



Strategies for improving school acceptance among vocational undergraduate students: a case study of Guangxi Vocational University of Agriculture

Diao Li*^{1,2}, Sombat Teekasap¹, Pong Horadal¹

¹Bansomdejchaopraya Rajabhat University, Bangkok, Thailand

²Guangxi Vocational University of Agriculture, Nanning, Guangxi, China

*Email of Corresponding Author: 871269659@qq.com

Abstract. The purpose of this study is as follows: 1) To investigate the issues and solutions regarding the current university students' sense of acceptance towards their school; 2) To formulate strategies for enhancing students' sense of acceptance with the university. The study involved 518 undergraduate students from Guangxi Vocational University of Agriculture and employed a School Identity Questionnaire as the research instrument. Data analysis utilized mean scores, standard deviation, and t-test analysis.

The results indicate: 1) Undergraduate students exhibit a significant level of acceptance towards the university. Satisfaction scores across six dimensions ranked from highest to lowest are as follows: teachers, campus activities for college students, school reputation, alumni success, curriculum, and campus facilities. 2) To enhance students' acceptance with the university, it is recommended to employ higher education branding and marketing strategies. Specific promotional measures include: first, reinforcing the focus on teaching-centered publicity and promotion; second, optimizing existing promotional platforms and consolidating media resources; establishing a faculty and student communication team to achieve comprehensive campus promotion; and shaping a content-oriented educational brand to enhance the university's brand influence.

Keywords: School acceptance, school reputation, curriculum, teachers, alumni success, campus activities for college students, campus facilities.

1 Introduction

Guangxi Vocational University of Agriculture was established on May 31, 2021, with the approval of the Ministry of Education of China and further endorsed by the People's Government of the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region on June 25, 2021. ⁴It was formed through the merger of Guangxi University Xingjian College of Science and Liberal Arts, Guangxi Agricultural Vocational and Technical College, and the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region Livestock Research Institute. It is currently the only agricultural vocational undergraduate institution in the country. While the university has made some progress in its development, there is still a significant gap when com-

pared to the standards set by the Ministry of Education for vocational undergraduate education, as well as the requirements for the 2-year review and the 3-to-5-year undergraduate teaching qualification assessment. In 2024, the university will undergo a 3-to-5-year undergraduate teaching qualification assessment as part of the transitional period set by the Ministry of Education.⁵ Understanding the sense of acceptance among college students can not only reveal their attitudes and tendencies towards their academic pursuits but also reflect, to some extent, the performance of the university's relevant efforts and areas for improvement.³

College students with high acceptance levels will have an optimistic and positive view of their alma mater, always maintaining the school's social interests and reputation, and through personal active efforts, winning social honors for the school.¹ On the contrary, when the acceptance level of a school is low, it will become passive, inferiority complex, and even reject all education or activities of the school, thereby affecting its own learning state and development motivation, and thus affecting the quality of talent cultivation in the school.²

This paper focuses on undergraduate students at Guangxi Vocational University of Agriculture. It conducts research and analysis on the current status of students' sense of acceptance towards the university, identifies issues related to students' recognition of the university's quality, and proposes strategies to enhance students' recognition of the university's performance. This will facilitate the university's preparation for the Ministry of Education's "2-year review" during the transitional period and further promote the development of its internal strengths and distinctive features. Ultimately, it aims to achieve high-quality development for vocational undergraduate institutions and enhance their visibility.

2 Survey of School Acceptance among Vocational Undergraduate Students

This study utilized a sample of 518 undergraduate students from Guangxi Vocational University of Agriculture. A total of 518 questionnaires were distributed online, and 518 were returned, all of which were considered valid. The survey measured school acceptance across six dimensions, including school reputation, curriculum, teachers, alumni success, campus activities for college students, and campus facilities. The questionnaire consisted of 27 items, rated on a 5-point scale, with 5 indicating strong acceptance and 1 indicating strong non-acceptance. Mean scores and standard deviations were used for interpretation. The definitions for average scores are as follows: A) 4.50-5.00 indicates strong acceptance; B) 3.50-4.49 indicates moderate acceptance; C) 2.50-3.49 indicates general acceptance; D) 1.50-2.49 indicates non-acceptance; E) 1.00-1.49 indicates strong non-acceptance.

This study achieved a Cronbach's α coefficient of 0.977 for the questionnaire, demonstrating excellent reliability. Therefore, the analysis and interpretation of the collected data in this study are both valid and reliable. Using computer software, the collected sample data was analyzed, and the results are as follows Table 1:

Table 1. Cronbach's α Coefficient

Cronbach's α Coefficient	Number of Items	Sample Size
0.977	25	518

2.1 Statistical Analysis of School Acceptance Survey Samples

2.1.1 Analysis of Acceptance Levels across Eight Colleges

Using computer data processing software, data from 518 students representing eight colleges who participated in the survey were analyzed, as shown in the following Table 2.

Table 2. Acceptance of Colleges

	Number of Samples	Minimum	Maximum	Average Value	Standard Deviation	Grade
1. College of Agricultural Engineering	50	1.00	5.00	3.5978	0.75450	B
2. College of Animal Science and Technology	70	1.00	5.00	3.6779	0.94676	B
3. College of Food and Drug Engineering	51	1.00	5.00	3.6512	0.74135	B
4. College of Intelligent Equipment Engineering	50	1.00	5.00	3.5537	0.91124	B
5. College of Urban and Rural Development	80	1.00	5.00	3.5722	0.84623	B
6. College of Information Engineering	87	1.00	5.00	3.5293	0.82956	B
7. College of Economics and Management	57	1.00	5.00	3.4731	0.82373	C
8. College of Humanities and Arts	73	1.00	5.00	3.4342	0.75737	C

The average values of the eight colleges are greater than 3, with minimal variations. The College of Agricultural Engineering (3.5978), the College of Animal Science and Technology (3.6779), the College of Food and Drug Engineering (3.6512), the College of Intelligent Equipment Engineering (3.5537), the College of Urban and Rural Development (3.5722), and the College of Information Engineering (3.5293) show a significant level of acceptance towards the university. The College of Economics and Management (3.4731) and the College of Humanities and Arts (3.4342) exhibit a moderate level of acceptance.

2.1.2 Descriptive Analysis of School Acceptance across Various Dimensions

Using computer data processing software, the averages and standard deviations of 518 students participating in this survey in the dimensions of school reputation, curriculum, teachers, alumni success, campus activities for college students, campus facilities, and overall acceptance are presented in the table below.

Table 3. Overall Acceptance towards the School

	Number of Samples	Minimum	Maximum	Average Value	Standard Deviation	Grade
1. Acceptance towards School Reputation	518	1.00	5.00	3.6811	0.83589	B
2. Acceptance towards curriculum	518	1.00	5.00	3.4215	0.95939	C
3. Acceptance towards Teachers	518	1.00	5.00	3.7748	0.88441	B
4. Acceptance towards Alumni Success	518	1.00	5.00	3.6496	0.96521	B
5. Acceptance towards Campus Activities	518	1.00	5.00	3.7558	0.87641	B
6. Acceptance towards Campus Facilities	518	1.00	5.00	3.059	1.05722	C
Overall Acceptance towards School	518	1.00	5.00	3.557	0.83013	B

From Table 3, it can be observed that the average score for overall school acceptance among the 518 students who participated in the survey is 3.5570, indicating a relatively high level of acceptance. The mean scores for college students' school acceptance in various dimensions are above 3, indicating minimal variations. Notably, school reputation (3.6811), teachers (3.7748), alumni success (3.6496), and campus life for college students (3.7558) have higher mean scores, suggesting that college students exhibit a more pronounced sense of acceptance in terms of school reputation, the teaching staff, alumni success, and campus life. The mean scores for campus facilities (3.0590) and curriculum (3.4215) indicate a moderate level of overall acceptance. The lowest mean score is observed in campus facilities (3.0590), indicating relatively lower satisfaction with the living facilities among college students.

2.2 Differential Analysis of School Acceptance Based on Different Demographics

Using computer data processing software, the school acceptance levels of students in six dimensions (school reputation, curriculum, teachers, alumni success, campus activities for college students, campus facilities) who participated in the survey were analyzed using mean values, standard deviations, minimum values, and maximum values. The analysis is as follows:

2.2.1 School Reputation.

Table 4. Overall Acceptance towards School Reputation

	Number of Samples	Minimum	Maximum	Average Value	Standard Deviation	Grade
1. The school's good reputation in society is reflected in the quality of its courses.	518	1.00	5.00	3.612	1.03236	B
2. The school's good reputation in society is reflected in the teaching staff.	518	1.00	5.00	3.8436	0.92915	B
3. The school's good reputation in society is reflected in its successful alumni.	518	1.00	5.00	3.8185	0.95644	B
4. The school's good reputation in society is reflected in the campus activities of college students.	518	1.00	5.00	3.89	0.9212	B
5. The school's good reputation in society is reflected in the campus facilities.	518	1.00	5.00	3.2413	1.0209	C
The overall acceptance degree of the school's reputation	518	1.00	5.00	3.6811	0.83589	B

From Table 4, it can be observed that the average score for overall school reputation acceptance among the 518 students who participated in the survey is 3.6811, indicating a significant level of acceptance towards the school's reputation. Among these, the dimension "The school's good reputation in society is reflected in campus facilities" has the lowest score with an average of 3.2413, while "The school's good reputation in society is reflected in campus activities for college students" has the highest score of 3.8900. The average scores for other dimensions are as follows: "The school's good reputation in society is reflected in high-quality curriculum" is 3.6120, "The school's good reputation in society is reflected in the teaching staff" is 3.8436, and "The school's good reputation in society is reflected in successful alumni" is 3.8185.

2.2.2 Curriculum

Table 5. Overall Acceptance towards Curriculum

	Number of Samples	Minimum	Maximum	Average Value	Standard Deviation	Grade
1. The school curriculum is well set up.	518	1.00	5.00	3.3494	1.10892	C
2. The school curriculum is of good quality.	518	1.00	5.00	3.5405	0.97418	B

3. School curriculum meets student interests and market needs.	518	1.00	5.00	3.3745	1.06586	C
Overall acceptance towards curriculum	518	1.00	5.00	3.4215	0.95939	B

From Table 5, it can be observed that the average score for overall curriculum acceptance among the 518 students who participated in the survey is 3.4215, indicating a moderate level of acceptance towards the curriculum. Among these, the dimension “The school’s curriculum is well-structured” has the lowest score with an average of 3.3494, while “The school’s curriculum quality is high” has the highest score of 3.5405. The average score for “The school’s curriculum meets student interests and market demands” is 3.3745.

2.2.3 Teachers

Table 6. Overall Acceptance towards Teachers

	Number of Samples	Minimum	Maximum	Average Value	Standard Deviation	Grade
1. The quality of the school’s teachers is good.	518	1.00	5.00	3.7654	0.92595	B
2. The expertise of school teachers is abundant.	518	1.00	5.00	3.8089	0.89926	B
3. School teachers are capable of scientific research.	518	1.00	5.00	3.751	0.9882	B
Overall acceptance towards teaching staff	518	1.00	5.00	3.7748	0.88441	B

From Table 6, it can be observed that the average score for overall acceptance towards the teaching staff among the 518 students who participated in the survey is 3.7748, indicating a significant level of acceptance towards the teaching staff. Among these, the dimension “The school’s teachers have research capabilities” has the lowest score with an average of 3.7510, while “The school’s teachers possess both breadth and depth of professional knowledge” has the highest score of 3.8089. The average score for “The school’s teachers have good quality” is 3.7654.

2.2.4 Alumni success

Table 7. Overall Acceptance towards Alumni Success

	Number of Samples	Minimum	Maximum	Average Value	Standard Deviation	Grade
1. Alumni are excellent and successful.	518	1.00	5.00	3.6622	0.99309	B
2. Alumni role models	518	1.00	5.00	3.6371	0.99493	B
Overall acceptance towards alumni success	518	1.00	5.00	3.6496	0.96521	B

From Table 7, it can be observed that the average score for overall acceptance towards alumni success among the 518 students who participated in the survey is 3.6496, indicating a significant level of acceptance towards alumni success. Among these, the dimension “The alumni are relatively outstanding and successful” has an average score of 3.6622, while “The alumni serve as role models and examples” has an average score of 3.6371.

2.2.5 Campus activities for college students

Table 8. Overall Acceptance towards College Students’ Campus Activities

	Number of Samples	Minimum	Maximum	Average Value	Standard Deviation	Grade
1. The school organizes and carries out good literary and artistic activities.	518	1.00	5.00	3.7104	0.97012	B
2. The school organizes and carries out good sports activities.	518	1.00	5.00	3.749	0.94262	B
3. The school organizes and carries out good skills competitions.	518	1.00	5.00	3.8089	0.93511	B
4. The school organizes and carries out volunteer service activities.	518	1.00	5.00	3.7548	0.97141	B
Overall acceptance towards campus activities	518	1.00	5.00	3.558	0.87641	B

From Table 8, it can be observed that the average score for overall acceptance of campus activities among the 518 students who participated in the survey is 3.558, indicating a significant level of acceptance towards campus activities. Among these, the dimensions of “The school organizes and conducts excellent cultural and artistic activities” has an average score of 3.7104, “The school organizes and conducts excellent sports activities” has an average score of 3.7490, “The school organizes and conducts excellent skills competitions” has an average score of 3.8089, and “The school organizes and conducts excellent volunteer service activities” has an average score of 3.7548.

2.2.6 Campus facilities

Table 9. Overall Acceptance towards Campus Facilities

	Number of Samples	Minimum	Maximum	Average Value	Standard Deviation	Grade
1. The school has a good teaching environment (classrooms, multimedia, etc.).	518	1.00	5.00	3.2375	1.1783	C
2. The school has excellent laboratory facilities.	518	1.00	5.00	3.2394	1.1622	C
3. The school's cultural and sports activity venues are perfect.	518	1.00	5.00	3.2027	1.17823	C
4. The school library facilities are excellent.	518	1.00	5.00	3.0367	1.29147	C
5. The dormitory conditions of the school's students are good.	518	1.00	5.00	2.5811	1.2823	C
6. The school student cafeteria is in good condition.	518	1.00	5.00	3.0676	1.14908	C
Overall acceptance towards campus facilities	518	1.00	5.00	3.059	1.05722	C

From Table 9, it can be observed that the average score for overall acceptance of campus facilities among the 518 students who participated in the survey is 3.0590, indicating a moderate level of acceptance towards campus facilities. Among these, the dimension of “The school provides good dormitory conditions for students” has the lowest score with an average of 2.5811, while “The school has well-equipped laboratory facilities” has the highest score with an average of 3.2394. Other average scores include “The school provides a favorable teaching environment (classrooms, multimedia, etc.)” with 3.2375, “The school has well-established venues for cultural and sports activities” with 3.2027, “The school’s library facilities are well-equipped” with 3.0367, and “The school provides good conditions in the student cafeteria” with 3.0676. Factors such as classrooms, laboratories, and dormitory conditions are significant in influencing college students’ sense of acceptance towards the school, and the school should focus on enhancing management in these areas.

3 Strategy Interviews on Students’ Acceptance towards School

In order to understand the current status and strategies to enhance students’ sense of acceptance towards universities, the authors conducted interviews with teachers responsible for brand promotion at three universities. The details are as follows:

Interview Topic: How do you think universities should use brand promotion to enhance students’ sense of acceptance towards the university?

3.1 Guangxi University

(1) Mass Media: Mass media plays a crucial role in promoting a university’s image to the public. During the enrollment promotion phase, universities concentrate on showcasing themselves through media to boost their brand. Furthermore, media also covers significant events at universities, allowing them to highlight their positive image. Of course, there might be some negative news, and universities should have effective crisis management capabilities to promptly address issues, provide explanations, and turn unfavorable situations into opportunities for the public to gain a deeper understanding of the university.

(2) Online Information Platforms: Online information platforms are essential for university promotion. These platforms can present information about the university’s introduction, organizational structure, news updates, campus culture, and campus scenery, offering a convenient channel for information dissemination. University websites, discussion forums (BBS), social media platforms like Weibo, WeChat, and TikTok are excellent online information platforms. These platforms continually attract attention from both inside and outside the university, accumulating popularity and enhancing the university’s visibility. They are effective channels for promoting the university’s brand.

(3) Public Facilities Naming: Public facilities communication is an overlooked aspect of university brand promotion. University branding doesn’t necessarily require extensive advertising campaigns like businesses do through television, radio, and

various other means. However, it is essential to pay attention to details in this regard. For example, naming newly installed bus stops or subway stations after the university can familiarize thousands of commuters with the university's name. This can provide valuable interpersonal support for building the university's brand. For instance, the establishment of "Guangxi University Station" on Line 1 of Nanning Rail Transit.

(4) **Interpersonal Promotion:** Interpersonal promotion is a practical and cost-effective means of university brand promotion. Universities can enhance their brand impact through interpersonal promotion by leveraging the resources of students, teachers, and university leaders. This can be achieved through large-scale conferences, lectures, important sporting events, and activities such as university anniversaries. Universities can also promote brand building by encouraging student associations to engage in practical activities. University leaders, teachers, and students can promote their university during various conferences and events. However, the effectiveness of this strategy depends on the brand awareness of all members. University brand promotion takes many forms, and these methods are not used in isolation. Integrated marketing strategies can be employed to promote the university's brand.

3.2 Guangxi University of Chinese Medicine

(1) **Communication among Faculty and Students:** Both teachers and students play pivotal roles in shaping and experiencing the university's brand. The university should facilitate dialogue, discussions, and cultural activities to ensure that teachers and students are well-informed about the university's achievements in teaching and management, overall planning, and goals. It is essential to convey the independent college's educational philosophy, cultural essence, and university spirit to the students and teachers on campus, seamlessly integrating them into their daily lives, thereby fostering a positive image and promoting the university's brand development.

(2) **Promotion through Parents and Employers:** Parents significantly influence students' choice of schools, and their assessments directly reflect the university's reputation and status in society. Hence, it is crucial to strengthen ties with students' parents. Through activities such as parent-teacher meetings and seminars, the university can gain insights into parents' expectations, which can inform the university's brand-building efforts. Employers serve as direct evaluators of the university's educational outcomes. Their feedback provides valuable information about the university's teaching quality and educational philosophy, positively contributing to the university's brand development. Therefore, effective communication with employers should be promoted. Inviting employers to the university for presentations and recruitment events can enhance their understanding of the university.

(3) **Leveraging Mass Media for Wider Promotion:** Mass media is a valuable tool for enhancing the university's visibility. The university should make full use of various media channels, such as newspapers, magazines, television, and the internet. It should disseminate information about the university's distinctive features, student extracurricular activities, achievements in both internal and external competitions, academic research outcomes, information about postgraduate entrance examinations, and employment prospects. Proactive self-promotion through these channels helps establish a

positive university image, increase the university's visibility, promote brand development, and ensure the university's sustainable growth.

3.3 Guangxi University of Finance and Economics

(1) **Creating Promotional Videos:** Producing an engaging, lively, and captivating promotional video is an effective way to attract the attention and interest of potential students and parents. The video content can encompass educational philosophies, introductions to teachers, curriculum offerings, and the learning environment, among other aspects. This approach provides audiences with a comprehensive and in-depth understanding of the university, leaving a lasting impression.

(2) **Hosting Open House Events:** Open house events are among the best ways to attract potential parents and students for campus visits. During these events, the university can showcase its unique and rich curriculum offerings, excellent faculty, and advanced facilities. Additionally, these events can facilitate interactive exchanges between students, parents, and the university, allowing them to gain a deeper understanding of the university's strengths and distinctive features.

(3) **Leveraging Social Media:** In the era of prevalent social media usage, utilizing these platforms for promotion is highly effective. Information and updates about the university can be shared on platforms such as WeChat public accounts, Weibo, and Douyin (TikTok) to capture the attention of more potential parents and students. Furthermore, social media provides opportunities for direct interaction with prospective clients, addressing their inquiries promptly, and offering relevant information.

(4) **Participating in Education Expos:** Participation in education expos offers an excellent opportunity to promote the university to a broader audience. At these expos, setting up professional and appealing booths allows the university to introduce its curriculum offerings, faculty strength, and the learning environment to visitors. Additionally, on-site enrollment activities can attract more potential parents and students to learn about the university.

(5) **Organizing Special Events:** Hosting special events is another effective way to capture the attention of potential parents and students. Events like cultural and arts festivals, technology and innovation exhibitions, and sports competitions not only showcase the university's uniqueness and strengths but also attract more prospective parents and students to participate. Through these means, more people can become acquainted with the university's excellent qualities.

(6) Through interviews, it was found that all three universities mentioned above employ a combination of online and offline methods for university brand promotion. They leverage modern new media technologies, including platforms like WeChat, campus microblogs, university websites, advertisements, and television, to develop avenues for campus brand promotion and increase outreach.

4 Conclusion and Recommendations

This study compared the current state of school acceptance based on various fundamental factors, including school reputation, curriculum, teachers, alumni success, campus activities for college students, and campus facilities. The results indicate that the respondents generally have a reasonably high level of acceptance of the university (Average Value = 3.5570). The degrees of acceptance in these six dimensions, from highest to lowest, are as follows: teachers (Average Value = 3.7748), campus activities for college students (Average Value = 3.7558), school reputation (Average Value = 3.6811), alumni success (Average Value = 3.6496), curriculum (Average Value = 3.4215), and campus facilities (Average Value = 3.0590).

This study proposes brand marketing and promotion as a means to enhance students' sense of acceptance towards the university. Brand promotion can rapidly establish a positive public image of the university in the short term, increase its visibility, strengthen cohesion, enhance trust, gain maximum social acceptance, and consequently improve students' sense of acceptance towards the university. Specific promotional measures are as follows:

(1) Strengthen the Focus on Teaching-Centered Promotion

The university should primarily promote its renowned teachers. Parents and the general public interested in basic education will pay more attention to the number of distinguished teachers and unique teaching topics and models at Guangxi Vocational University of Agriculture, rather than focusing solely on the number of buildings, campus size, or student enrollment. Furthermore, the university should vigorously publicize exemplary student achievements and progress to shape and highlight distinguished teachers and outstanding students. It is believed that the university's promotional efforts should be centered on teachers and students at the forefront of teaching, thereby creating and unearthing renowned teachers and outstanding students. Through awareness of these exceptional individuals, the general public can develop a deeper brand connection with Guangxi Vocational University of Agriculture. Additionally, the university should emphasize and report on breakthrough teaching achievements, pioneering reform initiatives, and socially impactful university events. By planning branded events and designing a series of promotional reports, the university can enhance its reputation and visibility.

(2) Optimize Existing Promotion Platforms and Integrate Media Resources

The university should establish communication channels using platforms such as the campus website, interactive forums, parent-teacher QQ groups, blogs, Weibo, WeChat, short video platforms like Douyin (TikTok), radio stations, and display cases. These platforms should be used to create comprehensive communication tools, allowing media platforms to serve a comprehensive role in promoting Guangxi Vocational University of Agriculture. This will ensure the smooth flow of external news and timely and effective dissemination of positive information about the university, thereby constructing a multi-dimensional information platform between the university and social media.

For handling news information on online platforms, flexibility in response, swift reporting, accuracy in information, and comprehensive coverage are essential. This

approach is suitable for quickly uploading news on the campus website. Subsequent news tracking can involve in-depth reporting published in campus newspapers and magazines.

Comprehensive planning of campus news based on high-quality campus activities is also an important form of integrating media resources. Three-dimensional and comprehensive planning of campus news shapes suitable campus public opinion and guides students toward healthy and positive development. Moreover, parents play a crucial role in the university's education, and their cooperation is essential. This partnership between the university and parents can be achieved through effective use of promotional platforms and mediums.

(3) Establish Teacher-Student Communication Teams to Achieve Comprehensive Campus Promotion

To cultivate promotional talent and enhance team building, Guangxi Vocational University of Agriculture should create a communication team characterized by positive attitudes, proficiency, discipline, and professionalism. This team will ensure both quality and quantity in promotional efforts. The communication team should prioritize learning the theory and skills of university promotion, become familiar with common strategies related to university promotion, understand the characteristics and general operation rules of social media and media platforms, and increase the university's news coverage rate.

(4) Shape an Enriched Educational Brand to Increase University Brand Influence

As basic education expands, the market has transitioned from being solely a seller's market where schools choose students to a buyer's market where students and schools engage in mutual selection. While Guangxi Vocational University of Agriculture focuses on the development of research and teaching, faculty training, equipment investment, and student habit and skill development, it should also prioritize and invest in news promotion planning and reporting, incorporating it as an important component of the university's brand strategy.

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