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Keys of Educational Marketing

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ABSTRACT

Education is not only a need of developing nations but of the developed ones also. Realization of its importance, there are several trends emerging in education. Educational Marketing is one of the new emerging trends. Keeping in view the global importance of Educational marketing, this study was design to identify, analyze and compare the higher education marketing strategies of Pakistan and Malaysia. Twenty students were randomly selected from each university and ten private universities of Pakistan and Malaysia each. The data was collected through questionnaire from university students. There were seven keys of educational marketing, i.e. Program, Price, Promotion, Place, People, Process and Physical facilities. It was found that physical facilities and prominence were considered the most important marketing strategies while price and premium were considered as the least important ones. Malaysian Private Universities showed comparatively high mean scores of usage and importance of marketing strategies rather than Pakistani Private Universities. It was observed that new and modern programs, adequate location (place), highly qualified faculty (people), educational expos (promotion) and physical facilities were examples of educational marketing strategies. Recommendations included that the variety of program offered by the universities may be helpful as marketing. The modern and new program attracted the students. Education Expo and Book Fair were the case of promotion of the universities. The suitable and approachable place increased the admission.

KEY WORDS: Keys, mix, educational marketing, education.

1. INTRODUCTION

Education is of great importance in the social and economic advancement of the country. Without education, it is imperative the country lag behind the other in the race for development. Without the human resource development and institutional strengthening, the nation cannot realize their dream of progress and prosperity. Investment in education is not going un-rewarded [16]. Therefore, all countries have too much emphasis on education. Current race, those nations are found on the front who is working in the field of education. Educational institutions function and an incubator for innovation and creative thinking necessary to society economically competitive [2]. It is a key factor for economic and technological development of a country.

It is internationally accepted that education is now one of the products that can be bought and sold and traded like other commodities. It grows day after day commodity in the market and even some state-funded institutions that spend large parts of their budgets on marketing and recruiting new students rather than focusing on their education. In addition, education are marketed, sold and purchased [17].

According to Al-Fattal, (2010) over the past few decades, the need for marketing is more important to achieve organizational efficiency. This indicates that the marketing presence and important role in the educational context, although some people may have ignored it, and therefore, it is important to educate and expand the understanding of stakeholders, rather than ignore or avoid it [1].

Marketing education received tremendous focus and attention in the past two decades. Marketing education is important because it covers almost every aspect of the social network. Production responds to market research about students' preference discovers quality. Market research also provides a guideline for the development of new degree programs based on the new market requirements. In addition, new technologies need to be strengthened to reach new students [24]. Marketing is the article as the product can be traded, bought or sold. Required marketing planning process and implementation of a strategy is to get more extension [19].

This study discusses the marketing mix suggested by Kotler & Fox (1995).

2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Education is not only the need of developing countries but also the need of the developed countries in the modern era. While everyone has realized the importance and consequences, now transformed into an industry and

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even in many developed countries is now considered as a surrogate for economic change. Marketing is the key factor for any industry. Therefore, there is a need for time to study the perimeters of educational marketing. These parameters may be act as keys to educational marketing. The main problem is to enlist and define these keys of educational marketing. So the problem to be investigated “what are the keys of educational marketing?”

3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of the study are as under:

1. To identify the keys of higher education marketing in Pakistan.
2. To analyze the keys of higher education marketing in Pakistan.
3. To compare the keys of higher education marketing in Pakistan.

4. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The significance of the study was as under

1. This study was important for the authorities interested in marketing for educational institutions. They can work in a better way, and thereby improve marketing strategies.
2. It was very fruitful study for all the heads of the institutions. They plan to improve marketing practices.
3. There are many attractive marketing techniques that help people identify any institution. The study was also very useful for the general public. Thus, this is an important study is not only for policy makers but also to other stakeholders who are concerned about the marketing of education.
5. This study discusses the mix suggested by Kotler and Fox (1995) illustrated in figure 1. This model is also more useful for educational marketing. These elements have been reviewed and how an institution could use it as a framework to rethink the components of their services.

5. REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

The keys of educational marketing (7Ps) is the use of a combination of education program of study (program), effective pricing (price), effective advertising and communication (promotion), easy to access location (place), high quality staff (people), operating system (process), evidence found by research and attractive facilities (physical facilities) and service the markets [18].

Table 1 Seven Keys of Educational Marketing

7 Keys of Educational Marketing	
1.	Program
2.	Price
3.	Promotion
4.	People
5.	Process
6.	Place
7.	Physical Facilities

The details of each key is as under

1. Program
 - Different programs
 - Post Graduates
 - Graduates
 - Under Graduates
2. Price
 - Fee Level
 - Discounts
 - Scholarships
 - Hostel dues
3. Promotion
 - Advertising

- Printed material
- Electronic media
- Publicity
- Education Expo
- 4. Place
 - Location of the university
 - Easy approach for every one
 - Reachable
- 5. People
 - Faculty
 - Teachers
 - Students
 - Other staff
- 6. Process
 - Staff appointment process
 - Admission process
 - Teaching learning process
 - Evaluation process
- 7. Physical facilities
 - Infrastructure
 - Buildings
 - Classrooms
 - Libraries
 - Laboratories

5.1 PROGRAM

The first element in the marketing mix is program. The issue of what program to offer and how to structure and design it within an institutional marketing strategy has been addressed in the literature [8], [5], [14], [31]. An institution usually begins by identifying the programs and services being offered and made available to the market and customers, whether they are students, companies or grants providers. An institution also questions whether this program matches customers' needs. Universities with similar programs will find their markets and public differentiating between them on the basis of their programs and their quality [17]. There is a strong relation between the program offered and the institution, as it establishes the institution's identity. Gibbs and Knap explain that such identity positions the institution in mind of its customers and determines how they will respond to what is being offered. e.g. bachelor degree, master degree, doctorate degree etc [10], [11], [28].

5.2 PRICE

How much the degree costs? Price is an amount charged to the students for the services provided by the university. It contains more than a value that someone is paying for it. The mean of price changes according to the different situations. Higher education institutions have also pricing policy. All the higher education institutions hope to increase their application and enrollment rates. Pricing policy may be one of the reasons that students are willing to choose any institution [19], [20], [29].

Entrants pricing strategies have the greatest potential to disturb higher education's current environment. One of the great advantages of the new technology is that it allows for very low price courses, since the marginal cost of delivering a course (after the initial investment for development) is negligible.

One of the most visible signals of quality is price. Thus, the powerful implication for universities is that extensive price competition is unlikely to occur immediately [5].

Using price as a weapon for rivals is as old as mankind. But it's risky too. Consumers are often sensitive for price, discounts and additional offers. Another aspect of pricing is that expensive products are considered of good quality.

5.3 PLACE

Where was the university situated? This means the location of the university, or the accessibility of the service – how easy it is to access?

It not only includes the place where the university is placed, all those activities performed by the university to ensure the availability of the program to the targeted customers. Availability of the program at the right place, at the right time and in the right quantity is crucial in placement decisions [9], [28].

5.4 PROMOTION

How it tell student about the program or service. Promotion is a means of communication between the institutions and communities. It contains advertising, public relations, personal and publicity. Promotion is how someone is given awareness of the universities in the marketplace; advertising, publicity and sales are aspects of promotion [24]. Promotion includes all communication and selling activities to persuade future prospects to enroll the program. Well organized, ongoing promotion plan for both the institution and individual programs should be organized to attract students, staff and financial resources. There are many methods of promotion which may be used by institutions, including:

- (1) Paid advertising in, for example, newspapers and magazines.
- (2) Free publicity; for example, public relations department provides positive information about the institution through press release.
- (3) Community and professional involvement; for example, faculty members are encouraged to speak to local community and professional groups to stimulate the 'word of mouth' which may attract a large number of prospective students and employers.
- (4) Open House, Information Day, Consultation Day and Recruitment Day to facilitate better communication with prospective students, parents and employers.
- (5) Personal selling, in which staff has been assumed the role of salesmen and marketing manager in communicating with students, parents and other stakeholders of higher education.
- (6) Free courseware, for example, a taste of distance learning on the Internet for prospective students. Short courses for a small amount of tuition fee are also effective tools for programs.

These marketing strategies on 'place' and 'promotion' should be designed to position the institution and programs with desired image making it realistic, attractive and distinctive in positive ways to the segments and the public's [22], [30].

5.5 PEOPLE

How the staffs are different from those in a competitor's universities, and how the clients are different from the competitor's clients? The individuals' delivering the service is used to the costumers. People are faculty, teachers and other staff in the higher education institution. The personality and ranking of the people send messages to the target audience [19].

People' refers to all the teaching and administrative staff through which the service is delivered, and customer relations built [17]. People also include the institution's current and former students. This is because prospective students tend to ask about, and check with current and former students on their views. In designing a marketing strategy an institution is recommended to start on developing its staff. Wright (1999) believes that the success of an institution is more dependent on the attitudes, commitment and skills of the whole workforce, than on any other factor. This strategy ensures the conveying of shared beliefs and goals, that the institution is customer oriented. Other than that, the idea of building a positive relationship with customers has an influential role. Brassington (2006) explains that if a customer feels comfortable with and trusts a particular provider, then competitors would find it difficult to disrupt this relationship. This is related to relationship marketing, where a university empowers is relationship with its markets. An example of this would be teachers keeping track and following-up each individual student, not only on an academic level but on many individual levels. In fact, this has great evidence reflecting on current student retention (Martinez & Further Education Development Agency, 1997; Dennis, 1998). Another example is establishing alumni unions where the relationship is maintained after the service is complete [25], [23], [31].

5.6 PROCESS

How the program is launched and delivered or how the service is sold, delivered and accessed? It is the manner and style in which teaching, administrative and support processes are provided. Process is a means identifying different process of recruitment or appointment of faculty members, teachers and other staff in the higher education institution. Admission criteria are also different in different institutions. The teacher personality and ranking of universities send messages to the target audience. Teaching learning process and examination system vary from teacher to teacher and institution to institution [19].

Although this element was introduced in a relatively short and quick fashion in various literatures e.g. Kotler & Fox (1995), there is substantial evidence of its importance and relevance, as it relates to all of the other marketing mix elements. Processes refer to the way an institution does business, and this relates the whole administrative system to this element [17]. Processes are how things happen in an institution, such as the process of management, enrolment, teaching, learning, social and even sports activities.

On a strategic level, institutions are careful about the delivery of service, and what quality controls can be built in [6], so that customers can be confident that there is consistency in the service offered. Inconsistency could occur, for example, with students' attitudes of various courses in the same university. It could also happen on the same course but with different lecturers. Thus, an institution is to establish common criteria that can guarantee consistency and maintain satisfaction. For this reason, some institutions adapt quality management systems, such as the Total Quality Management (TQM) or other franchised systems such as the ISO9000 series [21], [22], [33].

5.7 PHYSICAL FACILITIES

The nature of the facilities is about both for teaching and other components of student life. Physical evidence is a means identifying different evidences of teachers that is promoting the institution. The work such as MS, M Phil and PhD theses are indicating devotions and hard work of the teacher. Articles and books are telling us about the literary taste and depth in research [20].

'Physical facilities', or evidence as Palmer (2001) calls it, refer to all of the physical, tangible items in an institution. In this respect, physical evidence could be course books, or the furniture used and the built-environment. Marketers work together with architects and graphic designers in order to present attractive and effectively functioning facilities. Some marketers recommend an institution has a theme or culture color, for instance, the color green for the University of Leeds. This corporate identity color or logo has a marketing effect on customers as such color would remind them of that particular university [21].

Kotler *et al.* (2002) suggest that often the most immediate clue for prospective students about a university's identity is the physical evidence of buildings and furniture. This may be the first impression prospective customers have of an institution upon visiting. Usually, the first thing they see is the built-environment and the facilities the university has. Gibbs and Knapp (2002, 55) add that the condition of the physical location contributes greatly on the image of the institution. For example, technologies used, cleanliness of rooms, carpeting, regular washroom cleaning, all this sets a context in which the individual learner comes to understand who he or she is in the context of the learning experience. Apart from the customers view on physical facilities, there is a positive function for them, as they support the teaching and learning process. An example of this would be the use of visual representation and information technologies to facilitate and improve learning results [17].

6. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research was descriptive in nature and a survey was conducted to collect the data. The population of this study was all the private universities of Pakistan. Top ten private universities of Pakistan were taken as sample by using purposive sampling technique and 20 students were randomly selected to collect the data.

A questionnaire was developed for the students of the private universities to collect the data for the study five-point Likert scale was used with options [1-5, 1 = no use, 5= always use] to find the social dimensions of educational marketing. The data was collected through questionnaire from the students of the universities. The researcher was collect data through personal visit of sampled universities.

7. ANALYSIS OF DATA

The objective of the study was to identify and analyze the keys of education marketing in Pakistan. These keys were analyzed regarding usage and importance according to the views of the students of the private universities accordingly.

Table 3 Usage of Marketing Strategies of Higher Education

Marketing Strategies	Usage			Importance		
	Mean	SD	Ranking	Mean	SD	Ranking
Program	8.36	3.293	6	10.10	3.101	5
Price	6.61	2.553	7	8.87	2.003	7
Promotion	8.81	3.851	4	9.94	3.007	6
Place	9.74	3.204	3	10.72	3.016	4
People	11.54	4.433	2	14.54	4.005	2
Process	8.80	4.159	5	13.81	3.981	3
Physical Facilities	14.50	5.008	1	17.76	4.892	1

The above table depicted analysis of marketing strategies being used by the Universities of Pakistan and Malaysia. Furthermore the data described the use of Program [M=8.36, SD=3.293, Ranking = 6],[M=10.10, SD=3.101, Ranking = 5], Price [M=6.61, SD=2.553, Ranking = 7],[M= 8.87, SD=2.003, Ranking = 7], Promotion [M=8.81, SD=3.851,Ranking = 4], [M= 9.94, SD=3.007,Ranking = 6],Place [M=9.74, SD=3.204, Ranking = 3],[M= 10.72, SD=3.016, Ranking = 4], People[M=11.54, SD=4.433,Ranking = 2], [M=14.54, SD=4.005,Ranking = 2], Process [M= 8.80, SD=4.159Ranking = 5], [M= 13.81, SD= 3.981,Ranking = 3], Physical Facilities [M= 14.50, SD=5.008, Ranking = 1],[M= 17.76, SD= 4.892, Ranking = 1] respectively usage and importance. The table also depicted that physical facilities were the most important key of educational marketing while price was the least important.

8. FINDINGS

Based on data analysis, the findings of the research were as under:

1. The first effective factor marketing was program which included different modern programs offered which was meet the market needs and also offered post graduates programs.
2. Secondly, the price was the main and very important factor of marketing, fee level was attract the students for admission, discounts and scholarships was also tool of marketing.
3. At the third place was studied promotion which included advertising, printed material, electronic media, publicity and education expo were effective tools of marketing. There promotion activities were conducted different time and durations in different universities.
4. Central and main place in the city for the university was easy and approachable for everyone which attracts the students.
5. People were followed by place of universities which included faculty members i.e. professors, associate professors, assistant professors and lecturer and their qualification e.g. Ph D and M S/ M Phil catches the student's attraction for admissions.
6. Process was also studied. It focused on practices of marketing were used in different universities as admission process, teaching learning process, evaluation process.
7. Physical facilities do contribute the marketing practices. These included Infrastructure, buildings, classrooms, libraries, laboratories, furniture, and availability drinking water.

9. CONCLUSIONS

The following conclusions were drawn on the basis of the findings of the research:

1. Modern programs, low fee and scholarship strategies were most effective for marketing.

2. Educational Expos, location of the university were commonly used marketing practices.
3. Without competent teachers, any institution did not promote. So, for high student attraction, the universities had appointed competent and qualified teachers who were professionally skillful.
4. Physical facilities created an atmosphere of proper learning for students. The more the students and teachers were facilitated, the higher was their enrollment.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations were drawn on the basis of the findings, review of related literature and observations made by researcher during this study; these may be helpful to marketing educational institutions.

1. New and advanced programs were initiated in the universities and highly qualified faculty attracted the students. Educational expos were good informational gathering platform. These were fruitful marketing practices.

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