

**STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT DIRECTIONS OF CONSUMER BEHAVIOR TO ENHANCE
COMPETITIVENESS IN THE HIGHER EDUCATION SERVICES MARKET****Qodirov Uktamjon Abdumannonovich****Abstract**

This thesis substantiates the relevance of strategic management of consumer behavior in the context of increasing competition in the higher education services market. The study examines the organization of higher education institutions' activities based on market principles, as well as the identification and satisfaction of applicants' and students' needs in order to form competitive advantages. Furthermore, the impact of mechanisms aimed at ensuring student satisfaction and loyalty on the long-term sustainable development of higher education institutions is justified.

Keywords

Higher education market, educational services, competitive environment, consumer behavior, strategic marketing, segmentation, differentiation.

Аннотация

В данной работе обосновывается актуальность стратегического управления поведением потребителей в условиях усиления конкурентной среды на рынке образовательных услуг высшего образования. В исследовании рассматриваются вопросы организации деятельности высших учебных заведений на основе рыночных принципов, а также выявления и удовлетворения потребностей абитуриентов и студентов с целью формирования конкурентных преимуществ. Кроме того, обосновано влияние механизмов обеспечения удовлетворенности и лояльности студентов на долгосрочное устойчивое развитие высших учебных заведений.

Ключевые слова

Рынок высшего образования, образовательные услуги, конкурентная среда, поведение потребителей, стратегический маркетинг, сегментация, дифференциация.

In the modern context, the higher education services market is becoming an increasingly competitive environment. Both public and private higher education institutions, including O'zbekiston Milliy universiteti (National University of Uzbekistan), Toshkent davlat iqtisodiyot universiteti (Tashkent State University of Economics), and Westminster International University in Tashkent, are striving to strengthen their positions through the quality of education, the innovativeness of educational programs, and their adaptability to student needs. In this process, the strategic management of consumer behavior becomes a key factor in enhancing competitiveness.

Consumer behavior is the combination of economic, social, and psychological factors manifested in the process by which applicants and students choose, evaluate, and develop loyalty to an educational institution. The higher education services market has its own specific characteristics, where the decision-making process is directly linked to long-term prospects, social status, and future professional success.

Strategic management of consumer behavior primarily involves market segmentation, identifying target audiences, and developing a clear value proposition for them. Improving educational programs by taking into account the socio-demographic characteristics, professional interests, and financial capabilities of each segment ensures a competitive advantage. Additionally, due to the intangible nature of educational services and the dependence of quality on human factors, standardizing the service delivery process and strengthening internal quality control are also of critical importance.

In the modern context, digital transformation has a significant impact on consumer behavior. Online admission systems, distance learning platforms, active communication on social media, and transparent information policies increase applicants' trust. The university brand, its reputation, and the success of its graduates are key factors that psychologically influence consumer decisions. In this regard, regularly monitoring student satisfaction, analyzing feedback, and continuously improving services are integral components of strategic management.

The main directions of strategic management of consumer behavior to enhance competitiveness are as follows:

1. Market segmentation and identification of target audiences. Segmenting applicants according to their socio-demographic characteristics, geographic location, and professional interests allows educational services to be tailored to specific needs.
2. Developing a value proposition. The quality of education, the competence of faculty, international cooperation, practical training opportunities, and graduate employability should be emphasized as key priorities.
3. Digital marketing and communication strategy. Transparent and prompt information exchange through social media, official websites, and online platforms strengthens consumer trust.
4. Developing the brand image. The positive reputation of the higher education institution, its position in rankings, and the success of its graduates contribute to brand capitalization.
5. Managing the student experience. The convenience of the educational process, infrastructure, and academic and psychological support services enhance student loyalty.
6. Analysis of communication and feedback. Surveys, monitoring, and evaluations are essential for identifying student needs and establishing mechanisms for continuous improvement.

In conclusion, achieving success in the higher education services market depends not only on improving the quality of education but also on a deep understanding and strategic management of consumer behavior. A consumer-oriented management model ensures the long-term competitive advantage of higher education institutions and strengthens their position both nationally and internationally.

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