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# BRANDING IN SCIENCE

Identity, reputation, the system of values, experience, and relations with institutions are only some of the elements making up the brand of the Polish Academy of Sciences

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**A**s objects of research, brands are studied in terms of numerous aspects. Those relevant to the study of the Polish Academy of Science (PAS) brand include the following: identity (attributes, organizational culture, social ties), reputation (ability to deliver the desired and expected values), the system of values, relations (shaping the emotional attitudes of the audience), and experience (histories of the institutions, scientific and professional biographies of

members, stakeholder experience). In the context of questions regarding the directions of development of science, the PAS brand can be defined through such parameters as innovation in research, the prioritization of social relevance and knowledge distribution, and respect for the role that science plays in the formation of bonds.

**Key concepts**

Modern marketing, based on the management of audience attitudes and perception, places a special emphasis on the intangible components of the value of scientific institutions, including their image, brand, reputation, good public relations, and so on. The words “image” and “brand” are often treated as synonymous, with brand being sometimes equated with prestige. Marketing-based approaches to brand research make





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use of indicators for the evaluation of study programs, the quality of research and teaching staff, the level of research and teaching, the research and education infrastructure, international collaboration, and organizational culture (understood as the values, standards, and models of behavior that affect relations with the surroundings). These indicators are correlated with the academic tradition (history, location, values, and prestige) of the institution being evaluated. It can be assumed that the brand of a science institution is a result of the evaluation of all these elements and public expectations in terms of values and attitudes.

The brand of an institution can be viewed as comprising the rational (tangible) and emotional (intangible) components of the institution's values, identified and described in the processes of communication and establishment of relations with other institutions. The perception of the institution's values and character-

istics in the symbolic and functional spheres is especially important in this context, as it forms the basis for brand attachment and trust in branded products, services, or actions.

It can be assumed that the market credibility of a brand is created by its tangible components, whereas social credibility (also among consumers and audiences) is created by the identity message, reputation, the system of values, membership and participation criteria, and the unique nature of benefits from participation (elitism, distinctiveness, and the transfer of the institution's importance). The key parameters of the brand defined in this way should be construed through the prism of the institution's identity and mission.

## Brand characteristics

After adapting definition fields to the analysis of the brand of PAS as a scientific institution, we can assume that its following characteristics are of key importance:

- its status as an institution based on synergy between its body of elected members and its research institutes,
- its status as a symbol of prestige, resulting from the procedure for electing members,
- its recognizability among the national and international scientific community and in the socio-economic environment,
- the uniqueness of its research, development, and teaching programs (their narrow specializations, very good collaboration and internal communication, optimization of research costs and time, the knowledge and competences of the scholars involved, and the research infrastructure),
- the accumulation of intangible components (social identity, distinctiveness and presence in the minds of members of the audience thanks to serious participation in the public discourse, the consistency of values and declared goals with the institution's image).

Successful branding depends on the consistency of the brand's visual identity (name, logo, symbols, colors) and non-visual identity (mission, forms of activity, internal and external communication systems).

The PAS brand identity systems are consistent and recognizable, enabling the positioning of the institution as distinctive, trustworthy, and guaranteeing satisfactory institutional and individual collaboration. The PAS visual message is dominated by the color blue, which is associated with knowledge, responsibility, safety, and creativity. It is therefore well-suited to highlight the institution's mission, defined as the development, promotion, integration, and dissemination of science, as well as contribution to the development of education and the enrichment of the national culture.

## ACADEMIA PART I The Academy Ideal

The Polish Academy of Sciences organizes numerous scientific events. Photo: US Secretary of Energy Jennifer M. Granholm meets with Polish researchers in the Staszic Palace in Warsaw in September 2021



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The PAS website is managed very well. It contains a one-sentence description of the Academy at the start, followed by a comprehensive presentation of its mission, history, and tasks. Importantly, the website highlights the history of the Academy, dating back to the early 19th century, and the traditions of the Warsaw Society of the Friends of Science and the Kraków Scientific Society (transformed into the Polish Academy of Arts and Sciences, or PAAS, in 1918), which were an emanation of the strength of a nation deprived of its statehood and, just like the entire social scientific movement, played a major role in fostering the durability of independence-minded and civic attitudes. This historical aspect must not be ignored in the context of the 70th anniversary of the Polish Academy of Sciences in 2022. Taking into account distinguishing features of identity such as the system of values, the personalities of members, and the rules of conduct, we can describe the PAS brand as visible, recognizable, and attractive to audiences linked to science. PAS research institutes use the names of prominent scholars and intellectuals as their “patron” scientists, which is a very well designed element of the long-term image-building strategy of these units.

At the functional level, the PAS brand has a positive image. In particular, this applies to:

- the Academy’s organizational structure, well-established in public awareness (five divisions, 77 scientific committees, 13 task-force committees, and eight branches),
- the system of management (hierarchical and verified by the General Assembly),
- the rules for the election of members (which guarantee the autonomy of decisions for candida-

tes and units, and above all remain a measure of community trust),

- the activity of auxiliary units and units supervised by the PAS (thanks to very good communication practices, the PAS brand has been popularized by such units as the Botanical Garden – Center for Biological Diversity Conservation in Powsin, the Kórnik Library, and the joint Scientific Library of PAS and PAAS in Kraków).

### Pragmatics

The key components of the PAS brand related to prestige and uniqueness of what the Academy has to offer become evident in the analysis of the potential of the PAS institutes. Based on the reports on their activity in the period of the implementation of the higher education reform (2019–2020), we can conclude that 14 out of 69 institutes are units with the highest scientific category (A+), and 45 have the category A. This result determines the leading position of the Polish Academy of Sciences (both the institution and the units being evaluated) among higher education institutions in Poland, which also has its implications in the context of the Academy’s position in rankings. For example, the PAS units rank between the 351st and 400th position in the Quacquarelli Symonds World University Rankings (QS WUR). In SCImago Institutions Rankings, in turn, the PAS Institute of Organic Chemistry occupies the 258th place, PAS ranks 421st, and 10 PAS institutes rank between the 300th and 500th positions. SCImago (SIR) is based on evaluations of research performance, innovation output, and societal impact measured by their web visibility, which corresponds to the sphere



of brand value as such. The table below shows only some of the most prestigious statistical parameters reflecting the achievements PAS and its institutes:

	2019	2020
Expert tasks of special importance	4	3
Conferences	162	62
Journals	52	53
Monographs	32	41
Foreign agreements	6	3
Professor titles	39	47

These achievements can be summed up using the words of Rev. Prof. Michał Heller: “Gaining or creating knowledge is especially sensitive to potential growth of value.”<sup>1</sup> Incidentally, we can add that the Academy’s standard activities also include workshops and summer schools, exhibitions, dissemination of science, maintenance of databases, study visits, and international exchange programs (in 2019, for example, 450 foreign scholars visited or completed internships at PAS units, and 443 Polish scholars went to foreign countries). The Academy’s strengths include international cooperation, reflected in 78 agreements and memorandums and participation in 58 scientific organizations, including ALLEA (All European Academies) and EASAC (European Academies’ Science Advisory Council). Since 30 April 2020, the Polish Institute of Advanced Studies (PIAS) has been a member of the Network of European Institutes for Ad-

vanced Study (NetIAS). There are consultancy points for the EU Framework Programmes and the European Research Council (ERC) – in 2020, the Copernicus Astronomical Center received 14 million euros. The same year saw the opening of an interdisciplinary fellowship program for young researchers called Polish Academy of Sciences’ Individual Fellowship: Innovation and Creativity (PASIFIC) and the launch of the PAS International Institute of Molecular Mechanisms and Machines.

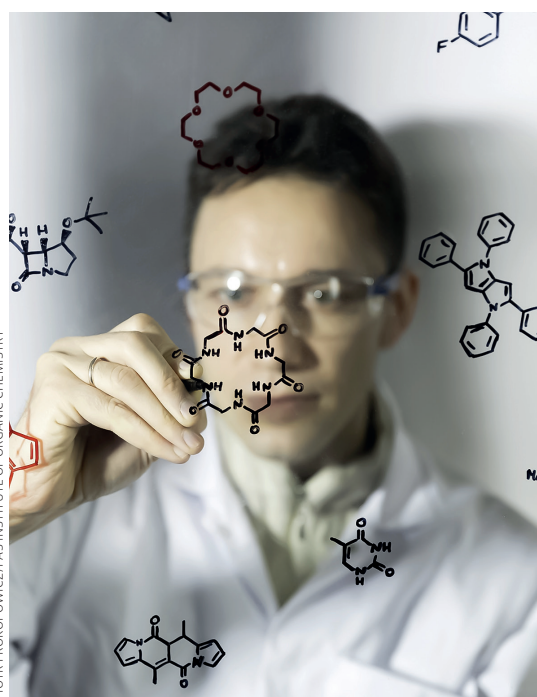
Examples of the Academy’s special involvement in social dialogue and research of special importance for the current situation included the initiatives taken by the Interdisciplinary COVID-19 Advisory Team to the PAS President (popularized in two special issues of the journal *Academia*). An equally significant social role is played by the work of the Advisory Group on Climate Crisis affiliated with the PAS President, for example, the position statements on rising sea and ocean levels and the prospects for decarbonization in electricity generation.

The Academy’s prestige and uniqueness are strengthened by achievements of social and economic importance, inventions, as well as national and foreign patents. Numerous research projects and patents reveal the diverse yet complementary nature of the research conducted by skilled teams. To put this into perspective, here are examples of projects implemented in 2019: “The Wellbeing of the Family,” “The Economy and Investment: Poland – China,” the development and implementation of innovative biotechnological products for agriculture and wastewater management to reduce water pollution, and the development of a biomarkers panel for early, non-invasive blood-based diagnostics of Alzheimer’s disease. In turn, the projects implemented in 2020 included: “Mental Wellbeing and Loneliness During the COVID-19 Pandemic,” “Origins, Goals, and Significance of the Three Seas Initiative,” “Digital Research Infrastructure for the Arts and Humanities DARIAH-PL,” “Managing and Reporting of Greenhouse Gas Emissions



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In 2021, members of the Interdisciplinary COVID-19 Advisory Team to the PAS President received the Nicolaus Copernicus Medals of the Polish Academy of Sciences. The medals are awarded for outstanding scientific achievements, honoring scholars for their distinguished service to the scientific community in Poland



PIOTR PROKOPOWICZ/PAS INSTITUTE OF ORGANIC CHEMISTRY

The PAS Institute of Organic Chemistry ranks 258th in the global SCImago Institutions Rankings.

Photo shows Dr. Yevgen Poronik designing new organic compounds

<sup>1</sup> Michał Heller, *Jak być uczonym* [How to Be a Scientist] (Kraków: Copernicus Center Press, 2017)

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and Carbon Sequestration in Different Landscape Mosaics,” and “Biology, Ecology, and Conservation of Birds in a Changing Environment.”

In terms of the Academy’s identity and mission, we should note the discursiveness of the opinions and positions adopted in 2020 on the issues of the Code of Ethics for Research Workers, proposals of the State Committee for Science Policy regarding the reform of the Polish Academy of Sciences, and attempts to block the freedom of scientific debate and expression of scientific opinions. Other important issues here include long-term forms of activity and a well-developed system of internal communication (newsletters, magazines, websites, social media profiles). In addition, the Academy remains committed to promoting the development of young scholars through the Polish Young Academy and to supporting them in the process of applying for ERC grants. Also, the PAS has a large group of PhD students (1874 in 2019 and 1791 in 2020) and awards scientific degrees to many scholars – 170 PhD degrees and 174 DSc degrees (*doktor habilitowany*) in 2019 (only among the scholars

perceived as a leader and partner. Interestingly, activities related to the Academy’s mission and value system (opinions, position statements, and communications) are more recognizable than specific scientific achievements that impact on the resolution of social or economic problems.

The Academy’s image-building strategy brings positive effects as a result of the application of several principles, namely:

- the principle of social responsibility (the PAS President and members express their opinions on important, current topics through the prism of the Academy’s mission and values based on their knowledge and scientific and organizational skills, thus representing the scientific community and its stakeholders),
- the principle of the identification of stakeholder groups (in the narrow sense – the system of science and higher education in Poland; in the broad sense – social affiliations based on the traditional role of the intelligentsia),
- the principle of the diversification of marketing activities (inclusion of the interests of various audiences, research and teaching programs provided by the institutes, and support for young researchers),
- the principle of monitoring outcomes (internal communication, promotion and dissemination of science in the media and through publicly accessible events, monitoring of media statements on science-related issues and the operations of PAS).

A simplified SWOT<sup>2</sup> analysis of the PAS image reveals that the Academy’s strengths lie in consistency with the rational and emotional components of the brand, whereas its weakness is reflected in the insufficient emphasis placed on its involvement in the resolution of specific social and economic problems (the media are dominated by narratives playing down the role of research institutes). Assuming the position of a leader drawing together the scholarly community and accepted by that community may be seen as an opportunity to be explored by the Academy, whereas the devaluation of its role in shaping Poland’s science policy should be seen as a threat.

### Recommendations

These findings may be used to formulate recommendations in the brand evaluation model. In the context of the PAS, such recommendations include the following: eliminating discrepancies between the Academy’s mission and practical actions, curbing general messaging that pertains to the past and is addressed to everyone, reinforcing the conviction that the Academy’s goals and tasks are consistent with public interests, and adding messaging that stresses the importance of research and its social and economic impacts. ■

The Academy’s image-building strategy brings positive effects as a result of the application of several principles, including the principle of social responsibility.

employed at the PAS institutes), and 128 PhD degrees and 108 DSc degrees in 2020. Finally, the Academy maintains foreign research stations, which promote Polish science and culture abroad.

Public reception of the activity of the task-force committees operating at the Presidium of the Polish Academy of Sciences offers solid proof of the Academy’s successful branding strategy.

### Brand vs. image

Since an institution’s public image is essentially the opinion formed by its surroundings, an external picture created in the awareness of members of the audience, we should stress the consistency of the PAS image and the PAS brand in terms of the Academy’s mission, system of values, human resources, standards of conduct, and material resources. The image of the Polish Academy of Sciences is based on the conviction of its status and prestige as a kind of cross-university organization that brings together outstanding scholars whose scientific and moral authority undergirds the gravitas of the public activities taken up. The PAS is

<sup>2</sup>SWOT stands for strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.



PART II

# THE CHALLENGES OF SCIENCE

