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# 9. Organisational Legitimation Strategies in Social Media: How Business Schools Address Declining Rankings

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**Abstract:** Public relations scholarship has drawn on organisational legitimacy theory to show how organisations appeal to stakeholders' acceptance of their existence and importance in society. Studies have shown how different types of organisations utilise communication strategies in social media to gain legitimacy. This chapter contributes to public relations research by examining how a sample of business schools implemented legitimation strategies in their social media posts when their legitimacy was threatened.

The findings show that when 10 world-class European business schools faced declining institutional rankings between 2016 and 2019, they made use of four legitimation strategies—*authorisation*, *rationalisation*, *moralisation* and *mythopoesis*—in their Facebook posts as they sought to regain their legitimacy.

**Keywords:** business schools, Facebook, legitimation strategies, public relations, rankings, social media

## Introduction

Public relations studies have sought to understand how organisations build and manage their legitimacy (Suchman, 1995) through strategic means (Canel *et al*., 2017; Etter *et al*., 2018; Yang and Ji, 2019; Yim and Park, 2019). These studies have explored how organisations seek public consent for their existence through communicatively managing relations with the public—a core public relations ideal. While some have examined how organisational legitimacy is managed through communication in social media (e.g. Colleoni, 2013; Etter *et al*., 2018; Schultz *et al*., 2013), such as through legitimation strategies (Aggerholm and

Thomsen, 2016; Coombs, 1992; Johansen and Nielsen, 2012; Woods, 2019), little is known about which legitimation strategies organisations use in social media when their legitimacy is threatened.

This chapter examines the legitimation strategies that were implemented by business schools on social media when they faced legitimacy threats. Business schools are exemplary places to examine this phenomenon because ambitious business schools rely heavily on institutional rankings (Bartlett *et al*. 2013) to manage public perceptions of their legitimacy on social media. Global and regional rankings have enabled business schools to stand out in a highly competitive educational marketplace, and falling in these rankings over consecutive years, as the business schools in this study encountered, can result in lower enrolment and thus lower revenues. Additionally, their legitimacy as highly valued institutions is challenged, obliging them to mitigate the damage. One way they do this is through legitimation strategies via posts on their school social media accounts.

Accordingly, this chapter examines how 10 world-class European business schools utilised legitimation strategies in their Facebook posts when faced with lower rankings in the *Financial Times* (FT) European business school rankings between 2016 and 2019. We collected 2,100 Facebook posts published by these schools within the above timeframe and adapted the theoretical models of Vaara *et al*. (2006), Vaara and Tienari (2008) and Vaara (2014) to identify the characteristic legitimation strategies used as the schools tried to rebuild their legitimacy while facing declining rankings. We identified and examined four legitimation strategies that were used: *authorisation, rationalisation, moralisation* and *mythopoesis*. The findings of the analysis contribute to progressive public relations

knowledge of how organisations communicate in social media to build their legitimacy in the context of threats to their legitimacy.

This chapter is structured as follows. First, we review public relations literature on organisational legitimacy formation, including on social media. Next, we describe the context in which 10 world-class European business schools attempted to communicatively manage their legitimacy through social media as they faced declining FT rankings, followed by describing the methods by which we collected and analysed Facebook posts as data to explore the phenomenon described above. We subsequently present the findings, interpret their meaning within this case and close with lessons learned for future research.

## Literature review

### *Public relations and organisational legitimation*

Public relations studies drawing on legitimacy theory (e.g. Bartlett, 2007; Canel *et al*., 2017; Colleoni, 2013; Coombs, 1992; Etter *et al*., 2018; Frandsen and Johansen, 2013; Johansen and Nielsen, 2012; Merkelsen, 2011; Metzler, 2001; Motion, 2005; Schulz *et al*., 2013; Wæraas, 2018; Yang and Ji, 2019; Yim and Park, 2019) have shown how the legitimacy of an organisation is formed in public perceptions of the appropriateness and social acceptability of that organisation in a given social context (Suchman, 1995). Although legitimacy and reputation are similar concepts reflecting public perceptions of approval or disapproval of an organisation and its actions, reputation is more concerned with how organisations are positively distinctive from one another; thus, it arises from social comparison processes. Legitimacy is more about how organisations must strive to conform to taken-for-granted standards. According to King and Whetton (2008), '*Conventional thinking holds that*

*legitimacy is a requirement of all organisations, whereas reputation is a desirable, but not essential, property'* (p. 192).

This chapter focuses on legitimacy rather than reputation because we are interested in exploring how organisations seek to gain public consent for their existence through communicatively managing relations with the public. Seeking legitimacy is a core public relations ideal. Boyd (2000) contended that legitimacy '*forms a basis for many lines of study in public relations'* (p. 346). For example, '*the idea that corporations depend on the goodwill of their publics (a 'consent of the governed' for profit-making enterprises) is reflected in crisis communication studies, image scholarship and issue management'* (Boyd, 2000, p. 346). Indeed, the way organisations communicate with stakeholders to acquire legitimacy is a relational and social process (Mazza, 1999).

*Public relations and legitimation strategies*

This study focuses on the organisation's role in the process of legitimacy formation to observe how organisations can strategically attempt to improve their *state* of legitimacy through a communication process of extracting legitimacy from their cultural environments (for public relations studies examining legitimation, see Aggerholm and Thomsen, 2016; Canel *et al*., 2017; Coombs, 1992; Johansen and Nielsen, 2012; Woods, 2019; Yang and Ji, 2019). Accordingly, this study examines how organisations enact legitimation strategies to enhance their legitimacy. While the public is the primary source from which organisational legitimacy originates, through a strategic legitimation process, organisations can attempt to persuade the public to view them in a more favourable light. Thus, legitimation involves organisations attempting to influence stakeholders' assessments of them through ongoing communicative efforts.

Some crisis communication and government communication studies within the public relations literature have examined ways in which organisations implement strategies and tactics for legitimation purposes. In their study of how Korean Air implemented a legitimation strategy and tactics in response to a crisis of legitimacy, Yang and Ji (2019) found that the airline implemented strategic restructuring tactics, such as *excuses, justifications* and *explanations*. In their study of the legitimacy of government policies about refugees, Canel *et al*. (2017) explored how citizens confer types of public policy legitimacy (*consequential, procedural, structural* and *personal*) and how governments can adopt communication and public diplomacy strategies to address refugee crises; thus, they contributed to ideas about how governments can build legitimacy as an intangible asset.

In his study of legitimacy's role in issues management, Coombs (1992) defined legitimation strategies as '*arguments for the acceptance of a legitimacy claim'* (p. 107) and identified 10 bases for rhetorically establishing legitimacy as part of an issues management process: *tradition, charisma, bureaucracy, values, symbols, de-legitimacy, credibility, emotionality, rationality* and *entitlement*. More recently, Woods (2019) adopted Coombs' (1992) framework to examine how an activist organisation employed legitimation strategies to garner public support for its cause and subsequently identified the additional strategy *endorsement by circumstance* that was used by activists.

Few public relations studies have drawn on organisational discourse theory (e.g. van Dijk, 1998; van Leeuwen and Wodak, 1999) to identify legitimation strategies used by organisations. For example, Johansen and Nielsen (2012) identified and examined four legitimation strategies (*authorisation, moral evaluation*, *rationalisation* and *mythopoesis*)

used by a company to legitimate itself as socially responsible. Aggerholm and Thomsen (2016) examined how management within a public sector organisation undertook three legitimation strategies to influence legitimacy conferred by internal stakeholders: *authorisation, rationalisation and moral evaluation*.

*Legitimation strategies in social media*

In practice, organisations make use of discursive, rhetorical or other communicative means to legitimate themselves via communication tools, such as organisational reports, news media reports and social media posts. However, although legitimation through news media is well studied, public relations research has not kept pace with these practices in social media. Furthermore, studies that do focus on legitimation conducted in social media largely either do not focus on organisational strategies or take the stakeholder perspective. For example, while Schulz *et al*. (2013) offered a theoretical view of how organisations can build legitimacy through Facebook and blogs, their study did not illuminate how organisations can implement legitimation strategies on social media. Etter *et al*. (2018) measured organisational legitimacy on social media, but their analysis was limited to legitimation via stakeholders' posts. Colleoni (2013) examined how both organisational and stakeholder tweets contribute to changes in organisational legitimacy, but her study analysed how corporate social responsibility (CSR) communication strategies build legitimacy.

Accordingly, the current chapter contributes to this gap in public relations knowledge of how organisations adopt legitimation strategies to legitimate themselves in social media. This study is limited to the organisational perspective to explore only how organisations attempt to legitimate themselves strategically through social media. Furthermore, this study does not explore the *effects* of legitimation efforts on organisations and thus does not seek to examine

stakeholders' legitimation efforts for or against organisations through analysing their posts on social media.

## Method and data

*Business schools' legitimation in social media when facing declining rankings*

This chapter seeks to identify and explore how business schools implement legitimation strategies through their social media posts. We chose this type of organisation, particularly the most prestigious schools, because they face constant challenges to their legitimacy through changes in rankings that are determined by accreditation and ranking organisations.

Global rankings like *FT* and Quacquarelli Symonds have enabled ambitious business schools to stand out in a highly competitive educational marketplace. Thus, we examined *FT* rankings to identify business schools in Europe with declining rankings between 2016 and 2019. Although there are many institutional ranking systems around the world, we chose to examine the *FT* rankings because of its focus on business schools and due to its reputation as one of the most prestigious and competitive ranking agencies in the business education field.

Importantly, many of these schools found themselves falling in these rankings across consecutive years. Students choose business schools based predominantly on their faculty, rankings and accreditations; indeed, over 80% of prospective students globally say they consult rankings when choosing business schools (Graduate Management Admission Council, 2021- see Further Reading). Thus, business schools experiencing even the slightest drop in rankings quickly seek ways to address this challenge to their legitimacy because they find themselves fighting for social acceptance (i.e. legitimacy) as highly respected and valued educational institutions. They rely on the public's conferral of legitimacy because it attracts

the best students and staff. When their legitimacy suffers, they may face declining enrolment and consequently reduced funding. Thus, when faced with ranking-induced legitimacy challenges, they adopt communication strategies to defend and rebuild their legitimacy.

We identified ten European business schools from the top 100 that were declining consecutively for two or more years in the *FT* rankings in Europe from 2016 to 2019. We also checked their global ranking in the *FT* to confirm their decline in rank globally. The schools included ESADE Business School (Spain), Nova School of Business and Economics (SBE) (Portugal), TIAS Business School (Netherlands), Nyenrode Business Universiteit (Netherlands), Leeds University Business School (UK), Solvay Brussels School of Economics and Management (Belgium), Paris Dauphine University (France), Brunel Business School (UK), La Rochelle Business School (France) and Lancaster University Management School (UK). See Table 9.1. for a list of the schools with their base country, *FT* rank in Europe (2016–2018) and Global MBA *FT* rank (2017–2019).

The average drop in these rankings across all 10 business schools during this period was almost 8 places. La Rochelle Business School suffered the greatest drop (12), followed by Nyenrode Business Universiteit (10). Interestingly, Lancaster University Management School lost and then gained back 3 spots during this period. Leeds University Business School and Solvay Brussels School of Economics and Management experienced the second smallest drop in rankings (5 each).

<INSERT TABLE 9.1. HERE>

*Data collection*

We collected these business schools' Facebook posts published between January 2016 and December 2019 and focused on posts they made rather than posts made by their stakeholders because our interest was solely in how these schools strategically used texts to build legitimacy. We chose social media posts because (1) individual or external stakeholders are increasingly adopting social media as their information source to evaluate the appropriateness of organisations' actions and activities (Whelan *et al*., 2013) (i.e. the social media posts of business schools help stakeholders form perceptions of them) and (2) scholars increasingly analyse social media posts of organisations to assess their legitimacy management discourses (Etter *et al*., 2019; Glozer *et al*., 2019).

In total, 2,100 screenshots of these business schools' Facebook posts published between 2016 and 2019 were collected, with the unit of analysis being Facebook posts, particularly the text within each post.

*Data analysis*

A close textual analysis of the selected Facebook posts identified a pattern of discursive strategies used by these schools during the rankings decline period. We looked for explicit discursive means that were used for legitimation purposes. For our coding we adapted the theoretical models of Vaara *et al*. (2006), Vaara and Tienari (2008) and Vaara (2014). We drew on organisational discourse theory (Vaara *et al*., 2006; Vaara, 2014; van Dijk, 1998; van Leeuwen and Wodak, 1999) which tends to adopt the approach that legitimation is socially constructed through the use of language for the ongoing creation of "*a sense of positive, beneficial, ethical, understandable, necessary or otherwise acceptable action in a specific setting*" (Vaara and Tienari, 2008, p.3). Accordingly, we distinguished four characteristic legitimation strategies used by the business schools: *authorisation, rationalisation,*

*moralisation* and *mythopoesis*. To ensure greater analytic transparency, Table 9.2. provides an overview of the four strategies and examples of how they were identified within the schools' Facebook posts.

*Authorisation* is legitimation referencing the authority of tradition, custom, law, institution, organisation or people in whom authority of some kind is conferred. Therefore, posts needed to clearly convey a reliance on some form of authority to present the school in a favourable light. This strategy provides an authoritative basis for legitimation. *Rationalisation* is legitimation using rational or logical arguments. We looked for posts that clearly referred to the usefulness "*of specific actions based on knowledge claims that are accepted in a given context as relevant*" (Vaara and Tienari, 2008, p.6). *Moralisation* is legitimation using moral arguments, which are often used to showcase an organisation's key values. We looked for posts clearly referencing specific value systems that provide the moral basis for legitimation (see examples below in our findings). *Mythopoesis* is legitimation conveyed through narratives. We identified mythopoesis in posts that told stories or conveyed narrative structures to indicate how the issue in question relates to the past or the future to build the organisation's legitimacy. Mythopoesis can be identified when a story is taken as evidence of acceptable, appropriate or preferential behaviour (Van Leeuwen and Wodak, 1999). Prime examples of these strategies are shown below in our findings.

**Findings**

Within the text of Facebook posts, we identified each of the four legitimation strategies used by these schools. Among these, *authorisation* and *rationalisation* were the most frequently used. Within these schools' social media posts, *authorisation* was used to refer to the expertise, authority and power of corporate, political and other social organisations and their

dignitaries (e.g. CEOs, Nobel laureates, prime ministers and senior European Union officials), along with business ranking agencies and accreditation bodies. Business schools attempted to align, associate and relate with these dignitaries and their organisations to exhibit recognition and acceptance by these legitimate authorities. Furthermore, ranking and accreditation organisations, often known as media evaluators (Münch, 2016), provide their assessment and certificates about business schools' performance and quality. Schools' Facebook posts referred to these certificates to showcase their achievements, endorsements and quality symbols to influence public perception and enhance public acceptance.

As an example of *authorisation*, in posting the following text, Solvay Brussels School of Economics and Management linked the authority of the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) Europe, the Middle East and Africa (EMEA) Conference with the presence and speech of its dean to boost its legitimacy as a world-class business school:

> '*AACSB EMEA Conference in Madrid—Our Dean delivers a keynote speech on the challenges of cross-disciplinary projects and curriculum design to 250 Deans and Business School Delegates'* (17/10/2016)

In the following example, Lancaster University Management School capitalised on the expertise of a professor and the institutional authority of the British Academy of Management to influence public opinion about the school:

> '*Congratulations to Professor Sue Cox, who has received a prestigious lifetime achievement award from the British Academy of Management.'* (09/03/2019)

*Rationalisation* was the second most frequently used legitimation strategy. Schools made rational arguments to build the perception that they should be considered legitimate, top-class

business schools, despite their decline in rankings. Many of their posts sought to build legitimacy through references to logical reasons why prospective students should choose them, such as to boost career prospects and extend their network of business contacts. In the following example, Leeds University Business School made the four-point claim that its Executive MBA programme will (1) instil inspiration, (2) challenge students, (3) fast-track their careers and (4) extend their network of contacts across the globe, thus rationalising the argument that the school should be perceived as a legitimate top-ranked education institution:

> '*Thinking about studying for an MBA? The top-ranked Leeds Executive #MBA will inspire and challenge you, accelerate your career and build global networks*.' (18/05/2017)

This strategy was also exemplified in the following three posts, which attempted to appeal to the rational argument that by investing in their further education, students will build their career and their future:

> '*Your World. Your Future. Your Career*.' (Nova SBE, 12/07/2016)

> *'Further develop your professional skills inside and outside the classroom with a postgraduate degree from Leeds University Business School.'* (Leeds University Business School, 18/01/2018)

> '*At ESADE, we prepare our students for the future.*' (ESADE, 08/07/2016)

Although less used by schools, the *mythopoesis* strategy was evident in posts narrating the success and experiences of students and alumni, thus attempting to build legitimacy through storytelling examples of their success:

‘*When Laura Amoretti started her #ExecutiveMBA at #ESADE, she didn’t think she could be a good leader. Now she is preparing to become CEO in the next three years. Discover her story and what changed in her mentality here*.’ (ESADE, 18/07/2019)

TIAS School for Business and Society used this strategy when it pointed out the success of one of its graduates through a story linked from this post:

*‘Saskia de Bruin, alumna of the IMM Global Executive #MBA program of #TIAS, has been named one of ‘the best EMBA students in the world! Read her story here*.’ (25/06/2018)

Leeds University Business School used *mythopoesis* by alluding to the success stories of three graduates in this post:

*‘To celebrate #InternationalWomensDay2019, we welcomed three inspiring alumni back to campus to talk about their successes*.’ (12/03/2019)

In using the *moralisation* strategy, the business schools tended to express their commitment to certain core values, which suggests an attempt at appealing to prospective students and other stakeholders who hold the same or similar values. These values were often linked to popular socio-political issues, such as sustainability, equality and diversity. Thus, although declining in rankings, these schools attempted to build legitimacy through moral signals. In the following example, Nova SBE demonstrated its commitment to sustainability through the use of *moralisation*:

*‘More than a buzzword, sustainability is part of the school’s mission, and Nova SBE devotes itself to address[ing] this issue and progressively achiev[ing] its pioneering environmental goals and milestones*.’ (23/10/2019)

In the following post, ESADE demonstrated its use of moralisation by referencing its support for the empowerment of women entrepreneurs:

> '*We embrace women entrepreneurs all over the world and support Women's Entrepreneurship Day, to be celebrated tomorrow*.' (18/11/2016)

These four strategies show different ways in which business schools attempted to persuade stakeholders to accept them as world-class education institutions, despite their decline in the *FT* European rankings. Through these legitimation strategies, business schools sought to influence public opinion about them and thus convince people that they still had legitimacy and worth in the business education field.

<INSERT TABLE 9.2. HERE>

**Conclusions**

We contend that legitimacy and legitimation theory can contribute to a better understanding in public relations scholarship of how organisations monitor public perceptions of them and communicate in online social arenas to manage these perceptions when facing external assessments. In identifying and examining legitimation strategies used by business schools in the context of declining rankings, this study contributes to public relations scholarship exploring legitimation as a communication process (Aggerholm and Thomsen, 2016; Canel *et al*., 2017; Coombs, 1992; Johansen and Nielsen, 2012; Woods, 2019; Yang and Ji, 2019). Our findings confirm previous public relations research demonstrating how organisations conduct discursive-based legitimation by use of *authorisation, rationalisation, moralisation* and *mythopoesis* strategies (Aggerholm and Thomsen, 2016; Johansen and Nielsen, 2012).

However, what differentiates our study from previous studies is that while they conduct textual analyses of typical public relations documents (i.e. strategy documents or a manager's speech) and narrow their focus to the strategies of a single organisation, our study conducted a textual analysis of the posts of multiple organisations (within a single sector) on their Facebook accounts. By showing a novel textual approach to the study of organisational legitimation and identifying strategies used in business schools' posts in their own social media accounts, this study also contributes to progressive public relations research exploring how organisations communicate using social media to enhance their legitimacy (e.g. Colleoni, 2013; Etter *et al*., 2018; Schulz *et al*., 2013).

The strategies examined in this study can improve organisations' appeal to stakeholders through four relatively separate persuasive means so that they are perceived as legitimate within certain situational contexts. This study showed how these 10 ambitious business schools used their Facebook posts to try to influence stakeholders through authoritative, rational, moral and narrative strategies to view them as legitimate, world-class business schools in the context of threats to their legitimacy.

*Authorisation* particularly stood out as a predominant legitimation strategy of these schools. As a strategy that draws on the authority of institutions and individuals in power positions, *authorisation* is especially useful for organisations facing ongoing legitimacy challenges because it points not only to the authoritative power of tradition, custom and law but also to the authority of influential stakeholders and their public endorsements of organisations (e.g. accreditations), whom organisations can draw on for support when facing legitimacy challenges.

## Key lessons for future research

- Understanding the process by which organisational legitimacy is formed, managed and built through strategic communication in social media can help relationship management scholars better understand how organisation–public relationships form in public arenas, such as social media, as stakeholders share positive, negative and neutral assessments about organisations.
- We encourage future scholars to use the legitimation strategies framework adopted in this chapter because research into organisations' use of these types of strategies in social media (described below) could potentially help scholars categorise four different ways (authoritative, rational, moral and narrative) for communicators working for organisations to utilise persuasive techniques to build public acceptance of them.

  Authorisation (i.e. drawing on tradition, custom, organisations and institutions in whom the power of authority is vested), rationalisation (i.e. the use of rational and logical arguments), moralisation (i.e. the use of moral and value-based arguments) and mythopoesis (i.e. the use of narratives and storytelling) all provide bases through which organisations can persuade stakeholders to consider them legitimate.
- We contend that Facebook is an appropriate arena in which to build and negotiate organisational legitimacy because it enables both organisations and their stakeholders to engage in (de)legitimation activities. However, organisations should be mindful that Facebook presents a great deal of risk for organisations that are not prepared to seek and respond to stakeholders' interactions with their posts because legitimacy originates in stakeholders' perceptions and expressions. Indeed, it is difficult for organisations to control their communication (e.g. corporate messages) on a platform designed primarily for audience discussions. For insight into how to best manage

control of organisational communication across multiple digital and social media arenas, see Badham *et al*. (forthcoming, 2022).

- This study did not examine the effect of organisations' legitimation efforts on legitimacy inflation or deflation and only examined organisations' one-directional communication on their own Facebook accounts. Thus, future research could look at the (de)legitimation efforts of stakeholders as well, such as sentiment (e.g. positive, negative or neutral engagement) and the objects of (de)legitimation efforts (e.g. whether stakeholders predominantly do not like the policies and programmes or the leadership and vision of organisations).

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**Table 9.1 Ten Europe-based business schools' decline in rankings (FT Ranking in Europe and FT Ranking in Global MBA) between 2016 and 2019.**

| **Business schools** | **Country of origin** | **Number of ranks dropped in FT Ranking in Europe (2016 - 2018)** | **Number of ranks dropped in FT Ranking in Global MBA (2017 - 2019)** |
|---|---|---|---|
| Lancaster University Management School | UK | 3 (but bounced back to 2016 rank in 2018) | 49 |
| La Rochelle Business School | France | 12 | No rank |
| Nyenrode Business Universiteit | Netherland | 10 | No rank |
| Paris Dauphine University | France | 9 | No rank |
| ESADE Business School | Spain | 9 | 4 |
| Brunel Business School | UK | 9 | No rank |
| TIAS Business School | Netherland | 8 | No rank |
| Nova School of Business and Economics | Portugal | 7 | No rank |
| Leeds University Business School | U.K | 5 | No rank |
| Solvay Brussels School of Economics and Management | Belgium | 5 | No rank |

**Table 9.2. Examples of legitimation strategies and how they were identified within business school posts**

| **Legitimation strategy** | **How the strategy was identified in post texts - e.g., The school drew on ...** | **Example of school posts indicating a specific strategy** |
|---|---|---|
| Authorization | The authority of international accreditation agency AACSB to give Brunel Business School legitimate standing among the best schools in the world | *Brunel University London is thrilled to announce that Brunel Business School has officially achieved International Accreditation. Founded in 1916, AACSB Accreditation is the highest standard of quality in business education. Brunel is globally recognized for excelling in business education.* (12/20/2016) |
| | The authority of corporations DSM, DAF, Inalfa, IBM and DHL to give legitimacy to TIAS School for Business as an institution providing high quality graduate employment | *Today we welcome DSM, DAF, Inalfa, IBM and DHL to #TIAS to give company presentations to our international #MBA students. They are providing our students with more insights in their companies with regards to vision, mission, core business, culture, recruitment process, internships and job opportunities!* (03/23/2018) |
| Rationalization | A rational argument in which Lancaster University Management School justified its claim of institutional excellence by showing its Top 10 position in major UK rankings. | *"Reaching the Top 10 in all major UK league tables is a fantastic achievement, recognising the great work taking place right across the University including in the Management School. It's great to see that our focus on achieving excellence in all our activities within LUMS is having a direct impact on reinforcing Lancaster's place amongst the UK's elite universities." Angus Laing, Dean of Lancaster University Management School, reacts to our recent ranking news".* (09/27/2016) |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | A rational argument in which Leeds University Business School affirmed its claim that it is one of the best schools that year. | *"We're delighted to be shortlisted for Business School of the Year in the Times Higher Education" #THEAwards 2018 http://bit.ly/2oNflqp (*09/07/2018) |
| Moralization | A moral argument by referencing its Olympic values (excellence, friendship and respect) | *"Of course we didn't forget the other programs! May the Olympic values of excellence, friendship and respect be followed and shared throughout your Nova SBE path!" #powerfulminds #NovaSBE* (08/23/2016) |
| | A moral argument by referencing its support for climate action | *"Our actions today will decide what tomorrow is going to look like for generations to come. We're joining WWF's Earth Hour initiative this evening and at 8:30 PM, CET, we'll switch off the lights to switch on our social power to shine a light on climate action" - http://esade.me/1PfNPVw* (03/19/2016) |
| Mythopoesis | Storytelling as a means to indicate its ability to develop award-winning students | *"Saskia de Bruin, Alumna of the IMM Global Executive #MBA program of #TIAS has been named one of "the best EMBA students in the world"! Read her story here: http://bit.ly/2Kjfyeb* (06/25/2018) |
| | Storytelling to indicate a futuristic image of the school (the link shares the story of how the school shaped the career of Joana, a girl from a small village) | *Join us in building the school of the future at http://bit.do/novacampaign . #CampaignforNovaSBE — with Joana Geraldes Barba.* (02/15/2018) |