

The challenges of the strategic communication of the Portuguese public universities in the internationalization processes

Los desafíos de la comunicación estratégica en los procesos de internacionalización de las universidades públicas portuguesas

Celene Fidelis Frias Ferreira¹
celeneff@gmail.com
University of Beira Interior, Portugal

Recepción: 30/10/2019 Revisión: 07/11/2019 Aceptación: 14/12/2019 Publicación: 20/12/2019
<http://dx.doi.org/10.5783/RIRP-18-2019-10-179-196>

Abstract

The main goal of this article is to drive organisations' communications managers to pay more attention to internationalisation processes at higher education institutions (HEIs) and uncover new opportunities for action focused on academic mobility. From a theoretical viewpoint, there is a discussion on the phenomenon of internationalisation Portuguese HEIs and the strategic relevance of recruiting international students are put into context, with a reflection on how communication can improve that process provided it is duly integrated into the institution's management and mission. The complexity of the decision-making process is highlighted, along with factors that influence international students when they look for and choose a host country and institution. The conclusion is reached that students prioritise reputation when choosing the country and the institution, which reflects a great opportunity for the public relations as a strategic management function of organization image and reputation.

Keywords: Internationalisation of higher education, academic mobility, recruitment of students, public relations, strategic communication, reputation

Resumen

El objetivo principal de este artículo es provocar en los responsables de la comunicación una mayor atención a los procesos de internacionalización de las Instituciones de Educación Superior (IES), con respecto a su dimensión institucional, y revelar posibles oportunidades de acción, especialmente en relación con la movilidad académica. Desde una perspectiva teórica, ha sido posible debatir sobre el fenómeno de la internacionalización, contextualizar las IES portuguesas y la planificación estratégica que han dirigido para el reclutamiento de estudiantes internacionales, y discutir cómo la

¹ PhD student in Communication Sciences at the University of Beira Interior – UBI (Portugal).

comunicación puede optimizar este proceso, siempre que esté debidamente integrada en la gestión y la misión de la institución con la internacionalización. Nos referimos a la complejidad del proceso de toma de decisiones y a los diversos factores que influyen en el estudiante internacional cuando debe buscar y elegir un país y una institución educativa. Finalmente, confirmamos que el estudiante prioriza la reputación tanto para la elección del país como de la institución, lo que resulta en una gran oportunidad para las Relaciones Públicas como una función estratégica a la hora de gestionar la imagen y la reputación de la organización.

Palabras clave: internacionalización de la educación superior, movilidad académica, reclutamiento de estudiantes, relaciones públicas, comunicación estratégica, reputación

Summary

1. Introduction
2. Theoretical framework
3. Methodology and discussion
4. Conclusions
5. References

Sumario

1. Introducción
2. Marco teórico
3. Metodología y discusión
4. Conclusiones
5. Referencias

1. INTRODUCTION

Since the UNESCO 1998 Declaration, internationalization and co-operation is seen as an integral part of the institutional missions of higher education institutions and systems.² The international dimension of higher education, rather than being an option is a responsibility of all institutions that want to maintain presence and leadership in the higher education field. Each institution of higher education should therefore envisage the creation of an appropriate structure and/or mechanism for promoting and managing international co-operation.

Against the complex days at present, and taking into account a highly dynamic, changing and competitive environment, Portuguese public universities have adopted internationalisation

² UNESCO (2018). World Conference on Higher Education: Higher Education in the Twenty-first Century, Vision and Action, Paris. Retrieved December, 2019, from: <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000141952>.

as a fundamental part of their strategic sustainability process. It is a significant challenge to draw up an internationalisation plan aligned with the institution's mission, duly integrated into its communications plan.

Communication, as part of broad-reaching internationalisation processes at higher education institutions, in particular in their strategies for recruiting international students, may be the great driving force of that internationalisation and a fundamental resource in gaining a competitive advantage in the long term.

The objectives of this article are twofold: first, it is aimed to present a theoretical discussion on the phenomenon of internationalisation, with a particular focus on the Portuguese HEIs; second, the influencing variables in the decision process for choosing an international institution are put into context and a reflection on how public relations as a strategic management approach to reputation can improve that process provided it is duly integrated into the institution's management and mission.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1. The internationalisation of higher education

Globalisation – something that is responsible, among other things, for liberalising trade, intensifying the movement of people, expanding higher education and knowledge, increasing levels of private investment and reducing public support for education and technological development – has also transformed the education market.

One of the most important characteristics of the global education market over the last decade has been the extensive growth in demand for international education. According to Bohm, Davis, Meares e Pearce (2002), there were around 1.8 million international students at higher education institutions (HEIs) around the world in the year 2000. There are currently around five million and this figure is expected to rise to 7.2 million international students in 2025.

Internationalization is one of the four strategic priorities of the International Association of Universities (IAU). The report of the 5th IAU Global Survey (2018), applied to 907 HEIs from 126 countries, highlights that an overwhelming majority of institutions (more than 90%)

have internationalization mentioned in their mission/strategic plan. This is a clear sign of how internationalization has become widespread at HEIs around the world.

Knight (2015: 2) defines internationalisation as “the process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of post-secondary education”. It is a dynamic, complex phenomenon that is subject to internal and external restrictions and should always be analysed individually and in context.

Broadly speaking, two important features can be identified in higher education programmes’ internationalisation policies. One is internationalisation abroad, understood as all forms of cross-border education: mobility for people, projects, programmes and providers. The other is internationalisation at home, which is more directed towards the teaching curriculum itself and focuses on actions contributing to a better understanding of the international landscape and the development of students’ international skills (Knight, 2008).

Several reasons are cited for the internationalisation of higher education. Economic justifications include a desire to prepare students for international careers, produce income for the institution, and develop competitiveness. Political reasons focus on the need to provide students with an awareness of world cultures and skills needed to deal with national security and foreign policy. Academic reasons underline the fact that in order to enhance liberal education it is essential to provide opportunities for students to: (a) gain a well-informed and diverse view of the world; (b) understand the international features of their main fields of study; and (c) develop global critical thinking skills. Socio-cultural reasons emphasise the need to develop students’ intercultural communication skills, essential for dealing with growing cultural and ethnic diversity within and between countries (Childress, 2009).

The greatest benefits of internationalisation mentioned by European HEIs, according to the EAIE’s Barometer survey, are: “Improve the overall quality of education at our institution” and “Prepare students for a global world”.³

³ Survey by the European Association for International Education (EAIE) titled EAIE Barometer: Internationalisation in Europe. It included participation by 2,093 individuals from approximately 1,500 HEIs in 33 countries of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). Retrieved March 10, 2019, from [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2015/540370/IPOL_STU\(2015\)540370_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2015/540370/IPOL_STU(2015)540370_EN.pdf)

With regard to the institutional component of internationalisation, there are many HEIs that find impetus for internationalisation in more diverse income and greater market and niche focus. For that reason, many actively work to recruit international students, driven primarily by the opportunity to generate income but also by a desire to boost cultural diversity. This appears to currently be the case in Portugal.

2.2 Portugal in the internationalization of higher education

Higher education in Portugal has seen significant improvements in recent years, but it has still not reached its potential. To improve its competitiveness at global level, structural problems need to be overcome. These relate to learning outcomes, flexibility in curricula, professional qualification, equity, employability, low geographic mobility for students, concentration in major urban centres, accommodation for students, financial dependence on parents and the financial sustainability of the higher education system, among other factors.

According to the Education at a Glance report (OECD, 2018), Portugal has low levels of public financing, especially when calculated by student, which has led to higher education being subsidised to a large extent by families (26% of higher education costs – almost double the 15% usually found in the European Union as a whole), in the form of tuition fees. ⁴

According to OECD data, just a third of young people aged 25 to 34 have higher education, a long way behind the 44% OECD average. Between 2007 and 2017, the Portuguese average grew from 21% to 34%, but even so it remains 10 percentage points below the OECD average. In 2015, Portugal invested around 1.3% of its gross domestic product (GDP) into higher education, below the OECD average of 1.5%. Portugal's main goals are to have 60% of young people aged 20 in higher education by 2030 and 50% of people aged 30-34 with a qualification (Resolution of the Council of Ministers no. 25/2018 approving the guidelines for a technology and business innovation strategy for Portugal, 2018-2030).

Student mobility in higher education has increased in most OECD countries, including Portugal. Between 2013 and 2016, the number of international students in the country grew

⁴ OECD (2018), Education at a Glance 2018: OECD Indicators, OECD Publishing, Paris. Retrieved March 23, 2019, from: <http://www.oecd.org/education/education-at-a-glance/>.

to 36%. In 2016, there were 20,000 international students in Portugal, representing 6% of the total number of higher education students. That is double the percentage found in neighbouring Spain (3%), and is in line with the OECD total (6%) but below the total for the EU23 (9%). The percentage of international students is particularly high for PhDs, where they make up 26% of students in Portugal and also in the total for OECD countries.

There were 44,485 students registered in Portuguese higher education in 2017/2018, hailing from 167 countries, according to RAIDES18 data.⁵ The most common country of origin for international students in Portugal is Brazil (32%), with Spain in distant second place (5%).

Against a backdrop of limited resources and bold targets, many Portuguese institutions have looked to the offer of international education as a pillar of their strategies. At organisation level, internationalisation: “It is firmly embedded in institutional mission statements, policies, and strategies as well as national policy frameworks. This signals that internationalization has come of age and is a legitimate area of policy, practice, and research in higher education” (Knight, 2015: 14).

Portuguese HEIs, in order to achieve their internationalisation missions and strengthen their positions within the existing range of teaching on offer, are dedicated to creating a more sophisticated and satisfactory education experience for their student bodies. Many have sought to meet the different expectations and motivations of international students and, under pressure, they make an effort to continually invest in improving their services and processes by supplying social supports, human capital, technical resources, and in their facilities and equipment.

HEIs have highlighted internationalisation opportunities and many have established the recruitment of students in international markets as an expansion strategy. Portuguese HEIs, particularly those located in inland regions of the country, which are undergoing greater demographic deficit; rely on the adoption of strategies like these to guarantee their long-term sustainability.

⁵ RAIDES - Registo de Alunos Inscritos e Diplomados no Ensino Superior (Record of Students Registered in and Graduated from Higher Education). Direção-Geral de Estatísticas da Educação e Ciência, Documento técnico da Plataforma de Recolha de Informação do Ensino Superior – RAIDES, Retrieved March 20, 2019 from: <http://www.dgeec.mec.pt/np4/raides18/>.

2.3. The Process of Recruiting International Students

The effectiveness of recruitment depends on international students' motivations and decision-making processes. An international student's decision-making process is a long one; it may last for more than a year and comprises several stages (ICEF Insights, 2018)⁶. Mazzarol and Soutar (2002) carried out a survey of 2,485 students from four countries – Indonesia, Taiwan, India and China – between 1996 and 2000 over two stages: surveys to find out motivations and focus groups for in-depth discussions on the nature of students' decision-making processes. They discovered that the process of making the decision to study abroad may involve at least three phases: 1) the student decides to leave his/her country of origin; 2) he/she chooses a host country; 3) he/she selects the institution (Mazzarol & Soutar, 2002).

During these stages, several factors influence the decision-making process. Initially, there are factors that belittle the country of origin: importance of having a course abroad, difficulty in joining the courses offered in the country of origin and the opportunity to better understand "Western culture" by way of an international education.

During the second stage, the choice of a particular country appears to be influenced primarily by the reputation and quality of the education institution. Recognition of the course in the country of origin and the international profile of the host country makes it easier to find out about its educational offer. Mazzarol and Soutar (2002) highlight that the reputation of HEIs was mentioned as the most decisive factor in students' choices. Furthermore, they concluded that the decision to study abroad is fundamentally a family decision.

As for the importance of the "costs" factor when choosing a host country, the students appeared to be more interested in the offer of part-time work than the cost of fees, travel or living expenses. They also found the "social cost" to be an important variable, seen as levels of crime, security and racial discrimination. The existence of an established population of international students in the host country was also considered an important pull factor. Although less important, environmental factors (climate, physical and study setting, lifestyle)

⁶ Recruitment never sleeps. (2018: 34). ICEFINSIGHTS2018, Available at: <http://marketing.icef.com/acton/fs/blocks/showLandingPage/a/18128/p/p-006b/t/page/fm/0->

should not be disregarded in the attractiveness of the host country, as well as geographical proximity to the country of origin and social links (friends or family members living or studying in the host country).

Mazzarol and Soutar (2002) used a 17-variable scale in the third stage to measure factors that influence the selection of a host institution. Students mentioned the following, in order of priority: institution's quality and reputation; recognition of the institution's qualifications in their own countries; quality, reputation and specialisation of the team; links to other institutions (protocols, agreements, conventions); number of international students registered; base of alumni; offer of qualifications that will be recognised by employers; variety of courses and programmes; use of the most up-to-date IT; a reputation of being receptive to students' needs; recognition for innovation in research and teaching; large campus with good facilities; being financially stable; possibility for flexibility in joining the course throughout the year; and being an institution that significantly promotes itself. Alumni may be a valuable source of influence in directing international students to education institutions and "social links" that emerge when a student has family or friends that have studied or are studying in a host country are another important influence on the choice of destination.

A similar study by Wilkins e Huisman (2011: 313) with 160 international students at a university in the west of England found two other important variables: improving job prospects and improving language skills (in English). For Li and Bray (2007), personal factors also interfere in the decision-making process and should be taken into consideration. After carrying out a study in 2002/2003 on two institutions in Hong Kong and another two in Macau, the authors concluded that factors such as "socio-economic status, academic ability, gender, age, motivation, and aspiration" (Li & Bray, 2007: 794) influenced the choice of institution. They add that "[t]he internal factors include family background, academic characteristics, perceptions, and motivations, which shape the affordability, accessibility and desirability of external higher education" (Li & Bray, 2007: 813).

In examining the role of personality and subjective judgement in student decision-making, Hemsley-Brown (2001) found that although economic, cultural, and structural forces do

influence students, they are filtered through layers of preconceptions shaped by family circumstances, culture, life history, and personality.

In 2018, 56,376 international students at 35 universities in Australia took part in the ISB (International Student Barometer) survey that involved the participation of international students from more than 100 countries with the aim of establishing the factors that contributed the most to international students’ happiness. The five main elements identified were: good contacts, employability, course organisation, social facilities and campus buildings. The research indicated that there was a positive correlation between level of happiness and high levels of satisfaction with the overall study experience. However, the data also shows that happiness is influenced by different elements in accordance with the students’ characteristics, including nationality. The same research showed that for graduate students from China – the main sending market for Australia – the three major elements with an impact on happiness were “making good contacts for the future”, “the institution” and “places to eat on campus”. The data suggests that international students’ notion of happiness is influenced by characteristics such as nationality, gender and stage of study and that their subjective satisfaction is determined by several interconnected factors.

Table 1. Influencing variables in the decision process for choosing the institution for international study

Hemsley-Brown (2001) Li & Bray (2007) Mazzarol & Soutar (2002) Wilkins & Huisman (2011)	Influencing variables in student’s choice
	Quality reputation and rankings
	Inter-institutional networks and agreements
	Large number of international students enrolled
	Strong international alumni base
	Quality of the programs
	Programs recognised by employers; jobs prospects
	The variety of courses and programs
	Recognition for innovation in research and teaching
	Large campus and excellent facilities
	Financial stability of the HEIs
	Offers flexible entry throughout the year
	Technological level
	Advertising and promotion
	Financial costs (fees, travel, living expences)
Personal characteristics: student personality, socioeconomic status, family history, academic ability	

Source: Hemsley-Brown (2001), Li & Bray (2007), Mazzarol & Soutar (2002), Wilkins & Huisman (2011).

As summarized in table 1, the process to decide on a country and institution is long and very complex and there are many factors that influence international students' decisions and that have an influence on a student's positive experience. And they are very often interconnected. Furthermore, there are several actors that take part in that process: family members, teachers, managers, recruiting agents.

3. METHODOLOGY AND DISCUSSION: CHALLENGES FOR PUBLIC RELATIONS IN HIGHER EDUCATION INTERNATIONALISATION PROCESSES

Reputation is the most significant factor influencing the student's decision to opt for a certain country and institution. Therefore, reputation management and relationship management with key publics may be highly strategic for completing higher education institutions' internationalisation missions. Based on a literature review as a research methodology, a discussion can be made about the public relations and strategic communication role on improving the process to recruiting international students in a very competitive market.

In organisational terms, Porter (2004: 36) defines competitive strategy as "offensive or defensive actions to create a defensible position, successfully tackle the five competitive forces and thus, obtain a higher return on investment for the company." The author points out three general strategic positions in organisation management: overall cost leadership, differentiation and focus.

According to Carneiro, Cavalcanti and Silva (1997), the central point of Porter's overall cost leadership strategy is the organisation's ability to reduce its overall cost, which works as a defence mechanism against the rivalry of its competitors, particularly with regard to price wars. The differentiation strategy assumes that the organisation offers a product or service that is considered unique by customers, in other words, the characteristics of which distinguish it from those offered by the competition. Loyalty and a reduction in sensitivity to price by customers are a result of the differentiation strategy.

Porter's focus strategy is based on the organisation's ability to better respond to its strategic market target than the competition. The strategic scope or target should be narrow enough to enable the organisation to serve it more efficiently and effectively and may be defined in

a variety of ways: type of customers, product line, variety of distribution channels, geographical area (Carneiro, Cavalcanti & Silva, 1997).

Accordingly to Baron (2000: 12) “the performance of business organizations is affected by their strategies and operations in market and non-market environments”. For Van Riel and Fombrun (2007), an integrated communication system is generally seen as a positive factor for an organisation’s performance and reputation. Organisations rely on visibility, communication and strategic relationships:

By developing an integrated communication system, an organization can flesh out a structure for corporate communication that can assist in the implementation of strategic objectives, build brand and reputation, and thereby create economic value (Van Riel & Fombrun, 2007: 9).

Again, it is important for there to be an integrated alignment of communication goals with HEIs’ objectives, strategies and internationalisation missions, and we believe in the idea that organisational communication included in a systemic perspective cannot be separated from the strategy for organisational position, differentiation and institutional brand positioning. In the end, communication and branding are set up as intangible assets and only integrated processes can make it possible to create value.

Serralvo and Furrier (2004) acknowledge the work of Ries and Trout (2002) as drivers behind debates on positioning in the field of marketing and show that this expression follows the client’s guidance, in other words, it is based on perceptual schemas. They define brand positioning as the “process of studying, defining and implementing a differentiated offer of value, the attributes of which provide a sustainable, advantageous position for a brand with regard to the competition in a certain category from the point of view of a target audience’s perception” (Serralvo & Furrier, 2004: 8), a concept that is adjusted and focused in the differentiation strategy.

The fact that products and services are assessed from the perspective of the customer/user/consumer can be highly strategic, depending on organisations’ opportunities to influence factors that shape that perception, however, “influencing customer experiences

is a complex process that involves interactions among several stakeholder groups” (Schlager, Bodderas, Maas & Luc-Cachelin, 2011: 497).

Perception is built by cognitive, environmental and structural activities/experience and is heavily interlinked with relational factors. In the case of prospecting for international students, it is fundamental to get to know, understand, monitor and assess stakeholders’ needs, preferences and expectations (including competitors’ practices) to better understand the search and decision-making processes when these students look for a country and institution.

This intended student should be able to interact and establish a tie, a dialogue with the brand/institution when coming into contact with it, and this can only be made possible through communication. Accepting communication as a potential resource for creating a long-term competitive advantage and adopting it as a positioning strategy will lead to a differentiated offer and add value to the organisation.

The process of recruiting students is often highly personal and is the product of meaningful connections among students, educators, institutions, agents and other partners, something that characterises it as a public relations approach to reputation:

[...] organisations cannot fail to be aware of the following fact: the opinion that publics have about an organisation and their resulting behaviour is always the result of a process of acquiring knowledge about products, services, brand, organisation, etc., which develops over time and does not emerge only from the messages produced by the organisation itself. It is therefore extremely important for the organisation’s image and reputation to be constantly analysed by public relations (Gonçalves, 2010: 17).

For Fombrun and Van Riel (2004), building a positive reputation is related to the way the organisation interacts with stakeholders. To “acquire a reputation that is positive, enduring and resilient, requires managers to invest heavily in building and maintaining good relationships with their company’s constituents (Fombrun, 1996: 57). Grunig, Grunig and Dozier (2002), based on the Excellence Study, suggested that the quality of relationships and reputation result more from the behaviour than from messages disseminated. Bronn (2007) also saw relationship outcomes as determinants of reputation. MacMillan, Money, Downing and Hillendbrand (2005) explained that at the heart of any business relationship is trust and

commitment by its stakeholders, and that reputation affects organizations stakeholder relationships.

Communication is of paramount importance to organizational image and reputation. Communication can influence how people perceive an organization on three levels (Broomly, 2000, in Van Riel & Fombrun, 2007: 1) Primary level - personal experience; 2) Secondary level - what friends and colleagues say about an organization or products; 3) Tertiary Level - mass media information (advertising, publicity). Secondary sources and mass media are the biggest sources of information but also the least influential. As van Riel and Fombrun (2007) stressed, the greatest degree of impact on reputation is the primary level, but the least used. In fact, most reputation assessments are measured by university rankings (ex. Time Times Higher Education Ranking; Shanghai Ranking; U-Multirank), which end up shaping universities' competitive behaviour. As pinpointed by Altbach (2015: 2), rankings "are widely criticised for their questionable methods or flaws, as well as for the concept itself, but everyone uses them".

Van Riel and Fombrun (2007), after analysing 7 years of data based on the Reputation Quotient and RepTrack identified six principles for communication that are associated with high reputation ranking: visibility, distinctiveness, authenticity, transparency, responsiveness and consistency. Visibility results from public exposure, mainly due to a strong media presence and to a well-earned positive publicity. Organization distinctive characteristics – slogans, trademarks, logos, organizational stories – make every organization unique. Authenticity, as one of the most important drivers of reputation, only exists if there are no gaps between the organization identity, communication and action. That is, organizations that are genuine, reliable and trustworthy. Transparent and responsible organizations are aware of the importance of allowing stakeholders to access information that helps them to have a more accurate evaluation of the organization and to be open to dialogue and feedback. Finally, the key to achieving consistency is aligning the various identities of the organization.

Based on this review it can be stressed that, to optimise the internationalisation process, a strategic communication approach to HEIs reputation is necessary. To succeed, the reputation platform must not only be strategically positioned; it must be managed by PR and

marketing departments in an integrated and harmonizing approach to communication. Communication asserts the organisation's relevance among others by providing information, creating awareness, stimulating, motivating and promoting stakeholder engagement, creating bonds/connections and favouring continued relationships, contributing to the organisation's positive reputation and aligning processes and practices with the institutional mission.

5. CONCLUSIONS

Internationalisation has been many higher education institutions' response to globalisation. Portuguese public universities have adopted internationalisation as an essential pillar and find in the recruitment of international students a strategic foundation to guarantee their long-term sustainability. Education organisations interact with a considerable number of publics over time. In the case of recruiting international students, it is important for HEIs to identify and understand the factors that have the greatest influence when searching for and choosing a country and institution and what has an impact on their experience. This means they can make informed decisions to improve international students' experiences and drive forward and optimise the internationalisation process.

Public relations as a strategic management function (Grunig, Grunig & Dozier, 2002) can have a pivotal role in optimizing the internationalization processes. The strategic management paradigm of public relations focuses on the participation of public relations practitioners in strategic decision making so that they can help manage both communication and behaviour of organizations. Van den Bosch and Van Riel (1998, apud Kim, Hung, Yang & Grunig, 2013: 201) defined this type of Public Relations as a bridging function. The bridging activity is designed to build relationships with stakeholders. For achieve this goal a two-way communication model is necessary in order to provide publics a voice in management decisions and to facilitate dialog between management and publics.

In this perspective, public relations has value for HEIs internationalization processes because it brings issues to the attention of strategic managers. Public relations can counsel the top management team about the pro and cons of any policy decision on strategic publics, such as students, professors, researchers, and university staff. In the long run, public relations

contribute for the organization reputation management. But as stressed by Kim et al. (2013), reputation management involves much more than managing messages distributed through the mass media to the general population, “an organization is ‘branded’ by its behaviour, and bad behaviour damages its reputation” (Kim et al., 2013: 209). Therefore, public relations professionals should also be able to play an important role in organizational governance.

To conclude, we can argue that there are future opportunities for the public relations in the internationalisation processes of higher education institutions. Communication and relationship building can become a long-term organisational differentiation strategy for HEIs that also adopt it as a strategy to differentiate their brands. Furthermore, it is public relations professionals’ full responsibility to manage reputation, the number one priority for international students when choosing a country and institution, and to manage relationships, which in HEIs’ case involve a significant public.

6. REFERENCES

ALTBACH, P. (2015). The dilemmas of ranking. *International higher education*, 42 (online). <https://doi.org/10.6017/ihe.2006.42.7878>.

BARON, D. (2000). *Business and its Environment*. 3rd ed. NJ: Prentice Hall.

BOHM, A., DAVIS, D., MEARES, D., & PEARCE, D. (2002). *The global student mobility 2025 report: Forecasts of the global demand for international education*. IDP, Canberra, Australia. Accessed on 20 March 2019, available at: <http://www.foresightfordevelopment.org/sobipro/download-file/46-333/54>.

BRONN, P.S. (2007). Relationship outcomes as determinants of reputation. *Corporate Communications: An international Journal*, 12 (4), 376-393.

CARNEIRO, J., CAVALCANTI, M., & SILVA, J. (1997). Porter revisitado: análise crítica da tipologia estratégica do mestre. *Revista de Administração Contemporânea*, 1(3), 7-30. <https://dx.doi.org/10.1590/S1415-65551997000300002>.

CHILDRESS, L. K. (2009). Planning for Internationalization By Investing in Faculty. *Journal of International & Global Studies*, 1(1), 30–49.

FOMBRUN, C. (1996). *Reputation: Realizing value from the corporate image*. Boston: Harvard Business School Press.

FOMBRUN, C. & RIEL, C. (2004). *Fame and Fortune: How successful companies build winning reputations*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Financial Times Prentice-Hall.

GONÇALVES, G. (2010). *Introdução à Teoria das Relações Públicas*. Porto, Portugal: Porto Editora.

GRUNIG, L. A., GRUNIG, J. E., & DOZIER, D. M. (2002). *Excellent public relations and effective organizations: A study of communication management in three countries*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

IAU – International Association of Universities (2018). *IAU 5th global survey on internationalisation of higher education institutional questionnaire*. Accessed on 18 March 2019, available at: <https://www.iau-aiu.net/IMG/pdf/iau-5th-global-survey-questionnaire.pdf>.

KIM, J.N., HUNG, C. J., YANG, S. & GRUNIG, J. (2013). A strategic management approach to reputation, relationships, and publics. In Carroll, C. *The Handbook of Communication and Corporate Reputation* (197-212). Chichester, West Sussex: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

KNIGHT, J. (2002). Trade Talk: An Analysis of the Impact of Trade Liberalization and the General Agreement on Trade in Services on Higher Education. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 6(3), 209-229.

KNIGHT, J. (2008). *Higher education in turmoil. The changing world of internationalisation*. Rotterdam, the Netherlands: Sense Publishers.

KNIGHT J. (2015a). Updated Definition of Internationalization. *International Higher Education*, 33 (online). Accessed on 18 March 2019, available at: <https://ejournals.bc.edu/ojs/index.php/ihe/article/view/7391>.

KNIGHT, J. (2015b). Five Myths about Internationalization. *International Higher Education*, 62 (online). <https://doi.org/10.6017/ihe.2011.62.8532>.

LI, M., & BRAY, M. (2007). Cross-border flows of students for higher education: Push-pull factors and motivations of mainland Chinese students in Hong Kong and Macau. *Higher education*, 53(6), 791-818. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-005-5423-3>.

MACMILLAN, K., MONEY, K., DOWNING, S. & HILLENBRAND, C. (2005). Reputation in Relationships: Measuring Experiences, Emotions and Behaviors. *Corporate Reputation Review*, 8 (3), 214-32. <https://doi.org/10.1057/palgrave.crr.1540251>.

MAZZAROL, T., & SOUTAR, G. N. (2002). "Push-pull" factors influencing international student destination choice. *International Journal of Educational Management*, 16(2), 82-90. <https://doi.org/10.1108/09513540210418403>.

OECD (2018). Education at a Glance 2018: OECD Indicators, OECD Publishing, Paris. Accessed on 23 March 2019, available at: <http://www.oecd.org/education/education-at-a-glance/>.

PORTER, M. E. (2004). *Estratégia competitiva: técnicas para análise de indústrias e da concorrência*. 2. ed. Rio de Janeiro: Elsevier, 2004

RIES, A. & TROUT, J. (2002). *Posicionamento: a batalha por sua mente*. São Paulo: Makron Books.

SCHLAGER, T., BODDERAS, M., MAAS, P., & LUC CACHELIN, J. (2011). The influence of the employer brand on employee attitudes relevant for service branding: an empirical investigation. *Journal of Services Marketing*, 25(7), 497-508. Accessed on 18 March 2019, available at: <https://www.emeraldinsight.com/doi/full/10.1108/08876041111173624>.

SERRALVO, F. A., & FURRIER, M. T. (2004). *Fundamentos do posicionamento de marcas: uma revisão teórica*. In FEA/USP, *Seminário em Administração* 7 (1-11), São Paulo FEA/USP.

UNESCO (2015). *Declaração de Incheon educação 2030: rumo a uma educação de qualidade inclusiva e equitativa e à educação ao longo da vida para todos*. Accessed on 18 March 2019, available at: https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000243278_por.

VAN RIEL, C. B., & FOMBRUN, C. J. (2007). *Essentials of corporate communication: Implementing practices for effective reputation management*. London: Routledge.

WILKINS, S., & HUISMAN, J. (2011). Student recruitment at international branch campuses: can they compete in the global market? *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 15(3), 299-316. <https://doi.org/10.1177/102831531038546>.

Forma de citar este artículo:

Ferreira, C. (2019). The challenges of the strategic communication of the Portuguese public universities in the internationalization processes. *Revista Internacional de Relaciones Públicas*, Vol. IX, Nº 18, 179-196. Recuperado el __ de _____ de ____, de <http://dx.doi.org/10.5783/RIRP-18-2019-10-179-196>.