

Running Head: BRANDING THE INSTITUTION

Branding the College of The Bahamas, the Institution

A Review of Literature

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Author Note

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### Branding the College of The Bahamas, the Institution

A building can take a symbolic role, it can become an emblem; it can become a part of a brand and even a brand within itself. However, at The College of The Bahamas (COB) part of its branding is advanced by the students' perception of its value. There are at least four areas or characteristics that a College of the Bahamas student pays special attention to when it comes to branding. Below are important areas for gathering the information needed.

- (1) *Ideas* – COB fosters an environment where ideas flourish and innovation thrives.
- (2) *Diversity* – COB thrives on its growing diversity in people, programs and its approach to education as well as research efforts.
- (3) *Community* – COB is a vibrant community of students, faculty and staff dedicated to scholarship and service learning.
- (4) *National outlook* – at COB research and teaching programs are national in scope and reach every corner of the Commonwealth of The Bahamas and beyond.

#### *Why is branding important?*

Branding is important because it is inextricably linked to marketing; the reason to create a (recognizable and unique) brand is to establish a marketable feature, and such a feature is necessary under conditions of intensifying competition over resources (funding, renowned academics, etc.) and consumers (COB students who can choose to attend other institutions which also have unique brands).

#### **Information needed**

Collection of data is perhaps one of the best ways to gather the primary source of information needed. Generally speaking, a primary source is one of the closest to the original source of information that can be produced. What constitutes the original source of information varies by discipline. In the social and behavioral sciences, primary data is collected and analyzed and the author reports the results of an original research conducted.

**Data collection methods**

Methods for data collection that are passive include searching institutional records, observation, and other forms of experimentation, states Kuiper. He further advances that active data collection involves questioning the subjects; and the person collecting the data interacts with the subjects who actively supply the data to the researcher.

**Sources of information**

The best sources for information collection include: people (COB students), and phenomena such as activities and processes (Kuiper, 2009, p. 315).

Some important questions students pose about branding, as COB goes through the process of transitioning from college to university:

- How do we embed core values into the hearts and minds of the current COB student?
- How will the university operationalize, brand, and sustain itself?
- What is the University of the Bahamas? What is its purpose?

General areas of concerns for undergraduate students:

- Improving technology
- Provision of administrative and support services
- Establish a student needs assessment system
- Enhance the student experience
- Increase social spaces on campus
- Establish a career and placement centre
- Establish an office for part-time mature students (recommendation from a small group of graduate students)
- How does COB manage inventory, demand for our product/service? (students are concerned about this)
- Find and increase funding for student work-study salaries and capital projects that improve student life and activities at The College.

**Appropriate methods for collecting primary data**

Data can be gathered through observation and experimentation using the *passive method*:

- 1) Using this technique the researcher (or mechanical or electronic device) watches the data sources and records information about branding elements that are being analyzed.
- 2) In some situations it can be mechanical (where a device is used to record or capture behavior(s)).
- 3) Experimentation is an integral part of the observation method; it can employ both passive and active data collection methods. A major shortcoming of the observation method is that the observer must interpret what he or she sees, and different observers may assign different meanings to events.

*Active methods* are useful when questioning is involved and can manifest in the following ways:

- 1) In an interview, the researcher or an assistant orally presents instructions and questions to the subjects and records their answers. Interviews may be face-to-face or mediated.
- 2) Focus group interviews – these interviews are often used to determine interest in a product or service; the effectiveness of business or communications research; background studies on consumer attitudes and behaviors toward an idea, organization or grouping of individuals. The standard focus group interview involves eight (8) to twelve (12) similar individuals, such as Bahamian undergraduate students. Competency in focus group interviewing involves establishing rapport with the group, structuring the rules of group interaction, and set objectives. In addition, provocation of intense discussion in relevant areas and summarizing group responses to determine the extent of agreement (Kuiper, 2009).
- 3) Questionnaire surveys – in a questionnaire survey (also called a self-completion survey), instructions and questions are presented to the subjects in a printed questionnaire, and the subjects record their answers on the questionnaire or another medium.
- 4) Electronic surveys – studies have shown that web-based questionnaires, when skillfully designed, are completed more quickly than telephone, face-to-face, and paper questionnaire survey. This medium also allows presentation of visual images, longer lists of options, and easy branching strategies (Kuiper, 2009).

By involving the participant visually and manually, this medium tends to maintain the respondents' attention and promotes good-quality data to the end of the questionnaire.

**Preparation of data collection instruments**

Data that is objective is generated for purposes other than the immediate report that is being prepared. A structured questionnaire can be used as a data collection instrument and can be distributed to students using email or social media (Adams & Lawrence, 2015). Given the nature of the research topic, it is most suitable to employ both primary and secondary data collection method. Primary data can be obtained through questionnaires given XXX number of respondents while the secondary data is gathered through journals, articles, internet and other published materials.

*Sample data collection instrument*

How satisfied were you with [BRAND]?

Very Dissatisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Slightly Dissatisfied	Neither	Slightly Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Very Satisfied
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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I am always or almost always satisfied with...

I am sometimes satisfied with...

I am sometimes dissatisfied with...

I am always or almost always dissatisfied with...

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Now that you've actually used the product, how satisfied with it are you?

Dissatisfied	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Satisfied
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**Behavioral Measures of Consumer Satisfaction**

Strongly Disagree	Sometimes Disagree	Neither	Sometimes Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

If I had it to do over again, I would purchase [BRAND] Behavioral Measure

My choice to buy [BRAND] was a good one. Behavioral Measure

I feel bad about my decision concerning [BRAND] Behavioral Measure

I think that I did the right thing when I decided to buy [BRAND] Behavioral Measure

I am not happy that I purchased [BRAND] Behavioral Measure

**Instrument Design**

There is also a criterion for instrument design that involves justifying and producing relevant data. Ensuring that proper and clear language is used, paying special attention to the format, generating valid data and giving clear instructions to the reader.

**Transmittal message**

University Branding, FIRST DRAFT OF 2014 INSTITUTIONAL BRAND REPORT

Pinder-Darling and Associates  
P. O. Box N-4491  
Nassau, Bahamas  
August 8, 2014

Dear Cordelia Twomey

Enclosed is the final report for our study of students perceptions of university branding conducted this past summer.

To the best of our knowledge, this is the first time that a study of this type has ever been conducted for the region.

With 1,500 students participating in the study, we feel that we obtained a sufficient survey sample to give an accurate profile of students' interests and perceptions and are pleased with the results. Our research has also generated a benchmark profile of branding in the area and the following report makes several recommendations for increasing the student populace and interest in the College of The Bahamas, as a leading institution in the region.

Further, based on the results of this study, we recommend that a comprehensive marketing plan should be developed, and this study includes recommendations for several items that should be included in that plan. It should also be noted that this study is only the first step in increasing the quality of the students attracted to the institution and should also impact retention in the academy. Similar studies should be conducted every few years to ensure that progress is being made towards the goal of increasing student interest in the university locally, regionally, and internationally. It will also prove helpful in attracting a good mix of undergraduate and potentially graduate students.

Thank you for allowing us to conduct this project to help increase students to the campus as a result of improving our brand in the West Indies area, and it was a pleasure working with current undergraduate students at the College of The Bahamas. If you have any questions, comments, or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

Antoinette Pinder-Darling

COB Director Faculty Team Advisor & Student Team Leader

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Enclosures

### **Ethical Issues**

Some areas for ethical consideration involve how people are used for the researcher's advantage and two other areas of concern involve privacy invasion and protecting those who provide the researcher with data (Kuiper, 2009).

Another area of importance when it comes to primary data is accurately citing the original source which should involve taking time to understand the findings so that information is accurately summarized. The researcher should take time to put information into his/her own words. So, it is important to take notes and ensure that as a researcher, there is a clear understanding of the material.

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