

ощущать свою принадлежность к социально значимой референтной группе железнодорожников, он настраивается и самопрограмируется в зоне доминирующих образов, символы побуждают его на развитие в заданном плане. Более того, символы сохраняют устойчивую коммуникацию между образовательным брендом и личностью обучающегося. Причем показательны результаты такой

коммуникации не только у студентов, умеющих мыслить в гуманитарной парадигме.

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## SYMBOLS OF A UNIVERSITY IN THE PERCEPTION OF STUDENTS

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### ABSTRACT

The author highlights a topical issue for the communicative space of an educational brand. Alma mater symbols play identification, programming and cognitive role in the involvement of the students. Young people perceive through these symbols their belonging to a socially significant group, adapt to a certain self-programming using visual sense from the proposed images. It represents further personal development, future profession. This means that the symbols can communicate between educational brand and personality of a student.

### ENGLISH SUMMARY

**Background.** It is not a secret that the significance of universities ranking increases. And each of them is trying to present itself as an educational brand – «a set of unique functional, emotional, social promises to target consumers which are unique and important for them, meet their needs the best way» [1, p.35].

The uniqueness of this educational brand as MIIT, in the format of identification branding is based on a combination of two environments: technical and humanitarian, their interaction and structuring of future specialists in the context of the entire transport sector. The fact that this fusion will increase, and this is the right direction, in particular, confirms the President of JSC «Russian Railways» Vladimir I. Yakunin. In his opinion the current situation dictates the need for a new approach to the competencies and management skills of managers who «should not be limited only with possession of engineering knowledge, they must also learn a whole range of disciplines in the field of economics and social sciences» [2]. For a transport higher education institution such a promise becomes a challenge of time, a measure of how deeply we understand the context of the inevitable interaction of technical and humanitarian environments. Under this point of view, problems of identification branding gain their own meaning.

**Objective.** The objective of the author is to investigate the perception of MIIT educational brand among MIIT students.

**Methods.** The author uses descriptive method and analysis.

#### Results.

#### Brand loyalty

Educational brand will successfully instill loyalty to brands «MIIT», «miitovets» [Russian word based on acronym for MIIT staff member or MIIT student – ed.note] if the basis of their construction would be corporate identity – a sense of belonging to railways, communication routes, presence of valuable importance of study in this famous

higher education institution, adaptation projections to the transport community. Dostoevsky describes in «The Brothers Karamazov» (a book «of our [Russian] mentality») XIX century as the century of «industry and railways» [3, p. 10]. MIIT graduates in the next, the twentieth century finished construction of Trans-Siberian Railway, and their projects are also Turkestan-Siberia Railway (Turksib), Baikal-Amur Mainline (BAM). They played a huge role in the industrialization of the country, the victory in World War II, the country's reconstruction after war devastation. And in the XXI century specialists with diplomas of the oldest university of means of communication continue to create, to participate in the Russian and international transport projects.

MIIT museum, which realizes itself in several aspects, including both branded educational production site, students learn about the history of the university, the fate of «miitovtsev», accustom themselves to corporate responsibility to society and the state. Right there, in the museum, they are introduced to books of graduates, on graduates, with the scientific aspect of their activities.

This side is increasingly historical, and another angle adjoins to, forming loyalty to the university image. During student life students begin to feel the real existence of industrial research schools and evaluate the research directions of their teachers and departments, become familiar with the understanding of universality of the theme «railroad», which brings together both technical and humanitarian spheres, and most importantly – more clearly differentiate «their» and «foreign» symbols.

### Perception of symbols by humanities-minded students

In the educational brand there are usually both graphic and semantic patterns of main directions of identification branding. Are the present-day university symbols consistent with it?

In communicative educational space MIIT brand exists as a symbolic unity, forming a space-time field of the subject. According to the survey (200 students responded, a sample is representative, quota and random) it is clear how students perceive the structure of MIIT brand, «body» of which is structured in color and graphic symbols of the «blue-speed train», and intention of the soul is expressed in the name and the verbal message from the time of the last of the Romanovs: first, Imperial College, then settled – MIIT, in today's time and space – State University of Railway Engineering. The visual component of the image reflects the deeper meanings of students as the subject of social communication: «we are all in the same train», «strive forward», «up to date», «future», «absence of obstacles: no traffic jams», «comfort, safety, speed, stability, taste for life», «the road everywhere: to Europe, Asia».



Anthropological and axiological attributes of the brand act as a personalized symbolism: sculpture near the main building of the university – a bronze image of the eternal student sample of the XIX century with epaulets, on which there are ax and anchor. With regard to the unity of humanitarian and technical spheres, maybe it appears in the type of behavior, which is shown in the sculpture: with dignity, holding a book in his hand, this young man is ready to comprehend the knowledge, at its disposal there is a wide range of associations for programming certain mentality, feelings and ideas, positive attitude to the subject of communication. In the view of respondents this student «is a fine fellow, they want to model themselves on him», «looks to the future», «for us he sits in the rain, in the snow, he wants us to remember history, respect alma mater», «waits for his train», «is purposeful, focused, likes to learn», «is steadfast in his legs, his posture, and the rector of MIIT offered to clean the shoes of this sculpture during the session», «is ready to leap into a new», «may be a companion», «gives us a part of himself», «calls upon to do as well as he, along with him, and even better», «he respects the passers-by».

Ax and anchor on his epaulettes mean (apart from the main semantic load of united water and land routes) in conjunction with a graphic logo «blue train»: «the oldest higher education institution with a modern spirit».

In a holistic interpretation we obtain the following: «everyone is waiting for his train», «road to life», «way to study, to work», «assurance that we will reach the destination», «all have enough space on the train», «a proverb «gnaw granite of science» becomes real and close and appears the understanding that «it is exciting».

As a result, the symbolism of the brand MIIT adequately positions itself for a humanities-minded student as a tool for constructing his own identity «miitovets» in the field of various social practices.

#### **Symbols in the perception of the students-«techies»**

Engineering students may not need to strengthen corporate identity, as they originally focus on the transport sector by the choice of profession. It is possible that the symbols for them are just an accompanying legend.

Of 200 respondents in this category (the sample is representative as for quota and random) 80% visited a museum containing many unique exhibits: a laboratory of Proskuryakov, installation of Maksimenko, flags of the Soviet period, the vessel of Kablukov [famous MIIT professors of 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries- ed. note]. They visited museums of physics and geodesy of corresponding departments. They saw a bust of Kochenov, and a stele of Volodin, a monument to Dzerzhinsky [personalities of railway ministry of respective periods – ed.note]. They saw all of this, but 70% consider these exhibits only as an educational material and not as a cultural heritage, not as symbols.

**Keywords:** higher school, higher education institution rating, educational brand, competitiveness, identification branding, corporate identity, social integration, communication.

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Characteristically, all have been in the home church, but not everyone remembers a unique icon of St. Nicholas, where the saint is holding in his left hand a model of the main building of the university, as if protecting it from possible adverse effects, giving educational brand of MIIT a life-saving mission, saturating it with fertile energy.

The fact that such a symbol is a rare phenomenon for the university, has not been noted by any person among the surveyed students of technical specialties.

The most recognizable symbol for the representatives of technical specialties is the same «eternal student», the figure of the imperial college. In this sculpture the students see their predecessor, with the same problems. Naturally, there is a transfer of identification, and on this basis there is trust and, as a consequence, the loyalty to the educational brand. Characteristically, that 65% of respondents said «the awareness that MIIT is a known educational brand came to them after entering the university».

«University logo and bronze student are the most memorable symbols» – was the conclusion of a fourth year student Natalia Ivanova, who participated in our field study. Recommendations to strengthen the awareness of students about university symbols sounded in her speech at the Student Scientific Conference «Science for Transport» and it is quite natural. The main areas of work: «during the course in history to tell the story of historical formation of the university», «to show a film about the symbols of the university for prospective students», «to make a tradition to show the museum not only to students, but also to prospective students».

These recommendations were embodied in expanded form in the report of 4<sup>th</sup> year students Christina Shauro, Maria Gracheva «Open Day as PR-project», in the study of Galina Lysenkova and Yulia Timofeeva «MIIT Brand in the eyes of prospective students». They gave data from a survey of students about the most important criteria when choosing a university. It has been confirmed that this is a notable brand of the university.

**Conclusions.** All these studies prove that there is a need in the modern context to revive the meaning of the symbols and cultural heritage of MIIT, closely connect the current educational and socialization tasks of the university with a professional engineering training of students and their prospects in the real working life in the transport sector.

In awareness of the involvement of students in the educational brand symbols play identification, programming and cognitive role. Students begin to feel that they belong to the socially significant reference group of railway workers. Moreover, these symbols remain stable communication between educational brand and a student's personality. The results of this communication are indicative not only of the students who are able to think in humanitarian paradigm.

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