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Institutional Organisation and the Visual Identity within the Physical Education and Sports Faculties in Romania

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Abstract

This research has as main purpose to analyse the dependent variable known as institutional visual identity consistency within higher education institutions that have Physical Education and Sports, and Kinetotherapy departments within Romania, with the means of the independent variables known as institutional organisation characteristics (knowledge strategy, methods and support). Given the survey and the hypotheses used are adapted from the academic literature, this research has as purpose to identify the connections between these constructs and the effects the independent variables have on the dependent variables. The research was undergone in seven departments with a physical education and sports and kinetotherapy profile from the following cities: Iasi, Bacau, Suceava, Galati, Craiova, Cluj-Napoca and Oradea. The survey has been applied on full-time professors with at least three years experience within these academic institutions. This study is trying to confirm or infirm the following statement: the positive or negative connection between the institutional organisation characteristics and the consistency of institutional visual identity.

Keywords: visual identity, institutional organisation, physical education, stakeholders, needs.

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Introduction

Regarding the physical and graphic dimension of the institutional identity, the notion of institutional visual identity is highlighted. According to Melewar and Saunders (1998), institutional visual identity consists of the name of the institution / company, logo and / or symbol, typography and color. Baker and Balmer (1997) present the visual identity mix as being composed of: company name, logo or symbol, color scheme and type-fount. Melewar and Saunders (1999) consider that there are five basic elements of an institutional / corporate visual identity system: institution name, logo and / or symbol, typography, colors and slogan. Four functions of institutional visual identity can be distinguished in institutional communication. The first three of these are intended for external stakeholders and the fourth for internal audiences. These functions of institutional visual identity are: (1) it provides the institution with a certain degree of visibility and „recognition" (Balmer, 1995: Balmer & Gray, 2000; Dowling, 1993). Effective for all for-profit and non-profit institutions, it is vitally important for people to know that the institution exists and to remember, at the right time, its name and basic activity; (2) it symbolizes an institution for external stakeholders and thus contributes to its image and reputation (Baker & Balmer, 1997). Poor visual identity can be a symptom of general ill-health for the institution. The importance of reputation for the viability of an organization is undeniable and this has been confirmed in several studies (Bickerton, 2000; Fombrun & Rindova, 1998; Greyser, 1999). The specific contribution of institutional visual identity to the institution's reputation has not been investigated as such, although experimental studies have shown that choosing the logo, colors or even the font can affect people's decisions and behavior (Doyle & Bottomley, 2002; Gabrielsen, Kristensen & Hansen, 2000; Van Riel & Van den Ban, (2001). Van den Bosch, De Jong, & Elving (2005) explored the possible relationships between institutional visual identity and reputation and concluded that institutional visual identity plays a supporting role in institutional reputation; (3) Expresses the structure of an institution for its external stakeholders, visualizing its coherence, as well as the relations between divisions or units (Olins, 1989); (4) the institutional visual identity concerns the internal environment and refers to the identification of the employees with the institution as a whole and / or as specific departments for which they work. Identification seems to be crucial for employees (Bromley, 2001; Dutton, Dukerich, & Harquail, 1994; Kiriakidou & Millward, 2000) and institutional visual identity plays a symbolic role in creating such identification.

The identity of higher education institutions with physical education and sports and kinetotherapy departments is the main topic of research. However, given the *institutional identity model* proposed by Melewar and Jenkins (2002) with its various components such as communication and visual identity, behaviour, institutional culture and market conditions, the main component that will be taken into account in this paper is *communication and visual identity*, *institutional visual*

identity to be more precise. The study appeals to SPSS Statistics 20.0 software for the research strategy. With the aid of this software the following statistic indicators were calculated: the Alpha Cronbach coefficient to analyze the reliability of the variables and the Pearson and Spearman coefficient in order to test the hypotheses (valid or invalid).

Research variables

Two independent variables connected to the *institutional organisation* (IO) are used in this research: (1) Variable IO-1 - *Strategy knowledge* variable measures the knowledge of the study participants, who are also employees. This variable has five different items; (2) Variable IO-2 - *Means and support* variable measures the coordination mechanism used to support the different units and functions within an institution. Six items are used for this variable.

All the answers have been measured using the Likert scale with five variants *(1=total disagree; 2=disagree; 3=neutral; 4=agree; 5=total agree)*.

Table 1: The items used for institutional organisation independent variables

Independent Variables	Items
IO-1 Strategy Knowledge	I know what our organisation represents
	I know what our organisation is heading towards
	It is important for our organisation to be easily recognisable
	It is important for our organisation to be different than others
	I know our organisation's mission
IO-2 Means and support	I am given enough training within our organisation to successfully carry out my activity
	I have adequate means within my organisation to carry out my activity
	The staff within the department supports me in my activity
	No one within our organisation is interested in the results of my activity
	There is always a focus on improving our work within our organisation
	All my peers within our organisation are aware of how I carry out my activity

Source: Van den Bosch, Elving, & De Jong (2006).

The dependent variable *visual identity (VI)* can be defined as the extent to which the constitutive elements of VI serve the practical purpose they have been designed for. Similarly, we are interested in the *institutional visual identity consistency. Consistency* can be defined as the connection between the component elements of VI and the connection between them. We believe that this VI consistency depends on the patterns of development of VI and the methods in which these patterns are applied, resulting in an institutional/organisational visual expression that is more or less consistent and solid. This variable has eight items. All the answers have been measured using the Liker scale model (*1- completely disagree to 5- completely agree*).

Table 2: Items used for the visual identity consistency dependent variable

Dependent Variable	Items
VI Consistency	Our organisation can be easily identified through its own VI
	Our VI suits our organisation
	Our organisation'sVI is untidy
	Everyone in our organisation contributes towards a better organisational image
	Everyone in our organization knows the VI rules
	I believe it is important to apply VI
	The organisation's visual materials lack consistency
	Everyone applies VI as they consider best

Source: Van den Bosch, Elving, & De Jong (2006)

Methodology

Research objective

Identifying the connections (positive and negative) those exist between the IO characteristics and the VI consistency.

Research hypotheses

The main aspect investigated in this research has been whether there is a positive relation between IO and VI consistency. We have started from the hypothesis that there is a positive relation between the two variables related to IO characteristics (IO-1 strategy knowledge and IO-2 availability of means and support) and the VI consistency.

Two secondary hypothesis derive from the mail hypothesis:

H1a: There is a positive relation between knowing the departments' strategy and the VI consistency;

H1b: There is a positive reaction between the availability of means and support given by the department and the VI consistency.
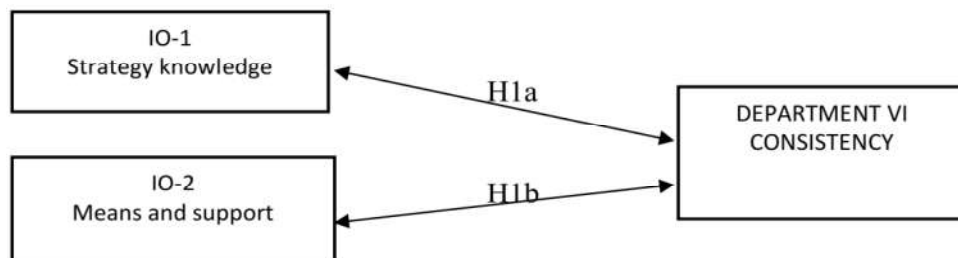

Figure 1: Research hypotheses

Research population and research subjects

The research population is formed by full time professors within the Physical Education and Sports and Kinetotherapy departments in Romania. Certain criteria have been established for the institutions that participated in this study. These criteria are the following: they must be institutions founded from the state budget; there must not be a department with the same profile within another faculty; they must not be Physical Education and Sports Universities; they need to have at least two course on the undergraduate level: physical education and sports and accredited kinetotherapy; they must not be engaged in implementing a new VI or to have recently introduced a change in their VI (in the last two years). We consider that VI attracts more attention in changing process and this could affect the results of this research.

The research subject is formed by higher education professors from Physical Education and Sports Faculties from the following cities: Iasi, Bacau, Suceava, Galati, Craiova, Cluj-Napoca and Oradea. The restrictive criteria for picking the subjects: they must be full time employees of the faculty and have an experience of at least three years within the department; they must not be in a managerial position (dean, pro-dean, head of department).

Results

Trust analysis of the variables and the constructs

In order to evaluate the internal consistency of the items within each variable, meaning the mode in which these items have the tendency to measure the same things (internal construct trust analysis), the Alpha Cronbach coefficient has been utilized. This has been generated through the SPSS software, version 20.0 for Windows (Analyse -> Scale -> Reliability Analysis). In order to consider a variable (a construct) trustworthy Schumacker and Lomax (2004) recommends a certain level on the Cronbach - Alpha coefficient of 0.7 and Malhotra (1996) recommends a level of 0.6. Similarly, George & Mallery (2003) consider the following: Alpha > 0.9 (excellent), Alpha > 0.8 (good), Alpha > 0.7 (acceptable), Alpha > 0.6 (disputable), Alpha > 0.5 (week), Alpha < 0.5 (unacceptable).

VI consistency (dependent variable)

Taking the aforementioned into consideration it can be confirmed that a trust analysis of the *VI consistency* dependent variable with a coefficient of 0.63 on the Alpha - Cronbach scale (*Table 3*) is good according to Malhorta and disputable according to George and Mallery (2003).

Table 3: Cronbach – Alpha coefficient for the dependent variable VI consistency

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.633	.627	8

Independent Variable related to IO (institutional organisation)

Independent Variable IO-1 Strategy knowledge. The trust analysis of the independent variable *IO-1 Strategy knowledge*, with a Cronbach – Alpha of 0.78 (*Table 4*) is good according to Malhotra (1996) and acceptable according to George and Mallery (2003).

Table 4: Cronbach – Alpha coefficient for the Independent variable IO-1 Strategy knowledge

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.780	.782	5

Independent Variable IO-2 Means and support

The trust analysis of the independent variable *IO-2 Means and support*, with a Cronbach – Alpha of 0.74 (*Table 5*) is good according to Malhotra (1996) and acceptable according to George and Mallery.

Table 5: Cronbach – Alpha coefficient for the independent variable IO-2 Means and support

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.748	.745	6

Testing the hypotheses

The first stage in testing the hypotheses (confirmed/infirmed) consists in calculating the One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov test. Based on these results derived from this test the Pearson coefficient (for a normal, parametric distribution of the answers) or the Spearman coefficient (for abnormal, nonparametric distribution of the answers) is used.

The results obtained following calculating the Pearson/Spearman coefficients can be interpreted based on Cohen's (1988) statements, who says the following:
   – r between 0.1 and 0.3 positive connection of small intensity;
   – r between 0.3 and 0.5 positive connection of medium intensity;
   – r between 0.5 and 1.0 positive connection of high intensity;
   – r between -0.1 and -0.3 negative connection with small intensity;
   – r between -0.3 and -0.5 negative connection with medium intensity;
   – r between -0.5 and -1.0 negative connection with high intensity.

Testing hypothesis H1a: There is a positive connection between knowing the Faculty's strategy and the VI consistency. There is a positive relation between knowing the Faculty's strategy (IO-1) and VI consistency (dependent variable) according to the results from the non-parametric bi-varied correlation analysis, the signification level (p) is less than 0,01 (sig = 0,000), which shows the existence of a connection between the two variables. As such, there is a probability less than 1 to 100 to obtain an r of 0,324 in the conditions in which there is no correlation between the two variables. Result: hypothesis H1a is confirmed.

The connection is positive, directly proportional: the broader the knowledge related to the Faculty's strategy, the larger the VI consistency. Given that the value of the Spearman coefficient is situated between 0,3 and 0,5 (r = 0,324), the connection between knowing the Faculty's strategy and VI consistency is of a medium intensity (*Table 6*).

Table 6: Knowing the Faculty's strategy and VI consistency

			Dependent Variable VI Consistency	Independent Variable IO-1 Strategy knowledge
Spearman's	Dependent variable VI Consistency	Correlation Coefficient Sig. (2-tailed) N	1.000 201	.324** .000 201
	Independent Variable IO-1 Strategy knowledge	Correlation Coefficient Sign. (2-tailed) N	.324 .000 201	1.000 201

**. *Correlation is significat at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)*

Testing hypothesis *H1b*: *There is a positive connection between the availability of the means and support offered by the Faculty and VI consistency.* There is a positive connection between the availability of means and support from the faculty (IO-2) and the VI consistency (dependent variable) according to the results from the analysis of the parametric bi-varied correlation, with the significance level (p) is less than 0,01 (sig = .000), which shows that there is a connection between the two variables. As such, there is a probability smaller than 1 to 100 to obtain an r of 0,487 in the conditions in which there is no correlation between the two variables. *Result: hypothesis H1b is confirmed.*

The connection is a positive and directly proportional: the more available the means and support offered by the Faculty, the higher the VI consistency level. Given that the value of the Pearson coefficient (normal distribution) is situated between 0.3 and 0.5 (r = 0.487), the connection between the availability of means and support given by the Faculty and the VI consistency if of a medium intensity (*Table 7*).

Table 7: Availability of the means and support offered by Faculty and VI consistency

		Dependent Variable VI Consistency	Independent Variable IO-2 Means and support
Dependent Variable VI Consistency	Pearson Correlation	1.000	.487**
	Sig. (2 tailed)		.000
	N	201	201
Independent Variable IO-2 Means and support	Pearson Correlation	.487**	1.000
	Sig (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	201	201

Conclusion

There is a positive connection between strategy knowledge related to the Faculty and VI consistency according to the results of the non-parametric bivariate correlation analysis, with a significance level (p) less than 0,01 (sig = 0.000), which shows a connection between the two variables. As such there is probability less than 1% to obtain an r of 0.324 in the circumstances where there is no correlation between the two variables. The connection is positive and directly proportional. The better the Faculty's strategy understanding, the higher the VI consistency. Given that the value of the Spearman coefficient is between 0.3 and 0.5 (r = 0.324), the connection between strategy knowledge and VI consistency is of medium intensity. There is a positive connection between the availability of means and support offered by the Faculty and VI consistency according to the results from the parametric bivariate correlation analysis, with a significance level (p) lower than 0.01 (sig = .0000), which shows that there is connection between the two variables. As such, there is a probability lower than 1% to obtain an r of 0.487 in the conditions in which there is no correlation between the two variables.

The connection is positive, directly proportional: the more available the means and support offered by the Faculty, the higher the VI consistency level. The value of the Pearson coefficient is situated between 0.3 and 0.5 (r = 0.487), which shows that the connection between the availability of means and support offered by the Faculty and VI consistency is of medium intensity.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the employees of the faculties of physical education and sports in Romania know the strategy of the faculty of which they are part, because it contributes to a consistent institutional visual identity (the connection between the component elements of the visual identity and the concordance between them). Also, the availability of the means and the support offered by the faculty management contribute to the identification of the employees with the institutional visual identity.

Acknowledgments

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