximately 10,000 graduates of the University each year. University academic teachers are highly recognized in scientific community worldwide. University of Vienna with its Faculty of Business, Economics and Statistics is also one of the best universities in Austria offering educational programs in Business Economics and Statistics. Research, Data Science and digital humanities are one of the main strategic priorities of the University of Vienna (University of Vienna, 2023).

All mentioned makes the HEI's image an attractive option during the decision making about the future education. The information mentioned above comes from brochures and it describes university in the positive light, however the perception about image is usually based on numerous sources during decision-making process, and website is one of the most influential, as it was highlighted in the theoretical part. In the modern globalized environment, when online sources become a part of daily routine of majority of customers, digital brand image and the way it perceived is relevant and important to explore more.

That is why the main aims of the study are using the example of the case of University of Vienna and the Faculty of Business, Economics and Statistics to: explore the brand identity and brand image concepts implementation in real life through the existing HEI website; to understand if the communication of the brand is conducted successfully, is it harmonized, and if transferred brand identity (intended brand image) is consistent with perceived brand image by the target audience of the potential students; identify the presence of communication gap between the brand identity and brand image. Case study is the method chosen to provide answers to questions stated.

The research questions are formulated in the following way:

Research question 1: Is brand identity of the University of Vienna successfully transmitted by the university website in terms of establishing a consistent brand image in potential future students by means of
a. the University of Vienna-Website,
b. the Website of the Faculty of Business, Economics and Statistics?

Research question 2: Which impact had the various dimensions of the website in transmitting the (intended) brand image (= brand identity):
a. design
b. layout
c. content

Research question 3: Which effects of the website of the University of Vienna and the website of its Faculty of Business, Economics and Statistics on brand image (as perceived by the target group) can be observed:
a. congruent
b. complementary
c. inconsistent

4.2. Methods

Case study approach was chosen for the analysis of the brand image of the University of Vienna and the Faculty of Business, Economics and Statistics with the aim to provide answers to

mentioned research questions. According to Crowe et al. (2011), case study approach is the most relevant and helpful to use when gaining a thorough in-depth, multifaceted understanding of an issue, event, or phenomenon of interest in its natural real-life context is necessary. In many different fields, especially the social sciences, it is a well-established research design that is widely used. Case study is identified by "naturalistic" design, which is different from the "experimental" design, in which variables are controlled and manipulated. Current study can be characterized as the collective interpretative case study, which it implies studying of several cases at the same time or one by own with the goal of wider examination and understanding of the certain question with questions "how" and "what" in the core. This type of study tries to provide an understanding of perception of meanings and processes of different individuals (Crowe et al., 2011).

Moving on to the research design of the case study, to answer the research questions, the following research design was organized:To evaluate if brand identity of the University of Vienna is successfully transferred in terms of establishing a consistent brand image in potential future students by means of a. the University of Vienna-Website, and b. the Website of the Faculty of Business, Economics and Statistics, three concepts are differentiated:

1) Brand identity, as formulated by the University of Vienna - formulated brand identity is the one established by the university itself. It explains how university wants to be promoted and the way it positions itself. For its evaluation content analysis of brand image brochure located on the main website of the university was conducted.

2) Intended Brand image, identical/ complementary to formulated Brand Identity - intended brand image reflects how brand desires to be perceived. For its exploration guided semi-structured interview with digital specialist of Communication Department of the University of Vienna was conducted. During the interview expert could provide all the necessary information about the website, its main content, and its connection with the brand identity.

3) Brand Image, as perceived by the target group of potential students – perceived brand image is the perception of the brand identity through the website reported by the future students of the university, one of the most important target groups of university website. To evaluate perceived brand image, guided semi-structured interviews were conducted. Students could

use and evaluate the website, its relevant pages and answer the questions regarding their perception of the identity of the brand.

Successful transfer of the Brand Identity is measured by comparing Intended Brand Image (in fact = Brand Identity) and (Perceived) Brand Image (i.e., what is measured on the side of the interviewed students). Data for intended brand image description is obtained with help of expert interview, while for perceived brand image is obtained during the interviews with target group of potential students. The question, which impact had the various dimensions of the website in transmitting the (intended) brand image (= brand identity) can be answered by analysis of the interviews with the future students to understand how they evaluate different website elements and how they influence the perception of the brand itself.

Figure 2: Interconnectedness of case-study concepts

The final question, which effects of the website of the University of Vienna and the website of its Faculty of Business, Economics and Statistics on brand image (as perceived by the target group) can be observed, can be answered as well after the analysis of the data and comparison of Intended brand image and perceived brand image.

Current study consists of three parts mentioned above – evaluation of Brand identity, as formulated by the University of Vienna, Intended Brand image, identical/ complementary to formulated Brand Identity, and Brand Image, as perceived by the target group of potential students. Evaluation is made using numerous methods and instruments which are mentioned and described further. Krapferer's approach to brand identity analysis underlies the study. The main aspects and components of brand identity by this approach are physique, personality, culture, relationship, reflection, and self-image.

The main idea of the study is to obtain the necessary data with aim to create three brand identity prisms relevant with the parts of the study to be able to compare them, and finally make conclusions.

4.3. Data Collection

4.3.1 Document: University Brochure

With the aim of formulated brand identity evaluation, Brand image document of the University of Vienna is analysed. This document can be found on the main page through the menu "About us", "At a glance", "Facts and figures", and downloaded freely by everyone. Brand image brochure analysis is conducted using qualitative data coding method with the aim of evaluation of formulated aspects of brand identity initially identified by the University of Vienna. Another brochure used for evaluation is Corporate Design Manual, also available online at the website.

Data collected from the Brand image brochure is the *secondary data*, what is the information obtained by someone other than the researchers for a different reason. Analysis of brand image brochure and Corporate Design-Manual is work with secondary data (Sreejesh et al., 2014, p. 17-18). The table provides the links with the documents used in the research and links by which they can be found.

Name of the document	Link
Brand image brochure of the University of Vienna	Corporate communication https://communications.univie.ac.at/: https://communications.univie.ac.at/fileadmin/user_upload/d_oeffentlichkeitsarbeit/Dokumente/20-07-13_UW_Imagebroschu__re_2020_EN_web.pdf
Corporate Design-Manual	Corporate communication https://communications.univie.ac.at/: https://communications.univie.ac.at/fileadmin/user_upload/d_oeffentlichkeitsarbeit/Dokumente/CD-Manual/UniversitaetWien_CD_Manual_Jan2023_interaktiv.pdf

Table 3: Documents used for data collection

4.3.2. Websites University of Vienna and Faculty of Business, Economics and Statistics

Semi-structured interviews are a big part of the study; the questions of the interviews are answered based on website pages evaluation and usage by study participants. The table provides the links with the pages used in the research.

Name of the web-page	Link
University of Vienna main page	https://www.univie.ac.at/
Faculty of Business, Economics and Statistics webpage	https://wirtschaftswissenschaften.univie.ac.at/en/

Table 4: Webpages used for data collection

Similar research was conducted by Meyer & Jones in which students had to comment on the website while using it with the aim to identify "what university website tell students". Authors mentioned that the qualitative approach is the most suitable in this case, as such an exploratory approach yields a plethora of detailed information about a significantly smaller sample (2011).

4.3.3. Expert Interview

To evaluate intended brand image, which is complimentary to formulated brand identity, with the goal to collect data structured guided interview with the expert (Mag. Margit Kastner) were conducted. Mag. Margit Kastner is the part of Communication team in the University of Vienna and responsible for Channel Communication and Digital Communication & Advertisement. Interview consists of two parts – evaluation of: a) the University of Vienna and b) Faculty of Business, Economics and Statistics digital brand identity aspects.

Name	Information	Date	E-mail	Length
Mag. Margit Kastner	Digital communication expert; female	8.04.2023	margit.kastner@univie.ac.at	1 h 37 min.

Table 5: Information details about Digital communication expert

4.3.4. Interviews with Potential Students

With the aim of perceived brand image evaluation based on website usage by target audience of future university students, with help of semi-structured guided interviews, evaluation of HEI image perception was conducted. Necessary data was gathered through interviewing of five prosperous university students and consisted of two parts – evaluation of: a) University of Vienna and b) Faculty of Business, Economics and Statistics digital brand identity aspects. Final step of analysis is qualitative data coding of the obtained data.

Semi-structured interviews were constructed taking the attributes of Krapferer and Burnmann brand identity approaches in focus. Digital specialist and students are asked to answer the questions while using the website. Interviews were conducted online through Zoom with shared

screen, recorded, transcribed with Descript, edited, and analysed. Qualitative data coding was chosen as a method of analysis. After results of coding are obtained, two digital brand identity prisms are created and compared. Finally, conclusions are drawn.

Sample of participants chosen for the interviews shared such similar characteristics:

- Austrian citizens, who live in Vienna and were born in Austria
- currently finishing last year of school
- engaged in the process of the university selection
- planning to study business and economics and connected with it specialties
- has never used the website before

All respondents are passing Austrian Matura (exam) and studying in school in English, French and German. Table 7 provides sample characteristics - all the information about the participants of both parts of the study.

Name	Information	Date	E-mail	Length
Saida Ben Nejma	School student; female; 18	12.04.2023	Saida.benn05@gmail.com	49 min
Elli Schweiger	School student female; 17	14.04.2023	Eisabeth.schwei@gmail.com	38 min
Antoine Barbier	School student; male	15.04.2023	Antoibebarbier05@gmail.com	46 min
Sofia Brouard	School student; female; 17	19.04.2023	Broudard.sophie1@gmail.com	32 min
Matias Huhs	School student; male; 17	1.05.2023	Mathias.kuhs@gmail.com	31 min.

Table 6: Sample characteristics

4.4. Interview Guidelines

The data obtained from interview is the *primary data, which* is original previously unpublished data gathered directly by researcher to conduct certain research. Most frequently gather primary data researchers use surveys, interviews, experiments, or observations. Such data is relevant to the research subject or goal and can be tailored to the needs of the study. In the current study, primary data was collected with method of structured interviews with relevant actors with the goal of brand identity components identification based on the website evaluation (Sreejesh et al., 2014, p. 17-18).

As it has been mentioned many times already, structured interviews are one of the methods used to obtain the primary data that will be used in the study. Historically, interviews have been associated with sociological approaches in scientific research, although today their usage extends well beyond the boundaries of social theory. Interviews are also commonly used in the humanities and technical research to investigate a wide range of subjects. Hence, we can claim that interviews are rather based on interdisciplinary approach and is solely determined by research tasks. "Interview" refers to a conversation with a certain priory defined goal, which is aimed at specific information obtainment to be used to answer the research question of the study. Throughout the interviews (literally "opinion in between"), an exchange of viewpoints between interlocutors (an interviewer and a respondent) entails creating additional value through the development of new information and the formation of new content (Libakova & Sertakova, 2015, p. 116). According to the literature there are three types of interviews to be used: formalized, un-formalized and semi-formalized. Explanation of each can be found in a table 4.

Interview type	Description	Number of respondents
Formalized	Closed type questions with pre-selected variants of answer. Homogenous, expected data provided by researcher is in focus.	From hundreds to thousands
Non-formalized	Type of interview which is trying to examine big issues range and focused on getting numerous opinions to the questions of interest. Interviewers choose to use the guide or to create questions along the interview process.	Depends on researcher, even one interview can be representative
Semi-formalized	Combination of formalized and non-formalized interviews. Contains several pre-defined questions, but no clear guidance on how they are going to be responded.	Depends on researcher, even one interview can be representative

Table 7 : Types of interviews (Libakova & Sertakova, 2015, p. 116).

Interview with expert are non-formalized or semi-formalized interviews. Expert is the person, who possesses the deep knowledge about the research field and object. The main goal of the expert interview is to get previously unknown, reliable, first-hand, professional information.

This type of interview cannot be formalized. It mostly involves open-ended questions, where expert can provide its personal opinion (Libakova & Sertakova, 2015, p. 117). In this study with the aim to identify intended and perceived brand identity two non-formalized interviews are constructed and conducted. Both are aimed to obtain an understanding of aspects of the digital brand identity of a) University of Vienna and b) Faculty of Economics, Business and Statistics.

As a semi-structured interview is a type of interview that is trying get numerous opinions on the questions of interest and for conduct of which interviewers can choose to use the guide or to create questions along the interview process, for this study the choice to create a guide with pre-determined questions to gather all the necessary primary data was taken.

Both interviews contain three parts, which relates to the:

1) general impression about brand
2) aspects of the University of Vienna brand identity evaluation
3) aspects of the Faculty of Business, Economics and Statistics brand identity evaluation. Students are also asked additional questions about website and brand importance.

Table 8 provides questions to both interview guides: interview with digital communication expert (part 1) and future university students (part 2). Questions about general first impression are different in part 1 and 2. Questions about University of Vienna brand identity evaluation and Faculty of Business, Economics and Statistics brand identity evaluation are the same in both interviews. The main aim of questionnaire is to obtain the primary data reported by interviewers to evaluate attributes of the digital brand identity and to create brand identity prism.

Introduction part of the interviews the following: Thank you very much for taking time. The interview will last around 40 mins and I will record it in order to be able to transcribe and to analyse it late. The interview and information will only be used as part of my Master thesis. The information will be handed anonymously and not given to third parties. Do you have any questions? If not, I will start with the interview now and will start by highlighting that today, there is a big competition between international universities. It's not just about academics, but also about reputation, financials, etc. And, universities became businesses where brand identity plays an important role. I would like to focus on University of Vienna as well as the Faculty of Business, Economics and Statistics in this interview, and mainly on the brand image. In the next 40 mins, I will ask you some questions about brand image of the university, and I would also ask you to show me important information on the website. For this reason, as the interview is online, we can share the screen, so you can guide me through the website and explain everything to me. Can I ask you, do you agree that this interview will be recorded and, uh, data will be used for the analysis?

Now, I will ask you to take some time to look through the main page of the website. Examine the page, please, and its content: images, content, menus, etc. You can as well click on what is interesting for you to explore. You will be able to use the website to answer the questions as well, but now observe the page carefully (observe menus, images, content, links…etc.) to form first impression and to get the sense of familiarity. Thank you!

The main part consist of following questions:

Ia. General information about the brand (interview with communication expert) – part 1	• What do you think about the role of the university website in image formation? • What is the desired image of the university brand you would like to obtain as the result? • How do you understand the digital brand identity? How do you manage it? • Do you measure perception of your website digital brand by different target groups/ stakeholders? If yes, how?	
Ib. General impression about the brand (interview with students) – part 2	• What is your general first impression about the website of the university of Vienna brand? Describe please? • Could you provide associations with the brand which come to your mind based on your first impression from the website. • What do you like about the webpage and what you do not?	
II.University of Vienna brand identity evaluation (Similar questions both for communication expert and students) – part 1, 2 III.Faculty of Business, Economics and Statistics brand identity evaluation (Similar questions both for communication expert and students) – part 1, 2	(1) Physique	1.In your opinion, which visual elements relate to brand image of the university? Please, show. 2.Could you, please, characterize the visual elements of the page? What do you think about the colours, fonts and images used? 3.Provide associations which you have with the content?
	(2) Persona-lity	1.If the website would be a person, what would be its characteristics? Please, provide associations based on your impression.
	(3) Culture	1.What in your opinion makes University of Vienna brand culture unique/special? 2.What are the main values and aspects that differentiate it from other universities?
	(4) Relationship	1.What is the main "products" proposed by the website? How is it presented, could you, please, show? 2.What is the main benefits future will students obtain while enrolling to the university? 3.What are the main competences of the university brand? 4.Could you, please, show how/where the interaction with future students is happening on the website?
	(5) Refle-ction	1.Can you please provide associations with /describe ideal bachelor graduate of the University?

Table 8: Structure of structured interview

Additional questions for students:

1.To which extent university website is important to you?

2.To which extent university brand is important for your choice of the institution?

3.What is the main purpose of your usage of the university website?

4.5. Data Analysis

4.5.1. Document Analysis

As it has already been mentioned, in this study Brand image brochure and data collected through the interviews with expert and potential students was analysed. Data is analysed with help of qualitative data coding.

4.5.2. Qualitative Data Coding

Qualitative data coding is a research process that includes careful identification and interpretation of patterns, themes, and meaning in many forms of communication, such as texts, photographs, and videos. In the context of brand identity analysis, content analysis may be performed to examine a brand's message and visual communication across various media platforms. Qualitative data coding begins with the researcher selecting a group of texts or media that are related to the study question or topic of interest. Working with coding is a way of working with qualitative data. A coding scheme or collection of categories is then constructed to be utilized to analyse the data. The coding scheme should be mutually exclusive and exhaustive, depending on the study questions and objectives. Following the setup of coding, the researcher reads the content and codes it according to the categories. The unit of analysis and construct developed by the researcher with the goal of classification, the production of patterns, hypotheses, and other analytical techniques are known as "code." Coding may also be defined as the act of interpreting information. Upon the completion of the coding, the researcher analyses the data to uncover patterns and themes that emerge from the data. Ultimately, depending on the data analysis, the researcher analyses the findings and draws conclusions (Crowe et al., 2011).

Qualitative data coding is the approach used in this research for identification of formulated, brand identity, intended brand image, and perceived brand image. The main purpose of this analysis is identification of themes, patterns, and meanings in the text/content. For

identification of formulated brand identity qualitative data coding of university Brand image brochure and Corporate Design-Manual is used. For identification of intended and perceived identity, qualitative data coding of primary data extracted from interviews is conducted (Sreejesh et al., 2014, p. 17-18).

4.5.3 Categories and Coding

As the main aim of this part of work is to identify digital brand identity aspects of a) the University of Vienna and b) the of Faculty of Business, Economics and Statistics, approach of Krapferer (see 2.2.1.2) was chosen for the analysis. Questionnaire guides created and used for the semi-structured interviews contain questions which are trying to identify 6 attributes of Krapferers brand identity prism. Some of the questions contain attributes of Burmann's (see 2.2.1.3) approach to brand identity evaluation as well. Compilation of Krapferer brand identity prism and Burmann's approach to brand identity was chosen, because elements of both approaches are complementing each other, and it is helpful for the better understanding of identity and creation of wider picture. After conduction of interviews data is transcribed and qualitative data coding to it is applied. Table 5 presents coding units for qualitative data coding and interrelation of attributes can be seen there.

Brand identity prism *(Kapferer)*	Question	Brand identity *(Burmann)*	Question
Physique (1)	What are the visual features of the brand? (Colors, shapes, design elements…)		
Personality (2)	What is the character of brand? Its language/ tone/ personality	Personality (2.1)	How does brand communicate?
Culture (3)	What is the ideology, vision of the brand, values, guiding principles	Origin (3.1) Values (3.2)	Where does the brand come from? What does brand believe in?
Relationship (4)	What is the relationship between customer and brand? What brand promises?	Benefits (4.1) Competences (4.2)	What does brand market? What can brand do?
Reflection (5)	What is the typical brand customer?		
Self-image (ideal self) (6)	What is the aspirational ideal- self presented by brand?	Vision (6.1)	Where brand wants to go?

Table 9: Coding units of digital brand identity analysis (Burmann et al., 2018, p. 17;32)

This approach is chosen because it is a key explanation of the brand identity concept, and it is able to describe brand fully.

5. Results

5.1 Brand Identity

This section provides the information about the brand identity of the University of Vienna and of Faculty of Business, Economics and Statistics brand. It is divided by information about brand identity as formulated by the University and intended brand image transferred by the website (= brand identity), which are complementary, but data is obtained by different sources. The findings provide the analysis of the brand identity using the Krapferer's approach, which help to get the full picture of the brand.

5.1.1. Brand Identity as Formulated by the University of Vienna

Findings for formulated brand identity were based on Brand image brochure of the University of Vienna and Corporate Design – Manual.

Aspects of formulated brand identity prism of the University of Vienna

Physique: Visual design of University of Vienna brand, which is correspondent to Physique aspect of digital brand identity is based on Corporate Design – Manual principles. Logo of the University is old emblem of the university. Primary colors used by the brand are blue, white and gray and they are used for all the title pages; secondary colors are wine red, orange red, golden yellow, light green, mint green and are used for interior and subpages and as primary colours for different services. Fonts used are Calibri and Source Serif Pro. Media used can be presented in form of photography and illustration. Images used by the brand should express diversity of the University of Vienna, be lively photos with people are in the foreground. The images must be of high resolution and have a copyright.

Personality: Based on the mentioned in Brand image brochure of the University of Vienna, according to 5 big personality traits (OCEAN) (Nandi & Nicoletti, 2014b), personality of the university brand is open (Openness = 10), conscious (Consciousness = 7), agreeable (Agreeableness = 4) and extraverted (Extraversion = 1). Neuroticism was evaluated as 0. (According to Aaker's (1997) brand personality dimensions, university personality is the most correspondent with Competence (7) dimension, Excitement (7) and Sincerity (4).

Culture: According with the main findings, university brand culture (Culture aspect) is based on such principles as excellence, community, research, cooperation, internationality, diversity, variety, openness, curiosity, tradition, feminism, and career.

Benefits: Benefits students are getting from the university brand are: personal development, independence (self-determined decision-making, critical thinking), intelligence (knowledges), support (during the study process), interdisciplinary approach to research and sturdies, research, career, orientation towards future, research, community and diversity.

Reflection: According to image brochure analysis on information about ideal graduate of the University of Vienna (Reflection aspect) was not found.

Self-image: According to image brochure analysis it was possible to identify Self-image aspect of the University of Vienna. Main target audiences of the brand are Austrian and International students (next generation of students as a part of society) together with national and international researchers and academics. Main characteristics detected are: people, interested in professional and academic career, people, open-minded international people, who want to develop critical thinking, willing to grow and explore the world, have interest in research and science, detail oriented, diligent and cooperative.

5.1.2. Intended Brand Image of the University of Vienna Brand

Findings for intended brand image transferred by the website were based on analysis of semi-structured interview conducted with expert of digital communication from Communication Department of the University of Vienna. Information showcased further was obtained through the qualitative data coding of the mentioned interview.

Aspects of Intended brand image of the University of Vienna

Physique: Visual design of University of Vienna brand, which is correspondent to Physique aspect of digital brand identity as it was reported by expert is based on Corporate Design – Manual principles. Logo, colors, fonts, multimedia, content, language, and layout. Logo as well as fonts are used according with Corporate Design – Manual, logo with complicated emblem. Colors – blue and set of other colors which must be used digitally, are used correspondently with Corporate Design – Manual. Criteria for multimedia content reported by expert are:

photography used on the website is created by university photographers (photography team of the University of Vienna), sometimes professional agencies are used as well, rarely stock photography is used - University of Vienna has an internal accessible photo media database from where pictures can be taken), People in media/photography are showcased in natural way, people are showcased in their natural workplace or student space, people in media are from the University of Vienna or research. The language used is gender neutral English and German. Talking about the main page structure, it contains of menu, which has clearly divided main dialog groups of the university (Bachelor/ Diploma, Teaching, Masters, Postgraduate further education, Doctors/ PhD). Social media icons are situated right under the menu. Further "Events", "Actual information", "Actual media" and University in numbers. Expert mention that they are aware that layout is off-to-date (exists for 10 years) and require a change. Website content in its turn is Up-to-date relevant articles, that are changing 3 times a week, with the exception that some big news coming. Expert mentioned that blog is one of the place, where an impression about university culture can be made.

Personality: Based on the mentioned in Brand image brochure of the University of Vienna, according to 5 big personality traits (OCEAN) (Nandi & Nicoletti, 2014b), personality of the university brand is conscious (Consciousness = 2), open (Openness (1), extraverted (Extraversion = 1), and agreeable (Agreeableness = 1). Neuroticism is 0. According to Aaker's (1997) brand personality dimensions, university personality is the most correspondent with Competence (2) dimension, Excitement (1) and Sincerity (1). Sophistication and Ruggedness are 0.

Culture: According with the main findings, university brand culture (Culture aspect) is based on such principles as excellence, community, research, cooperation, internationality, variety, openness, curiosity, tradition, and feminism.

Relationship: Relationship aspect relate to benefits which future students obtain while engaging with the brand. According to expert, main page does not promote benefits; "Studieren an der Universität Wien" page in its turn showcase benefits through yearly media campaigns. Expert states that spring is the time for the university promotion campaigns and university use most often small paid media campaigns with social media (for example, Unicheck with the special test students can take online to find out if the program is suitable for them). Expert also mentions that focus of the main page is on the broader public. She states: "The focus here is to

present information that is, um, interested in most persons, not specifically students or researchers". Product of the university is science, education, teaching and learning process. Scientific magazine “Rudolphina” is another free of charge product, the main aim of which is spread of recent scientific knowledge and findings. Communication with students at the main page is happening also through social media icons and blog. As it was stated by communication expert, the main competences of the university are digitalization, sustainability, and good scientific practices.

Self-image: As it was mentioned by expert, that ideal graduate of the University of Vienna (Reflection aspect) is ambassador of the university, happy with the choice, has a goal of continuing education.

5.1.3. Brand Identity as Formulated of Faculty of Business, Economics and Statistics Brand

Formulated brand identity is based on Brand image brochure of the University of Vienna and on Corporate Design – Manual. The only aspect which could be analyzed is Physique aspect.

Physique: Visual design of University of Vienna brand, which is correspondent to Physique aspect of digital brand identity is based on Corporate Design – Manual principles. Logo of the University is old emblem of the university. Primary colors used by the brand are blue, white and gray and they are used for all the title pages; secondary colors are wine red, orange red, golden yellow, light green, mint green and are used for interior and subpages and as primary colours for different services. Fonts used are Calibri and Source Serif Pro. Media used can be presented in form of photography and illustration. Images used by the brand should express diversity of the University of Vienna, be lively photos with people are in the foreground. The images must be of high resolution and have a copyright.

5.1.4. Intended Brand Image of Faculty of Business, Economics and Statistics

Findings for intended brand image transferred by the website were based on analysis of semi-structured interview conducted with expert of digital communication from Communication

Department of the University of Vienna. Information showcased further was obtained through the qualitative data coding of the mentioned interview.

Aspects of Intended brand image of the Faculty of Business, Economics and Statistics

Physique: Expert mentioned that the same logo is used at the faculty webpage, which shows its belonging to the University of Vienna. Similar layout, color scheme and navigation is used. Layout is simple and structured. Its main elements commented by expert were multimedia used, media portal, news portal and calendar (addressing international scientific community). Multimedia showcase authentic students, authentic professors (real people at their work and study places).

Personality: Based on the mentioned in Brand image brochure of the University of Vienna, according to 5 big personality traits (OCEAN) (Nandi & Nicoletti, 2014b), personality of the university brand is extraverted (Extraversion = 5) and conscious (Consciousness = 1) and open (Openness = 1). According to Aaker's (1997) brand personality dimensions, university personality is the most correspondent with Competence (4) dimension, Excitement (2) and Sincerity (1) .

Culture: According with the main findings, university brand culture (Culture aspect) is based on such principles and values as support, openness, tradition, research and knowledge, internationality, ambition, continuous education and growth.

Relationship: Expert stated that education, research and media are the products of the university. Benefit students are getting is the ability of studying successful educational programs in Vienna very interesting international city. According to the interview with help of the website, images and articles used, it is shown that university is trying to help students to grow and achieve success.
Research skills and applied knowledge is another benefit students are getting, as it is a top priority of the university which is in 10 top research universities in Austria.

Reflection: As it was mentioned by future students, that ideal graduate of the University of Vienna (Reflection aspect) is cooperative, ambitious, intelligent, international person, who approve “learning never ends” approach.

5.2. Brand image

This section provides the information about the brand image of the University of Vienna and of Faculty of Business, Economics and Statistics brand as perceived by the target audience of prosperous students based on website evaluation.

5.2.1. Brand Image of the University of Vienna, as Perceived by Potential Students

Findings for perceived brand image transferred by the website were based on analysis of semi-structured interview conducted with five potential university students (See Table 6). Information showcased further was obtained through the qualitative data coding of the mentioned interview.

Aspects of perceived brand image of the University of Vienna

Personality: Based on the mentioned in Brand image brochure of the University of Vienna, according to 5 big personality traits (OCEAN) (Nandi & Nicoletti, 2014b), personality of the university brand is conscious (Consciousness = 9), extraverted (Extraversion = 4), agreeable (Agreeableness = 3), neurotic (Neuroticism = 3) and open (Openness = 1). According to Aaker's (1997) brand personality dimensions, university personality is the most correspondent with Competence (10) dimension, Sincerity (6) and Excitement (1) and Ruggedness (1). Sophistication is shown as 0.

Culture: According with the main findings, university brand culture (Culture aspect) is based on such principles as excellence, community, research, cooperation, internationality, diversity and variety, openness and curiosity, tradition and feminism.

Relationship: Benefits students are getting from the university brand are: personal development, independence (self-determined decision-making, critical thinking), intelligence (knowledges), support, interdisciplinary approach to research and sturdies, research, orientation towards future, community and diversity. Main competences of the university are research, science, natural sciences.

Reflection: As it was mentioned by expert, that ideal graduate of the University of Vienna (Reflection aspect) is open personality with variety of future international possibilities, happy with the choice of the university, has a goal of continuing education. This person has a balanced approach to studying - care of health (body), enough of time for everything; organized, cultured/ intelligent, curious, accepting, professional and plan to find a future job - connected with research/ climate issues.

5.2.2. Brand Image of Faculty of Business, Economics and Statistics as perceived by Potential Students

Findings for perceived brand image transferred by the website were based on analysis of semi-structured interview conducted with five potential university students (See Table 6). Information showcased further was obtained through the qualitative data coding of the mentioned interview.

Aspects of perceived brand image of the Faculty of Business, Economics and Statistics

Personality: Based on the mentioned in Brand image brochure of the University of Vienna, according to 5 big personality traits (OCEAN) (Nandi & Nicoletti, 2014b), personality of the university brand is extraverted (Extraversion = 8), neurotic (Neuroticism = 5) and, open (Openness = 4) and conscious (Consciousness = 2). Agreeableness is 0. According to Aaker's (1997) brand personality dimensions, university personality is the most correspondent with Competence (13) dimension and negative Excitement (-2).

Culture: According with the main findings, university brand culture (Culture aspect) is based on such principles and values as support, openness, tradition, research and knowledge, internationality, ambition, continuous education, and growth.

Relationship: Future students see structured courses, research, and media as a product of the faculty. The benefits students are getting based on their evaluation of the website are support during the studies, future opportunities for work in economics. Research skills and knowledge and research-based education is a benefit for students. Possibility to be a part of community and teamwork is another benefit as it is stated by future students.

Reflection: As it was mentioned by future students, that ideal graduate of the University of Vienna (Reflection aspect) is cooperative, satisfied with the choice, career-oriented, ambitious, international, and intelligent person, who approve "learning never ends" approach and has interest in research and relevant global issues connected with economics, environment and cultures.

According to some students, webpage of Faculty does not showcase the characteristics people typically have with business and economics. *"I think at least that like people who do, like business administration and international business administration are like people who are like creative. Maybe they already have like an idea of, uh, what the company they want to create and it's like very dynamic and whatever. And this website doesn't really give you that impression, you know? » (Mati).*

5.3.Communication Effectiveness

This sub-point provides comparison of formulated brand identity (= intended brand image) and perceived brand image by target audience.

This section is correspondent with Research Question 1, which aims to answer is brand identity of the University of Vienna is successfully transmitted by the university website in terms of establishing a consistent brand image in potential future students.
Information is provided with help of tables and conclusions are made.

5.3.1. Physique (University of Vienna)

	Brand Identity		Brand Image
	Formulated brand identity	= Intended brand image	Perceived brand image
1. Physique	Logo, Colours, Fonts - Corporate Design – Manual **<u>Style of media</u>** • Images should express diversity of the Uniwien • lively photos • people are in the foreground • high resolution images • copyright **<u>Illustration of themes</u>** • Typography as illustration in the primary color palette. • Typography as illustration in the secondary color palette • Typography as illustration combined with Image. • Thematically related b&w photography. • Graphic alienation of thematic images. • Google icons as illustration	**Logo, Colours, Fonts** - expert **Language** – German/ English, gender neutral **Multimedia** • People in media/photography are showcased in natural way (in their natural workplace or student space) • People in media are from the University of Vienna or research **Layout** • off-to-date layout: require a change "this layout is used for 10 years already…" **Content** • Up-to-date relevant articles, that are changing 3 times a week, with the exception that some big news coming • Blog - one of the place, where an impression about university culture can be made	Logo, Colours, Fonts are perceived in the same way Language – German/ English **Multimedia (impression):** • sense of community, holding together • making friends • welcoming smiling people • professional, put together look • scientific • a lot of pictures of people learning • good idea to use different size images **Content** • Up-to-date relevant articles • Promotion of events (Verantstaltungen) • Information about current issues (crises, war, covid, etc.) **Layout (positive)** • Organized • Easy to find information • Attention to every stakeholder is provided • Social media icons • Clear • easy to see what is Important resembles of newspaper **Layout (negative)** • lack of dynamism **Design** • boring • not creative • Old fashioned • Old website trying to implement new trends **Other comments:** • Need of more visual information (images/ videos) of the university to get the fuller impression • importance of campus for the future students • Inconsistency of some pictures with articles was also identified as a problem • One of the students mentioned that usage of woman image may be perceived as oppressive

Table 10: "Physique" aspects of the University of Vienna brand identity prisms

As interview provides the data, which is more descriptive, the comparison of identity and image are more subjective. Hence, in analysis of Physique more general conclusions were made and

negative aspects mentioned by students were emphasized. Understanding of negative aspects is important, because their evaluation impact the perception of the website and HEI brand.

Interviews findings indicated that logo, colours, fonts, language, and informational content were perceived by future students quite similarly to the formulated brand identity by the university of Vienna; evaluation of layout was both positive and negative and evaluation of design rather negative.

Future students described layout positively as organized and clear with easy access and logical placement of the information with due attention provided to each stakeholder. They mentioned that because of layout it was easy to understand what important, and which sections is were intended for them. Rather neutral was comparison of layout newspaper and negative evaluation related to the lack of dynamism. Static pictures considered to be old-fashioned, because students associate animation and videos with more modern and dynamic brand. Expert in her turn mentioned that layout of the website is old and already used for 10 years, hence it requires an update.

Even though layout was evaluated quite positively, design was perceived rather negatively, and characterized as boring, not creative, old-fashioned; HEI website was characterized as an old website trying to implement new trends.

Recommendations based on the findings from the interview to improve the website's Phisique:

- Need of more visual information (images/ videos) of the university to get the fuller impression about the campus and the HEI brand; lack of visuals was severally claimed by future students, especially they were interested into the campus facilities and was wandering to find this information on the main website; VR visual tour/video was as well proposed as an idea for brand promotion
- Inconsistency of some pictures with articles was also identified as a problem
- According to one of the students, big image of woman on the main page was considered to be oppressive, however student did not provide the full explanation of statement.

5.3.2. Personality (University of Vienna)

	Brand Identity		Perceived
	Formulated brand identity	= Intended brand image	Perceived brand image
2. Personality (a) Five big personality traits (OCEAN) (b) Brand personality dimensions	(a) Openness (10), Consciousness (7), Extraversion (1), Agreeableness (4), Neuroticism (0) (b) Excitement(7), Competence(7) Sincerity(4), Sophistication(0) Ruggedness(0)	(a) Openness (1), Consciousness (2), Extraversion (1), Agreeableness (1), Neuroticism (0) (b) Excitement(1), Competence(2), Sincerity(1), Sophistication(0) Ruggedness(0)	(a) Openness (1), Consciousness (9), Extraversion (4), Agreeableness (3), Neuroticism (3) (b) Excitement(1), Competence(10) Sincerity(6), Sophistication(0) Ruggedness(1)

Table 11: "Personality" aspects of the University of Vienna brand identity prisms

For more detail see Annex A.

Based on analysis of the interviews following similarities and differences were identified.

Similarities:

a) University personality can be considered as conscious after three brand identity prisms analysis. Consciousness shows the highest rate. Agreeableness show high rate as well.

a) University is both positioned and perceived as competent.

Differences:

a) Brand image brochure positions university significantly more open than it is reported by expert and perceived by students. However, as expert reported small number of personality features, it is hard to make a conclusion. Also, students report traits of neuroticism, what should also be considered, because it is rather negative evaluation.

b)Brochure promotes personality of the university as personality with high excitement level, but it is not perceived in similar way. Students reported quite small number of features connected with excitement. As well students promoted Ruggedness, which was not mentioned in other cases.

5.3.3. Culture (University of Vienna)

	Brand Identity		Perceived
	Formulated brand identity	= Intended brand image	Perceived brand image
3. Culture	• Excellence • community • research • cooperation • internationality • diversity • variety • openness • curiosity • tradition • feminism • career	• Excellence • Community • Research • Cooperation • Internationality • Diversity • Variety • Openness • Curiosity • Tradition • Feminism	• excellence • community • research • cooperation • internationality • diversity • variety • openness • curiosity • tradition • feminism Negative aspects reported by future students: • May be considered as too scientific. • May be considered as only science oriented (other disciplines seems to be "promoted" way less) • Too traditional • Too formal

Table 12: "Culture" aspects of the University of Vienna brand identity prisms

For more detail see Annex B.

As it can be seen from the table, perception of culture is identical with exception of career aspect.

Based on interviews career is associated with pursuing the academic career, targeted career development of early-stage researchers, wide range of sectors for academic career. Formulated brand identity emphasizes the importance of academic and professional career for the university. Neither expert not students mentioned about career perspectives in other sections. Students mentioned that university proposes diverse options for continuation of education, but nothing was said exactly about academic or professional career when they were asked about culture. Conclusion can be made that importance of research/academic education and perspectives are significantly outweighs the importance of career for the university.

This statement is emphasized by students reported opinion about their perception of the brand based on website evaluation. Negative aspects reported by future students were:

- May be considered as too scientific.

- May be considered as only science oriented (other disciplines seems to be "promoted" way less)
- Too traditional
- Too formal

5.3.4. Relationship (University of Vienna)

	Brand Identity		Perceived
	Formulated brand identity	= Intended brand image	Perceived brand image
4. Relationship	Benefits • Personal development • Independence (critical thinking and self-determined decision-making) • Intelligence and knowledge • Interdisciplinary approach to research and studies • Research • Support • Career (academic) • Orientation towards future • Community • Diversity	Benefits Main page does not promote benefits Assumption: even though university does not promote benefits specifically on the webpage, students are able to assume what benefits they are going to get based on the elements of the webpage, such as images, menus, media/ articles.	Benefits • Personal development • Independence (critical thinking and self-determined decision-making) • Intelligence and knowledge • Interdisciplinary approach to research and studies • Research • Support • Orientation towards future • Community • Diversity
	Competences • Research • Sustainability • Digitalization	Competences • Digitalization • Sustainability • Good scientific practices (research, science)	Competences • Research • Science • Natural science

Table 13: "Relationship" aspects of the University of Vienna brand identity prisms

An interesting finding related to the observation that perceived brand identity reflects formulated brand identity, even though expert mentioned that Main page, evaluated by future students, does not promote benefits. Assumption can be made that even though university does not promote benefits specifically on the webpage, students are able to assume what benefits they are going to get based on the elements of the webpage, such as images, menus, media/ articles.

Also, it can be noticed that formulated brand identity emphasizes the importance of academic and professional career for the university. Neither expert not students mentioned about career perspectives in other sections. Students mentioned that university proposes diverse options for continuation of education, but nothing was said exactly about academic or professional career when they were asked about culture. Conclusion can be made that importance of research/ academic education and perspectives are significantly outweighs the importance of career for

the university. Possibly, if promoting career more, this action may attract more ambitious and goal-oriented students to the university in case this is the aim of university.

Talking about competences, University of Vienna is perceived as university concentrated on research and mostly natural sciences, which is correspondent with formulated and intended brand identities which emphasize the importance of research and sustainability.

5.3.5. Reflection (University of Vienna)

	Brand Identity		Perceived
	Formulated brand identity	= Intended brand image	Perceived brand image
5. Reflection	Only self-image was found: A) Students of the university (next generation of students as a part of society); Austrian students / international students; B) researchers and academics (national and international); • People (regardless of age) interested in professional or academic career • willing to grow and explore the world • open-minded and international • want to develop critical thinking, • interested in science and research • detail-oriented • dilligent • cooperative	a) Ambassador of the university b) Happy with the choice of the university c) Has a goal of continuing education	a) Open personality with variety of future international possibilities b) Happy with the choice of the university c) Has a goal of continuing education Additionally: • balanced approach to studying - care of health (body), enough of time for everything • organized, cultured/ intelligent, curious, accepting, professional • future job - connected with research/ climate issues oriented

Table 14: “Reflection” aspects of the University of Vienna brand identity prisms

Similarities: Intended and perceived brand identities were described quite similarly. Both expert and students see ideal graduate as person, happy with the choice and has a goal of continuing education. Expert sees graduate as university ambassador and future students as open personality with variety of future possibilities. Additionally, future students see graduate as organized, cultures, curious, accepting, professional person with balanced approach to studying process. Plans for the future of the graduate are to get a job connected with research and climate issues oriented.

5.3.6. Physique (Faculty of Business, Economics and Statistics)

	Brand Identity	Perceived
	Formulated brand identity	Perceived brand image
1. Physique	**Corporate Design – Manual** Same University of Vienna logo Colours • same color scheme • same color as the University of Vienna webpage – belonging to the University of Vienna Multimedia • like the main page • authentic students, authentic professors (real people at their work/study places) Layout • news portal/media portal • calendar	Moving pictures: • five changing images showcasing different study directions • more dynamism that at the main page, more visually appealing, not a modern website, but more modern than homepage • provides a picture of what is waiting for the student Impression from the Content (images): • young people • diversity • woman in centre • multicultural/international • building diverse international future • no borders, equality • university as a part of your daily life, not only students' life Layout (positive) • faculty contacts > contactable • colours are well managed • media portal > informative, practical, helpful Layout (negative) • Rather reminds of journal, but not a university website • Contains a lot of lists and static images > lack of dynamism • Not appealing, because of the big number of links > information overload Multimedia (negative) • moving images with titles is evaluated to be too superficial, not enough of details • according to the students some pictures are not correspondent with headings • slideshow tries to catch attention with headings, but do not provide any information afterwards, only media • according to students text about faculty (description) could be a good idea Design: • reminds of doctor's website > formal, straight, strict • boring, not fun

Table 15: "Physique" aspects of the Faculty of Business, Economics and Statistics

Expert described the physical elements of the page and mentioned that they are following the same principles as the main page. These principles are the part of Corporate Design -Manual of the university. Students described how they perceive the webpage and provided their opinion about positive and negative aspects and provided their opinion about the multimedia and their impression about layout, and design.

Some negative aspects of content (multimedia) were identified based on analysis:

a) Moving images with titles were evaluated as too superficial. Even though slideshow catches attention it does not provide enough of necessary information about Faculty for students to understand the faculty.

b) Some pictures were not correspondent with headings:

"I mean, if I look more in depth about the image, Uh, I mean, it's what the text says is clearly represented on the picture. For example, study. I just see people studying. Then this way I can pause. Yeah. Um, so this, for example, I, I do not know what it's supposed to tell me. Okay. Applied economics and I just see a professor just maybe teaching. However, does not give me any more information at all. It's just this, I, I would say it's just a random picture. Okay. With this title, so definitely a bit confusing here. Mm-hmm" (Antoine)

c) According to students' comments text/short description about faculty on the main page of the Faculty could be a good idea to obtain impression of what the faculty and its specialization is about.

Layout of Faculty's page was rather criticized than approved. The contacts section pointed at the contractability and support of the faculty. Media portal with articles was reported as informative, practical, and helpful. Students identified some negative aspects about layout and content, for example:

a) Lack of campus information and visuals; information about campus exists on the webpage, but students would like to see it straight at the main page of the faculty instead of searching.
b) Some students evaluated layout as "messy", what Is not appealing; page consists not enough of information, not enough of logic.
c) Webpage of faculty looks more like a media portal, news portal, but not a faculty page; some students are not sure if the news is a good idea.
d) Future students don't understand what the meaning is of calendar.

Design was as well criticized, because according to students it is too strict and formal and reminds of doctor's website. It is considered ad boring and not fun, which is not very appealing.

5.3.7. Personality (Faculty of Business, Economics and Statistics)

	Brand Identity	Perceived
	= Intended brand image	Perceived brand image
2. Personality (a) Five big personality traits (OCEAN) (b) Brand personality dimensions	(a) Openness (1), Consciousness (1), Extraversion (5), Agreeableness (0), Neuroticism (0) (b) Excitement(2), Competence(4) Sincerity(1), Sophistication(0) Ruggedness(0)	(a) Openness (4), Consciousness (2), Extraversion (8), Agreeableness (0), Neuroticism (5) (b) Excitement(-2), Competence(13) Sincerity(0), Sophistication(0) Ruggedness(0)

Table 16: "Personality" aspects of the Faculty of Business, Economics and Statistics

For more detail see Annex C.

Similarities: a) Extraversion showed the highest rate in case of both intended and perceived brand identities. Both brand identities reported features connected with Consciousness and Openness.

b) Both intended and perceived brand identities analysis showed high Competence level.

Differences: a) Students reported high rate of Neuroticism when talking about the faculty.

c)Perceived brand identity showed negative level of Excitement, which can be evaluated as quite negative perception of the faculty. Experts sees the brand as sincere, why students did not report features connected with sincerity.

5.3.8. Culture (Faculty of Business, Economics and Statistics)

	Brand Identity	Perceived
	= Intended brand image	Perceived brand image
3. Culture	<u>Principles</u> • Support • Openness • Tradition • Research and knowledge • International • Ambition • Continuous education and growth	<u>Principles</u> • Support • Openness • Tradition • Research and knowledge • International • Ambition • Continuous education and growth

Table 17: "Culture" aspects of the Faculty of Business, Economics and Statistics

For more detail see Annex D. For both intended and perceived brand identity the main principles are identical: support, openness, tradition, research and knowledge, internationality, ambition, continuous education, and growth.

5.3.9. Relationship (Faculty of Business, Economics and Statistics)

	Brand Identity	Perceived
	= Intended brand image	Perceived brand image
4. Relationship	Product: • education • research • media Benefits: • studying in Vienna very interesting international city • studying successful educational programs • faculty helps to achieve success • Research • research as a top priority - applied research knowledge • Uni Wien in 10 top research universities	Product: Program • structured courses • research • media Benefits: • support during the studies • future opportunities for work in economics Research • researchh and new knowledge • innovative approach to studies - courses are evolving together with research updates Community • ability to participate in study groups • being a part of community

Table 18: "Relationship" aspects of the Faculty of Business, Economics and Statistics

No significant difference in Relationship aspect is found.

5.3.10. Relationship (Faculty of Business, Economics and Statistics)

Brand identity	Intended	Perceived
5. Reflection	• Cooperative • Ambitious • intelligence, continuous learning • International	• Cooperative • Satisfied with the choice • Career-orientation (ambition) • Intelligence, continuous learning • Research • Interest to global relevant issues, culture, and environment

Table 19: "Reflection" aspects of the Faculty of Business, Economics and Statistics

One of the students stated that webpage does not showcase the characteristics people have with economics and business:

“I think at least that like people who do, like business administration and international business administration are like people who are like creative. Maybe they already have like an idea of, uh, what the company they want to create and it's like very dynamic and whatever. And this website doesn't really give you that impression, you know?” (Mati).

5.4.Impact of Website

5.4.1. HEI’s Website Impact as reported by Potential Students

Website has immense impact on perception of the HEI by its target groups and further in this work information is provided about opinion of potential students about the university.

The first question stated, “To which extent website is important?” and according to the students’ answers website is responsible for the first impression they get about the university brand. They mention as well that they usually attend university before personal visit.

Sofia mentions that *“…nowadays the first thing you look at when you want to go study, you don't especially visit the university, maybe after, but the first thing you do is look at the website. So, I think it's very important and it should be appealing. It should be interesting. It should catch the attention of everyone and not just maybe, um, older people. Not older people like in the twenties. And I mean, I'm 17, so I'm basically a child. So it should appeal everyone. Um, and be very clear, structured. Uh, I mean, I know it's difficult to create a website, uh, but yes...”.* Student emphasizes that website should be appealing and interesting to catch attention of all the target audiences regardless the age.

Interesting is the comparison of the website with PowerPoint, which speaks about website’s presenting function: *“It's, it's basically like a PowerPoint you do or you did in school. Like it can be very basic and informative and it's good, but does it appeal to the public and does the teacher and everyone like the PowerPoint? That was, I don't know”* (Sofia). Here importance of appealing design is emphasized.

Students also connects the quality of the website with quality of the university. Saida stated that good university usually has a good website. Saida mentions that "*if the university is good, but like the website isn't, a lot of people wouldn't know that univesity is good".* So because of

the negative impression of the website a lot of people will have a wrong impression about the university.

Antione also connects the quality of the website with university quality. He states that *"the website is supposed to represent their (university) brand, so therefore the website somehow has to be of good quality to represent that the university is also good quality"* (Antoine).
Mati emphasizes the importance of the accessibility*: "I think, uh, the website is very important because, uh, I mean you need to have like, all information that one could need easily accessible. So like a website that has all the information but it's like still very difficult to access… I don't think it's, uh, it's great"* (Mati). He also mentions that *"at the end, like the website can be, uh, an important factor when you choose your university"* (Mati).

She mentioned that while using website she gets the "feeling" or as she says *"when I'm on a website, when I see something, it's like create in my brain, I'm like, okay, that's good. That's not that good. And like, maybe when I'm there (in person, physically) I can see if it's really like that and everything. But like on the website I have to get like a first impression of something to see, okay, I want to go further, or I, I don't want to see more"* (Saida). She is trying to explain that her first imression about the brand on the website is important for her to understand if she wants to engage with brand (institution) further. And this statement can be related with self-image aspect of the brand identity when student understand if there is a self-congruence between his self-image and brand.

Antoine mentioned that university website is important, but not one hundred percent, however, as he mentioned *"it's definitely somewhere in the back of my mind, like mm-hmm. You know, um, like for example, oh, how do they showcase, um, about, um, how the students are like, not being treated, but about the qualities of, I would say, of the students when they are there"* (Antione). Here, Antonina provides an explanation to what can be characterized as the Personality aspect of the brand identity.

Mati states that *"I think like different university types catered to different people… different types of people want different types of universities."* (Mati), and these statements identify that students differentiate that different universities have different personalities and student's personality must be congruent with personality of the university.

Second question was “What do you search at the website”? According to Saida, students usually use website to get the impression about the university and check on the pictures of campus, get to know, what programs it has, where it is possible to meet people, etc. (Saida)

According to Sofia the information searched the most is:

a) Information about enrolment: how to apply, requirements, timing, etc)
b) University offer: programs, study groups, events, Welcoming days, etc.
c) Information to get to know the university better.

The third question was “To which extent university brand is important for your choice?”. One of the students interviewed Antione mentioned that brand is some kind of reassurance for the future student during the selection process of the higher educational institution. He states that *“when you leave high school, you are leaving for university, you know, it's a big first step and therefore a lot of people are scared about this next part of life and to get like information like that, it's (brand is…) reassuring with make, which makes it better.*

Saida mentions as well that in case brand is not well-managed online and impression formed is rather negative, university is perceived as not professional. Students also feel the lack of trust towards the university in case of poor quality of university onlie presetation.

Mati states *“definitely think the brand image is important and, and when I talked to the people around me in like my grade and in my class who were applying to, to university that I think, uh, from what I picked up, it, it was definitely like an important part”* (Mati).

5.4.2. University of Vienna – Website

According to digital communication expert, university website is the contact point, where customers interact with the university representatives and get the information about the brand, especially when they have no previous knowledge of what the University of Vienna offers. Website is as well a touchpoint for numerous dialog groups, for instance, international scientific community, university staff, students, media, government representatives, broader public, etc.. Expert mentions that with help of the website, university tries to show what they do and what they achieve.

Website is functioning based on the Communication plan and communication strategy, which is based on the Development plan of the University of Vienna, written by directorate and all stakeholders inside the university together with the ministry.

For website to functions and achieve the goals of communicative strategy, communication department organizes the matrix of dialogue groups that they want to address. People responsible for each group and channels are defined.

Website as well plays an important role in brand identity transfer. University of Vienna has a strong brand since 1365, which claims “Genuinely curious since 1365”.

The following key points provided by the digital communication expert summarize websites’ characteristics of the University of Vienna:

1. University website of the University of Vienna is a contact point for many dialogue groups, first point of interaction with the brand and a place to show “what we do and what we achieved”.
2. Desired image: University of Vienna is aimed to be perceived as international and sustainable organization with variety of offers for students and for people who search for jobs.
3. Communication Department is responsible for website management and define dialogue groups that need to be addressed. One person from the team is responsible for each group.
4. Digital brand identity: expert understands digital brand identity as a part of brand identity in general. Uniwien is a strong brand since 1365 with the traditional claim "Genuinely curious since 1365". University logo is a part of visual brand identity of the university. Logo of Uniwien is a complicated sign - emblem of the university.
5. Measurement of digital brand identity: digital brand identity is measured through the Reputation management – the project for measurement of digital brand perception. Research groups of the university are listening to the digital universe, trying to understand which attributes dialogue groups connect with University of Vienna. University also listens to other brands reputation; however, its strategy is to compare itself to its own results only.
6. Optimization is an important part of brand management. The most important questions are: Who has visited the website before? What are the main users? Where do they click to? Where does the traffic go? Where do the users stay longer? Where don't they stay very

long? Where do they bounce a lot to go back to the site where they came from. The main aim here is of optimization to produce relevant content to satisfy dialogue groups and provide answers to the relevant questions.

Important to notice that university and its website was numerously compared with its one of its competitors - WU university (Wirtschaftsuniversität Wien, University of Economics and Business). Website of WU was perceived to be more international, more young, dynamic, and innovative in comparison with University of Vienna. It was mentioned by students as well that website of the Uniwien is reflecting the essence of the University itself.

5.4.2.1. Elements

This sub-section is correspondent to the Research Question 2, which aims to understand, which impact have various dimensions of the website in transmitting the intended brand image (=brand identity). Krapferer's brand identity elements were at the core of the analysis and future students were answering the questions related with these elements. They were allowed to use the website while answering.

The following image is the screenshot of the part of the "University of Vienna" home page, based on which analysis was based. The screenshot shows the part with menus and social media links. Second part of the page includes sections "Events" and "News".

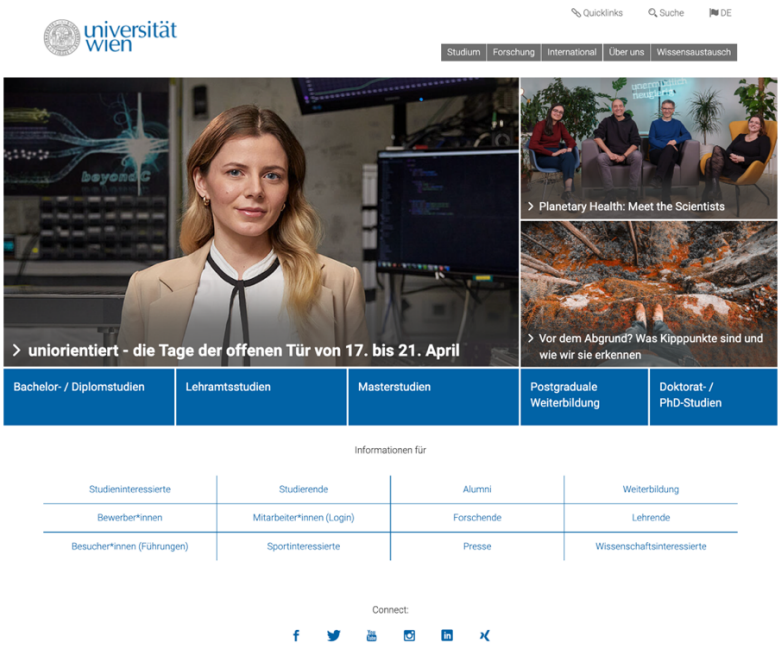

Figure 3: Homepage of the website of the University of Vienna (https://www.univie.ac.at/)

Content analysis of this webpage was conducted based on criteria used in the analysis of ZARA website of the study of (Tőkés, 2022).

Quality of visual content	Good-quality pictures for articles correspondent with the content; minimalistic design; usage of university colours (white, dark blue, grey, black (texts));
Delivery of information	logical and has a clear and accessible structure; contains numerous menus hyperlinked to another sections; search option in the header; website map in the footer
Interaction with the customers	links to other (all) social media, namely Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, LinkedIn, Xing; address, phone number and address of the institution

Table 20: Content analysis of webpage of University of Vienna

It was clearly seen that the answers of the students about the university brand and website were based on their evaluation of website elements.

Generally, students characterized university website as structured, well-organized, inviting, appealing, with a good navigation, informative and providing a feeling of support. It was considered both old-school and modern by different students. University brand based on website was perceived as diverse, international, traditional, old university with serious image.

After the analysis of the answers provided by future students it could be clearly seen that some elements are more connected with brand identity as, for example, content, design, layout. Interactive experience was mentioned as well, but it did not play the central role in students' answers. Further impact of these elements are analysed using the information obtained with help of interviews.

5.4.2.2. Design

Design is responsible for visual representation of brand and has a strong influence on brand identity perception by the target audience. Elements of design in its unity shape visual identity of the brand, which is mostly connected with Physique element of the Krapferer's prism is mostly connected with visual part of website elements. When it comes to the design evaluation, logo, color scheme, fonts, multimedia play the most important role here.

Logo here is essential symbol, which transmitting the values, mission, and personality of the brand. Logo of the University, which is an old emblem of the university was mentioned by each student as a part of university branding. Logo as well was mentioned to be a part of the university culture and was characterized as antique, historic, traditional, very old, providing the feeling of trust, and giving a very serious image of the University.

Primary colours used by the brand are blue, white, and grey and they are used for all the title pages; Blue colour is the main colour associated with the university, which is associated with calmness and "put together" state.

According to students' responses during the interviews with future university students, university design had neutral or rather negative characteristics, such as: quite simple, boring, not very creative, old fashioned with some "ugly" details. Students mentioned that website seems to be old but trying to adapt some trends.

Visual design has an influence of the perception of university's personality, culture and as well important for brand differentiation. It was clearly seen, when University of Vienna website was numerously compared with website of its Austrian competitor WU, which was perceived to be more international, young, dynamic, and innovative and based on design impression.

5.4.2.3. Layout and Interactive experience

Layout is directly connected with interactive experience and user experience of the customer which has its influence on the overall brand experience. Navigation, structure, and accessibility are evaluated here as well as their influence at positive experience.

Evaluation of layout is assessing the way elements of web-design, content and other visual components are arranged. Layout was numerously mentioned during evaluation of website and conclusion can be made that it has direct influence on the brand identity perception. Layout of the website relates to visual representation, placement of elements of branding and personality of the brand.

When it comes to the evaluation of University of Vienna layout, it was considered as organized and clear, with due attention to each stakeholder. According to students, it was easy for target audience to find information on the main page, what speaks about navigation and user

experience. According to students with clear layout as in case with the website of the university and structure of its menu, it was easy to see what is relevant. They immediately recognized the section, intended for them which is called “Prospective students” and located straight under the articles. As well they hac a positive impression about that there are as well sections for each educational programs level: Bachelor, Masters’s, PhD, etc. The fact that layout of University of Vienna webpage contains social media icons and blog was as well appealing to future students because this may help them to find out more about HEI and its culture.

Negative for many was that layout rather reminds of journal, but not a university. Lack of dynamism based on long lists/ links with a lot of text and usage and static pictures were considered as a drawback, which was associated with the lack of modernity and old-fashioned brand. One of the students Sofia mentioned that *“it (links) doesn't seem appealing to me… I don't even want to read all the links”.*

5.4.2.4. Content

For establishment of efficient brand representation, connection between content and brand identity is essential. Content has a huge influence on how brand will be perceived by target audiences. Content is as well a part of visual representation of the brand and design.

Multimedia is a part of visual content, which was mentioned by each respondent. Relating to interviews, analysed content was divided into visual (i.e. multimedia: images for the articles and media, photography, graphics, etc.) and textual (up-to-date relevant articles, events announcements, information about current issues, blog). While being asked to answer the questions, students were scanning the page, evaluating the content, and providing associations based on the images and text. The images and photography used on the website provided students with general understanding what university is about and what its main field of occupation and focus. Each student mentioned that research lays at the core of University of Vienna brand. Based on multimedia used students as well mentioned that brand can be characterised as: community-oriented, friendly, welcoming, professional, scientific, growth-oriented (learning visualization).

During content evaluation, students’ attention was paid to:

- Tone and message: marketer-produced content of the brand, no matter on the type of content, conveys the message and tone of the brand. That's why style, language, voice and visual content must be aligned with identity and personality of the brand. As it was highlighted by potential students, is easy to understand while evaluating the content, what exactly the focus of University of Vienna brand is.
- Visual Elements: text is not the only type of content that evaluated; images, graphics, photography is a very important part of visual content as well. They make the webpage more attractive and easier to understand. Images used by the webpage transfer what the brand stands for and what is it about. In case of the University of Vienna, it shows images connected students, researchers, university staff and environment, scientific environment, etc.

  According to some students comments, talking about the content aspect, there is a need of more visual information (images/ videos) of the university to get the fuller impression; as well the information and visual information about the campus for future students was highlighted; inconsistency of some pictures with articles was also identified as a possible problem; one of the students mentioned that usage of woman image may be perceived as oppressive.
- Content's quality: content of the high quality can influence the reputation of the brand and its perception. At the same time, poorly executed content can have a negative influence on the brand's perception.

To sum up, content is communicating, expressing, reinforcing the identity of the brand. Content is essential for creation of authentic brand.

5.4.3. Faculty of Business, Economics, and Statistics – Website

Webpage of Faculty of Business, Economics, and Statistics is the part of website of the University of Vienna, which presents the faculty digitally. The main aim of this webpage is to provide users with the clear and accessible delivery of content about, which is designed for a students and university staff. Further in this section elements, mentioned by potential students during interviews are described and analysed.

5.4.3.1.Elements

This sub-section is correspondent to the Research Question 2, which aims to understand, which impact have various dimensions of the website in transmitting the intended brand image (=brand identity). Krapferer's brand identity elements were at the core of the analysis and future students were answering the questions related with these elements. They were allowed to use the website while answering.

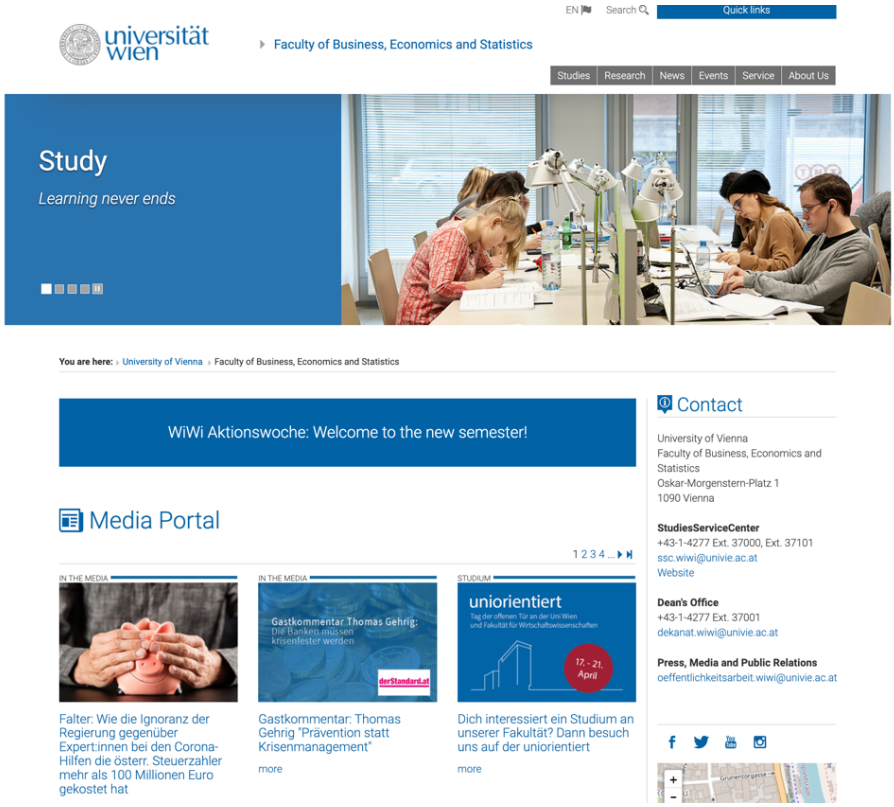

Figure 4: Website of the Faculty of Business, Economics and Statistics (https://wirtschaftswissenschaften.univie.ac.at/)

Additionally, content analysis of webpage was conducted based on criteria used in the analysis of ZARA website of the study of (Tőkés, 2022). Website design, its structure and visual elements are very similar to the homepage.

Quality of visual content	Good-quality pictures for articles correspondent with the content; minimalistic design; usage of university colours (white, dark blue, grey, black (texts));
Delivery of information	logical and has a clear and accessible structure; contains numerous menus hyperlinked to another sections; search option in the header; website map in the footer
Interaction with the customers	links to other (all) social media, namely Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, LinkedIn, Xing; address, phone number and address of the institution

Table 21: Content analysis of webpage of Faculty of Business, Economics and Statistics

It was clearly seen that the answers of the students about the university brand and website were based on their evaluation of website elements. After the analysis of the answers provided by future students it could be clearly seen that some elements are more connected with brand identity as, for example, content, design, layout.

Interactive experience was mentioned as well, but it did not play the central role in students' answers. For example, students emphasized that Faculty's webpage is the part of the University website and usage of university logo pointed out to this. Navigation as well indicated belonging, because students saw that they could always came back to the main page. Colors was another important indicator Talking about colors, same color scheme is used, and design is quite similar as well.

5.4.3.2.Design

Design of the Faculty's webpage was mentioned to be quite like the main university webpage due to the usage of the same color scheme, logo and in general style. Some students commented design as boring and not fun. It reminded doctors' website, because of the colors, formality, minimalism, straight and strict style. According to some student's design was evaluated as too simple, did not communicated anything, and did not evoke any specific emotions. Hence, website of Faculty of Economics, Business and Statistics had no distinctive differentiative features, which could attract attention of future students.

5.4.3.3. Layout and interactive experience

Layout as well was actively commented by future university students and obtained some positive feedback: the contacts section pointed at the contractability and support of the faculty. Media portal with articles was reported as informative, practical, and helpful. When clicing through the main menu, future students immediately recognized the section, intended for them "Before the studies". Altogether, navigation was evaluated positively, however students would prefer having buttons at the main page already.

Apart from that, some other aspects were rather criticized than approved, for example:

- Students would like to have a section about campus on the main page;

- Some students evaluated layout of the Home page of faculty as “messy” and illogical based on some elements, what Is not appealing; for example, future students don’t understand what the meaning of calendar is;
- Faculty’s webpage looks more like a media/news portal, but not a faculty page; some students are not sure if the news is necessary at the webpage;
- Webpage does not contain a section with a descriptive information about the faculty; it provides some numbers, but students told that it would be interesting to get to know more about the description of faculty and faculty building at the main page.

5.4.3.4.Content

All students spoke about multimedia content used by the faculty website. The same as at the main page, while being asked to answer the questions, students were scanning the page, evaluating the content, and providing associations based on the images and text. The images used on the website provided students with general understanding what university is about and what its main field of occupation and focus.

Future students commented on five changing images showcasing different study directions and provides a general picture of what is waiting for the student during the education in the faculty. Students identified more dynamism than at the main page, which is more visually appealing. They stated that Faculty’s webpage is not modern, but because of dynamism more modern than homepage.

Future students reported that multimedia provides images with young people of different nationalities, studying together, attending lectures, where female professor is explaining something, students in the lecture hall clapping, etc. This all together gives an impression of diverse, multicultural, and international faculty, which supports female, follows principles of equality, and aims at creation of diverse international future and finally is a part of daily life of the student and not only students’ life.

Some negative aspects were mentioned as well by the students. For instance, moving images with titles were evaluated as too superficial. Even though slideshow catches attention it does not provide enough of necessary information about Faculty for students to understand the faculty.

Some pictures were not correspondent with headings: *"I mean, if I look more in depth about the image, uh, I mean, it's what the text says is clearly represented on the picture. For example, study. I just see people studying. Then this way I can pause. Yeah. Um, so this, for example, I, I do not know what it's supposed to tell me. Okay. Applied economics and I just see a professor just maybe teaching. However, does not give me any more information at all. It's just this, I, I would say it's just a random picture. Okay. With this title, so definitely a bit confusing here. Mm-hmm"* (Antoine)

According to students' comments text about faculty (short description) on the main Faculty page could be a good idea to obtain impression of what the faculty and its specialization is about.

5.4.4. Summary of Findings based on Brand Identity analysis

Tables 22 and 23 provide the conclusions drawn from analysis of brand identities of a) University of Vienna (Table 22) and b) Faculty of Business, Economics and Statistics (Table 23).

Results were divided into four categories: a) Efficiently transferred/ communicated aspects, b) Not efficiently communicated aspects, c) Puzzling findings, d) Suggestions drawn from the findings.

I. University of Vienna:

As interviews provided more descriptive data it was quite hard to make a precise comparison. However, at the same time, it was still possible to provide an evaluation and make an analysis.

	a. Efficiently transferred/ communicated aspects	b. Not efficiently communicated aspects/ Negatively perceived	c. Puzzling findings	d. Suggestions drawn from findings
Physique	1)Visual aspects of the brand were perceived quite similarly. At the same time some negative aspects were detected as well 2)Logo, colours, fonts, language, and informational content were perceived quite similarly.	Design was evaluated rather negatively, as boring, not creative, old-fashioned, and seen as old website trying implement new trends.	Layout was evaluated both positively and negatively. Layout was described by students as organized and clear; it was easy to find information and to see what was important; attention to every stakeholder was provided. Students mentioned that layout remined newspaper, but evaluation was rather neutral. Negative aspect mentioned about layout was that it lacked dynamism. Static pictures considered to be old-fashioned, students associate animation and videos with more modern and dynamic brand. Expert mentioned that layout of the website is used for 10 years, its old and require an update.	1)Need of more visual information (images/ videos) of the university to get the fuller impression 2)Importance of campus for the future students 3)Inconsistency of some pictures with articles was also identified as a problem 4)One of the students mentioned that usage of woman image may be perceived as oppressive
Personality	a) University personality can be considered as conscious after three brand identity prisms analysis. Consciousness shows the highest rate. Agreeableness show high rate as well. b)University is both positioned and perceived as competent.		a) Brand image brochure positions university significantly more open than it is reported by expert and perceived by students. However, as expert reported small number of personality features, it is hard to make a conclusion. Also, students report traits of neuroticism, what should also be considered, because it is rather negative evaluation. b)Brochure promotes personality of the university as personality with high excitement level, but it is not perceived in similar way. Students reported quite small number of features connected with excitement. As well students promoted Ruggedness, which was not mentioned in other cases.	
Culture	Such aspects as excellence, community, research, cooperation internationality, diversity, variety, openness, curiosity, tradition, and feminism were similarly detected in all three brand identity prisms.	Negative aspects reported by future students were: 1)May be considered as too scientific.	Career: Formulated brand identity emphasizes the importance of academic and professional career for the university. Neither expert not students mentioned about career perspectives in other sections. Students mentioned	Define if promotion of career is a priority and decide to promote career more efficiently. This may

		2) May be considered as only science oriented (other disciplines seems to be "promoted" way less) 3) Too tradition	that university proposes diverse options for continuation of education, but nothing was said exactly about academic or professional career when they were asked about culture. Conclusion can be made that importance of research/academic education and perspectives are significantly outweighs the importance of career for the university.	possibly attract more ambitious students.
Relationship	Perceived brand identity reflects formulated brand identity, even though expert mentioned that Main page, which was evaluated by future students does not promote benefits. **Assumption** can be made that even though university does not promote benefits specifically on the webpage, students are able to assume what benefits they are going to get based on the elements of the webpage, such as images, menus, media/ articles. Benefits by formulated and perceived brand identities detected were: personal development, independence (critical thinking and self-determined decision-making), intelligence and knowledge, interdisciplinary approach to research and studies, research, support, orientation towards future, community, diversity.		It could be noticed that formulated brand identity emphasizes the importance of academic and professional career for the university. Neither expert not students mentioned about career perspectives in other sections. Students mentioned that university proposes diverse options for continuation of education, but nothing was said exactly about academic or professional career when they were asked about culture. Conclusion can be made that importance of research /academic education and perspectives are significantly outweighs the importance of career for the university. Talking about *competences***,** University of Vienna is perceived as university concentrated on research and mostly natural sciences, which is correspondent with formulated and intended brand identities which emphasize the importance of research and sustainability.	As career benefit wasn't highlighted and mentioned by students, possibly, if promoting career more, this action may attract more ambitious and goal-oriented students to the university in case this is the aim of university.
Reflection	Intended and perceived brand identities were described quite similarly. Both expert and students see ideal graduate as person, happy with the choice and has a goal of continuing education. Expert sees graduate as university ambassador and future students as open personality with variety of future possibilities. Additionally, future students see graduate as organized, cultures, curious, accepting, professional person with balanced approach to studying process. Future plans of the graduate are to get a job connected with research and climate issues oriented.		No characteristics of "Reflection" were found in Formulated identity, based on brand image brochure, however its aspects were found during intended and perceived brand identity analysis.	
Self-image			Neither expert nor students could not describe current student clearly. However, it was clearly described in brand image brochure	

Table 22: University of Vienna summary of results of brand identity analysis

II. The Faculty of Business, Economics, and Statistics

	a. Efficiently transferred/ communicated aspects	b. Not efficiently communicated aspects/ Negatively perceived	c. Puzzling findings	d. Suggestions drawn from findings
Physique	Expert described the physical elements of the page and mentioned that they are following the same principles as the main page. These principles are the part of Corporate Design -Manual of the university. Students in general evaluated "Physique" quite similar to the way experts want it to be perceived, however some negative aspects were noticed as well. Media portal with articles was reported as informative, practical, and helpful. The contacts section pointed at the contractability and support of the faculty.	Students reported some negative aspects about multimedia: 1)Moving images with titles were evaluated as too superficial. Even though slideshow catches attention it does not provide enough of necessary information about Faculty for students to understand the faculty. 2)Some pictures were not correspondent with headings 3)According to students' comments text about faculty (short description) on the main Faculty page could be a good idea to obtain impression of what the faculty and its specialization is about. Layout was more criticized than approved. Students identified some negative aspects about layout and content, for example: 1) Lack of campus information and visuals; information about campus exists on the webpage, but students would like to see it straight at the main page of the faculty instead of searching. 2) Some students evaluated layout as "messy", what Is not appealing; page consists not enough of information, not enough of logic. 3) Webpage of faculty looks more like a media portal, news portal, but not a faculty page; some students are not sure if the news is a good idea. 4) Future students don't understand what the meaning is of calendar. Design was as well criticized, because according to students it is too strict and formal and reminds of doctor's website. It is considered ad boring and not fun, which is not very appealing.	a) Students reported high rate of Neuroticism when talking about the faculty. b) Perceived brand identity showed negative level of Excitement, which can be evaluated as quite negative perception of the faculty. Experts sees the brand as sincere, why students did not report features connected with sincerity.	Based on the negative aspects reported by students, some information about/ description of the faculty should be added, because students consider images with headings as too superficial. Some creative choices should be proposed to improve the main page's layout and design for it to be more appealing and less strict.

Personality	a) Extraversion showed the highest rate in case of both intended and perceived brand identities. Both brand identities reported features connected with Consciousness and Openness. b)Both intended and perceived brand identities analysis showed high Competence level.			
Culture	For both intended and perceived brand identity the main principles are support, openness, tradition, research and knowledge, internationality, ambition, continuous education, and growth.			
Relationship		No significant difference in Relationship aspect is found. The main points mentioned were orientation towards future and research.		
Reflection			One of the students stated that webpage does not showcase the characteristics people have with economics and business: *"I think at least that like people who do, like business administration and international business administration are like people who are like creative. Maybe they already have like an idea of, uh, what the company they want to create and it's like very dynamic and whatever. And this website doesn't really give you that impression, you know?" (Mati)*	

Table 23: Faculty of Business, Economics and Statistics summary of results of brand identity analysis

5.4.5. Strengths and Weaknesses of University Website as Touchpoint and Communication tool

As it has been already mentioned numerously, website of the university is an important touchpoint and tool of communication for numerous groups of stakeholders, such as future and current students, university staff, alumni and public. One of the main questions of this work is what makes the university of Vienna-website effective in transferring the brand identity consistently to a strong brand image in potential customers of future university students. Brand identity is transferred successfully via HEI website through simultaneous work of pillar website elements responsible for creation of efficient institution's representation. According to the study, design, layout, interactive experience, and content are these key factors. After the conduct of interviews analysis, such main factors of success were differentiated:

1)Visual identity – which is reflecting identity of HEI created by specific suitable marketer-created design, layout, and content, targeted to specific groups of interest; Logo, colours, multimedia, and other design elements play important part here.
2) Messaging of the brand – marketer-created branded content, which reflects university personality, values, culture, showcases focus of it and attract attention to main university's offers. University of Vienna implements it efficiently with its visual and textual content.
3) Interactive experience design and layout – for customers to be satisfied with the website, appealing layout is necessary for pleasant interactive experience to be achieved. Easy navigation and though-out intuitive structure is important here, as well as easy and clear information search.
4)Personalization – adaptation of website and its elements to interests and needs of various HEI's target audiences, which helps the website to build connection and efficient communication with them. University of Vienna, for example, implement this starting from the main page, where each target group of the university is targeted.
5) HEI's culture and lifestyle – HEI website must provide a chance to understand what is special about the university and its culture, life of students and extracurricular activities.

According to the interviews it is something students were interested in and such information was easily found by them on main page and in menu. In the best way the culture and its main aspects can be learned in the menu of the HEI website. Incorporation of mentioned elements to the design of the website can make digital touchpoint highly efficient, appealing,

informative, and target all the needs and interest of the numerous stakeholders. Lack of knowledge about target audience, its needs and interest may have a negative effect on brand identity transfer, which can confuse customers and push them away from the choice and preferer competitor's proposal. Low quality of content and design, poor navigation and confusing layout can have a negative effect on impression about website and brand. As all of these elements together are strongly connected with brand identity reflection, perception of it can also be deteriorated easily.

5.4.6. Websites of the University of Vienna and its Faculty of Busines, Economics and Statistics: Concurrent or complementary sources of information for potential future students?

Based on the website evaluation and interviews analysis, websites of the University of Vienna and its Faculty of Busines, Economics and Statistics are rather complementary sources of the information for potential university students than concurrent. Website of the University of Vienna and website of the Faculty of Business, Economics and Statistics can refer to the touchpoints and information sources through which the same object or topic is represented from different perspectives. In case of the study, both websites relate to the presentation of University of Vienna brand and help to gasp the brand more comprehensively and fully.

Websites mentioned as well cannot be concurrent because being the part of the same brand identity they follow the same mission, represent the same personality, share the same values, and as well follow the same rules for visual identity. It should be highlighted, that the Faculty of Busines, Economics and Statistics website is part of University of Vienna website, which is showcasing one of its fields, engaged with Busines, Economics and Statistics. Both websites are also connected through navigation. It was as well mentioned by potential students that they recognize that these two websites share the same identity.

Other channels and platforms of the HEI or the one that are talking about HEI might be concurrent. In this case University of Vienna website is the relevant source of marketer-created official information, which may help students to make their choice.

6. Conclusions

6.1. Summary of Results

The University website as a touchpoint and communication tool is the main object of analysis of this study. The University website is one of the most critical and influential marketer-created sources of information used by potential students during the university selection process. Apart from the delivery of relevant and official information about HEI, the university website as well is responsible for creating by institution's brand image transfer. Brand image is an important concept described in detail in theoretical part of the study. It is directly connected with the process of brand identity decoding, perception of the brand and information about it by customers, its differentiation from customers, positive associations creation and attitude formation.

Efficiency of brand identity embedded into university website and its perception by target audience of future university students is in the core of this research. Understanding of digital branding and its connection with website elements is crucial nowadays, as digital sources of information have already become influential and indispensable in daily life and during the decision-making process of customers.

Current work is divided into two main parts: theoretical and empirical. In the theoretical part, due attention is given to brand identity and brand image concepts, their relationship and the decision-making process together with the meaning of HEI website for it.

Empirical part of the study is concentrated on the case study, which is based on three research questions and University of Vienna and its Faculty of Business, Economics and Statistics were chosen as study objects. The main aim of case study was to provide the answer to the questions if the brand identity of the HEI is successfully transferred through the website and which impact had the various dimensions of the website in transmitting the (intended) brand image.

To evaluate if brand identity of the University of Vienna is successfully transferred in terms of establishing a consistent brand image in potential future students by means of a. the University of Vienna-Website, and b. the Website of the Faculty of Business, Economics and Statistics, three concepts are differentiated:

- Brand identity, as formulated by the University of Vienna;
- Intended Brand image, identical/ complementary to formulated;
- Brand Identity, Brand Image, as perceived by the target group of potential students.

Successful transfer of the Brand Identity is measured by comparing Intended Brand Image (in fact = Brand Identity) and (Perceived) Brand Image (i.e., what is measured on the side of the interviewed students).

Data for intended brand image description is obtained with help of expert interview, while for perceived brand image is obtained during the interviews with target group of potential students.

The question, which impact had the various dimensions of the website in transmitting the (intended) brand image (= brand identity) was answered through analysis of the interviews with the future students to understand how they evaluate different website elements related to brand identity and how they influence the perception of the brand itself.

Krapferer's approach to brand identity analysis underlies the study. The main aspects and components of brand identity by this approach are physique, personality, culture, relationship, reflection, and self-image.

6.2. Discussion, Implications & Suggestions

6.2.1. Discussions

Moving to research questions of the study, first research question *"is brand identity of the University of Vienna successfully transmitted in terms of establishing a consistent brand image in potential future students by means of a. the University of Vienna-Website, b. the Website of the Faculty of Business, Economics and Statistics"* was addressed in the section 5.3. "Communication Effectiveness", where comparison of Brand identity (Formulated brand identity = intended brand image) and Brand image (perceived brand image) can be found and as well in section 5.4.4. "Summary of findings based on brand identity analysis", which presents tables with comparison of a) Efficiently transferred/ communicated aspects, b) Not efficiently communicated aspects, c) Puzzling findings and d) Suggestions drawn from the findings.

Altogether, after the analysis of the interviews it can be stated website communication of the brand is rather efficient and students' perception of the brand image based on the website is congruent with formulated brand identity created and transferred. However, there are some negatively perceived and puzzling findings which may be analysed in detail and addressed by marketing managers. Section 5.3. and 5.4.4. Provides detailed description of each element of prisms and compares formulated aspect with perceived one. In the future research, it is also possible to work with each element separately and implement quantitative methods for more accurate results.

Second **research question** *"which impact had the various dimensions of the website in transmitting the (intended) brand image (= brand identity): a. design, b. layout and interactive experience, c. content."* was answered in section 5.4.

While evaluating the brand image, students are using the website and forming their impression about brand based on various website elements. During interviews with potential students the most attention was paid to such website elements as design, layout and interactive experience and content, further analysis of which helped to understand the connection of various dimensions with brand identity transfer. 5.4. Impact of Website contains all the findings relevant to answer the question. In mentioned section opinions about perception of these elements on two websites by potential students are discussed as well.

a. Design

Design is responsible for visual representation of brand and has a strong influence on brand identity perception by the target audience. Elements of design in its unity shape visual identity of the brand, which is mostly connected with Physique element of the Krapferer's prism is mostly connected with visual part of website elements. This study analysed design on website on the HEI in details and it can be found in sections 5.3.1 and 5.3.6. When it comes to the design evaluation, logo, colour scheme, fonts, multimedia play the most important role here.

Logo here is essential symbol, which transmitting the values, mission, and personality of the brand. Logo of the University, which is an old emblem of the university was mentioned by each student as a part of university branding.

Visual design has an influence of the perception of university's personality, culture and as well important for brand differentiation. It was clearly seen, when University of Vienna website was numerously compared with website of its Austrian competitor WU, which was perceived to be more international, young, dynamic, and innovative and based on design impression.

b. Layout and interactive experience

Layout is directly connected with interactive experience and user experience of customers, which has its influence on the overall brand experience. Navigation, structure, and accessibility are evaluated here as well as their influence at positive experience.

Evaluation of layout is assessing the way elements of web-design, content and other visual components are arranged. Layout was numerously mentioned during evaluation of website and conclusion can be made that it has direct influence on the brand identity perception. Layout of the website relates to visual representation, placement of elements of branding and personality of the brand.

c.Content

For establishment of efficient brand representation, connection between content and brand identity is essential. Content has a huge influence on how brand will be perceived by target audiences. Content is as well a part of visual representation of the brand and design. During content evaluation, students' attention was paid to tone and message, visual elements, content's quality.

Multimedia is a part of visual content, which was mentioned by each respondent. Relating to interviews, analysed content was divided into visual (i.e. multimedia: images for the articles and media, photography, graphics, etc.) and textual (up-to-date relevant articles, events announcements, information about current issues, blog).

While being asked to answer the questions, students were scanning the page, evaluating the content, and providing associations based on the images and text. The images and photography used on the website provided students with general understanding what university is about and

what its main field of occupation and focus. Content is communicating, expressing, reinforcing the identity of the brand and is essential for creation of authentic brand.

Third **research question "***which effects of the website of the University of Vienna and the website of its Faculty of Business, Economics and Statistics on brand image (as perceived by the target group) can be observed: a. congruent, b. complementary, c. inconsistent."*

Website of University of Vienna and website of the Faculty of Business, Economics and Statistics have rather complementary effect on brand image.

Based on the website evaluation and interviews analysis, websites of the University of Vienna and its Faculty of Busines, Economics and Statistics are rather complementary sources of the information for potential university students. Website of the University of Vienna and website of the Faculty of Business, Economics and Statistics can refer to the touchpoints and information sources through which the same object or topic is represented from different perspectives. In case of the study, both websites relate to the presentation of University of Vienna brand and help to gasp the brand more comprehensively and fully.

Websites mentioned are the part of the same brand identity they follow the same mission, represent the same personality, share the same values, and as well follow the same rules for visual identity. It should be highlighted, that the Faculty of Busines, Economics and Statistics website is part of University of Vienna website, which is showcasing one of its fields, engaged with Busines, Economics and Statistics. Both websites are also connected through navigation. It was as well mentioned by potential students that they recognize that these two websites share the same identity.

University website can be a great source of the first impression for the potential student and important source for brand image transfer. University of Vienna is managing its website and image efficiently. However, some implications still can be conducted to improve the brand image based on the website perception.

6.2.2. Implications

Results and suggestions of this study can be used and implemented by University of Vienna, which was an object of the case study for the better understanding of the perception of their brand by target group of potential students based on usage of the website as touchpoint and tool of communication. As it has been numerously mentioned in theoretical part, understanding perception is important in times of significant growth and development of communications and computer sciences.

This study gives an insight into the exploration of the process of perception formation about the HEI image transferred through the website and its elements and engage with the analysis of irrational and emotion-based factors behind the decision-making process which are largely unexplored.

Results of the study are presented in both theoretical and empirical manner: for example, both the role of the element, and its perception by the target audience; perception of each element of the brand identity prism and its comparison with formulated brand identity. Results of the study are detailed; they can be revised and taken into consideration if needed. As well, based on consideration of mentioned recommendations and revision of negatively perceived and puzzling findings, website and elements connected with brand image transfer can be improved.

6.2.3. Limitations & Potential for Further Research

Limitations of the current study could be mostly noticeable during work with semi-structured qualitative interviews. Participants always understood the questions and its meaning but were providing quite different points of view, which were complicated to categorize later. As well the number of points mentioned for example by expert was significantly smaller than number of points reported by students. Regardless the problem mentioned, it was possible to obtain and analyze data and get the general impression.

Another limitation can relate to bias, which can be explained by that living in the city of Vienna, students already have an impression about the University of Vienna and its reputation. Already formed opinion may influence the reported by students' answers.

Amount of time needed for gathering the data and its analysis is another limitation. If this process would be less time consuming, sample size chosen could be bigger.

One of the limitations as well was that no information about the Faculty of Business, Economics, and Statistics could be found in brand image brochure. As well no information could be found in other documents. For this reason, only intended and perceived brand identity were created.

There are also some proposals for further research:

1. Comparison of University of Vienna website and competitors (for example WU, TU...)
2. Deeper dive into each aspect of digital brand identity of the university website
3. Usage of quantitative methods for each aspect evaluation
4. Comparison of perception of English and German version of the Website
5. Evaluation of brand image of the university based on the university website by international students
6. Evaluation of digital brand identity by different target audiences
7. Comparison of brand identity perception by future university students, current students and graduates
8. Deeper dive into the personality analysis and differences reported by the study

Another proposal is to find the solution to remove all the negative findings and to implement the recommendation. After this another research can be conducted to see the difference in brand identity perception.

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List of Annexes

A Personality aspect of the University of Vienna brand identity

(2)	Formulated Brand identity	5 big personality traits (Nandi & Nicoletti, 2014a)	Brand personality (Aaker, n.d.)	Intended Brand identity	5 big personality traits (Nandi & Nicoletti, 2014a)	Brand personality (Aaker, n.d.)	Perceived Brand identity	5 big personality traits (Nandi & Nicoletti, 2014a)	Brand personality (Aaker, n.d.)
	Competent	Conscientiousness	Competence	Curious	Openness	Excitement	**Intelligent (2):**	Consciousness (2)	Competence (2)
	Quality/ Standard oriented	Conscientiousness	Competence	Hard working	Conscientiousness	Competence	-Smart		
	Focused			Smart	Conscientiousness	Competence	-Intelligent		
	Career oriented	Conscientiousness	Competence	Natural	Agreeableness	Sincerity	**Organized (3):**	Consciousness (2)	Competence (3)
	Dilligent	Conscientiousness	Competence	Leader	Extraversion	Competence	-Put-together		
	Truthworthy	Conscientiousness	Competence				-Structured		
	Tolerant	Agreeableness	Sincerity				-Organized		
	Respectful	Agreeableness	Sincerity				**Cheerful (4)**	Extraversion (4)	Sincerity (4)
	Cooperative	Agreeableness	Sincerity				-Communicative		
		Agreeableness	Sincerity				-Outgoing		
	Open-minded	Extraversion					-Friendly		
	Curious	Openness	Excitement				-Contactable		
	Willing to learn and grow /	Openness	Excitement				(open)		
	curious	Openness, Conscientiousness	Excitement				**Respectful (3):**		Sincerity (3)
							-Understanding	Agreeableness (3)	
	Scientific	Openness					-Attentive		
	Research-oriented	Openness,	Competence				-Respectful		
		Conscientiousness	Competence				Helpful	Openness (1)	Competence (1)
	Individualistic	Openness							Sincerity (1)
	Versitale	Openness	Excitement				**Reliable (4):**	Consciousness (4)	Competence (4)
	Innovative	Openness	Excitement				Logical		
	International	Openness	Excitement				Adequate		
		Openness	Excitement				Serious		
							Formal		
							Spirited (3):	Extraversion (3)	Excitement (3)
							-Fun with life (enjoying life)		
							-Happy		
							-Interesting		
							Not fun	Neuroticism (3)	-1Excitement
							Antisocial		-1 Sincerity
							Boring		-1 Excitement
							Masculine	-	Ruggedness (1)
		Openness (10)	Sincerity (4)		Openness (1)	Sincerity (1)		Openness (1)	Sincerity (6)
		Consciousness (7)	Excitement (7)		Conscientiousness (2)	Excitement (1)		Consciousness (9)	Excitement (1)
		Extraversion (1)	Competence (7)		Extraversion (1)	Competence (2)		Extraversion (4)	Competence (10)
		Agreeableness (4)	Sophistication (0)		Agreeableness (1)	Sophistication (0)		Agreeableness (3)	Sophistication (0)
		Neuroticism (0)	Ruggedness (0)		Neuroticism (0)	Ruggedness (0)		Neuroticism (3)	Ruggedness (1)

B Culture aspect of the University of Vienna brand identity

(3)	Formulated	Intended	Perceived	
	Principles	**Principles**	**Principles**	
	Excellence • International quality and standards orientation • Accuracy (commitment to quality) • Excellent researchers	Excellence • Excellence and achievements • Known for Nobler Prize winners • Winners	Excellence • Known for Nobler Prize winner	
	Community	Community • Cluster of excellence	Community • Integrity • Inclusion	
	Research • interdisciplinar research • support of research • Innovation (presenting novel findings and developing innovative solutions) • Location in the city of science • International exchange	Research • Interdisciplinarity • Exchange (of knowledge) • Discussion	Research • Support • Science	• Too scientific • May be considered only science oriented (other disciplines seems to be “ignored”)
	Cooperation • Cooperation: inside the university; industries/culture/ society; geographical (regional and international) • International partnership of universities	Cooperation • Collaboration/ cooperation	Cooperation • Cooperation with other universities (exchange, incl. sport, music)	
	International • Internationally visible • International quality and standards orientation • International partnership Diversity and variety • Diversity • Disciplinar variety • Cultural diversity (multi-cultural, international)	International Variety	International Diversity and variety • Diversity • Variety of disciplinary choice • Culture	
	Openness and curiosity • Openness/open-mindness (openness to new ideas) • Curiosity (critical thinking) • Decisiveness (self-determinied decision-making)	Openness and curiosity • Openness • Curiosity	Openness and curiosity • Curiosity • Openness: welcoming to different opinions	
	Tradition • Oldest university in German speaking world (tradition) • Located in Vienna (city of sience)	Tradition • Tradition	Tradition • Well known University of Vienna (reputation) • History (tradition) - gives a feeling of trust • Austrian culturalism • city of Vienna • unique	• Too traditional • Too formal

	Feminism • Support of feminism (60% of female in University)	Feminism • support of females • attention to females ("we try to really promote female persons a lot because, um, they are underrepresented unfortunately, and we want to, to represent ladies and female persons, um, more")	Feminism • Support of female (females are depicted in pictures)	
	Career • Career orientation • Academic career • Professional career			

C Personality aspect of Faculty of Business, Economics and Statistics brand identity

(2)	Intended brand Identity	5 big personality traits	Brand personality	Perceived	5 big personality traits	Brand personality
	ambitious curious inclusive communicative busy successful talanted	Extraversion Openness Extraversion Extraversion Extraversion Extraversion Conscientiousness	Excitement Competence Sincerity Excitement Competence Competence Competence	Organized structured intelligent curious proactive ambitious charismatic leader cooperative expressive bossy hardworking willing to learn collabarative serious not funny not creative reserved	Consciousness Consciousness Openness Openness Extraversion Extraversion Extraversion Extraversion Extraversion Openness Neuroticism Extraversion Openness Extraversion Neuroticism Neuroticism Neuroticism Neuroticism	Competence Competence Competence Competence Competence Competence Competence Competence Competence Excitement Competence Competence Competence Competence -1 Excitement -1 Excitement -1 Excitement
		Openness (1) Conscientiousness (1) Extraversion (5) Agreeableness (0) Neuroticism (0)	Sincerity (1) Excitement (2) Competence (4) Sophistication (0) Ruggedness (0)		Openness (4) Consciousness (2) Extraversion (8) Agreeableness (0) Neuroticism (5)	Sincerity (0) Excitement (-2) Competence (13) Sophistication (0) Ruggedness (0)

*number beside the category: number of words belonging to the category.

D Culture aspect of Faculty of Business, Economics and Statistics brand identity

(3)		Intended	Perceived
	Support	**Principles** • accessible for students • approachable (university staff) • support (help) • organization • caring and supportive faculty • service orientation • faculty helps to achieve success	**Principles** • support (during studies)
	Openness	• Vienna - international city • caring and supportive faculty • friendly culture • inclusive • inviting • communicative • cooperation	• city of Vienna - students city • community
	Tradition	• Faculty is the part of the university: Follows same principles	• City of Vienna • history • tradition
	Research and knowledge	• reasearch as a top priority • applied research knowledge • Uniwien in 10 top research universities	• Research • new knowledge • innovative approach to studies
	International	• intenational • Vienna- international city	• interconnectedness with the world • importance of media • diversity • multicultural • international environment
	Ambition	• ambitious • organized • quite busy • successful • talanted	• competitions (students awards) • ambition • hard work
	Continuous education and growths	• "Learning never ends" • curious	• “Learning never ends” • continuous education

Table 21: Culture aspect of Faculty of Business, Economics and Statistics brand identity