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THE IMPACT OF A SLOGAN ON LOYALTY IN HIGHER EDUCATION: A CASE STUDY AT IDE LPKIA

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Abstrak

This study aims to explore the impact of institutional slogans on student and alumni loyalty in higher education, with a case study conducted at IDE LPKIA. The slogan under examination, "Graduates are Easily Employed and Internationally Certified," serves as the focal point for analyzing perceptions, motivations, and brand loyalty among stakeholders. Employing a qualitative research method, the study involved 20 respondents consisting of current students and alumni. Data were collected through in-depth interviews and open-ended questionnaires to capture the nuanced opinions and lived experiences of the participants. The findings reveal that while many respondents perceive the slogan as a strong motivational factor and a key reason for choosing IDE LPKIA, others regard it primarily as a marketing tool with limited influence on actual loyalty. Moreover, the slogan's promise of employability and certification positively correlates with students' sense of institutional pride and commitment. Practical implications of this study suggest that higher education institutions must ensure alignment between slogan messaging and real student outcomes to strengthen loyalty and institutional reputation. The study contributes to understanding how branding elements such as slogans can influence long-term stakeholder engagement in the education sector.

Keywords: institutional loyalty; higher education; slogan impact; student motivation; branding strategy

1. Introduction

In the competitive landscape of higher education, institutional branding has become a vital component in shaping public perception and influencing stakeholder behavior [1]. One of the most strategic tools in this branding effort is the institutional slogan, which encapsulates the institution's core values and promises in a concise and memorable phrase. The slogan "Graduates are Easily Employed and Internationally Certified" adopted by IDE LPKIA is intended to position the institution as a provider of practical, globally relevant education [2]. This study aims to analyze how this slogan affects the loyalty of students and alumni—both emotionally and behaviorally—within the context of a private vocational higher education institution[3].

The primary objective of this study is to examine how students and alumni perceive the slogan and whether it influences their sense of trust, pride, and belonging toward the institution. Loyalty in higher education is increasingly viewed not just as a byproduct of academic satisfaction but as an outcome of perceived institutional credibility and authenticity [4]. If a slogan aligns with actual student outcomes,

it can serve as a reinforcement mechanism that fosters emotional connection [5] and long-term loyalty [1]. However, misalignment between slogan and experience may result in disillusionment, weakening students' and alumni's connection with their alma mater.

In this qualitative study involving 20 respondents, the focus is on how the slogan shapes experiences during and after formal education. Loyalty can manifest in various ways, such as continued participation in institutional activities, alumni contributions, and positive word- of-mouth promotion [2]. These behaviors are directly influenced by the degree of congruence between institutional claims and lived experiences [6]. Therefore, exploring the perceptions surrounding the slogan can provide deeper insights into how branding affects stakeholder engagement in a non-commercial educational environment [7].

One central issue lies in the interpretation of the slogan as either a genuine institutional promise or merely a marketing tool [8]. In an era where consumers—students, in this case—are more critical and discerning, promotional claims must be substantiated with tangible evidence [9]. If the

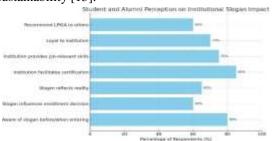
institution fails to deliver the promises implied in its slogan, such as ease of employment or access to international certification, it risks damaging its credibility and reputation, leading to diminished student satisfaction and weakened loyalty [10] .

Another important dimension is the slogan's role in positioning the institution against public universities (PTNs), which often benefit from stronger reputations, more extensive resources, and government subsidies. Private institutions like LPKIA must find innovative ways to differentiate themselves, and a slogan emphasizing employability and certification may offer a strategic advantage if backed by valid data [3]. However, without transparent metrics on employment rates and international accreditation success, the slogan could be perceived as empty rhetoric.

Institutional loyalty is not formed solely through academic interactions but is built through the entirety of the student experience—including how well the institution fulfills its stated promises [11]. Students who perceive the slogan as aligned with their experiences are more likely to feel satisfied and develop a lasting emotional attachment to their institution [3]. This emotional loyalty becomes critical in motivating alumni to serve as ambassadors for the institution, thereby reinforcing its brand identity over time [12].

Given the rising skepticism among prospective students, it is essential for higher education institutions to provide evidence-based communication [12]. Slogans must evolve from being purely promotional to being strategic representations of institutional values and performance [11] . By assessing student and alumni perceptions of slogan credibility, institutions can better tailor their communication strategies to foster transparency, trust, and long- term loyalty [4] .

In summary, this study provides an in-depth exploration of the influence of institutional slogans on stakeholder loyalty in the context of a vocational private higher education institution. While existing research has examined branding and loyalty separately, this study integrates both elements by focusing on the lived realities behind institutional messaging. The novelty of this study lies in its dual focus on slogan perception and loyalty formation, particularly within a private, non-elite educational context where branding plays a critical role in maintaining competitiveness and institutional sustainability [13].



2. Literatur Reviews

Institutional loyalty in higher education refers to the emotional and behavioral commitment of students and alumni to their alma mater. According to Helgesen and Nesset (2007), institutional loyalty is influenced by both cognitive (e.g., satisfaction with facilities and teaching) and emotional (e.g., pride, trust) factors. A loyal student is more likely to participate in campus activities, recommend the institution to others, and support it after graduation. This loyalty is not built overnight; rather, it evolves through consistent and positive educational experiences. Thus, understanding how external messaging, such as slogans, contributes to this loyalty becomes essential for strategic communication [9].

Branding has become a strategic imperative for higher education institutions (HEIs) amid increasing competition. As observed by Hemsley-Brown and Oplatka (2006), branding is no longer limited to corporate settings but is widely used by universities to differentiate themselves. In this context, a slogan functions as a core branding element that encapsulates an institution's promise, mission, and uniqueness. Successful branding, including effective slogans, enhances institutional identity, increases student trust, and encourages retention [10]. It also helps establish an emotional connection that fosters long-term institutional loyalty [4].

The impact of a slogan depends largely on its credibility and alignment with student expectations. According to Keller's (1993) Customer-Based Brand Equity model, slogans form part of brand salience and imagery—two dimensions critical for establishing strong brand equity [2]. A slogan like "Graduates are Easily Employed and Internationally Certified" makes a concrete promise. If students and alumni perceive this promise as realistic and fulfilled, it strengthens their loyalty and perception of institutional quality [13]. However, if the slogan is perceived as mere rhetoric, it can damage trust and reduce engagement [3].

Motivation plays a mediating role in how students respond to institutional slogans. Ryan and (2000)Self-Determination Deci's emphasizes the importance of autonomy, competence, and relatedness in student motivation [7]. A slogan that promises career readiness and international certification may appeal to the need for competence and future security, thus motivating students to engage more deeply in their studies. Motivation driven by a belief in institutional value often leads to higher satisfaction and, in turn, loyalty [1]. Therefore, slogans can act as motivational cues that influence how students experience and value their education [2].

A successful slogan taps into emotional branding, which refers to marketing strategies designed to evoke emotional responses [13]. In the educational context, this means cultivating a sense of pride and belonging through messages that resonate

with students' goals and aspirations. Emotional engagement—triggered by branding messages—has been found to influence students' attachment to the institution, creating advocates who promote their university even after graduation [10]. For institutions like IDE LPKIA, emotional branding via slogans can help develop a distinctive identity in a saturated market [14].

Students are more likely to develop loyalty when they perceive a good fit between their personal values and the institution's brand values. According to Punjaisri and Wilson (2007), internal brand alignment—how well internal stakeholders (e.g., students and staff) understand and believe in the brand—is critical for brand success [14]. When a slogan reflects what students value (e.g., job readiness), they are more likely to align with the institution's identity and become brand ambassadors. Conversely, a mismatch between brand promises and student realities can lead to disengagement.

A slogan's effectiveness depends not only on its content but also on its consistent delivery across institutional channels. As suggested by Balmer and Gray (2003), brand messages must be reinforced through actual institutional practices such as curriculum, internships, and certification. If students repeatedly encounter institutional messages that are not backed by tangible experiences, they may become skeptical. Thus, consistency between slogan and student experience is a key driver of institutional trust and loyalty. This also reinforces the idea that branding is not just about communication, but about aligning perception with experience [13].

In a higher education market increasingly characterized by competition from public institutions, slogans can offer a source of differentiation [9]. According to Wilkins and Huisman (2011), private institutions must highlight their unique value propositions to remain competitive [10]. A slogan promising international certification and employability can create a perceived competitive edge, especially if supported by graduate success stories and employer partnerships [15]. This not only enhances institutional image but also contributes to higher enrollment and retention rates, particularly in private institutions like LPKIA.

Alumni loyalty is a crucial dimension of institutional sustainability, contributing to donations, mentorship, and advocacy [15]. Research by Weerts and Ronca (2008) indicates that alumni engagement is closely linked to their satisfaction and emotional connection with the institution during their studies. A slogan that reflects alumni success and reinforces their positive experiences may strengthen their willingness to support their alma mater. Thus, slogans can serve as continuity mechanisms, reminding alumni of their educational values and outcomes, and reinforcing a lasting bond with the institution [10].

Overall, the literature reveals that slogans are not merely promotional tools but are deeply connected to

institutional loyalty, motivation, and branding. Their effectiveness lies in how well they are integrated into the student experience and perceived as authentic [4]. This study contributes to the literature by focusing specifically on how vocational students and alumni interpret and respond to a professionally oriented slogan, an area still underexplored [13]. The novelty of this research lies in its intersectional approach analyzing slogan impact not just from a branding perspective, but also through the lenses of motivation, emotional attachment, and institutional competitiveness within a private higher education setting [7].

3. Metode Research

This study employed a qualitative research approach to explore the influence of institutional slogans on student and alumni loyalty at IDE LPKIA. Qualitative methods are suitable for capturing indepth insights, personal perceptions, and contextual interpretations that quantitative methods may not fully reveal [3]. Since the focus is on understanding subjective experiences and meanings associated with the slogan "Graduates are Easily Employed and Internationally Certified," a qualitative design was deemed most appropriate.

A total of 20 respondents participated in this research, consisting of a combination of active students and alumni. These respondents were selected using purposive sampling, where [16] participants were chosen based on their relevance to the research objective [12]. The criteria included having completed at least one year of study (for students) or having graduated within the last five years (for alumni). This ensured that participants had sufficient experience to assess the relevance and impact of the slogan on their perceptions and loyalty.

Data were collected through two primary techniques: semi-structured interviews and openended questionnaires [10]. Semi-structured interviews allowed for flexibility in exploring emerging themes, while open-ended questionnaires enabled participants to freely express their thoughts. Each interview lasted approximately 30–45 minutes and was recorded with the participants' consent. Interviews were conducted either in person or online, depending on the availability and location of the respondents.

The analysis process followed a thematic analysis approach[6]. After transcription, the data were coded using open coding, followed by categorization and theme identification [6]. Themes such as perceived credibility of the slogan, alignment with institutional experience, motivation to study, and emotional attachment to the institution emerged from the data. These themes were then interpreted in relation to the research questions and existing literature [11].

To ensure the validity and trustworthiness of the findings, the study applied triangulation, member checking, and peer debriefing. Triangulation was

achieved by comparing data from interviews and questionnaires. Member checking was conducted by returning a summary of findings to selected participants for verification. Peer debriefing involved discussions with fellow researchers to reduce potential bias during interpretation [9].

Overall, this methodology enables a holistic understanding of how an institutional slogan can influence student and alumni loyalty. It provides nuanced insights that can guide institutional branding strategies, particularly for vocational institutions seeking to enhance their competitive edge through targeted communication [9].

| No | Infor - mant Code | Status | Faculty/ Program | Remarks |
|----|----------------------------|---------|----------------------------|--|
| 1 | R1 | Student | Informatics Management | Actively involved in campus job-prep events |
| 2 | R2 | Student | Business Administration | Recently completed an internation al course |
| 3 | R3 | Alumni | Accounting | Working in a multination al company |
| 4 | R4 | Alumni | Information Systems | Has obtained internation al IT certificatio n |

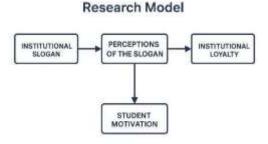


Fig 1. Research Model

The research model diagram illustrates the relationship between institutional slogans and

institutional loyalty within the context of higher education. It begins with the institutional slogan as the starting point, which influences students' perceptions of the slogan[15]. These perceptions then have a direct impact on institutional loyalty, highlighting the importance of how messages are received and interpreted. Additionally, student motivation is shown as an intervening factor that is shaped by perceptions and contributes indirectly to loyalty[15]. This model emphasizes that a slogan's effectiveness is not only based on its content but also on how it motivates students and aligns with their academic and professional goals, ultimately influencing their emotional attachment and long- term loyalty to the institution.

4. Result and Discussion

4.1 Result

| Interview Topic | Summary of Responses |
|--|---|
| When did you first hear the LPKIA slogan "graduates easily get jobs and are internationally certified"? | Most respondents became aware of the slogan before or after enrolling, through posters, online searches, or recommendations. |
| Did the slogan influence your decision to choose LPKIA? | Mixed responses. Some were influenced positively by the slogan, seeing it as promising. Others chose LPKIA due to recommendations, location, or other factors. |
| Does the slogan reflect your experience at LPKIA? | Generally, respondents felt the slogan was somewhat reflected in their experience through training and internships. However, several mentioned inconsistencies in implementation. |
| Does LPKIA provide international certification opportunities? | Many respondents confirmed participating in certification programs like MOS and TOEIC. Some felt opportunities were limited or not evenly distributed across majors. |
| Has LPKIA equipped you with relevant job skills? | Most agreed that LPKIA offers practical courses, certifications, and software training aligned |

| | with industry needs. Some noted unequal access depending on major or semester. |
|---|--|
| Do LPKIA graduates easily find jobs after graduation? | Responses were optimistic, supported by alumni success stories and partnerships with companies. However, individual effort was still considered crucial. |
| Are you proud to be an LPKIA student/alumnus? | Most expressed pride due to practical learning and employability. Some wanted more national recognition for the institution. |
| Would you recommend LPKIA to others? | Majority would recommend LPKIA for its career-focused approach, although a few were hesitant due to facility or recognition concerns. |
| Do you feel attached or loyal to LPKIA? | Many felt emotionally connected through memorable experiences and support from staff. Others remained neutral due to limited campus involvement. |
| Does the slogan contribute to your loyalty to LPKIA? | Several respondents said the slogan reinforced their motivation and trust in the institution. Others saw the slogan as symbolic but not significantly impactful. |

Based on the interview summary table above, it can be interpreted that the majority of informants were aware of the institutional slogan "Lulusannya Mudah Bekerja dan Bersertifikasi Internasional" either before or shortly after entering LPKIA. A significant number of respondents stated that the slogan served as a source of motivation and positively influenced their decision to enroll. Most informants agreed that the slogan reflects their academic experience, especially in relation to the availability of international certifications such as MOS and TOEIC. These certifications are seen as strong institutional support for preparing students to enter the workforce. Furthermore, the respondents generally perceived that LPKIA equips them with relevant and practical skills, which aligns with the promise embedded in the slogan.

In terms of employability, many informants expressed confidence that LPKIA graduates are relatively easy to place in the workforce, citing the institution's industry collaboration and skill-based curriculum. Additionally, most respondents indicated a sense of pride in being part of LPKIA and showed a willingness to recommend the institution to others. This sense of loyalty is further reinforced by their belief that the slogan contributes to their emotional attachment to the institution. However, a small number of participants expressed skepticism, noting that the slogan might not always match their personal experience or may depend on individual efforts. This suggests that while the slogan has a generally positive impact, its effectiveness is influenced by both institutional consistency and individual perception [17].

The thematic table presents responses from 10 informants (INF-01 to INF-10) concerning their perceptions of the institutional slogan "Graduates are Easily Employed and Internationally Certified" at IDE LPKIA. The data offers insight into various dimensions such as awareness, motivational impact, perceived reality, and its influence on loyalty. According to Keller (1993), brand elements like slogans are instrumental in forming brand resonance, where awareness is the first step toward loyalty development [8].

A notable majority of respondents (8 out of 10) were aware of the slogan before enrolling, indicating a high level of slogan dissemination. This aligns with Aaker's (1991) brand equity model, where brand awareness is a foundational component influencing consumer choice. The slogan, therefore, appears effective in capturing attention during the early stages of the student decision-making process[18].

In terms of motivational influence, six respondents confirmed that the slogan served as motivation for choosing the institution. This supports the findings of Kotler and Keller (2012), who argue that effective slogans not only inform but also emotionally persuade stakeholders. The use of employment and international certification appeals to extrinsic motivations, which can strongly impact educational choices [18].

When evaluating the perceived reality of the slogan, only three respondents firmly agreed that the slogan reflects their actual experience, while others expressed doubt or partial agreement. This discrepancy points to a gap between brand promise and service delivery, echoing Lovelock and Wirtz's (2011) concept of service expectation disconfirmation, which can negatively influence satisfaction and trust.

All respondents confirmed the facilitation of international certification, and most acknowledged support in skill preparation and job readiness. These components reflect strong institutional efforts in employability, in line with Yorke's (2006) model of employability, which emphasizes a combination of subject understanding, generic skills, and self-theories as determinants of employment successy[14].

While most respondents perceived an ease in getting jobs post-study, some expressed uncertainty.

The inconsistency might stem from external factors like job market conditions, which, as noted by Tomlinson (2008), complicate the direct linkage between higher education and employment. Nonetheless, the positive responses indicate that the slogan partly delivers on its employment-oriented claim.

Regarding emotional attachment and pride, the majority expressed pride in being an LPKIA student. Pride is an emotional component of brand attachment and aligns with Thomson et al.'s (2005) conceptualization of emotional branding, where positive emotions foster stronger loyalty and advocacy behaviors among stakeholders [3].

The dimension of recommending LPKIA to others received varied responses. While many were affirmative, some hesitated, suggesting a nuanced satisfaction level. This aligns with Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry's (1988) SERVQUAL model, which posits that perceived service quality influences willingness to recommend, a key marker of loyalty and customer satisfaction. Sense of loyalty and contribution of the slogan to loyalty were affirmed by fewer than half of the respondents [12]. This indicates that while the slogan may play a role in initial attraction, it is not a dominant factor in long-term loyalty formation. Reichheld and Sasser (1990) emphasize that consistent service delivery, not just branding, drives customer retention.

In summary, the data suggests that the institutional slogan is effective in raising awareness and attracting new students, partially successful in shaping student motivation and expectations, but less effective in directly influencing long-term loyalty. Institutions must therefore ensure that branding messages are fully aligned with the actual student experience to foster sustained trust, satisfaction, and loyalty.

In summary, the interview data link strongly with established constructs: institutional loyalty is bolstered when slogans align with educational experience; student motivation is enhanced by meaningful slogans; branding strategy must integrate internal and external coherence; and reputation and service quality mediate how slogans transform into loyalty. Evidence from the interviews aligns with modern scholarship, showing that slogans—when authentic and implemented consistently—can positively influence motivation and loyalty in higher education [19].

4.2 Discussion

This study examined how the institutional slogan "Graduates Easily Get Jobs and International Certification" influences student loyalty, motivation, and perceptions of quality in higher education. Based on interviews with students and alumni of LPKIA, it was evident that slogans play a significant role in shaping expectations and perceptions of institutional credibility and value [14]. Many participants recalled

encountering the slogan before or shortly after enrollment, which highlights its reach and visibility as a branding tool.

The data revealed that slogans are more than just promotional statements—they carry emotional and motivational weight. Respondents frequently associated the slogan with future aspirations, practical career goals, and pride in being part of an institution that promises employability and global certification [5]. This supports the notion that motivational messaging can directly influence student attitudes and institutional commitment [10].

A recurring theme in the responses was the importance of message-reality alignment. Students who experienced actual support through certification programs like MOS and TOEIC were more likely to trust the slogan and develop a stronger sense of loyalty. This confirms findings from Ali et al. (2021), who argued that brand trust and authenticity are essential in converting promotional claims into lasting institutional relationships.

Interestingly, not all students viewed the slogan in the same light. A minority believed that the slogan had little influence on their decision or that its promises had not been fully realized. This aligns with Wibowo & Sumarwan (2020), who noted that overpromised branding can create dissonance, leading to dissatisfaction. It highlights the risks of strategic branding that is not matched by consistent internal implementation [7].

The study also suggests that institutional loyalty is strongly correlated with perceived service quality and employability outcomes. Students who had access to practical training, career placement programs, and internationally recognized certifications reported greater loyalty and willingness to recommend the institution to others. This reflects the service-profit chain theory in higher education, where student satisfaction and success drive advocacy and retention [10].

In the context of a competitive educational market—especially with public universities—branding becomes a tool of differentiation. LPKIA's slogan, which emphasizes career-readiness and international relevance, positions it uniquely among vocational institutions [10]. However, for such branding to remain effective, it must evolve alongside changing labor market needs and student expectations [6].

Student motivation, both intrinsic and extrinsic, was influenced by the clarity and realism of the slogan. Those who saw direct pathways from learning to employment through certifications felt more motivated to engage actively in their studies. This supports research by Subekti & Jannah (2020), which found that future-oriented institutional narratives can improve academic motivation and student engagement [15].

A positive institutional image, supported by consistent branding and reliable academic outcomes,

strengthens the emotional bond between students and their universities [9]. This emotional attachment—or institutional affective commitment—was evident in several interviewees who expressed pride in their academic identity and desire to give back to the institution, aligning with the loyalty framework [9].

While slogans may appear superficial to some, this study demonstrates that their impact can be deep and multifaceted—especially when combined with visible support structures, transparent communication, and evidence-based outcomes. The slogan served as a gateway for expectation-setting, but its long-term impact was determined by the degree to which students experienced real benefits during their academic journey.

This study contributes a novel perspective by empirically linking institutional slogans measurable aspects of student loyalty, motivation, and branding efficacy in a vocational higher education setting. Unlike prior research that treats slogans as surface-level marketing tools, this study positions them as meaningful psychological and strategic components of student experience. Practically, institutions should ensure slogan alignment with institutional delivery, integrate brand messaging into academic services, and treat branding as a continuous, evidence-based practice [11]. These findings can guide higher education leaders in crafting slogans that not only attract, but also retain, and empower students throughout their academic lifecycle.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, the findings of this study reveal that institutional slogans play a critical role in shaping students' perceptions, motivations, and loyalty within higher education. The slogan "Graduates Easily Get Jobs and International Certification" has proven to be both influential and memorable among LPKIA students and alumni. Many respondents indicated that the slogan was a contributing factor in their decision to enroll, reflecting its power as a branding and communication tool. Moreover, when the promised benefits—such as access to certifications like MOS and TOEIC-were delivered, students developed stronger trust and loyalty toward the institution [6]. This alignment between messaging and actual experience is vital in sustaining institutional credibility. However, inconsistencies or unmet expectations can lead to skepticism, demonstrating the risks of branding that lacks operational support [13]. The study also highlights how a well-crafted slogan can boost student motivation by connecting education with real- world career outcomes. It reinforces the notion that effective branding is not just external promotion, but also internal alignment with institutional services. Students who perceive the slogan as authentic are more likely to feel emotionally attached to their campus [19]. This emotional connection often translates into pride and a

willingness to recommend the institution to others. The slogan serves not only as a promise but also as a strategic vision for institutional performance. Its impact goes beyond enrollment; it affects how students engage, perform, and relate to their educational journey. Thus, institutional slogans must be more than symbolic—they must be lived and proven. Educational institutions must continuously assess whether their branding aligns with students' lived realities [20]. This ensures that the slogan not only attracts attention but also builds lasting trust and loyalty [10].

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