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Manish Lohni

Ph.D. Scholar, School of
Business Studies, Jigyasa
University, Uttarakhand,
India

Dr. Chandra Dev Bhatt

Assistant Professor,
Department of Management,
School of Business Studies,
Jigyasa University, (Formerly
Himgiri Zee University),
Uttarakhand, India

Corresponding Author:

Manish Lohni

Ph.D. Scholar, School of
Business Studies, Jigyasa
University, Uttarakhand,
India

Private higher education institutions' use of marketing strategies for admission

Manish Lohni and Chandra Dev Bhatt

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Abstract

The last decade of the 21st century brought the policies of privatisation in every sphere of life, and education also wasn't spared. Today, education has become global product with institutions worldwide competing for students. India isn't untouched by the influence of it. In fact, after 1990s the private education institutions in India have mushroomed very systematically impoverished in metro and semi-urban cities and towns of India. Indeed, the admission seekers for higher education institutions is diverse, such as- seeeker in graduate level degree, vocational degrees, technical degrees etc., this means the higher education institutions require equally diverse range to accomadate large number of prospective students.

Academic interest in Marketing Strategies toward Private Higher Education has significantly grown in the recent years. This review paper is comprise of contradiction between the students and the private higher education institution owners and also suggests some viable suggestion that would enrich the work of Institutions, those working or bound to work in this saga. The researcher is bond to focus his work on the marketing strategies that can play a pivotal role in enhancing admission in the private higher education.

Keywords: Higher education, institution, marketing strategy, accomadate, enhancing admission

Introduction

The new millenium brought a new changes in education policy by the Indian government. This change in policy adhere to the vibrant growth of privatization in education, several urban centres transferred its strategy from establishing manufacturing industries to the hub of higher education centres. Banglore, Mumbai, Pune, Delhi, and even ssmaller cities like Dehradun and so on emerged as the centre of private institutions in the field of higher, vocational education. With the setting of education hubs, a new form of marketing became the need for these newly established institutions. The globalization and liberalization stimulated the course of private sector in every sphere of economy, education isn't away from that. In fact, in present boom, private education has taken over the public education system. Now, the environment has been totally changed from the government education system to privatization, diversification decentralization, internationalization, and increase competition in higher education have become more common in most of the countries, including India.

Indeed, we are in an era where the institution and students go through a tug-a-war from the two ends; while the education institutions seek and rely on students for their growth, whereas students seeking better institute in all means and reasonable cost, so that they could obtained the best in the least. Thus, it has created stiff competition among the private institutions, and secondly also in between private and public education institutions in the recruitment of good students.

This new phenomenon has shifted the gear toward a phenomenon of managerial structure in the universities and colleges to promote academic plan, building structure, enrollment plan, resource planning etc., and for the purpose marketing strategy is a must demand. Especially, at the beginning of the session all reputed and general colleges/university adhere to have dynamic plans to influence the students. And to appease the student, obviously, a marketing system was required, this we can name as education marketing. The objective of this marketing is to promote valuable educational content and helps institutions and individuals take advantage of it. Therefore, most of the institutions have their own separate department to build strategies, so that more and more student could be influenced toward the particular

institution.

Marketing strategies is one of the envoking work in any sought of public influencing targeted work. Managing the customers toward the product isn't just an ideal word but require mastery to attract, through impulsing criteria to judge the demands of the consumers. In the field of education, especially Higher Education there has been significant entrance of marketing modules to apprise the student of different sector for admission. As it is noteworthy that student arent only looking an institution with good education, but simultaneously search for different facilities. Interestingly to apprise the student, the Institutions require to assimilate multiple components from infrastructure to advertisement; indeed for all these institution needs the well-mentained and workable marketing strategies.

Thus, keeping in view, the present paper tries to debate upon the extent to which marketing ideas are often applied to education, having as a start line the core of the marketing concept: the fact that it wants to satisfy the requirements of the consumers. The paper starts by shortly watching a number of the most marketing approaches and ideas as they were developed for the business and continues with the discussion of how they will be applied in education.

Scope and the meaning of Marketing Strategy: The word "Marketing Strategies" has emerged with the rise in production of the goods and stiff competition that led to balance between the supply and the demand. Gradually, the marketing strategies gained the foothold and consequently moved to a higher level. In a statement, Marketing Strategy is the process responsible for identifying, anticipating and satisfying customers requirement. But the definition never been stagnant, it changed with the requirement of the market. In nut shell, the scenario of the change in the marketing system, floated the new kind of marketing strategy to arrange a platform to meet the new challenges of the market. The latest marketing strategy define, "Marketing is the activity, set of institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering and exchanging offerings that have value for the customers, client partners and society at large. Thus, Marketing is a philosophy that leads to the process by which organization, groups and individuals obtain what they need and want by identifying value, providing it, communicating it and delivering it to others. Here, our focus is on the marketing strategies which promotes the growth of the education institutions. The education institutions primarily design the methods in such a way which can endure the student to make their reach to a particular institution, because for the institutions, the students are source of revenue as well as growth.

Thus, Marketing is a philosophy that leads to the process by which organization, groups and individuals obtain what they need and want by identifying value, providing it, communicating it and delivering it to others.

Marketing for Private higher education: The higher education sector comprises of two main features- primarily all the entire schooling from primary to higher education in most of the countries is a non-profit, therefore marketing concepts applied to the sector doesn't function as in the business sector. Secondly, higher education is a service. Considering the two aspects, Maringe (2006) [10], expresses that it is highly accepted that sector has multi-clients, as students, employers, and society who are the beneficiaries of higher education service. While Hemsley-Brown &

Goonawardana (2007) [5], say that students are the direct and immediate customers of the higher education service. Indeed, with yielding competition among the private higher education institutios to attract the students, the institutions float dynamic information through various avialable sources. Thus, as said by Baldwin & James (2000) [11]- large applicant to higher education are no longer passive customer; but an informed consumers who make rational choices while making selection of the institutions. Therefore, the private institute owners need to fulfil multiple requirements of the students who are looking for admission. For instance, besides the teaching and learning activities, as Temple & Shattock (2007) [13] express about quality based service.

- Branding is another marketing concept that now-a-days is a customary for the private institutions. While covering the concept of brand, Bulotaite (2003) [3] illustrates that Branding is associated with the creation of images with the sole purpose of increasing the number of student's admission into the institutes.
- In higher private institutions, promotion policy concentrates around marketing communication and dissemination of information. Such activities emphasizes mainly on the use of communication tools like advertising, public relations etc. in order to attract the students, which is associated with the admission in private HEIs.
- Pricing policy also deserve to play pivotal role in the admission process of students in private institutes. Two decades ago, the higher education was supposed to be total state sponsered that meant the student were free of charge. But since than, the things have dramitically changed with new changing education policy of the government. This drastic change eventually cut down the deployment of government aided universities, and promoted the privatization especially in the higher education. As Chapleo (2004) [4], reveals that about the USA, how it transformed from traditional academic values to market-focused values.
- Alumni and Students also play pivotal role in the marketing for private HEIs. No matter what an institutions say about itself doesn't consider as valuable as what pass out expresses becomes more valuable. Definitely, if institutions looking for more and more students in the institution, thay need to look their current and former students who appraise the works of the institutions.

India also didn't remain far and wide from the mould of privatization in higher education sector, perhaps in the last couple of decades it remains torch bearer by taking leap jump compare to many other countries. Wih this, rise in tug-a-war is precedented among the private institutions to attract the new students who are looking ahead for private institutions.

Literature Review: Review of literature provides detailed knowledge on previous studies carried out in a particular subject. The literature over a subject matter of research can be had from the available standard books, periodicals, journals, published and unpublished research works, conference proceedings government reports etc. In this particular study researcher reviews in context of the role played in by marketing strategy in admission process in the education institution in general; particularly focuses on the

Higher Education Institution (HEIs).

This literature review is based on the elements of marketing strategies that probably influence the best to the students for the admission in the Higher Education Institutions. The review comprised of the authors who endeavoured the different component of marketing strategies.

Han P, expressed in journal, higher education has become more diverse and competitive in the 22nd century. Students have wide range of option to choose i.e., public to private, for-profit entities, technical communities and vocational schools, or virtual colleges that offer online programs. Further, HEI are dabbling in commercial management exercise, through marketing practices to adopt itself within the changing environment. It has been also found to be equally true that students who are going ahead with higher education, often influenced by other factors like economic, political, social and cultural characteristics occasionally. (Bodycott, 2009; Kodakci, *et al.*, 2018) ^[2, 8]. Besides, there has been other aspects that play pivotal role in regard of making choice, are academic, administrative and environment that determines important factors while selecting the institutes for further studies. (Mazzarol & Soutar, 2002) ^[11]. A peaceful and calm place, away from hustling-bustling centres are the paradise for the students.

Another aspect is the use of social media, points by Barnes, (2009) ^[16]. He draws attention through a report commissioned by the National Association for College Admission Counselling which mentions that private institutions have started social media for admission strategies. It has been found that more than fifty percent of the department in private institutions use social media for seeking admission. Timothy (2010) ^[14], adds that the influence of sources of information on students' choice of university for further education is tested out. The other factor means much into account of India is the influence of friends, family members, campus visit, etc. which often becomes the deciding factors for many students.

There is yet another set of view which is of Naidu and Woo 2014 ^[17] who stated that international student recruitment forms an internal part of an overall internationalization strategy which however is now common feature of the upper education landscape for international marketing. While pertaining about the social media, Blackshaw and Nazzaro in Mangold and Faulds (2009, pp. 357-358) ^[9] stated it to be consumer generated media. They described a variety of new sources of online information that are created, initiated, circulated and used by consumers intent on educating each other about products, brands, services, personalities, and issues.

Tripathi, Purnendu in the book 'Marketing Strategies for Higher Education Institutions: Technological and Practices' brought a different aspect of marketing management and technological innovations in all sphere of education, that include K-12. Non-formal, and distancing education.

The writing of various authors raises some different argument which is related to subjectivity and objectivity of the past. Perhaps, the initial studies on the subject focus on the wants of the quality based higher education that attract the student for admission, but then it leaves unclarity about service quality (Seymour, 1992; Green, 1994) ^[12, 7]. While reviewing these, an essentiality is felt to go into the depth to understand the pragmatism of admission in private higher education institutions. Nevertheless, the literature available of the past takes us to the journey in glancing how different marketing concepts are used by private higher education

institutions authority to motivate a wide section of students who are looking for better opportunity in the future.

Challenges faced by marketing strategies in promoting Higher Education:

Marketing strategies that required to evolve in making students to attract the institutions particularly in the domain of Indian higher education need to be dynamic in multiple way. As we go into backdrop of Indian education history, undoubtedly, we enhanced ourselves from gurukul system to modernized education system. With the passage of time, the curriculum, method of teaching, student-teacher relation only didn't change, but also managed to equip ourselves with modernize tools, infrastructure, counselling the students, time to time surveying the mood of the students, assurance of well qualified teaching staff, career opportunity and channelizing the feedback from the students have become quite familiar these days.

Despite, the steady growth and advancement in the higher education system due to skilled and well-trained team of marketers who work day and night to make lucrative policy for their respective institutions to support recruitment, building the brand and driving enrolment, yet it is quite true that accomplishing these goals can be challenging for a myriad of reasons which are as follows:

1. Lacking in technological infrastructures.
2. Bureaucratic behaviour of the management.
3. Fragmented internal structures and
4. The limited resources used in advertisement and expenditure in promotional work.
5. Unfavourable work load on the small team of marketers.
6. Pricing policy; in terms of fee structure, scholarship and cost of living.

These are some of the challenges that a institution has to face and overcome by it, to be remain competitive in the market. Indeed, the students who are looking for the best institute for themselves, also foresee a best option in terms of facilities, and environment in an appropriate cost.

Conclusion

Thus, use of marketing concepts in higher education varies from one country to another as well from time to time. It is vital to note that students' behaviour toward the selection the type of higher education counts a lot for the private HEIs to rethink about their plans; and this keeps on changing. Therefore, it become essential to have continuous survey of students' thoughts. Even the thinking of urban students differs from the rural students. Thou, neither the privatization of higher education nor marketing strategies are new phenomena for India, but due to uncertainty and changing students' behaviour now and then, we need to overhaul our old plans to restructure it so that it works according the requirement.

Definitely, marketing isn't one way strategy, but is multi-faceted- sometimes, word of mouth may attract its audience, later it may more planning is required to appease the audience. Thus, one can say, to make marketing concepts only partially applicable to the higher education institutions, as said by Temple and Shattock (2007) ^[13], that the approaches taken from other sectors or from commercial marketing platforms aren't readily transferable to higher education as it is. In such cases, students' behaviour is seen as a valuable source of information, Sander *et al.*, (2000) ^[18],

indicated that as their satisfaction depends on the relationship between their expectations and their perceptions of actual performance. As Baldwin & James (2000)^[1], in his writing reveals that applicants to higher education are no longer a passive consumer; they are the one who make rational choices of higher education courses and institutions at the time of seeking admissions.

Thus, the chain of private higher education institutions that has mushroomed in all corners of India require to thoroughly study the impulse of students and accordingly plan the action, so that it could satisfy the consumers. The bottom of the line is that private institutions ensure their institutional image and reputation and based on these principles construct the brand which is essential to attract the students, and these three are based on the quality services that embellishes a certain gesture towards students and stakeholders. In the case of higher education teaching, research, other services are the basic components that provide satisfaction to the admission seeking students and their parents.

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