Abstract. Article shows that image of the universities is a powerful lever affecting choice of the higher education institution by the enrollees. The authors, based on analysis of different literary sources, regard that the elements of the higher education institutions image include the indicators showing the levels of education services, professors and leaders, as well visual characteristics, social and business activities and originality of universities. In the authors’ opinion, the higher education institution should take care about formation of its image from the date of institution’s establishment. They should care about high level of education, satisfaction and loyalty of the staff members and students, professionalism of the professors and teachers, as well as infrastructure and some other factors that ensure positive assessment of its activities from the side of public. The article emphasizes that today in Georgia the image of higher education institution is the powerful instrument for attraction of the enrollees and key factor determining employment of the graduates. And as the instrument for formation and maintenance of the university’s image the authors offer extensive application of marketing approaches at the education service market.

Keywords: education service market of Georgia, university image, enrollee, choice.

Introduction. In the situation of increased competition at the education service market, image of the higher education institution is a powerful instrument for attraction of the enrollees. The higher education institution that is unable to present itself positively will be left without students or their contingent will decrease. This problem equally affects the state and private higher education institutions and leading universities all over the world are well aware in this. Therefore, they conduct extensive studies of the university image. Currently, such researches provide significant criteria for assessment of the university’s activities. Hence, improvement of the university image and demonstration of its advantages at market is the most significant component of marketing strategy. In this area numerous works were completed at the famous US and European universities. Studying of the university images is significant for Georgian higher education institutions as well as they have to operate in the environment of severe competition. In addition, the integration processes between EU and Georgia pose new challenges to the domestic higher education institutions that extensively involve into the international education sector.

In such a small country as Georgia, at the beginning of academic year 2017/2018, 75 higher education institutions operated, 20 of them were state ones and 55 – private. 10 years ago number of the higher education institutions was 166, including 18 state-owned and 148 private institutions. During this period, number of students has increased from 140.8 thousands to 143.6 thousands [1]. Growth fall on the private higher education institutions, while number of students in the state higher education institutions has decreased. Though by academic year 2018/2019 the number of higher education institutions has decreased by 12 compared with the previous year, in our opinion, it is still excessive for Georgia. This is evidenced, to certain extent, by the fact that certain numbers of places for enrollees declared by some higher education institutions remain unfilled. This problem is less significant for the prestigious higher education institutions but there are some exclusions as well.

In Georgia, some higher education institutions set less strict requirements to the knowledge of the enrollees thus endangering the prestige of university education. We agree with the opinion that devaluation of the university education is a very dangerous social phenomenon containing significant risks.
[2]. Apparently, many young people in Georgia require higher education to improve their social status and this is harmful for the country [2]. The fact that at Georgian labor market Georgian entrepreneurs request the higher education diplomas for the positions of cashiers, store consultants and some other similar positions, demonstrate that higher education is not properly appreciated. Normally, the graduates of prestigious higher education institutions should have no problems in finding employment corresponding to their professions and this issue cannot be easily resolved. Therefore, Georgian government extensively seeks the solutions to this problem. In this respect, significant step was made by bringing forward the issue of vocational education at the state level. More painful problem is number of students per one professor employed at the universities, and the world leading higher education institutions offer the examples for its regulating. By 2018, at the most prestigious higher education institutions of the world, there were 10-15 students or even less, per one specialist. By this indicator, the top five universities of the world are: Harvard University (8.9 students), Massachusetts Technological University (8.7 students), Stanford University (7.5 students), Cambridge University (10.9 students) and Oxford University (11.2 students) [2]. At the Faculty of Economics and Business of Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University (TSU), in average, there are 43 students per teacher. In the conditions of such workload the teachers would merely be able to elaborate critical and creative thinking corresponding to current requirements in their students. Certainly, reduction of the students’ numbers and the teachers’ workload require certain costs but improvement of the prestige of university education is impossible in any other way. In this way the requirements to the professors will increase but in lieu, they would have more time and opportunities to improve their qualification. Private higher education institutions attempt to improve their prestige by high fees while the state higher education institutions do this through improvement of the students’ funding. Reduction of the professors’ workload and improvement of the students’ funding would, expectedly, further improve the education level provided by the universities and this would improve significantly their image and impact the enrollees’ choice. Our article intends to study the decisions in favor or one or another university of enrollees influenced by the images.

Research Methodology. Methodological basis for this article is provided by the published scientific works about the corporative image of higher education institutions, as well as materials collected in various dictionaries and encyclopedia. In the process of work on this article we have applied both, general and statistical methods of research. General methods included the methods of analysis and synthesis and the statistical methods included comparison and grouping methods.

Research Results. Enrollees and their family members, primarily their parents, perceive the university image as the key factor of competitiveness of the higher education institution graduates. Therefore, in making choice in favor of one or another university, the enrollees with high academic achievements rely on the image and popularity of the university among the public. And yet, what does the university image implies and what are the factors that create the image of Georgian universities in the view of Georgian society?

It should be mentioned that the scientific literature dealing with the image does not offer any common opinion. According to the most widespread definition, image is how the product, enterprise, person is seen in the view of the public [4]. As for the university image, it implies the society’s perception of the university role in students’ education level and ensuring competitiveness of the graduates at the labor market [5-6]. University image is created by the set of various elements. On the basis of analysis of the available sources, dealing with the image of higher education institutions [7-11] we regard that the elements providing the university image include:

- **Education service image.** In turn, it depends on the number and quality of education programs, teaching methods, additional education services (trainings, internship etc.) and opportunities of enrollment.

- **Image of the professors and teachers.** In this case there is implied qualification, professionalism, ambition, communication skills, diligence, organized nature, ability to listen of both, fully employed and invited teachers and professors.

- **Leader’s image.** This element of image implies education of the university heads, their recognition in the academic circles, organized nature, communication skills and ability to complete tasks.

- **Image of visual characteristics.** This implies condition of the exterior and interior of the university building, as well as condition of the yard.
- **Social image.** This element is formed through university’s involvement in the public life, in particular, through charity, participation in environment protection efforts, measures to deal with the social problems of their staff members.

- **Business activities image.** With respect of the university, this element includes fair attitude to the teaching process, availability and transparency of information about the university, high level of the graduates’ preparedness, adequacy of the education fees and education quality, reliability.

- **Image of originality indicators.** This element is created by the university name, logo, firm color.

Certainly, the university image cannot be created at once. Naturally, care about it cannot be limited to one single activity. In the conditions of market economy the higher education institutions should care about their images from the date of their establishment. Management of some private universities operating in Georgian education sector are well aware in this. Such approach allowed such higher education institutions as Free University, David Tvtildiani Medical University, Caucasus University, GIPA, Black Sea International University to form as highly prestigious higher education institutions. The universities that have emerged in the education sector of Georgia just recently – New Vision and University of Business and Technologies clearly understand the requirements of market economy.

Regarding the requirements of market economy, the higher education institutions should not leave without attention any single factor that affect in any way each of the elements of their images. There are numerous such factors. Scientific literature contains several different opinions about them [12–16]. On the basis of studying and careful examination of different opinions, we regard that the key factors determining the image of the universities in Georgia are as follows:

- Level of preparedness of the graduates and demand for them at labor market;
- Level of satisfaction and loyalty of the staff members and students;
- Professionalism and scientific achievements of the professors and teachers;
- Historical past of the university and its visibility in the society;
- University’s infrastructure;
- University’s location.

Certainly, most of the above factors depend on the other ones. Therefore, the university management and their relevant services have to provide their in-depth study, properly interpret the findings and only after this make the decisions.

Image of any university can be formed by marketing approach only. Without the approach oriented towards the customers – students in this case – the university cannot have positive image in the view of public, especially the enrollees and their parents. Way to attraction of the enrollees with high academic achievements is based on the satisfied and loyal students and actual opportunities of their employment.

In addition, today in Georgia, for the higher education institutions achieving of the students’ satisfaction and loyalty is much easier than taking measures for their employment. In this respect, it could be said that the higher education institutions in Georgia have no any levers to deal with this. Solution to this problem depends on the university image only. Employment problem is of particular significance for the universities with great numbers of students that have poor contacts with the various businesses. Primarily, this is the case with the state higher education institutions, including Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi state University (TSU) enrolling annually over 4000 students at the bachelor’s programs only. It is very hard to attract such number of enrollees given the severe competition at education market, though TSU is able to do this, regarding the above factors affecting the image.

Irrespective the great number of students, TSU is in top five, regarding the scaled points of the students enrolled through united national examinations. In this respect, in 2018, the situation was as follows (Tab. 1).

The situation was almost similar in the previous years as well. Free University is the undoubted leader by the average scaled points of the students newly enrolled at bachelor’s programs. Though, number of students with high ratings enrolled at TSU was quite high as well. This can be evidenced by the example of the Faculty of Economics and Business at TSU. In 2018, more than half (366) of the students enrolled through united national examinations to this Faculty had 2000 and higher scaled points. Average scaled points of all 75 students enrolled at the International School of Economics at
TSU were over 2060. More than half (230) of the students enrolled at the specialty of economics had 2000 points and higher [17]. Situation was not so good at the specialties of business administration and tourism and this requires in-depth analysis and taking adequate measures based on the findings. To attract highly rated enrollees, the administration of the faculty of Economics and Business at TSU has already made certain steps. Regular meetings with the graduate students of the public schools, in our opinion, would play positive role in attraction of the enrollees with high academic achievements in the upcoming academic year.

Table 1

| Higher Education Institution                          | Number of enrolled students | Scaled points |
|-------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|---------------|
| 1. Free University                                   | 546                        | 2115.78       |
| 2. Agrarian University                               | 400                        | 2022.44       |
| 3. Tbilisi State Medical University                  | 1017                       | 2015.42       |
| 4. David Tvidiani Medical University                 | 132                        | 1967.0        |
| 5. Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University       | 4432                       | 1964.58       |
| 6. New Vision University                             | 57                         | 1947.53       |
| 7. Caucasus University                               | 1006                       | 1919.15       |
| 8. GIPA                                                | 159                        | 1911.54       |
| 9. Black Sea International University                | 106                        | 1893.27       |
| 10. Business and Technologies University              | 917                        | 1884.97       |

Source: http://www.tabula.ge/ge/story/123823-2017-tlisertiani-erovnuli-gamocdebis-shedegebit-universitetebis-reitingi

As mentioned above, infrastructure is a significant factor in formation of the university image. In this respect, the 10th building where Faculty of Economics and Business at TSU is located is beneath all criticism, irrespective of certain works conducted in recent years to put infrastructure into order. It could be said that this is a “drop in the bucket”, compared with what should be done. Satisfaction and loyalty of the staff members and students should be thoroughly studied. Each factor affecting level of employees’ and students’ satisfaction and loyalty should be identified and this requires extensive application of marketing. In this case we are implying not only infrastructure but all factors related to the education process.

Conclusion. Studying of the literature related to the image of higher education institution and regarding Georgian reality, observation of some practical issues allowed us making the following conclusions:

- Image is a significant lever with respect of the enrollees’ choice on favor of one or another higher education institution. Therefore, the higher education institutions of Georgia should take measures for creation and maintenance of their images from the outset.

- Higher education institutions of Georgia, in creating their images, should take into consideration the competition at education service market and the values that are of significance for the target market and that are acceptable for them as well.

- Higher education institutions of Georgia, with extensive use of marketing, should thoroughly study the influence of image-determining factors on the enrollees’ choice in favor of one or another higher education institution. Based on their results the operative measures should be taken to ensure stabilization or improvement of the situation.

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ЕКОЛОГІЧНИЙ МАРКЕТИНГ ЯК МЕХАНІЗМ ВПРОВАДЖЕННЯ «ЗЕЛЕНОЇ ЕКОНОМІКИ» УКРАЇНИ

Актуальність. Ідея сталого розвитку, започаткована близько тридцять років тому, набула світового визнання та була реалізована багатьма країнами в національних стратегічних ініціативах. Ці стратегії визначили позицію світової спільноти щодо розробки та впровадження нової соціо-еколого-економічної моделі розвитку цивілізації, що набула назву «зеленої економіки». «Зелена економіка» трактується в цілому ряді авторитетних міжнародних документів як варіант нової соціо-еколого-економічної моделі, яка орієнтована на принципи сталого розвитку та активно використовує інноваційні «зелені технології». «Зелене зростання» базується на збереженні природних ресурсів та безперервному наданні екосистемних послуг, від яких залежить добробут теперішніх і майбутніх поколінь. Імплементація економіко-екологічних