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COMMUNITY MANAGEMENT AS A TOOL FOR SUPPORTING BRAND REPUTATION IN RUSSIAN BUSINESS SCHOOLS
THE CASE OF GSOM SPBU

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Introduction

Education has always played an important role in human life. At all times, people in one way or another strived to become educated. However, in the past, higher education was not available to everyone. But as the years go by, many things are changing. Nowadays, education is not something difficult to access. Everyone has the right to get it, but, nevertheless, to enter an educational institution must fulfil a number of conditions. This is especially acute when entering a higher education institution. So, to get a prestigious higher education, you need to successfully pass the entrance exams, which require serious preparation. And during the whole period of higher education one must successfully complete the curriculum and cope with the workload, which is not always easy, but requires persistence and patience.

Business schools take a special place in the field of higher education. Since business education is a key element of modern economic development and management improvement, that allows individuals and organisations to instantly make the right decisions in difficult conditions of the business world and the economy as a whole. The purpose of business education is multifaceted and is aimed not only at obtaining basic knowledge in the field of economics, management and strategy, but also at developing critical thinking, ethical decision-making skills and leadership qualities, which are crucial in today's dynamic business environment.

In Russia, business schools play a significant role in the country's economic and social development. They are the most important centres for developing business skills, promoting innovation and entrepreneurship, and bridging the gap between theory and practice in business. These schools also train senior and middle-level managers who are essential to the success of companies. As Russia integrates deeper into the global economy, the significance of these schools increases. They provide students with the skills needed to succeed in competitive markets and contribute to the growth of national and international businesses. This exchange of knowledge enriches both the Russian business community and the global marketplace. These educational institutions play a dual role, training future leaders and contributing to the development of businesses around the world. Their efforts help create a dynamic workforce that can drive economic growth and innovation.

At the same time, in the social media space, there is an increasing promotion of the idea that higher education is a waste of time and that all necessary skills can be acquired through short courses. Recently, courses, particularly business courses, can be taken online without the

need to leave home. This new trend in the education landscape is increasingly attractive to young people who wish to acquire everything now. Online courses are enticing with no obligation to complete assignments, short deadlines, and practice-oriented. Course authors also promise that graduates will be provided with a job immediately after completing the course. These short-term prospects have become a significant draw for potential students, thus the education market has greatly changed. Today, due to an increasingly more competitive environment, higher education institutions are becoming more "marketized and promotionalised" (Williams & Omar, 2014) The market has become highly competitive, which has led to higher education institutions facing economic and social challenges nowadays.

Like any other organisations, business schools strive to be flexible and differentiate themselves from their competitors. To be agile in its current state, business schools must fulfil its goals while meeting the challenges of competition. The challenge of competition is a race to provide the best interest of each stakeholder. In other words, an organisation tends to build a strong competitive advantage to stand out in a favourable way from its competitors by addressing all challenges and achieving its goals.

Competitive advantage is the unique attributes or strategies that enable a company to outperform its competitors in the market and achieve superior business results. It is an advantage that a company has over its competitors that allows it to attract customers, generate higher profits, and maintain long-term success. In the context of higher education institutions, competitive advantage can be achieved through a combination of factors that differentiate one institution from others and attract students, faculty, and funding. One of the key elements, that contribute to competitive advantages is a building strong brand reputation.

In this work we focus on the brand reputation of Russian business schools. In the transition period it is especially important, as there is an acute need for highly qualified specialists in the field of business administration and management. With growing competition between business schools, maintaining a competitive advantage becomes essential. A strong brand reputation, as mentioned above, can help in achieving this goal. The literature review identifies various elements and practices that influence brand reputation. It also examines the specific components that shape brand reputation in the context of higher education, particularly for business schools.

This work also emphasises the phenomenon of community management. In recent years, especially since the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been an increasing emphasis on the importance of building and developing community. This is because people seek to feel a sense of belonging to something bigger, to be part of a group and to know that they are not isolated

or alone. Community management could not be better suited to respond to such a global societal demand and tendency to seek connection and belonging. When people belong to a particular group, they feel special and unique. The trend for exclusivity and uniqueness and the desire to be part of an exclusive community is growing rapidly, and community management is ideally suited to meet these needs. Furthermore, community management by its very nature involves interaction with all stakeholders in the community. Mark Granovetter, in his work The Power of Weak Ties, emphasised the importance of weak ties. Weak ties, such as former colleagues and acquaintances, give people the opportunity to quickly advance in their careers.In addition, Granovetter emphasises their importance in the development of human capital. According to Granovetter's theory, weak ties are necessary for visualisation and this phenomenon plays an important role in the formation of social networks. Despite this, people still prefer to maintain stronger ties in real-life interactions outside the digital realm. Therefore, community management remains a relevant area of study.

After reviewing the relevant literature, the author investigates the specifics of implementing community management within the context of higher education institutions. Specifically, community management in business schools is essential for shaping the student experience, enhancing participation, and creating an inclusive learning environment that supports the university's third mission. The diverse student and faculty composition necessitates effective community management strategies to create a harmonious and supportive atmosphere.

Research motivation

The value and novelty of this work lies in the fact that considering two different theoretical perspectives of brand reputation and community management, the author noticed a potential connection between them. Previously, the literature did not consider in detail how community management can be a tool for building brand reputation both in general and especially in an educational context. A few articles only casually mentioned the positive impact of community management on the reputation and perception of the brand. However, no one has previously described their communication mechanism and there is no clear understanding of how it works. But as mentioned above, the importance of the two entities under consideration cannot be overestimated, so this work is important for understanding the mechanism of communication between community management and brand reputation in business schools, which will allow us to develop practical recommendations for business school managers on the implementation and management of communities. It also creates a space for further study of such a new, but at the same time such an important interaction.

As a case study, the author takes the Russian business school - Graduate School of Management St. Petersburg State University (GSOM SPBU). GSOM SPBU is the only Business school in Russia with the triple crown of international accreditations. This means that the most reputable associations in the field of business education have confirmed the competence of GSOM SPBU: EQUIS, AMBA and AACSB, also included in the ratings of business publications Financial Times, The Economist and others. The largest companies cooperate with GSOM St. Petersburg State University - more than 200 organisations are partners of the school. Graduates of GSOM SPBU hold senior management positions in the largest and most prestigious companies both in Russia and around the world. GSOM SPBU has all the key elements that make up a strong brand reputation, therefore it can be considered as a case study.

Based on the propositions that follow from the literature review, we conducted in-depth, semi-structured interviews with stakeholders at GSOM St. Petersburg State University, particularly with business school managers.

Goal of the work

The goal is to deeply understand the relationship between community management and brand reputation, as well as to identify specific practices that directly affect branding and their mechanisms. Additionally, we sought to uncover any challenges and difficulties encountered in the application process and to understand what prospects GSOM sees for itself in terms of using its brand.To increase the reliability and gain a deeper understanding, the author of the study conducted interviews with students to understand how community management practices are perceived by the "clients" of the business school. Identify how these practices are important for students and which ones, from their perspective, have a significant impact on the brand reputation of the school.

The results obtained have provided a deeper understanding of the propositions made during the analysis of the literature. They have immersed us more deeply into the process of brand reputation suppport through community management tools and have also identified some additional elements that were not previously described in the literature.

The results of this study represent a theoretical contribution in the form of well-founded propositions and hypotheses, which lead to prospects for further research into such a fascinating and important phenomenon as the relationship between community management and brand reputation. This is achieved through quantitative research. As a practical application, the study contains ready-made recommendations for business school managers on how to apply

the studied phenomena in making managerial decisions that are consistent with their own higher education institution's mission and environment. And, of course, given that this work is in the field of intelligence, it provides an excellent foundation for further study and development in both practical and theoretical aspects.

Theoretical background

Understanding of brand reputation
Brand reputation definition

According to D. Aaker (2003), we can define brand as "a name, term, sign, symbol, picture or their combination, designed to identify the goods and services of a manufacturer or a group of sellers and differentiate them from those of competitors». At the same time, D. Aaker recommended choosing one of four aspects when implementing measures to develop a brand: brand as a product, as an organization, as an individual or as a symbol.

In this paper, we will talk about the brand of the organization, or rather about its reputation. And the reputation of the brand has some particular features like "innovation, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) or perceived quality are less apparent for consumers. Nevertheless they can positively or negatively shape value propositions and perceptions of a brand" (Aaker, 1996).

From a resource-based perspective, reputation is a valuable and rare intangible resource because it is difficult to imitate and highly causally ambiguous, which in turn, leads to a sustained competitive advantage. The availability of such a tool is necessary to remain competitive. More specifically, brand reputation is a manifestation of the attitude of customers, buyers and consumers towards a particular company and its activities.

Brand reputation reflects how the brand is perceived by stakeholders, including consumer trust, loyalty, and overall brand attitude. The literature considers the concept of reputation as an intangible asset, but critically influencing the success of a business.

(Fombrun, 1996) describes reputation as "the overall assessment of a company by its participants." It is quite obvious that for the success of a company in its activities, the brand reputation must firstly be positive, and secondly very strong and resistant to possible shocks from external sides, whether competitors or other dependent forces. In this regard, both practitioners and researchers agree that a positive reputation contributes to brand profitability and leads to competitive advantages (Herbig & Milewicz, 1995; Roper & Fill, 2012).

When it comes to building a reputation, corporations should ask themselves how their environment perceives them (Urde & Greyser, 2014). That is, it is important to evaluate not only clients, but also internal stakeholders. Thus, brand reputation reflects the brand's attractiveness to employees, suppliers, investors, communities, and customers (Blackstad &

Cooper, 1995). A positive corporate reputation can also lead to support from various stakeholders (Milewicz & Herbig, 1994; Roper & Fill, 2012; Greyser, 2009).

Brand reputation as a tool for brand leadership

For a deeper understanding of the concept of brand reputation, we turn to the book "Brand Leadership" by Erich Joachimsthaler and David Aaker.

Brand reputation is the perception of brand values by consumers and other stakeholders, which is formed based on their direct and indirect experience of communicating with the brand. This is building a long-term impression that can significantly affect consumer choice and loyalty (Keller, 2013).

Another author, already mentioned earlier, Aaker, emphasizes that brand reputation is not only the perception of the brand in the market, but also the overall impression and reliability that the brand evokes from consumers, stakeholders and the public.

A strong brand reputation is built on trust and credibility. Aaker emphasizes the importance of keeping brand promises, adhering to high quality standards, and acting ethically and responsibly to gain and maintain the trust of consumers and stakeholders.

In other words, the brand's reputation affects the loyalty of consumers and their promotion among people unfamiliar with the brand. Loyalty determines how much a customer's attachment to a brand is, which can reduce marketing costs associated with maintaining sales levels and create a barrier to the introduction of competitors. Loyal customers are less sensitive to price changes and are much more forgiving of mistakes made, but they tend to forgive. This loyalty stems from a positive brand experience, brand trust, and perceived brand value, which includes quality and satisfaction. Thus, brands with a positive reputation are likely to be favored by loyal customers who support the brand, recommend it to others and protect it from criticism or threats of competition.

Aaker also emphasizes the importance of brand reputation during crisis situations. Brands with strong reputations are better prepared to solve complex problems, reduce reputational risks and recover from failures, minimizing long-term damage to equity and brand value.

In addition, brand reputation management requires strategic leadership and a long-term vision. Effective brand leadership involves active efforts to monitor, strengthen and protect the brand's reputation, bringing it in line with broader business goals and expectations of society. All this is achieved by applying elements and mechanisms of brand reputation supporting.

Elements of brand reputation formation

To assess the quality of relationships in the context of services in B2B markets, five different but interrelated indicators were used: perceived quality of service, trust, commitment, satisfaction and quality of service (Rauyruen and Miller, 2007).

Because changes in reputation affect all stakeholders, companies monitor and manage their reputation closely. Fombrun has diagnosed that global reputation is based on six factors or 'pillars' (Fombrun, Gardberg and Sever, 2000): l emotional appeal (trust, admiration and respect); l products and services (quality, innovativeness, value for money and so on); l vision and leadership; l workplace quality (well-managed, appealing workplace; employee talent); l financial performance; l social responsibility

According to Kevin Keller, the components of brand reputation are listed as follows: The importance of corporate identity, which is a unique set of associations, attributes and values that distinguish one brand from its competitors. On the other hand, brand image is how consumers perceive such a brand based on contacts and experience with it. The fact that a brand has a powerful identity and image helps to strengthen its reputation by creating impressions and associations in the minds of consumers. The significance of a brand promise lies in the fact that the brand promises to provide its customers with a certain benefit or experience. Fulfilling brand promises in all cases and at all stages of interaction helps to further strengthen the trust of target customers and creates a positive reputation for reliability and reliability. Brand capital, i.e. intangible assets associated with the brand, i.e. brand awareness, perceived quality, brand association and brand loyalty. The significant contribution of the brand is reflected in its positive reputation among target consumers, based on truthfulness, value and quality, which surpass the performance of competitors. Keller's model emphasizes the importance of brand resonance and brand creation using brand capital to build brand reputation and, consequently, increase the efficiency of the company. How brand experience and brand relationship marketing influence the formation of brand reputation. The positive brand perception created through each point of contact develops emotional contact with the consumer, which further means developing relationships with the consumer and further strengthening the positive reputation of the brand in terms of consumer satisfaction and brand engagement.

As Kotler (Kotler, 2008) suggests, brand credibility and trust in it are strong factors determining a good reputation. Those brands that prove their capabilities, reliability and integrity succeed in gaining the trust of their consumers and, in turn, strengthen their reputation and influence in the market. As Keller and Kotler described, branding communication, in turn, creates a brand reputation. Clarity, consistency and reliability of the message ensure that the brand's values, benefits and promises are conveyed to the consumer, while proactive reputation management protects the image and reduces the risks that may be associated with the brand's reputation.

Brand reputation in different contexts

In terms of the corporate reputation of the brand - this is how the company is perceived by stakeholders, including customers, employees, investors and the general public. Here, the most important factors are product quality, customer service, corporate social responsibility and overall reliability. A strong corporate brand reputation can lead to increased customer loyalty, the spread of positive word-of-mouth information and, as a result, form a competitive advantage (Adewole, 2024).

The reputation of a personal brand reflects the perception of a certain personality both personally and professionally. It includes elements such as competence, trust, authenticity and honesty. A strong personal brand reputation is very important in the context of today's trends, as it opens up opportunities for career growth, professional networking and personal influence. This is often achieved through consistent messaging, thoughtful leadership and positive interaction with other people (Gorbatov S., Khapova S., Khapova E., Lysova E., 2018).

Next context of the brand reputation is product context. This discuss the market's impression of products is shaped by the brand's reputation. It takes into account elements like customer happiness, productivity, dependability, and product quality. While a bad reputation causes brand erosion and a loss of competitiveness in the market, a good reputation can boost sales, brand loyalty, and market share.

A service brand's reputation type is based on how consumers perceived the services that the company provides. Effectiveness, dependability, compassion, and problem-solving skills are the key components of a solid reputation. When a service brand has a strong and positive reputation, customers are more satisfied, so they are more likely to recommend it to others, becoming ambassodors. While negative reviews and customer attrition can harm the brand's

reputation (Barros, Teresa, Paula Rodriguez, Nelson Duarte, Xue-Feng Shao, F. V. Martins, H. Barandas-Karl, Xiao-Guang Yue, 2020).

Another significant factor influencing how present and prospective employees view the company as an employer is the HR brand reputation. For this type the most important factors are work-life balance, career possibilities, employee benefits, business culture, and employee care are all included. The employer's good reputation minimizes the challenges in hiring new employees by attracting and keeping skilled professionals, lowering employee attrition, and increasing organisational effectiveness.

In the era of digitalization, brand reputation is also heavily influenced by online presence and perception. Brand reputation on the Internet includes factors such as online reviews, opinion on social media, search engine rankings and digital word of mouth. Brand reputation management on the Internet involves monitoring online conversations, interacting with stakeholders, and responding promptly and transparently to any negative feedback or criticism. And this can be part of the brand's reputation, or it can be a separate context. This aspect is especially relevant within the framework of this work, responding to its relevance. When it comes to the edtech industry, brand reputation on the internet is the only brand reputation.

Thus, it is necessary to study the brand's reputation in the context of higher education institutions.

Brand reputation in the Higher education context

The brand's reputation in the context of higher education has attracted considerable attention from academics, reflecting its crucial role in attracting students, staff and funding from partners and the state, as well as donations. Several studies have examined various aspects of how universities and colleges manage their reputations in an increasingly competitive and globalized educational market.

After analyzing the literature, the author was able to identify the key parameters that shape the brand's reputation in higher education institutions, in particular in business schools. One of these parameters is student satisfaction, their perception of quality and trust in the brand, which together contribute to overall loyalty to the educational institution. Successful implementation of these parameters contributes to a strong brand reputation to retain students and attract graduates, which makes it possible to emphasize the impact on the success of the institution and increase competitive advantages (Dimitrova, Desev, 2020).

Another study examines factors such as brand identity, image, and the impact of communication strategies on stakeholder perceptions.

For example, a study on the Finnish Master's degree program examined how brand identity and reputation are interconnected, and found that strong, trust-based relationships with other prestigious brands significantly enhance the reputation of the university. This integrative model highlights the importance of strategic partnerships and co-branding efforts to create and maintain a positive brand reputation. What is directly an integral part of business schools and is sewn into their DNA.

In addition, business schools are increasingly using sophisticated branding techniques similar to those used in the corporate world. This includes using digital platforms for marketing, engaging alumni networks, and strengthening an active online presence. A comprehensive analysis of branding in higher education highlights the importance of maintaining a stable and trustworthy brand image through transparency and openness, which can influence not only the choice of future students and their overall satisfaction, but also other stakeholders.

Understanding these elements can help universities increase their attractiveness and competitiveness in the global educational market. To conclude discussion of the brand reputation in the context of higher education institutions. It is essential to explore concrete practices of brand reputation support.

The study identified several factors influencing this reputation of Mission and values, namely clearly formulated statements strengthen the institutional identity and trust of stakeholders by aligning actions with strategic goals (Chan, 2016).

Academic success is expressed in high standards for the level of teaching and mastering of the program by students, reliable scientific research and qualified teaching staff. These elements enhance the university's credibility as a reliable provider of educational services, as well as as an advanced source of scientific research. There are special teacher training systems aimed at continuously improving the quality of their skills (O'Leary, 2017). While previous academic achievements and current grades demonstrate the student's success, indicating the quality of his knowledge, which undoubtedly strengthens the reputation of the educational institution in the eyes of future employers (Shahiri, Hussain and Rashid, 2015).

Students experience, including extracurricular activities, directly affects satisfaction and retention at the university. An attractive and supportive environment in the form of the implementation of various student initiatives encourages students to recommend their educational institution (Wood, 2017).

Visual identity and branding distinguish educational institutions in competitive markets. Consistent use of logos, colors, and messages strengthens the mission and values by attracting potential students, while also increasing their recognition (Hemsley-Brown, Oplatka, 2006).

Relationships with graduates directly support and strengthen the reputation. in the following way: involved graduates act as brand ambassadors, providing feedback, supporting fundraising, and contributing to the development of educational programs (Kotler and Murphy, 1981). Feedback and recommendations from students, graduates and experts influence the decisions of future students. Positive reviews and high ratings demonstrate strengths and attract talent (O'Leary, 2017).

Accreditations and awards from reputable organizations confirm compliance with generally recognized quality and standards. These awards confirm the pursuit of excellence, increasing the attractiveness of the university for students and teachers (Chen & Esangbedo, 2018). International recognition achieved through

academic partnership between universities around the world, the diversity of curricula and cultural inclusivity, increases not only prestige and attractiveness, but also allows you to create an educational product in accordance with the international level of quality, makes the program more diversified, which can not but say positively on the reputation of the business school brand. (Chan, 2016).

The inclusion of the ESG agenda in the activities of an educational institution enhances its reputation, as it meets the requirements of socially responsible education and the trends of the modern world, as well as helps to find common ground with corporate partners. In addition, the strong ESG program attracts socially conscious students and positions educational institutions as leaders in corporate and social responsibility (Chan, 2016).

Community management

Definition
Community management is a systematic method of building relationships within a group to achieve common goals, it is defined as the creation of communities of practice in which people share experiences and information to facilitate group learning (Wenger, McDermott and Snyder, 2002). The function of community management is to promote collaboration and

creativity in creative cities, and its application is not limited to corporate settings (e.g. Grandpa Adam and Simon, 2010).

Other scientists express additional points of view. According to Kim (2000), community management involves creating an environment that supports interaction and engagement of members, with a particular focus on design development and sustainability the functioning of communities, including online communities.

Goals of Community Management

The goals of community management include engagement, support, and growth:

Creating meaningful interactions that foster a sense of belonging and active participation, strengthen community cohesion and satisfaction of its members (Kim, 2000). Providing resources and assistance to meet the needs and solve the problems of participants, enhance their overall experience and loyalty (Kraut & Resnick, 2011). By attracting new members and increasing the influence and reach of the community, we ensure that it remains dynamic and dynamically developing (Priece & Maloney-Krichmar, 2005).

Since community management is directly related to interaction with people, the author studied the fundamental work of sense of community in order to understand the psychological aspects underlying community management.

Sense of community is a feeling that members have of belonging, a feeling that members matter to one another and to the group, and a shared faith that members' needs will be met through their commitment to be together (McMillan, 1976).

Membership

Effective communities carefully delineate who belongs and who does not through various mechanisms. These can include explicit criteria such as membership fees, prerequisites, or adherence to a code of conduct, which help to maintain the exclusivity and special identity of the community. Membership has boundaries; this means that there are people who belong and people who do not. The boundaries provide members with the emotional safety necessary for needs and feelings to be exposed and for intimacy to develop (Bean, 1971; Ehrlich & Graeven, 1971; Wood, 1971). Psychological research suggests that when boundaries are clear and meaningful, members are more likely to feel a unique pride and loyalty to the community, which can enhance their commitment and active participation. Such barriers separate "us" from "them" and allay anxiety by delimiting who can be trusted.

Creating an environment of emotional safety is very important. According to attachment theory, safe environments allow individuals to explore and engage without fear, promoting more open communication, creativity, and problem-solving among members. The sense of belonging and identity encompasses the feelings, beliefs, and expectations that an individual has regarding their fit within a group and their role within that group, as well as the sense of acceptance extended by the group and the willingness to make sacrifices for the benefit of the collective. Emotional safety may be considered as part of the broader notion of security. Boundaries established by membership criteria provide the structure and security that protect group intimacy. Such security may be more than emotional; gangs, for example, provide physical security and collectives enhance economic security (Doolittle & MacDonald, 1978; Riger, LeBailly, & Gordon, 1981). Leaders within communities can foster emotional safety by modeling empathy, enforcing respectful interactions, and encouraging members to support one another.

The principle of reciprocity plays a crucial role here; the more individuals invest in the community, the more they feel it belongs to them, which can increase their overall commitment and satisfaction. McMillan (1976) contended (a) that working for membership will provide a feeling that one has earned a place in the group and (b) that, as a consequence of this personal investment, membership will be more meaningful and valuable. This investment isn't solely financial or temporal but also emotional. Communities that facilitate member contributions in planning, decision-making, and execution see higher levels of engagement and satisfaction.

Symbols, shared language, and rituals are essential for reinforcing a shared identity. Cognitive psychology highlights that symbols simplify complex ideas and foster a quicker, deeper connection between community members. "The symbol is to the social world what the cell is to the biotic world and the atom to the physical world. . . . The symbol is the beginning of the social world as we know it" (Nisbet & Perrin, 1977, p. 47). Symbols serve as constant reminders of the community and its values, enhancing the internal cohesion and external perception of the community.

Influence

The balance of influence is crucial for a healthy community. Social exchange theory suggests that individuals are more likely to contribute positively to the community if they feel their contributions are recognized and influence community outcomes. Conversely, the community's norms and values should help shape the behavior of its members, creating a harmonious

environment where personal and communal goals align.Conformity is not necessarily synonymous with loss of personal choice. A. Hunter and Riger (this issue) caution that many people do try to escape the conformity of the close community in order to express their individual freedom.

The development and enforcement of norms are vital for maintaining order and ensuring community sustainability. Norms reduce uncertainty within interactions and can significantly influence satisfaction and predictability among members. The process of setting these norms should ideally be participatory, reflecting the diversity of the community and enhancing the community's legitimacy in the eyes of its members.

Integration and Fulfillment of Needs

This one is translated into more ordinary terms, is reinforcement. Reinforcement as a motivator of behavior is a cornerstone in behavioral research, and it is obvious that for any group to maintain a positive sense of togetherness, the individual-group association must be rewarding for its members. Given the complexity of individuals and groups, however, it has been impossible to determine all of the reinforcements that bind people together into a close community, although several reinforcers have been identified. Aligning members around shared values is crucial for the cohesiveness of the community. These values act as a central guiding principle for actions and decisions within the community. Social identity theory explains that shared values can enhance group cohesion and promote a positive social identity, increasing individuals' self-esteem and social standing through their membership. According to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, after their basic needs are met, individuals seek belonging and esteem, which communities can provide. A community that successfully meets these higher-level needs will not only retain its members but also empower them to actively contribute, leading to a cycle of positive reinforcement. The quality of relationships within a community greatly impacts its functionality and members' well-being. Research in relational sociology suggests that networks of stronger, trust-based relationships are more effective at achieving common goals, resolving conflicts, and fostering mutual support.

Shared Emotional Connection

In the realm of community management, understanding the dynamics that foster a strong sense of belonging and cohesiveness among members is crucial. McMillan and Chavis provide a comprehensive examination of these dynamics, focusing on the resolution of community tasks, the significance of shared events, investment in the community, and the effects of honor and humiliation. Importantly, these factors are underscored by a robust

conceptual framework that examines both the emotional and practical aspects of community engagement.

Firstly, resolving interactions within a community is essential for maintaining its cohesiveness. As noted by Hamblin (1958) and Mann & Mann (1959), ambiguities or unresolved tasks can significantly hinder the development of group unity, suggesting that clear and decisive outcomes are vital for the health of the community. Furthermore, the shared valent event hypothesis illustrates that the importance of events experienced together by community members can greatly enhance the bonds among them. This is particularly evident in situations where community members face crises together, creating a strong communal tie due to the intense and shared nature of the experiences, as highlighted by Myers (1962), Wilson & Miller (1961), and Wright (1943).

Additionally, the depth of an individual's investment in the community—whether through time, resources, or emotional commitment—also plays a critical role in their sense of community. This investment not only involves boundary maintenance but also contributes to a member's perception of the community's value and relevance to their own lives, as discussed by Aronson & Mills (1959) and Peterson & Martens (1972). Moreover, the way a community manages the dynamics of honor and humiliation can significantly impact its attractiveness or adverse effects on its members, according to the research by Festinger (1953) and James & Lott (1964).

Lastly, the spiritual bonds within communities, as explored by Bernard (1973), often define the essence and deeper connections among members, particularly in religious and quasi-religious settings. This spiritual connection, or 'community of spirit', transcends physical locality and is integral to the identity and cohesion of the community, exemplified by the rich cultural expressions found in music, dance, and other cultural practices.

These insights from McMillan and Chavis highlight the complex interplay of factors that contribute to the success and longevity of communities. They provide valuable lessons for community managers in fostering environments that are not only cohesive but also resilient and responsive to the needs of their members, reinforcing the importance of strategic community management in building sustainable and vibrant communities.

Instruments of Community Management

Various resources are used to effectively manage the community, aimed at improving interaction and maintaining interconnectedness. One of them among them are digital platforms such as social networks, forums and special websites. Their presence is necessary to facilitate instant communication and information exchange (Kietzmann et al., 2011). In addition, as Chiu, Hsu and Wang (2006) point out, the distribution of newsletters, discussion boards and real-time chats is also a very important element. They are needed not only to disseminate relevant information, but also to engage participants in a constant dialogue and collect valuable feedback. This will allow you to constantly maintain a high level of engagement of participants. Creation of relevant content, organization of events and implementation of gamification. They are also an important part of community management, as they stimulate participation and help to maintain a lively atmosphere in the community, encouraging the constant involvement of members. Through these integrated approaches, managers can effectively develop an active and interconnected community.

Elements of Community Management

Effective community management through a clear vision and ensuring compliance with its goals. Leaders set the tone and direction of the community (Wenger, 1998).Fostering a sense of belonging and encouraging active participation. The involved participants are more likely to make a positive contribution to the common cause. (Battilana and Casciaro, 2012). The constant provision of relevant and valuable information helps to maintain the activity of the community and its usefulness, as well as ensure transparency and increase trust (Nonaka, 1994). Tracking community performance through various metrics to ensure continuous improvement, such as participant engagement, satisfaction, and growth (Shirky, 2008).

Practices in Community Management

Adapting and orienting new members with community norms, goals, and tools to ensure smooth integration (Nielsen, 2006). Maintaining consistent and transparent communication with community members through updates, newsletters and direct messages to inform and engage participants (Kraut & Resnick, 2011). Organizing various events, discussions and joint projects to facilitate interaction, building and strengthening relationships between participants (Pris and Maloney-Krichmar, 2005).

It is mandatory to recognize and reward active participants for their participation and contribution to the life of the community. This will encourage new members of the community to become more active and will also contribute to the further active involvement of their active participants. (Chiu, Hua, & Wang, 2006).

Implementation of feedback collection mechanisms, such as feedback from participants, to improve community management practices and prompt problem solving (Hummel & Lechner, 2002).

Community Management in Different Contexts

Community management practices vary significantly across different contexts:

Corporate Communities: In corporate settings, community management focuses on enhancing employee engagement, fostering innovation, and driving organizational change. Internal social networks and collaboration tools are commonly used to connect employees and facilitate knowledge exchange and support communication at all (Hamel, 2007).

Community management in non-profit organizations and social movements focuses on mobilizing support, coordinating actions, and disseminating information. Methods such as grassroots organizing, volunteer coordination, and digital activism are used. Key practices include organizing public events, awareness campaigns, and using social media to spread information and engagement (Tufekci, 2013).

Online communities focus on digital interaction and virtual collaboration. Platforms such as social media, forums, and community websites facilitate global connections. The practice includes online discourse management, content management, and the introduction of virtual technologies and webinars to attract attention. participants (Hagel and Armstrong, 1997). Online communities satisfy four types of consumer needs: interest, relationship building, transaction, and fantasy. Interest communities are formed by people with common interests, experience, and passion in a wide variety of fields, such as interior design, sports cars, or bird watching.

In an academic context, community management purposefully promotes the development of educational and collaborative processes between students and teachers. The most important tools in this process are online learning platforms, study groups, and academic discussion forums. These platforms and tools provide the necessary infrastructure for knowledge sharing and collaboration. In addition, community management actively uses methods such as

organizing webinars, conducting peer review procedures and developing joint research projects. Wenger, McDermott and Snyder (2002) emphasize that such practices not only contribute to the deepening of educational material, but also stimulate active interaction of participants in the educational process, which is key to the formation of a stable and dynamic academic community. Although of course this is far from the only practice, and will be discussed in more detail in the next section

Community management in Higher Education Institutions

HEIs involves a range of practices designed to enhance engagement, support, and collaboration among diverse stakeholders. Each practice plays a critical role in fostering a cohesive and supportive academic environment. Here is a detailed description of key practices and their importance:

Student Involvement and Engagement

Astin's (1999) theory emphasizes that student involvement is crucial for learning and development. He notes, "Student involvement is the amount of physical and psychological energy that the student devotes to the academic experience" (Astin, 1999, p. 518). Higher involvement leads to better academic performance and personal growth. Institutions should create environments that encourage active participation (Astin, 1999).

Berger and Milem (2000) discuss how institutional practices and culture impact student outcomes. They state, "Organizational behavior in higher education significantly impacts student outcomes by shaping the institutional culture and practices" (Berger & Milem, 2000, p. 300). A supportive campus environment enhances student engagement and success (Berger & Milem, 2000).

Trowler (2010) explores student engagement, highlighting its importance in academic achievement and retention. She explains, "Student engagement is a complex construct involving behavioral, emotional, and cognitive dimensions" (Trowler, 2010, p. 5). Effective engagement strategies should address all these aspects to enhance academic performance and retention (Trowler, 2010).

Organizing events, workshops, and student organizations to foster interaction and build relationships among community members. These activities include academic conferences, social gatherings, and collaborative projects. Facilitating interaction helps build a sense of

belonging and community among members. It encourages collaboration, knowledge sharing, and the formation of supportive networks, which are vital for a thriving academic environment (Tinto, 1993).

College Choice and Retention

Cabrera and La Nasa (2000) identify factors influencing college choice, such as academic reputation and financial aid. They note, "Understanding the college-choice process is essential for developing effective recruitment and retention strategies" (Cabrera & La Nasa, 2000, p. 10). Addressing these factors can help institutions tailor their outreach and support services to attract and retain students (Cabrera & La Nasa, 2000).

Volkwein and Carbone (2011) focus on retaining engineering students. They state, "Academic support and a positive campus environment are critical for retaining undergraduates in engineering programs" (Volkwein & Carbone, 2011, p. 110). Academic support services and a positive campus environment are crucial for retention (Volkwein & Carbone, 2011).

Digital and Social Campus Transformation

Deloitte Development LLC (2016) discusses how colleges are redesigning their campuses to foster social interaction and collaboration. The report states, "Colleges and universities are reimagining their spaces to create more social and collaborative environments" (Deloitte Development LLC, 2016, p. 15). These changes enhance student engagement and accommodate new learning technologies (Deloitte Development LLC, 2016).

The Higher Education Research Institute (2018) provides insights into the changing demographics and attitudes of incoming students. The report highlights, "The changing demographics and attitudes of incoming college students necessitate adaptations in institutional support strategies" (Higher Education Research Institute, 2018, p. 25). Institutions must develop responsive and inclusive support systems to ensure student success (Higher Education Research Institute, 2018).

Maintaining consistent and transparent communication through updates, newsletters, emails, and direct messages keeps community members informed about important events, changes, and opportunities. Regular communication fosters transparency and trust within the community. It keeps members informed, engaged, and connected, which is essential for building a cohesive and responsive community (Kraut & Resnick, 2011).

Leadership

Providing effective leadership by setting a clear vision, establishing goals, and guiding the community towards achieving them. This includes appointing dedicated community managers or leaders who oversee community activities. Strong leadership is crucial for setting the tone and direction of the community. It ensures that activities align with the institution's mission and goals, and helps in managing conflicts and fostering a positive community culture (Wenger, 1998).

Institutional Change and Strategic Planning

Kezar and Maxey (2014) examine strategic planning and mission statements in guiding institutional change. They state, "Strategic planning and mission statements are crucial for guiding successful institutional change" (Kezar & Maxey, 2014, p. 870). Clear, inclusive mission statements are crucial for guiding successful change and improving institutional effectiveness (Kezar & Maxey, 2014).

Upcraft, Gardner, and Barefoot (2005) provide strategies for supporting first-year students. They assert, "Comprehensive support for first-year students is key to enhancing retention and success" (Upcraft, Gardner, & Barefoot, 2005, p. 30). Creating supportive environments and comprehensive orientation programs are key to enhancing retention and success (Upcraft, Gardner, & Barefoot, 2005).

Comparative Engagement Practices

Zhao, Kuh, and Carini (2005) compare engagement practices of international and American students. They note, "International students engage with educational practices differently than American students, requiring tailored strategies" (Zhao, Kuh, & Carini, 2005, p. 215). Tailored strategies are necessary to address diverse needs and support international students effectively (Zhao, Kuh, & Carini, 2005). Onboarding and orientation practices involve introducing new members, particularly students, to the institution's norms, goals, and tools. These practices typically include orientation sessions, campus tours, and informational workshops. Effective onboarding ensures that new members understand the institution's culture, resources, and expectations. This helps them integrate smoothly into the community, reduces anxiety, and sets the stage for active participation and engagement (Nielsen, 2006).

Sustainability in Higher Education

Menon and Suresh (2020) review sustainability practices in HEIs, focusing on integrating sustainability into education, research, campus operations, and outreach. They emphasize, "Sustainability has made inroads into HEIs, but only a few universities have been successful in implementing it holistically" (Menon & Suresh, 2020, p. 1030). Their review provides practical insights for HEIs planning to integrate sustainability more effectively (Menon & Suresh, 2020).

Rewarding and recognition

Acknowledging and rewarding active members for their contributions through awards, recognition programs, and public acknowledgments. Recognizing contributions boosts morale and encourages continued participation. It reinforces positive behavior, motivates members to stay active, and fosters a culture of appreciation and respect (Chiu, Hsu, & Wang, 2006).

feedback collection

Implementing systems for gathering member feedback through surveys, suggestion boxes, and focus groups to understand their needs, preferences, and concerns. Feedback mechanisms provide valuable insights into the community's dynamics and areas for improvement. They help community managers make informed decisions, address issues promptly, and enhance member satisfaction and engagement (Hummel & Lechner, 2002).

Ensuring the consistent provision of relevant and valuable information through academic resources, event updates, and community news. This involves curating and disseminating content that meets the needs and interests of community members. High-quality content keeps the community informed and engaged. It supports academic and professional development, promotes informed discussions, and enhances the overall value of community membership (Nonaka, 1994).

Support services

Providing academic advising, career counseling, and mental health services to support the well-being and development of community members. These services are crucial for addressing the holistic needs of students, faculty, and staff. Support services are essential for maintaining the well-being and productivity of community members. They help individuals navigate challenges, achieve their academic and professional goals, and contribute positively to the community (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005).

Cultural and inclusive programms

Implementing practices that promote diversity and inclusivity within the community. This includes cultural competency training, inclusive policies, and programs that celebrate diversity. Promoting cultural and social inclusivity ensures that all community members feel valued and respected. It enhances the richness of the academic environment by fostering diverse perspectives and ideas, which are crucial for innovation and learning (Tierney, 1993).

Alumni network

Developing long-term strategies to keep community members engaged over time. This includes creating alumni networks, lifelong learning opportunities, and continuous engagement programs. Sustainable engagement strategies ensure that community members remain connected and involved even after they have left the institution. This fosters a sense of lifelong loyalty and support, which can benefit the institution in various ways, such as through alumni donations and mentoring programs (Weerts, 2007).

Community management in HEIs requires a multifaceted approach to address the diverse needs of stakeholders. Each practice plays a crucial role in fostering engagement, support, and collaboration. By implementing these practices effectively, HEIs can create a cohesive and supportive academic environment that enhances the overall experience of its members. So author considers it important to pay attention to the concept of stakeholder theory in order to better understand the structure of the community, as well as the perception of brand reputation. This will be a kind of bridge connecting the two perspectives already considered.

Stakeholder theory

Stakeholder theory was popularized by R. Edward Freeman in his 1984 book "Strategic Management: A Stakeholder Approach." According to Freeman, stakeholders are "any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the organization's objectives."

Key concepts of stakeholder theory

The identification of stakeholders involves the identification of all groups and individuals interested in the activities of the organization. Stakeholders can include employees, customers, suppliers, investors, communities, and regulators. To ensure comprehensive interaction, it is important to identify all relevant parties.

Stakeholder interests include understanding their needs and expectations, Active interaction with stakeholders to obtain information about the values and possible problems of stakeholders and effective communication and consultation are key strategies here.

The influence of stakeholders on the decisions and actions of the organization. Stakeholders vary in their ability to influence an organization, and this influence can be positive or negative. Understanding which stakeholders have the most influence helps to prioritize interaction efforts.

Creating value for all stakeholders by balancing their different interests. To achieve sustainable success, it is necessary to make decisions that take into account the interests of all stakeholder groups, not just shareholders. Organizations should strive to create shared value by strengthening their reputation and ensuring long-term viability.

A stakeholder matrix is a tool used to map stakeholders based on their level of influence and interest. This matrix helps organizations prioritize their engagement strategies and allocate resources effectively.
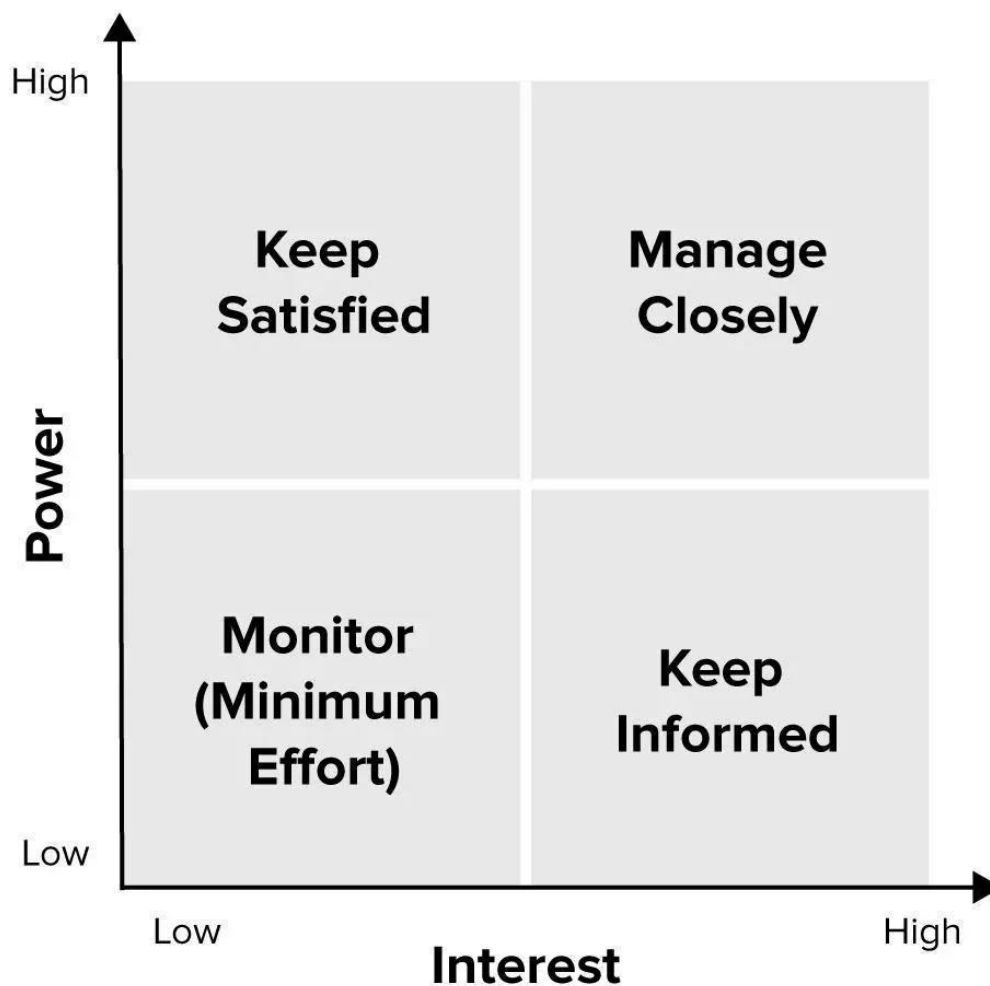
Pic.1 - Stakeholder matrix by R. Edward Freeman

Stakeholder theory importance

The importance of stakeholder theory is to provide a holistic view of the organization's environment, recognizing the importance of multi-stakeholder participation.;

- Assist in strategic planning by identifying key stakeholders and determining how to meet their needs and expectations;

- help to identify potential risks associated with the dissatisfaction of stakeholders;

- By balancing the interests of different stakeholders, organizations can achieve long-term sustainable success and build stronger relationships;

- improve communication and interaction strategies, ensuring that the right stakeholders are informed and engaged at the right time.

Key Stakeholders of Business Schools

Students are the main stakeholders in any educational institution, at least because of their number in parallel with their greatest involvement at the time of study. Business schools should ensure a high level of academic achievement, offer career development services and create an attractive learning environment that meets their expectations. Student satisfaction directly affects the reputation and attractiveness of the school.

Professors and administrative staff are needed to implement educational programs and support operational activities. Their interests include job security, professional development, research opportunities, and a supportive work environment. Business schools should invest in teacher development, provide research funding, and foster a positive corporate culture. Teacher satisfaction affects the quality of educational services provided, the results of scientific research and the academic reputation of the school.

Alumni play a vital role in the continued success of the school. They value lifelong communication, networking opportunities, and continuing education. Alumni support includes donations, mentoring, and advocacy. Strong alumni network enhances the reputation of the school and helps in the employment of students.

Employers and corporate partners are looking for graduates who can contribute to the development of their organizations. They value collaboration in research, internships, and curriculum development. Strong relationships with employers increase graduates' chances of employment and the relevance of academic programs.

Accreditation bodies such as AACSB, EQUIS and AMBA ensure that business schools meet educational standards. They are focused on maintaining excellence and continuous improvement. Accreditation directly affects the reputation of the school, the recruitment of students and the right to funding.

The government and regulatory agencies monitor compliance with educational standards. They provide quality education, ethical standards and access to education. Compliance with standards is crucial for legal activities, government funding, and participation in government programs.

Applicants take into account the reputation of the educational institution, the quality of programs, career prospects and life on campus. Effective marketing and clear communication are necessary to attract them. Attracting prospective students affects enrollment and financial stability.

Parents and families influence the decisions of future students. They place the utmost importance on safety, well-being and future success.

Research and academic communities benefit from the school's contribution to knowledge creation. They value collaboration, publications and participation in conferences. The contribution to scientific research enhances the academic status and reputation of the school not only in the scientific community but also in the international arena.

The local community benefits from economic contributions, participation in cultural life and social initiatives. They value job creation, community development, and educational resources. Positive relationships with the community enhance the image of the school in the community and promote local recruitment.

Understanding and taking into account the needs of all stakeholders is very important to performance effective community management in business schools. By aligning the interests of stakeholders with the goals of the organisation, schools can build strong relationships, enhance their reputation, and achieve sustained success.

Peculiarities of Russian business schools

Russian business schools face a unique set of challenges due to the socio-economic, political and educational landscape of the country. These challenges affect their ability to provide high-quality education, attract students and teachers, and maintain competitiveness both domestically and internationally.

The Russian economy is experiencing significant fluctuations under the influence of world oil prices, sanctions and domestic policy. Economic instability can lead to a reduction in public and private funding for educational institutions. It may be more difficult for students to pay tuition, which will lead to a decrease in the number of students.

The political climate and regulatory framework in Russia can create problems for business schools. Government policies, regulations and bureaucratic obstacles can affect the activities, curriculum development and international cooperation of business schools. Regulation requires significant administrative efforts and may limit the flexibility of business schools to innovate and adapt to global standards.

Political tensions and international sanctions can also hinder partnerships with foreign institutions and affect the international reputation of Russian business schools.

Competition on the world stage requires Russian business schools to obtain international accreditation, establish global partnerships and attract international students and teachers. Obtaining international accreditation (for example, AACSB, EQUIS, AMBA) requires compliance with strict quality standards, which may require significant resources. Creating and maintaining international partnerships requires strategic investments and constant interaction. Attracting international students and teachers is a difficult task due to the perception of the political climate in Russia and cultural differences.

General depression due to the events of recent years, depression can affect the active activities of business school stakeholders, both in terms of educational and extracurricular activities. Both students and teachers face high levels of stress, which can affect their well-being and academic performance. Actively addressing mental health issues can enhance the overall well-being of a community, improve academic performance, and contribute to creating a supportive learning environment.

Conclusion of the part

In this chapter, a literature review has been conducted on the main concepts that underpin this work. Specifically, the definition of brand reputation and its constituent elements have been determined, as well as various contexts in which brand reputation can be applied, including the context of higher education institutions and business schools in particular.

Next, the concept of community management and its elements and practices have been examined. After reviewing a significant number of sources, community management practices have been compiled that have been implemented within an educational setting.

Throughout this process, the concept of stakeholders has been encountered repeatedly. For this reason, the stakeholder theory has also been considered, including the use of the stakeholder matrix.

To summarise the chapter, there is a potential link between the development of a brand's reputation and community management practises in the context of business schools, although there are no specific studies that have explored and described the mechanisms of how community management can be connected with brand reputation formation. It is also unclear how stakeholders contribute to this relationship. A literature review has helped to establish the background, however the specificity of the context requires additional knowledge. So it is worth further research to develop this phenomenon in greater depth. For this purpose, a study has been conducted, which will be discussed in subsequent chapters.

Methodology

Research design

There are various research methods that are used to conduct research (Panneerselvam, 2014). Three categories of research methods are widely used in the literature: qualitative, quantitative and mixed studies (Ayiro, 2012).Qualitative research provides an opportunity to collect information through observations, notes, individual interviews and focus groups (group interviews), analysis of documents and artifacts (Savin Baden, 2015). Compared with quantitative studies, the data in qualitative studies are mainly.

However, in addition to numbers, there are a number of analytical strategies available for this type of research, including coding (Saldana, 2012), content analysis (Krippendorf, 1980) and thematic analysis (Brown, 2012). In other words, qualitative research can be conducted when it is required to collect specific information, study it in depth and analyze it using analytical appropriate approaches.

Quantitative research is aimed at quantifying the collection and analysis of data and adheres to an objective positions on the nature of social reality (Becker, 2012). They analyze and produce numerical data and irrefutable facts (Ahmad et al., 2019). Official statistics, Internet surveys, structured observations and other approaches are used as methods of collecting this kind of data (Becker, 2012).

The use of quantitative methods can give precise expression to qualitative ideas. Thus, their combination to collect both qualitative and quantitative information refers to research using mixed methods (Dirivechter and Valsiner, 2006).

The plan of this study requires the use of a qualitative research method, since it is necessary to collect unique data with a deep understanding of their nature. The limitations of such a method, including the reactivity of the participants and the potential for the researcher to over-identify with one or more study participants (Sinclair, Mo Wang & Tetrick, 2013), will be taken into account and minimized using an analytical analysis approach.

Research design is an important part in the planning of scientific research, which is emphasized by many scientists, including David de Waals and Mohammed Akhtar. However, these researchers have slightly different approaches to classifying research design. Making the right design choice is very important.

De Vaus identifies four main types of research design: experimental, longitudinal, transverse and thematic. The aim of the experimental design is to establish causal relationships

by manipulating independent variables under controlled conditions. Longitudinal studies allow you to track changes over time through multiple observations of the same subjects. Cross-sectional studies collect data at one point in time for comparison between groups. Case studies provide an in-depth understanding of a particular case or phenomenon through careful analysis (De Vaus, 2001).

Mohammad Akhtar proposes a different classification system that includes experimental, explanatory, descriptive and exploratory studies. Experimental studies, like those of Vaus, are aimed at establishing causal relationships between variables. Explanatory research focuses on understanding the underlying causes of phenomena without changing any factors or making comparisons. This type of research provides an overview of current circumstances, and usually answers questions such as "what", "who", "where", "how" and "when". Descriptive research is particularly useful in both social and natural sciences, as it provides insight into the current state of the phenomenon under study. The research type is aimed at identifying potential relationships between variables without a specific purpose, which subsequently contributes to the development of hypotheses for numerous studies. (Akhtar, 2016, Scribbr) When choosing a suitable research design, it is important to consider the research objectives and the type of data needed to achieve them. Experimental projects are suitable for testing hypotheses under controlled conditions, while descriptive projects are useful for documenting the current state of a phenomenon. Research studies are ideal for the first steps in studying the phenomenon, when it is important to develop hypotheses and identify potential connections (Scribbr, 2023). Understanding various research projects and their suitability for specific research purposes allows you to successfully plan and conduct scientific research effectively achieving the goal.

In order to more clearly define the aim of the study, it is necessary to revisit the results from the previous chapter.

There is a **gap** in that there is a significant amount of literature discussing what community management is and there are some superficial assumptions that it can be connected with the formation of a brand's reputation, but no proven mechanisms have been identified for how it operates. While there is a potential connection between brand reputation and community management, in the context of business schools, there is no clear understanding of exactly how this connection works or what specific community management practises may exist that could contribute to maintaining a business school's brand reputation. The objective of this research is to investigate and analyze specific community management strategies employed by business schools that have a significant impact on their reputation. The study will focus on identifying these practices, understanding their significance, the mechanisms of their implementation, and

the challenges associated with their use in the complex and evolving higher education environment.

Thus, it is possible to form a research goal, for a more accurate understanding of the research tasks, we will divide it into two parts: theoretical and managerial.

Theoretical goal is to summarise the links and gaps, provide specific framework into testing validation of the community management practices on brand reputation and pave the way for further qualitative and quantitative analysis.

Managerial   goal is to provide russian business school's managers with strong theoretical frame to make managerial decisions in compliance with their own HEI missions and environment

The research question is - What are the practices and mechanisms of the community management that contribute brand reputation in Russian business schools? This research question answers the problem of the study and follows the goal of the study. However, in order to concretize potential information, the research question should be divided into clarifying objectives:

- Identify, if community management can be used as a tool for brand reputation
- Identify the roles of each stakeholders of the Community of Russian business schools
- Identify existent practices of community management in Russian business schools
- Identify contribution of community management to the brand reputation of Russian business schools
- Identify challenges that russian business schools face with implementing those practices

According to the set research goals, question and objectives, it is necessary to delve into the study of the phenomenon by conducting a case study. According to De Vaus, the case study is one of the most thoroughly researched methods to understand what is happening and why it is happening (De Vaus, 2001). He considers case study as a way to analyze one or more cases in detail in their real context, which is especially important for social sciences.

When a deep and detailed analysis is required, a **single case study** is used. The study of one particular case makes it possible to comprehensively study all aspects of the phenomenon. This method allows the researcher to study a variety of variables and factors affecting the object of study, which leads to a holistic understanding of the phenomenon under study. Robert Yin (2009) emphasizes that case studies are particularly useful for studying complex social processes and mechanisms. Such a detailed study can reveal nuances that may be overlooked in broader studies.

Single case studies can be effectively used to develop and test theories. This allows you to identify existing theoretical concepts on real cases in real conditions or develop new theories based on the results of a detailed analysis of one particular case. Such research is great for answering the question "how?". David De Vaus (2001) emphasizes the usefulness of case studies to explore how theoretical concepts are applied in practice and to develop new theoretical ideas based on the specific details of an individual case.

According to Robert Yin (2003), case studies are appropriate when the research question focuses on the "how" and "why" of contemporary events over which the researcher has little or no control. Yin posits that single case studies are particularly useful in instances where the case represents a critical test of a significant theory or an extreme or unique situation. This approach allows you to comprehensively study the subject of the study, providing a wealth of high-quality information, full of insights and observations.

Similarly, Dag Ingvar Jacobsen (2002) emphasizes the usefulness of case studies for understanding the complexity and dynamics of the phenomenon under study, depending on the context. Jacobsen notes that case studies are useful in exploratory research at the first stages, as they allow for a detailed understanding of processes and interactions within a single environment. This method allows researchers to delve deeply into the nuances and subtleties of the study, identifying patterns and relationships that may be overlooked when conducting broader quantitative studies.

Moreover, case studies are considered credible and reliable because they provide a holistic view of the subject of the study. By paying close attention to a single case, researchers can collect extensive data, compare results from multiple sources within the same case, and achieve a high level of detail and accuracy. Such thoroughness increases the reliability and reliability of the research results. This is comparable to scanning an environment to understand all the small details of its structure.

Justification of the case's choice
GSOM SPbU is a highly representative case of Russian business schools. In the chapter of the theoretical part, the elements that make up the reputation of the business school brand were identified.

International cooperation

27 foreign universities from 17 countries of the world provide places for study under the exchange program. 3 programs are implemented in the format of a double diploma

Awards and ratings

GSOM St. Petersburg State University receives recognition in Russia by taking the Grand Prix at the HR award Crystal Pyramid 2023, 1st place in the IBA rating in Russia, 2nd place in the rating from the Expert analytical center, 3rd place in the RAEX rating.

In international rankings, it takes the 2nd place in the 5 Palmes rating in the universal business school section. According to world university rankings, it ranks 24th in the EMBA program, and is among the top 130 best business schools in terms of basic educational programs. According to the ranking from the Financial Times, GSOM holds its position in 21st place in the Master in management program, EMBA - 71-80 place, and 44th place in the category of business schools in Europe.

GSOM St. Petersburg State University is included in only 1 percent of all business schools in the world with the triple crown of accreditations. this means that it meets the requirements in many areas of AACSB, EQUIS, AMBA.

Alumni relationships

Since 1997, GSOM has more than 9,500 graduates in the community. Graduates of the St. Petersburg State University Graduate School of Management demonstrate a high level of qualification and willingness to work effectively in a variety of economic and social conditions. They are employed in more than 50 countries around the world, which indicates the international recognition and demand for their skills. The majority of graduates (92%) occupy managerial positions within three years after graduation, which underlines the success of the curriculum in preparing students for rapid career growth. An important indicator is the fact that more than 90% of graduates find a job within three months after graduation.

GSOM St. Petersburg State University graduates are actively working in sectors such as IT and telecommunications, FMCG, auditing and consulting, finance and insurance. This diversity of industries reflects the flexibility and adaptability of the educational program to the needs of various economic sectors. During their studies, students acquire a range of important skills, including adaptability, strategic and critical thinking, analytical skills, confidence and stress tolerance. In addition, students master time management, teamwork, public speaking and effective interaction in a professional environment.

GSOM St. Petersburg State University maintains active contacts with graduates, providing access to continuing education and professional development programs, which supports their career growth throughout their lives. This approach not only helps graduates stay

up to date with the latest trends and changes in the business environment, but also supports their connection with their alma mater, enriching the professional community of the school with new ideas and projects. Among such projects are annual reunions of graduates of the main educational programs, a traditional sailing regatta - a meeting of graduates of EMBA programs. Celebrating the New Year - all these projects are aimed at creating a warm atmosphere, maintaining strong horizontal ties with the business school.

There are also projects on interaction between current students and graduates. For example, the Talent Up mentoring program, where a mentor is selected for each student in accordance with his request and joint work is carried out for 6 months. The results of the program can be completely different, someone finds their way through mentoring and coaching, someone improves skills by receiving expertise, and someone finds a job employe. There are also other formats of interaction

Alumni Share – this project includes a series of meetings, workshops and other events where graduates share their professional and life experiences with current students. Such events not only enrich the learning process, but also contribute to the development of a professional network of students.

Participation in business events: GSOM St. Petersburg State University graduates actively participate as speakers at conferences, forums and graduation ceremonies. Such interaction allows graduates to remain at the center of the academic and professional life of the educational institution.

Business School Promotion: Graduates also participate in Open Days, interviews and podcasts for GSOM St. Petersburg State University information channels, helping to attract new students and maintain the reputation of the school.

Support for projects of the GSOM St. Petersburg State University Charitable Foundation: This initiative includes financial support and expert assistance in the development of various programs aimed at improving the academic and extracurricular activities of the school. One of the most recent successful projects is the collection of funds for the beautification of the campus - the planting of a lime alley.

1,400 students study annually at the high-tech campus. The high-tech academic building for classes and comfortable dormitories for students includes a modern venue for large-scale events in full-time or hybrid format. A friendly environment for creative development, communication and recreation is also organized for students. Including spaces inside the academic campus with the necessary technical equipment, as well as a separate Student Club building where students spend their leisure time. There are a large number of initiatives for students where they can show their managerial and creative abilities.

One of the Green Campus initiatives is an environmental organization whose goal is to introduce the concept of sustainable development and social responsibility, focusing on environmental aspects, into the functioning of St. Petersburg State University, including administrative buildings and dormitories, starting with the Graduate School of Management of St. Petersburg State University.

The annual Drucker Awards - the Peter Drucker Award is a solemn ceremony that unites students, graduates, teachers of GSOM St. Petersburg State University, representatives of the business community, artists and cultural figures.This project is distinguished by its creative component, as every year students prepare theatrical productions, dance and vocal performances.

GSOMATES is a team of curators at GSOM St. Petersburg State University, which helps first–year students adapt to school and makes their student life brighter and more intense.GSOM Case Club is a career project created to bring together the most motivated and active students on the path to development.The main goal is to give each member of the Club the opportunity to learn new things, consolidate existing knowledge and skills, improve and discover new opportunities. The club regularly organizes workshops, lectures and open interviews with professionals from consulting companies.

GSOM S&C (Sport and Culture) helps to diversify student life through sports and cultural activities.Sports enthusiasts can participate in regular table tennis championships, football competitions, chess and checkers tournaments, as well as many other sporting events.Among the cultural events, literary evenings and intellectual quizzes "What? Where? When?", board game evenings, quizzes, as well as various thematic workshops. and many others.

In addition, GSOM implements such major projects as Management Career Week and the Management of the Future conference.These events are key elements of the program of interaction with students and graduates, as well as provide a platform for professional development and networking.

Management Career Week (MCW) is the flagship career project of GSOM St. Petersburg State University, which annually attracts students, graduates and business representatives. The main goal of MCW is to simplify the process of finding and hiring young professionals for leading Russian and international employers, as well as to provide students with the opportunity to gain new knowledge and master strategically important and relevant skills for building a career. MCW is held twice a year and includes workshops, business games, individual career consultations and job fairs. This event is a platform for GSOM St. Petersburg State University students to meet with business and government, facilitating their interaction and exchange of experience.

The conference "Management of the Future" is an annual All—Russian student conference that gathers the top 100 students of leading Russian universities (in an online format up to 200 participants). The event is aimed at forming a new generation of managers who are able to adapt and succeed in a rapidly changing economic reality. The conference includes discussions, business breakfasts, workshops and job fairs, providing participants with a unique opportunity for learning, networking and professional development. It provides a platform for discussing key topics, including the economic development of the country and regions, government support, national projects, new markets, industry changes and entrepreneurship.

Corporate partners

GSOM St. Petersburg State University cooperates with more than 300 corporate partners.

More than 15 of the largest Russian companies are members of the Board of Trustees.There are also many other projects at GSOM aimed at strengthening mutual relations with partners. For example, the GSOM St. Petersburg State University Career Center provides interaction between business and students in the format of students implementing consulting projects, swot analysis, writing academic and graduation papers on a special order. There are also summer and industrial internships, as well as participation in summer schools.

Representatives of graduates and corporate partners are involved in the creation of the curriculum and its implementation as guest speakers.

Social media presence

GSOM has its own website and social media communities. The most well-known interaction platform is a private chat in the GSOM family telegram channel, which unites about 2,000 active participants. In this chat, various issues are discussed, ranging from career and expertise, ending with travel recommendations and household issues. The Linked In community has more than 6,350 members. Podcasts and online reviews with success stories of graduates are also published in the open channels of GSOM St. Petersburg State University.

Teaching excellence lab

The center was created for the development of pedagogical practice and teaching methods in the field of business education, the creation and implementation of pedagogical innovations and new digital solutions in the educational process, as well as training and advanced training of teachers. Continuous improvement of educational programs and the learning quality assessment system in accordance with the standards of international accrediting organizations (AACSB, EFMD). Community about modern teaching methods Method.GSOM for teachers and methodologists of universities and corporate universities. The community brings together high school professionals and the best teaching practices online, offline and hybrid.

This is just a brief overview of GSOM St. Petersburg State University as a prominent representative of the Russian business school. Moreover, GSOM St. Petersburg State University has built a development strategy by 2025. The main direction is an ambitious and multifaceted strengthening of the status of Russia's leading business school and its active promotion in the international arena.

Among the key aspects of development is the intensive development of human resources. GSOM St. Petersburg State University strives to be not only a center of attraction for talented students, but also an attractive place of work for highly qualified teachers and researchers. The Business School plans to strengthen its position as the best employer in the academic environment of Russia, offering competitive conditions and creating a favorable atmosphere for professional and personal growth.

To become a leader in the creation of unique content, it is planned to update curricula and teaching methods. GSOM St. Petersburg State University focuses on the development of a micro-modular adaptive structure of training courses, which allows you to quickly make changes to the educational process in response to the changing demands of the labor market and the economy. This direction implies the active introduction of digital technologies and the creation of an open educational environment that is able to quickly adapt to new challenges. About 50% of the educational content will be implemented using digital technologies.

Such strong and ambitious plans characterize GSOM St. Petersburg State University as a representative business school with a strong brand, which means it can be chosen as a case study.

The third direction of the strategy is related to the intensification of research activities. GSOM St. Petersburg State University plans to strengthen its position as a leader in creating unique scientific content by establishing partnerships with leading scientists and research institutes around the world. The school strives to become a center of innovation and innovative solutions, which involves not only deepening existing scientific research, but also launching new interdisciplinary projects.

The fourth area concerns the development of leadership skills among students. GSOM St. Petersburg State University focuses on the education of leaders who are able to make a significant contribution to the development of society and the economy. The school develops programs focused on the development of managerial competencies, strategic thinking and the ability to innovate. Special attention is paid to preparing graduates for a successful career in an international environment, which implies training not only within the framework of traditional classroom classes, but also through real projects, internships and practices. Also, 10% of graduates will participate in the life long learning program, however, the total number of graduates will be increased to 30 thousand annually.

The fifth element of the strategy covers international cooperation. GSOM St. Petersburg State University plans to expand its international network of partners by participating in global educational and scientific programs, which will allow students and teachers to actively share experiences with colleagues from other countries, as well as enhance the international status of the university.

It is also impossible not to note the involvement in issues of corporate social responsibility, which is an integral part of the modern realities of the business world. GSOM St. Petersburg State University strives to change the world for the better, therefore, the basis of the academic model of the business school is responsibility and sustainable development. 15% of the disciplines will be devoted to the ESG agenda.

Thus, the strategy of GSOM St. Petersburg State University is aimed at the comprehensive development of the educational institution as a leader in modern business education, which includes innovations in educational methods, the development of scientific and research activities, strengthening leadership qualities among students, as well as active international cooperation.

Summing up, we can conclude that GSOM St. Petersburg State University is a fairly large and representative business school that meets all the criteria of a business school with a strong reputation. To assess the portability and generalizability of the results, it is important to consider the closest competitors of GSOM St. Petersburg State University: the Business School of the Higher School of Economics (HSE), the Moscow School of Management SKOLKOVO and the Business School of the Russian Presidential Academy of National Economy and Public Administration (RANEPA). These educational institutions have similarities with GSOM St. Petersburg State University, which makes them suitable landmarks.

Higher School of Economics (HSE) Business School: HSE Business School is renowned for its rigorous academic programs and strong emphasis on research. Like GSOM SPbU, HSE maintains extensive industry partnerships and has a vibrant alumni network. Its reputation for fostering a dynamic academic community makes it a comparable institution for studying community management practices.

Business school Skolkovo is known for its innovative approach to business education, focusing on entrepreneurship and leadership. The school has established significant international collaborations and offers a range of executive education programs. SKOLKOVO's emphasis on community building and stakeholder engagement aligns with the focus of this study.

RANEPA Business School: RANEPA is one of Russia's largest and most influential business schools, offering diverse programs across various disciplines. Its extensive network of regional campuses and partnerships with government and industry stakeholders provide a

broad platform for community engagement. RANEPA's initiatives in fostering academic and professional communities make it a relevant comparator.

After analysing these competitors, we can interpret the conclusions of GSOM St. Petersburg State University and assess their applicability to other leading Russian business schools. The similarity in their approaches to community management and compliance with brand reputation requirements suggests that the ideas obtained during the GSOM St. Petersburg State University case study are likely to

To a certain extent, they can be generalized and transferred to these educational institutions.

Interview as a data collection

Qualitative research involves data collection methods such as observation, individual and group interviews, documents and artifacts. Interviews will be used for the purposes of this study.

According to Kvale, interview is a conversation with the purpose too gather descriptions of the of the interviewee with respect to interpretation of the meanings of the described phenomena (Kvale, 1996). Different types of interviews are described in literature including such options as in-depth interviewing, phenomenological interviewing, focus-group interviews (Marshal and Rossman, 2014) and other options.

To cover all the research objectives, it is necessary to get in-depth answers, reflections and insights from community stakeholders, a semi-structured interview could meet these needs, since it is well suited for studying respondents' perceptions and opinions on complex issues that could be said about the relationship between community management practices and brand reputation in the context of business schools, searching for additional information, identifying new gaps and clarifying answers (Barriball and While, 1994).

In other words, a semi-structured type of interview covers prepared questions and topics for persuasion, but there is room to change the order of questions and the overall structure of communication in order to delve into details. In this case, the success of conducting a semi-structured interview is determined not only by how the interviewees answer the researcher's questions on topics (Adhabi & Anozie, 2017), but also by how the interviewer is able to listen and analyze the meaning of the answers received (Alshenqeeti, 2014).

Interview sampling

To confirm the validity, credibility, trust-worthiness of the single case study, various sources of information will be used in this study, that is, different groups of respondents will be interviewed.

In exploratory research, the selective approach helps in identifying key informants who can offer valuable initial insights that guide the direction of the study. This method is essential for preliminary investigations that aim to develop hypotheses or identify key issues for further research. In this study, the task is to deeply understand the phenomenon of community management and their possible relation with brand reputation. Since this work examines the practices of community management, it is very important to interview those stakeholders who directly create a community from within. And these are administrative staff and professors.

Professors - academic directors and heads of faculty departments - will be able to give insights not only with regard to the educational part, but also on the administrative part. The number of respondents is 6.

Administrative staff, as the main organizers of all processes, should be interviewed in terms of strategies and operational activities. Thus, 11 respondents were selected from among the administration staff, including the heads of alumni departments, managers of the career center, the head of marketing, the head of the department for organizing events and working with partners, the manager of the office, the manager of ESG initiatives, the head of the international department etc. We also managed to communicate with key employees from the project office involved in the development of the business school strategy. Such a multifaceted set of respondents will allow us to study the issue more comprehensively and cover all important aspects of the problem under study.

Since the literature has determined that the key stakeholders of the community are students, therefore, one of the groups of respondents will be students. To ensure the greatest validity of the results, students were also differentiated according to the curriculum, course and their pattern of behavior, the degree of involvement in the life of the business school. Thus, the total number of respondents from among the students is 17, of which 5 are active undergraduate students, 3 are inactive undergraduate students who are engaged only in studies and do not participate in projects and initiatives, 4 are active graduate students and 5 are inactive.

Thus, there are an equal number of respondents among students (17 people) and respondents from among the staff of GSOM St. Petersburg State University, administration of different levels + professorrs (17 people).

However, there are other groups of Community stakeholders such as the state, corporate and academic partners, alumni, the local community, and so on. But since this research is exploratory in nature, at this stage it is important to delve into the "inner kitchen", how culture and a sense of community are created among the most active and frequently contacted stakeholders - students, teachers, staff. The reaction of other stakeholders will depend on how this root system of interaction is built.

In other words, students are the most important stakeholders of the community, since their role is initial and can then be transformed into any other (alumni , employee, professor, partner). Therefore, it is important to study their perception and interaction with the closest stakeholders - employees of the business school, who build all practices for students. Important to note that among the employers there are different work experience in GSOM SPBU, that also can diversify the results.

However, to confirm the above statements, 2 interviews were conducted with representatives of corporate partners, members of the Board of Trustees. The initial request was for 5 partners to maintain the validity and balance of all types of respondents, however, due to the fact that the average response rate is 50%, only 2 were able to be interviewed.

The alumni group was also represented in the respondents. They had an included graduate role among the faculty and staff, and during the interview such respondents expressed their point of view from both the graduate and the employee positions.

Thus, the sample of respondents looks like this:

Professors - 6 people;

Administration - 11 people;

Master's students - 9 people;

Bachelor's students - 8 people;

Corporate partners - 2 people.

Contact with the respondents was established through the researcher's professional network. They were contacted by email, Telegram. The letter provided brief information about the study and asked to answer interview questions.

Interview process

All interviews were conducted using online platforms Microsoft Teams. The conversations were recorded and automatic transcripts of the interviews were prepared. The researcher also took notes of emerging ideas and topics during the interview.

The duration of the interview is the initial scheduled time of 40 minutes. However, respondents emotionally shared their insights, which led to a variation in the length of the interview from 40 to 100 minutes. The average interview duration is 75 minutes. Total - 2,700 minutes. For a deeper understanding, all interviews were conducted in Russian, except for interviews with a foreign teacher. I talked to him in English.

Interview guide

The interview guide consists of blocks of questions (shown in the table below) each block meets a specific goal and corresponds to the research objectives. Each respondent was asked the same set of questions in order to ensure the reliability of the results and to achieve an understanding of the problem from his perspective. *The specific list of questions and its purpose will be described in the next chapter.*

Table 1.

Block of interview	Aim	Research objective corresponded
Introduction	To understand patterns and perspectives of the respondent by describing his role in GSOM	*partially* "Identify the roles of each stakeholders of the Community of Russian business schools"
Understanding community management in GSOM	To understand respondent perception of CM and prove the representativeness of GSOM case	"Identify existent practices of community management in Russian business schools"
Define stakeholders and their roles in community	To investigate roles and implement stakeholder matrix (power-interest) for creating recommendations	"Identify the roles of each stakeholders of the Community of Russian business schools"
CM connection with brand reputation	To understand how CM and BR are connected in general	"Identify, if community management can be used as a tool for brand reputation "
Successful CM practices	To identify the mechanisms of connection of particular CM practices	"Identify contribution of community management to the brand reputation of Russian business schools"
Challenges and Limitations	Investigate the challenges and find solution	"Identify challenges that higher education institutions face with implementing those practices"
Future directions	To explore more insights and wishes	"Identify existent practices of community management in Russian business schools", "Identify contribution of community management to the brand reputation of Russian business schools"

Data analysis method

Thematic analysis is a qualitative research method that allows you to identify patterns or topics in the data. The interviews were transcribed and analyzed, The results were summarized in the form of topics and subtopics. Thematic analysis may include generating codes based on data, followed by classifying codes by topics and subtopics, or taking notes during an interview and then reading its results. In this paper, the author chose the second option. The validity and reliability of the results have been improved. Triangulation of data sources was used by collecting data from multiple sources, as already described above. When developing the methodology, all open documents and social networks were studied in detail, as well as personal observations of the author were carried out during his studies at GSOM St. Petersburg State University for 2 years and active participation in a variety of practices and activities in various functional departments.

Ethical considerations

To minimize the occurrence of a conflict of interest the first and last names of the respondents were anonymized because the respondents shared their personal thoughts on various issues related to the place where they work or study.

Limitations

The selected methods of data collection and analysis have certain limitations. Conducting interviews can cause problems on two sides - on the part of the respondent and on the part of the researcher-interviewer. For example, respondents may misunderstand the question, give superficial answers if they do not want to get involved in the topic, or on the contrary, go too far into reasoning, succumbing to emotions, which can lead them astray from the main vector of the discussion. It is also possible to lose concentration, fatigue or other external irritating factors. Another problem that may arise when discussing the issue in too much detail is the loss of a sense of time. It may happen that the respondent gets too carried away answering the first questions of the interview, and then he will not have enough time to answer the last questions. As a result, either the last issues will be covered superficially without in-depth study, or they will not be covered at all. In this case, the researcher needs to be a good facilitator and keep his respondent in good shape, guide and correct, keep track of time and moderate the discussion properly.

On the part of the interviewer, it is also necessary to maintain concentration. It is important to be able to win over the interlocutor, he needs good listening skills and the ability to manage the situation during the interview in such a way as to collect data that truly reflects the opinions and feelings of the interlocutor regarding the chosen topic(s) (Hancock and Oakleford, 2001).

It is also important to catch non-verbal signs, however, while in the interview process, it will be difficult for the researcher to pay attention to many aspects since he does not need to listen to the respondent, ask clarifying questions, keep track of the time and the structure of the interview, as well as take notes. Therefore, an excellent solution to this problem can be to record audio or video interviews. Since this will help you to listen back later and find new interesting details. Another important limitation is the biased behavior of the researchert and the demonstration of a personal attitude to opinion. It is important to be able to abstract from personal emotions and feelings about the discussed aspects and be open to new information. Another important point is the ability to ask open-ended questions to the respondent that do not already contain an answer or the direction of the answer. In order not to be subjective and not to make the respondent say what the researcher wants to hear. Therefore, it is important to be careful when formulating a question. Try to build it in a fairly understandable way, but leave space for additional insights.

The results of single case l study may not be applicable to other contexts o The uniqueness of a particular case may limit the applicability of the results to broader conditions or other dynamics of community management. It can also be difficult to establish causal relationships between variables. However, this is acceptable for a exploratory format, since no concrete results are expected. When considering only one case, it can be difficult to identify patterns or themes that manifest themselves in different contexts. The validity or consistency of results over time and across researchers may be difficult to establish based on a single case study due to its limited scope and context specificity. Another important point is the importance of taking into account the specifics of the context - the Russian business schools, which were described in the theoretical chapter of this work. This can significantly influence the further study and dissemination of the results of the study. At least in different countries there are differences in culture and mentality.And one more particular limitation is associated with an incomplete presentation of the full picture of the phenomenon due to the fact that not all stakeholders were interviewed equally.

Conclusion of the chapter

In this chapter, the design was described in detail.The single case study approach is a well-founded and credible approach to this study, supported by academic researchers Yin and Jacobsen. Also, this method is excellent for the goals of this work - an in-depth understanding of the processes and development of the phenomenon for further study, since this study is

exploratory in nature. GSOM St. Petersburg State University is a representative case of a Russian business school due to its strong brand reputation and comprehensive community management practices. Using the analysis (by secondary open sources) of the closest competitorss of GSOM St. Petersburg State University (HSE Graduate School of Business, SKOLKOVO Business School and RANEPA), provides reasonableness in the ability to transfer and generalize the results of the study. So competitors have the same brand reputation elements as the case we are studying. As a method of data collection, in-depth semi-structured interviews with representatives of various groups of business school stakeholders were selected. This makes it possible to increase the validity of the study with a single case study approach, where information is taken from various sources. The chapter also described the limitations of the study, which were taken into account by the researcher.By focusing on these aspects, this chapter provides a solid methodological basis for exploring the role of community management in maintaining brand reputation in Russian business schools, which allows for reliable results.

Results analysis

Data analysis

This chapter will provide a thematic analysis based on 36 in-depth semi-structured interviews. Each question will be presented below with an indication of the purpose for which it is being asked. The key patterns and topics that the researcher was able to identify in the process of conducting and analyzing the interview will also be written out.

1. Tell me about your role and responsibilities at GSOM SPbU.

Aim: To understand the interviewee's position, scope of duties, and level of involvement in community management. This provides context for their insights and helps to interpret their responses accurately.

As already noted in the methodological chapter, the set of respondents includes different community members. These are students who are engaged only in studies, or those who are involved in student initiatives and business school projects. The diversity of roles can be noted among the employee respondents. Some respondents are graduates of GSOM St. Petersburg State University. Professorrs are engaged not only in educational activities but also have administrative tasks. Respondents who are involved in the supervision of certain projects began to talk enthusiastically about the projects, their goals and objectives.

This question does not carry a specific theme, but it helps to tune in with the respondent and get into the context of their role.

2. How would you define (from your perspective) community management in the context of higher education institutions? (This question is asked in advance, and interviewer gives explanation further)

Aim: To capture the interviewee's initial understanding and personal definition of community management before any formal explanation is provided. This helps identify common perceptions and knowledge gaps.

Key themes and patterns:

- The respondents felt some embarrassment and confusion when they were asked such a question and asked the researcher for help in determining. However, each respondent was able to define it independently.

- **Community management is the creation of an environment/conditions for a group of stakeholders who are united by a common experience, idea, goal to meet their goals and the goals of the business school as a whole**. - this is the definition given by the respondents. It could differ slightly in wording, but the general understanding was identical for all respondents.
- When naming stakeholders in the definition, respondents named various stakeholders. The students did not name the representatives of the administration among the members of the Community
- Before giving a definition, the respondents from among the employees were puzzled about which community they were talking about. Because the first thing that came to their mind was the alumni community. There was no such problem among the interviewed students

According to this question, it can be concluded that the general understanding of community management is uniform and corresponds to the definition from theory, However, people do not encounter such a concept on a daily basis, so such a question drove them into a stupor. There are serious differences between who is included in the community. There is no direct connection between the respondent's role and his perception. However, it is noted that students do not include the administration in the community stakeholders.

3. What are your overall impressions of community management at GSOM SPbU? Please rate from 1 (minimum) to 7 (maximum).

Aim: To gauge the interviewee's satisfaction and perceived effectiveness of community management practices. And also to confirm that GSOM SPBU is a good case to study.The rating provides a quantitative measure for comparison across different respondents.

Key patterns and themes:
- 34 respondents rated 5-6 (depending on their personal assessment style), however, they claimed. That the community management at GSOM St. Petersburg State University is at a fairly high level, but there is always room to grow.
- Respondents among active bachelor's students noted projects aimed at interacting with graduates and partners what allows you to build a culture and close ties
- The professor with big work experience gave a grade of 3 due to the fact that graduate retention practices are poorly established. This is especially true for express

programs.The respondent is also dissatisfied with the implementation of GSOM family chat management. Poor structuring reduces his interest in participating in this chat.

- Master student noted the lack of student government practises that he had seen at other universities. However, this student is not involved in extracurricular activities.
- Many decisions are made without consulting the students, which causes a lot of dissatisfaction. Such issues are resolved through good personal relationships.
- It is important to build a chain of interaction, all the way from the admission stage to the graduate stage
- Master students and some administrative staff don't feel like they're part of something big.
- If the respondent had assessed only from the point of view of the alumni, the score would have been lower - 4, since there is not enough awareness of many events and he miss it.
- The remoteness of the campus creates problems in the desire to get involved in the life of the business school

The majority of respondents are satisfied with the way community management is implemented at GSOM St. Petersburg State University. They are aware of the many initiatives and opportunities, but not everyone is familiar with them closely. Есть недостаток в слабом влиянии студентов.

4. What community management practices implemented at GSOM SPbU are you aware of?
Aim: To identify specific community management practices known to the interviewee, which helps map out the range of activities and understand their visibility and impact.

Key patterns and themes:
- Digital communication platforms - chats, channels. This is important in the era of digitalization, it increases the visibility of the business school among external stakeholders and allows you to retain internal ones.
- Events for graduates. There are wishes from active students so that there is more interaction between students and graduates in an informal way

- Studying under the exchange program is a strong practice, but not relevant in current realities
- Attracting partners and graduates to the routine tasks of the business school - guest lectures, master classes, consultations, preparation of curricula, participation in state final commissions.
- From the point of view of partners - the implementation of image tasks of partners with the help of business school resources. Integration of a partner with expertise into the educational process. Using the business school resource for training and conducting expertise for the company's tasks. There is a wish for the possibility of greater integration into the business school.
- The tendency of mixing between students of different courses and this allows us to achieve synergy. Synergy creates potential that can have an impact on the community

of practice to recognize and rejoice in the victories and achievements of graduates - positively affects the ego of graduates students who are interested only in studying pay attention to guest lecturers and the status that graduates achieve.

- The most striking and notable practices are the implementation of multi-directional activities as well as the practice of an online community in the form of a GSOM Family chat. Each stakeholder sees gaps in their field and suggests possible solutions.

5. Who are the stakeholders of the GSOM SPbU community? What role do they play in community management? Please rank each type of stakeholder by importance.Place the stakeholders in the influence-interest matrix .How increase interest and influence ?

Aim: To determine the key stakeholders involved in the community and their roles, as well as to assess their relative importance. This helps prioritize stakeholder engagement and resource allocation.

Key patterns and themes:
- Professors identify of students and alumni as the main stakeholders
- Uninvolved students believe that the main stakeholders are students. While active students consider partners and top management of the business school as the main stakeholder
- Only one person mentioned the importance of the role of a single leader in the person of the director of the business school
- Most students did not name the administration as a stakeholder
- Teachers play the role of inspirers and symbols of the business school
- The administration believes that their work is underestimated
- The location in the stakeholder matrix is ambiguously defined. According to legal correspondents: students have high interest, weak influence. The top-level administration has high interest and high influence, while the middle-level administration has an average level of interest and influence. The influence and interest of faculty and graduates varies from low to medium. It was not possible to determine the pattern among the respondents and their classification. no interconnection was found.
- Additionally, the role of the university and the state was mentioned, which, according to respondents (mostly students and administration) have a high influence and interest
- Stakeholders such as the media, employers (separate from corporate partners), local communities, applicants and parents were specifically mentioned.
- Students have strength and weight due to their number and are not aware of their strength
- Alumni are the main indicators of school success
- Student engagement is the main problem. To increase their interest, you need to identify their values. This is the main difficulty. Students believe that their interest will be increased due to an increase in their independence and the realization of their interests

- The interests of the business school differ from the interests of students
- Increasing influence and interest are interrelated. If interest increases, then influence automatically increases. and on the contrary.
- To increase the influence/interest of teachers, it is necessary to give them more freedom when creating training programs. Involve their expertise more in projects. Come up with initiatives that will contribute to the mutual understanding of different groups of stakeholders within the framework of working on the same project.
- The development of special metrics will increase the influence/interest of employees.
- Reducing the workload of employees will increase their interest in the community.
- It is a way to increase interest by creating deep values and culture, building traditions.
- Increasing the interest of alumni does not depend much on the business school, since this is already a passed stage and graduates have their own lives, However, they can be tied to the business school during their studies.
- For partners, the state and the university, the top management of the business school, as well as the presence of other partnerships play an important role.
- If the business school is not a key partner of the company, the company does not have a strong desire to have more power

6. How do you see the relationship between community management practices and the brand reputation of the business school?

Aim: To explore the perceived connection between community management activities and the overall brand reputation of GSOM SPbU. This provides insights into strategic alignment and effectiveness.

There are two concepts: 1 - aimed at internal stakeholders, 2 - at external stakeholders. The reference point for external stakeholders was called by teachers and students who are not involved in extracurricular activities. The focus on internal stakeholders was among the actively involved students and representatives of the administration.

- Internal:

- creating a positive experience increases brand loyalty, which can later play as word of mouth recommendations, brand advocacy and brand advocacy

creating comfortable conditions allows you to invest better in processes, which ultimately will give a high-quality result, which will cause satisfaction and a desire to share your positive experience

- External
- Presence of various practices can be sold as an additional offer to the main one. All other things being equal, the stakeholder will choose the most "complete package"
- External stakeholders, when interacting with the community and the school, will spread their positive experiences in their professional circles
- The implementation of classroom practices of community management, in particular the organization of events, serves as an information guide for media coverage and publicity. Thus, brand awareness increases and its reputation grows.
- High involvement in the processes ensures a high-quality result, which is reflected in the ratings. Ratings are an important element of reputation formation.

7. Is this practice (listed below) part of community management? How does it impact/relate to brand reputation? Describe the mechanism of the practice's impact on brand reputation. Rate each practice as a tool for building brand reputation from 1 to 7.

Aim: To determine whether the practices identified in the literature review constitute effective strategies for building brand reputation. To use brand reputation communication tools in order to assess the level of engagement and success of specific community management approaches, and to understand their direct impact on the brand's reputation. This will provide detailed information on individual working methods and their strategic significance.

Key patterns and themes:

All practices are related to brand formation and support. It is impossible to determine the most effective ones. Different stakeholders identify different practices as the most significant.However, there is no preponderance of opinions in either direction.

Digital interaction platforms (Blackboard, MS Teams, mobile app, feedback collection platform, Telegram channels, and chats)

Key patterns and themes:
- Respondents share internal and external interaction platforms.
- External factors directly affect recognition.
- Internal platforms are not perceived as an element of brand reputation support and it is considered that this is just a must have.There is an inverse relationship if the internal

elements of communication are missing, this will negatively affect the reputation of the business school brand.

Student services and support (career services, mental health support services, counseling, coaching)

Key patterns and themes:

- It is rated at high points from those that the respondent set.
- It is considered as a pleasant addition to the main package of services.
- Students feel safe and feel cared for, which creates a positive experience and satisfaction.
- Serves as a boost in the realization of graduates' careers, which positively affects the ratings of the business school.
- Administration staff also want to be able to have support and help in building a career track.
- Pampered students because of the abundance of offers. The partners believe that students underestimate the opportunities provided to them.

Alumni networking and events

Key patterns and themes:

- The way to learn about the current affairs of the school, which makes the business school transparent and increases trust
- The way to recognize the successes of alumni, which also increases the reputation of the business school both in the eyes of the graduates themselves and to the general public.
- Demonstrating success, students seeing the successes of graduates are convinced of the correctness of their own choice, which strengthens their satisfaction.
- The urgent need to introduce more diverse practices informal interaction between students and graduates.
- The need to optimize the processes of interaction with graduates located in other cities and countries
- The low involvement of students in the initiatives proposed for them

Clubs and organizations, including student government, academic societies

Key patterns and themes:

- Low ranking - has little effect on the reputation of the brand, however, students would like more support from the administration for their initiatives.
- There is a "point" effect on those students who need it, inactive students this practice does not carry any value.
- Allows students to self-actualize and manifest themselves, which forms a positive experience.
- There is competition between various student initiatives.
- The student council has no power and meaning and there is only formally.
- Students want more involvement from the administration, but at the same time more freedom in decision-making.
- Request for more informal non-career related events.
- There is a gap between master's and bachelor's degree students due to different locations
- Difficult entry into the organizing committee for first-year students
- Organization of leisure space to maintain networking among students

Community outreach and knowledge dissemination (volunteering, social projects, public lectures, and seminars)

Key patterns and themes:

- It doesn't matter to the students.
- Professors consider this to be the most important element.
- Volunteer and social projects - it is useful for local society, but it does not affect the target audience of the business school.
- It is of great importance for partners, especially if the GSOM speaker speaks at status events. Or there are large-scale projects to work with the municipality, which meets the interests of the company.
- Students believe that the public does not associate the speaker with the business school and a positive impression will be made only about the speaker himself and not about the entire business school that he represents.

Sustainability initiatives (Green Campus, sustainability education)

Key patterns and themes:

- Professors from the Department of Strategy consider this important as it meets global trends.
- Also, the older generation assumes that it is important for the younger generation to be "green".
- The Sustainable Development Manager reveals this initiative as caring for all employees and stakeholders and it means much more than just being "green".
- For students, this is not an important element, but they understand that this is a pure formality.
- Understanding that this is just a formality can form a negative impression of the brand as it tries to imitate in order to match the trend.
- A foreign professor doubts the importance of this initiative in Russia, but in foreign business schools all ratings are based on the principles of sustainability. and if GSOM aspires to be a world-class business school, it should be matched.

Cultural and inclusive programs (exchange programs, buddy support for foreigners)

Key patterns and themes:
- For partners, this is not a determining factor, however, they are very happy to observe the success of the business school in international cooperation.
- The availability of such programs is paramount since this is a way to get and keep their place in international rankings.
- in current realities, this has become less significant.
- Based on the number of foreign students who arrive, conclusions can be made not only about the school that sends them, but also about the school that receives them.
- Internal stakeholders feel longing and nostalgia for the past times when the campus was filled with international students.
- The desire of employees of the international department to have the opportunity to attend international conferences in order to cultivate a relationship with international partners in a personal format.

Educational process organisation (group exercises in class, group projects, discussion formats, guest lectures)
- Partners striving for greater integration consider this practice to be the most important

- Professors and administration staff consider the very first contact with the community. This is where community building begins. students communicate with each other and with teachers, strong ties are formed.
- That meet the specifics of business education.
- Guest lecturers, seeing the involvement of students in the classroom, will form a positive attitude towards the business school and talk about it on external platforms.

8. Can you provide examples of successful community management initiatives and their impact on the school's reputation? How do you measure success? How do you determine how successful a practice is?

Aim: To gather concrete examples of community management initiatives and their outcomes, along with the criteria used to evaluate their success. This offers practical insights and benchmarks for best practices.

<u>Key patterns and themes:</u>

- Respondents name the practices in which they interact the most. (*Analogy is drawn with the first question of the interview*)
- The conference management of the future - done professionally unites students from different universities and business representatives
- Draker Ceremony , Management career week, Talent Up - top named practices
- Telegram Chat GSOM Family
- Practices are considered successful - if they cause positive feedback, the number of participants increases qualitatively and quantitatively, if participants are actively involved in this practice.

9. What challenges does GSOM SPbU face in implementing community management practices? How does GSOM SPbU address these challenges?

Aim: To identify the difficulties encountered in community management and the strategies used to overcome them. Understanding these challenges helps in refining practices and developing more effective solutions.

<u>Key patterns and themes:</u>

- Suspension of international activities due to external economic circumstances.
- Difficulty in involving students, especially in the master program.
- Lack of resources to support initiatives, both financial and human.

- Bureaucratic obstacles - inability to implement ideas due to restrictions from St. Petersburg State University.
- Difficulty in finding a compromise between the various interests of stakeholders.
- Weak attendance and awareness at events and projects - people would like to participate but they do not even know that there is such a possibility.
- The struggle for attention to small projects/initiatives - while large projects have a lot of internal competition for entry.

Optional Question (for those who may know)

10. What are GSOM SPbU's future plans regarding community management?

Aim: To gain insights into the strategic direction and anticipated developments in community management. This helps understand the long-term vision and goals of the institution.

Key patterns and themes:
- The majority of respondents replied that they did not know about future plans.
- It is planned to continue implement existent community management practices.
- Great hopes are being built for a new partnership with a Chinese university.
- Development of a chatbot that will help structure the GSOM Family chat.
- Development of the Alumni Ambassador program.

11. Is there anything you would like to add that was not covered in the interview?

Aim: To ensure that all relevant information is captured and to allow interviewees to share additional insights or concerns that may not have been addressed by the structured questions. This can reveal unexpected perspectives and contribute to a more comprehensive understanding.

- There is no sense of community at the school level (in emotional level)
- It is necessary to reconsider the format of interaction between student organizing committees and the administration.
- In order to resolve the issue of low student engagement, special attention should be paid to selection.The selection should be stricter, the higher the student's score, the more motivated he is and the higher his involvement will be in many ways.
- Come up with new, fresh event formats, more informal and warm.
- The importance of building personal relationships is high. This makes it possible to cope with the difficulties listed above - partners and administrative staff note.

- Partners - of the most interesting joint projects and options for interaction under the same financial conditions.
- More interaction between stakeholders for building warm relations.

Thus, it was possible to analyze the respondents' answers and identify additional insights in addition to the answers to the questions and reflect them in topics and patterns. Additionally, you can view Summary's thesis interview on the respondents at this link:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1ypUXJdAm9MRZh0BCtjrAuxvi_ELMsUegC42Ia8A1Mkc/edit?usp=sharing (derived 2/06/2024).

Results discussion

The results of the interview turned out to be very rich and covered a large number of aspects. However, returning to the originally set tasks, it is better to build this part on the discussion of the results in comparison with the research objectives.

- **Identify, if community management can be used as a tool for brand reputation.**
- **Identify contribution of community management to the brand reputation of Russian business schools.**

Clearly, community management can be used as a tool for building brand reputation. And community management has several variations of manifestation. The key ones are the creation of a favorable atmosphere that forms a positive stakeholder experience. As a result of satisfaction, brand loyalty arises. Next, there is a desire to share their experience with others, which makes stakeholders brand ambassadors. This helps to build brand awareness and also creates brand advocacy. Also, a positive experience allows people to be more involved and give high-quality results, which increases the brand in various ratings. Strong attachment to the brand and the creation of transparency increases trust in the brand, which again nurtures the brand's reputation in wider circles. However, this path is achieved by various practices that have their own nuances. Achieving balance and synergy between all stakeholders is a key element in community management.

- **Identify the roles of each stakeholders of the Community of Russian business schools.**

During the analysis of the interviews, the various roles of stakeholders were identified.However, it was not possible to identify an unambiguously leading role. Stakeholders identify the most important stakeholders from different perspectives, depending on their roles and tasks. However, it is unequivocal that the proportion of students as stakeholders is very high. And one of the most important insights is the need to develop the right strategy for interacting with students. Overcoming all his way from an applicant, student, graduate and further into a potential student, parent of a student, partner, teacher, employee of a business school. To build loyalty to the school, you need to focus on while he is still a student and he is in physical contact with the school often.

Another finding is the significant difference in the interests and focus of external stakeholders, such as corporate partners, from the priorities and desires of internal ones. Nevertheless, these two groups are very dependent on each other and then it is necessary to study the issue of interaction in more detail. Try to find a compromise in order to achieve maximum engagement and satisfaction.

Speaking of the matrix of stakeholders, there is no point in highlighting the main roles and applying measures to increase their interests and influence. The purpose of community management is to create warm ties, including vertical and horizontal, to create a sense of community in order to achieve synergy and thereby achieve common goals, satisfying individual ones.

Identify existent practices of community management in Russian business schools. The table below shows the practices of community management that are involved in shaping the brand's reputation, as well as the insights that were derived in the interview.

Table 2.

Practice	Insight
Digital Engagement Platforms	It is important to maintain the involvement of participants and a clear structure. Notification of projects and initiatives plays a very important role in loyalty.
Student Services and Support	It is important to develop as many different options for interaction as possible, to implement a personal approach to achieve satisfaction. Support employees too.
Alumni Network	Recognition of the achievements of graduates, creation of events for graduates and students. A well-developed notification system will be able to keep graduates at a high level of engagement.
Student Clubs and Organizations,	Freedom is important for students, but at the same time financial support from the administration. Support students' initiatives - this will shape their positive experience. It is important to allow different formats to exist and cultivate informal communication. Involve all

	stakeholders in the creation process. Create spaces for offline meetings.
Community outreach and extention	Community outreach and extension It does not play a role for students. But it plays an important role for partner companies.
Sustainability Technology integration	It is more formal in nature. However, it corresponds to the interests of the partners.
Cultural and inclusion programs	It plays an important role in the formation of ratings and compliance with high standards in all industries.
Educational process	Invite guest lecturers from different industries. This is the first contact with the community - it can gain a greater number of active and engaged students in a short time.

Additionally, you need to work with the values of each stakeholder to create common ones. Only through the communication of values, culture and tradition will it be possible to achieve synergy.

- **Identify challenges that business schools face with implementing those practices**
One of the main ones is limited resources, difficulties in organizing the work of digital platforms, slowing down the process and reducing flexibility due to high bureaucratization. Low student engagement, which makes it impossible to build strong relationships.

However, by working through personal relationships, finding an approach and compromise, meeting the needs of stakeholders by identifying their values and communicating their own, again, thanks to the formation of synergy, these challenges can be minimized or eliminated.

Conclusion

In this work, an exploratory study was conducted. They were exposed to the proposition that community management can be A study has shown that community management in Russian business schools is a powerful tool for maintaining and developing brand reputation. Effective community management helps to create a positive experience for stakeholders, which leads to increased loyalty and turning them into brand ambassadors. In practice, this is achieved through various activities and programs aimed at improving interaction with the audience and integrating digital platforms to increase engagement.

Theoretical contribution

The use of the stakeholder matrix in community management represents a significant theoretical contribution to the study of the dynamics of managing internal and external relations in educational institutions. This framework allows not only to identify and analyze stakeholders, but also to assess their influence and interests regarding the educational institution. The application of the stakeholder matrix helps educational institutions determine which groups have the highest priority and which community management strategies will be most effective in meeting their needs.

Striving to convey values through community management plays a key role in increasing the engagement of all stakeholders. The communication of common values and beliefs contributes to the formation of a single vector of development and culture of interaction, which, in turn, leads to the creation of synergy. Synergy enhances the overall influence and interests of stakeholders, which contributes to a more stable and long-term development of the brand of educational institutions.

The practices mentioned in the study, such as using digital platforms for engagement, student and alumni support, club and organization management, external collaboration and community expansion, can help achieve these goals. Transparent and active application of these practices contributes not only to improving relations within the community, but also supports the reputation and visibility of the brand in the foreign market. This is especially important in the context of Russian business schools, where competition and requirements for the quality of education are constantly growing.

Managerial implications

The results of this work provide excellent recommendations on the application of specific community management practices in order to maintain the reputation of the business school brand

For business school leaders, the results of the study highlight the importance of developing and implementing integrated community management strategies. It is recommended to focus on the creation and maintenance of digital infrastructure, the development of student and alumni communities, as well as on the involvement of external stakeholders in the life of the educational institution. Managers should take into account the specific needs of different stakeholder groups in order to maximize their satisfaction and loyalty.

Opportunities for further research

Further research may include conducting multiple case studies covering various Russian and international business schools. This will allow you to compare how different educational institutions apply community management strategies and how this affects the brand's reputation. Case studies can reveal unique approaches and common strategic mistakes, as well as provide a deeper understanding of the relationship between the actions of schools and the perception of stakeholders.

In-depth study of stakeholder behavior and psychological patterns

An important area will be the in-depth study of the behavioral reactions and psychological patterns of stakeholders to various actions of educational institutions within the framework of community management. This includes analyzing how students, alumni, academic staff, and partners respond to various programs and initiatives, and how these reactions correlate with their satisfaction and brand loyalty.

Hypothesis:

"The comprehensive involvement of stakeholders through a variety of community management platforms and activities has a positive effect on brand awareness, loyalty and engagement of students and alumni, while the effect is enhanced with the active use of digital tools and cultural programs, which contributes to strengthening the reputation and competitiveness of business schools."

This hypothesis implies that not only single events, but also their combination and interaction with cultural programs and digital tools have a significant impact on brand perception. To test this hypothesis, structural equation modeling or multilevel regression analysis can be used to assess the impact of each individual component of community management in the context of their interaction with each other.

Such a study will help to establish which specific aspects of community management are most effective in shaping a positive image of an educational institution, and determine which strategies should be prioritized to achieve the best results in strengthening the reputation of business schools. Exploring possible interactions between partners and students

A very interesting area for research is the analysis of possible interactions between corporate partners and students in the context of community management. It is possible that such interactions can enhance both educational outcomes and commercial opportunities for both parties. The study may include an analysis of cases of successful cooperation, as well as identification of potential obstacles and factors contributing to a successful partnership.

These directions will not only expand the theoretical knowledge base in the field of brand and reputation management in higher education, but also provide practical recommendations for improving strategies for interacting with stakeholders.

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