

Educational Marketing Practices in Pakistan and Malaysia: A Comparative Study

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Abstract

There is a growing tendency of emphasizing higher education, as it is not only responsible for the academic development but also adds income of the country. The objectives of the study were to identify, analyze and compare the educational marketing practices in Pakistan and Malaysia. The survey method was used as research design. Population study comprises all the private sector universities of Pakistan and Malaysia. By using purposive sampling, ten private universities were selected for data collection and from each university ten students were selected, making total sample of 200 students. Questionnaire was used as tool for data collection. The data was analyzed by using inferential statistics. It was found that physical facilities and human resource were considered as the most important marketing elements while, price and premium were considered as the least important. Malaysian private universities showed comparatively high mean scores of usage and importance of marketing strategies rather than Pakistani private universities. It was found that new and modern programs, attractive location (place), highly qualified faculty (people), educational expos (promotion) and physical facilities were major components of educational marketing elements. It was concluded that Physical Facilities, People, Process and Place are the most important elements of educational marketing. It was recommended that the available physical facilities may be marketed in a befitting manner as they are more important for students.

Keywords: Educational marketing, higher education institutes

Introduction

Education is considered an important factor in the social and economic advancement of the country. Without education, it is imperative, the country lag behind the others in the race of development. The investment in education never goes un-rewarded (Ivay and Nude 2004). Therefore, all countries give very much emphasis on education. In current race of economic growth and development, those nations are found to be on the front, which are working in the field of education. The educational institutions act as an incubator for innovation and creative thinking that is necessary to make society economically competitive (Asian Development Bank, 2011). Education is a key factor for economic and technological development of a country.

It is internationally accepted that education is now one of the products and it can be bought, sold and traded like other commodities (Al Fattal 2010). It is growing day by day in the market and even some state-funded institutions spend major chunk of their budget on marketing and recruiting new students rather than focusing on their education.

According to Al-Fattal, (2010), over the past few decades, the need for marketing is more important to achieve organizational efficiency. This indicates 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 ignore or avoid it.

The marketing education received tremendous focus and attention in the past two decades. Marketing education is important because it covers almost all aspects of the social network. Production responds to market research about students' preference and discovers quality. Market research also provides a guideline for the development of new degree programs, based on the new market requirements and new technologies which are needed to be strengthened to reach new students (Rizvi and Khan, 2010). The required marketing planning process and implementation of a strategy is to get more extension (Lovelock & Wright, 2010). This study discusses the marketing mix suggested by Kotler & Fox (1995).

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, educational marketing has now transformed into an industry and even in many developed countries, is now considered as an impetus for economic change. Therefore, there is a need to study the parameters and practices of educational marketing in different settings. These parameters may act as key to educational marketing regardless of geographical dimensions. The problem to be investigated is “ how to compare the educational marketing practices in Pakistan and Malaysia” .

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are as under:

1. To identify higher education marketing practices in Pakistan and Malaysia.
2. To analyze practices of higher education marketing in Pakistan and Malaysia.
3. To compare the practices of higher education marketing in Pakistan and Malaysia.

Research Questions

Following were the research questions of the study:

1. What are the practices of higher education marketing in Pakistan and Malaysia?
2. How the educational marketing practices in Pakistan and Malaysia may be compared?

Significance of the Study

The significance of study was as under

1. This study would be significant for the authorities interested in marketing of educational institutions. They can work in a better way, and thereby improve marketing strategies.
2. The study would be very fruitful for all the heads of the institutions of both countries. Through this study, the heads of educational institutes will be able to improve marketing practices that result in overall increase in student enrollment.
3. There are many attractive marketing techniques which help people to select institution of their choice for admission. The study would be very useful for the heads of educational institutes to select the marketing strategy that is more useful and beneficial in the context.

Theory behind the Study

This study discusses the marketing mix suggested by Kotler and Fox (1995) and Ivy and Naude (2004), illustrated in figure 1. It is a combination as it encompasses all of the elements mentioned by both models. This model is also more useful for educational marketing. These elements have been reviewed as how an institution could use it as a framework to rethink the components of their services.

Review of Related Literature

The educational marketing is not a new concept. It was dated back to 1990's, the era of services marketing. There were ten Keys of educational marketing (10Ps) i.e. 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), brochure (Prospectus), reputation (Prominence), quality (Premium), which motivate and service the markets (Kotler& Fox, 1995; Ivy &Naude 2004).

7 Keys of Educational Marketing	
➤	Program
➤	Price
➤	Promotion
➤	People
➤	Process
➤	Place
➤	Physical Facilities
➤	Prospectus
➤	Prominence
➤	Premium

Figure 1: Seven Keys of Educational Marketing

Source: Kotler, P., & Fox, K. (1995). Strategic Marketing for Educational Institutions (2nd ed.), Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall.

The details of each key is as under:

Program

The first element in the marketing mix is the 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 by Frumkin et al. (2007), and Hesketh and Knight (1999). An institution usually introduces it by identifying the programs and services being offered and made available in the market and to customers, whether they are students, companies or grants providers (Rizvi and Khan 2010)

An institution also questions whether this program matches customers’ needs. Universities offering similar programs will find their markets and public differentiating between them on the basis of their programs and quality (Kotler& Fox, 1995). There is a strong relation between the program offered and the institution, as it establishes the institution’s identity. Gibbs and Knap (2002) 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.

Price

Price is an amount charged to the students for the services provided by the university. It contains more value that someone is paying for it. The mean of price changes according to different situations. Higher education institutions have also a 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 keep in mind while choosing any institution (Masterson & Pickton, 2010) and in some cases, it is the single reason for choice.

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 (Collins, 2010).

Place

Place refers 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 universities are placed but all the activities performed by the university to ensure the availability of the program to the targeted customers (Lovelock and Wright 2010). Availability of the program at the right place, at the right time and in the right quantity is crucial in placement decisions.

Promotion

Promotion is a mean of communication between institutions and communities. Pradey (1991) states that it contains advertising, public relations, personal and publicity by using different forms of media. Promotion is how someone is given awareness of the universities in the market place; advertising, publicity and sales are aspects of promotion (Smith & Taylor 2004).

According to Wright (1999), there are many methods of promotion which may be used by institutions, including:

- a) Paid advertising in press, for example in newspapers and magazines.
- b) Free publicity; for example public relations department provides positive information about the institution through press release.
- c) Community and professional involvement;
- d) Open House, Information Day, Consultation Day and Recruitment Day to facilitate better communication with prospective students, parents and employers.
- e) Personal selling, in which staff assume the role of salesmen and marketing manager in communication with students, parents and other stakeholders of higher education.
- f) Free courseware, for example, a taste of distance learning on the Internet for prospective students. Short courses charging a small amount of tuition fee are also effective tools for programs.

People

The individuals delivering the services are crucial in the process of educational marketing. People include faculty, teachers, administration staff and other staff working in the higher education institution (Palme, 2001). The personality and ranking of the people send messages to the target audience (Masterson & Pickton, 2010).

People refer to all the teaching and administrative staff, through which the service is delivered, and customer relations built (Kotler & Fox, 1995). 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 their views. In fact, this has great

evidence reflecting on current student retention (Mukerjee 2007; Gibbs 2001). Another example is establishing alumni unions, where the relationship is maintained after the service is completed.

Process

It is the manner and style in which teaching, administrative and support processes are provided. Process is a mean identifying different process of recruitment or appointment of faculty members, teachers and other staff in the higher education institution (Cubillo, Sanchez and Cervino 2006). Admission criterion is 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 (Masterson & Pickton, 2010).

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 other marketing mix elements. Processes refer to the way an institution does business, and this relates the whole administrative system to this element (Kotler *et al.*, 2002,). Processes are how things happen in an institution, such as the process of management, enrolment, teaching, learning, social and even sports activities. (Hayes 1991).

Physical Facilities

The nature of the facilities is about both for teaching and other components of student life (Brassington 2006). **Physical evidence is a mean identifying different evidences of teachers that is promoting the institution?** The work such as MS, M.Phil and PhD theses indicate devotions and hard work on part of the teacher. Articles and books tell us about the literary taste and depth in research (Mukerjee, 2007).

Prospectus

Prospectus is a mean of transforming information through brochure, catalog, booklets and pamphlets between the institutions and communities (Ivy & Naude 2004). Gibbs and Knap (2002) explain that such identity positions the institution in mind of its customers and determines how they will respond to what is being offered. It has permanent effect on the communities.

Prominence

Prominence means the importance and reputation of the institution regarding some speciality. For example institutions are research oriented (Ivy & Naude 2004). This element has a lot of attraction for the students.

Premium

Premium means the quality of the institution regarding grading. For example institutions are in a category institution and high in ranking (Ivy & Naude 2004). This is also an attraction for the communities. It often takes time and requires market research to develop a successful marketing mix. One should not depend on one mix but should always try different mixes. While designing the mix, make changes to all mixes in such a way that all convey the same message.

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 and Malaysia. The top ten private universities of Pakistan and Malaysia were taken as sample by using purposive sampling technique and 20 students were randomly selected from each university.

A questionnaire was developed for the students of the private universities to collect the data for 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 selected universities. The data was collected through personal visits and e-mails to the respondents.

Analysis of Data

The data was analyzed by using descriptive statistics method. Means scores were calculated and used to rank the data.

Table 1
Identification and ranking of Marketing Strategies of Higher Education In Pakistan and Malaysia

S#	Marketing Strategies	Pakistan			Malaysia		
		Mean	SD	Ranking	Mean	SD	Ranking
1	Program	10.10	3.101	5	10.70	3.199	6
2	Price	8.87	2.003	9	9.08	2.793	8
3	Promotion	9.94	3.007	6	10.96	3.399	5
4	Place	10.72	3.016	4	11.46	3.101	4
5	People	14.54	4.005	2	14.03	4.013	3
6	Process	13.81	3.981	3	14.32	4.241	2
7	Physical Facilities	17.76	4.892	1	18.46	5.222	1
8	Prominence	9.40	3.444	8	9.96	3.704	7
9	Prospectus	9.88	4.004	7	9.07	4.001	9
10	Premium	8.05	3.029	10	8.90	3.719	10
	Mean	113.07	34.482		116.94	37.392	

The above table elaborated that analysis of marketing strategies being importance by the Universities of Pakistan and Malaysia. Furthermore the data described the use of Program (M=10.10, SD=3.101, Ranking = 5),(M= 10.70, SD=3.199, Ranking = 6), Price (M= 8.87, SD=2.003, Ranking = 9),(M= 0.08, SD=2.793,Ranking = 8), Promotion (M= 9.94, SD=3.007,Ranking = 6), (M= 10.96, SD=3.399,Ranking = 5),Place (M= 10.72, SD=3.016, Ranking = 4),(M= 11.46, SD=3.101, Ranking = 4), People(M=14.54, SD=4.005,Ranking = 2), (M=14.54, SD=4.013,Ranking = 3), Process (M= 13.81, SD= 3.981,Ranking = 3), (M= 14.32, SD=4.241, Ranking = 2), Physical Facilities (M= 17.76, SD= 4.892, Ranking = 1),(M= 18.46, SD=5.222, Ranking = 1), Prominence (M= 9.40, SD= 3.444, Ranking = 8),(M= 9.96, SD=3.704, Ranking = 7), Prospectus (M= 9.88, SD= 4.004, Ranking = 7),(M = 9.07, SD= 4.001, Ranking = 9), Premium (M= 8.05, SD= 3.029, Ranking = 10),(M= 8.90, SD= 3.719, Ranking = 10) over all usage (M= 113.07, SD= 34.482),(M= 116.94, SD=37.392) respectively Pakistan and Malaysia. The table also depicted that physical facilities were considered the most important marketing

strategies while premium is considered as the least important marketing strategies in both countries.

The dispersion reveals that those factors which got higher ranking also has big dispersion. Physical facilities has the more dispersion than any other in both countries, followed by people and process. It means that the respondents are not very much close to each other views and it is logical as everyone view marketing strategies by his/her own view point

Findings

On the basis of data analysis, the findings of the research were as under:

1. Both countries have same educational marketing Practice reference to importance and usage.
2. It was found that physical facilities, in both countries were ranked as No. 1 with reference to importance followed by process, place and people.
3. In both countries Premium has least importance, followed by prospectus and program
4. The first effective factor for marketing was 'program' which included marketing of different modern programs, offered to meet the market needs. In comparative paradigm, it was found that Program was at 5th rank in Pakistan and on 6th rank in Malaysia
5. Secondly, the price was the main and very important factor of marketing; fee level was an attraction for the students for admission. In comparative paradigm, it was found that Price was at 9th rank in Pakistan and on 8th rank in Malaysia, reference to importance in marketing practices.
6. At the third place was Promotion, which included advertising, printed material, electronic media, publicity and education expo and these were found effective tools of marketing. There promotion activities were conducted at different times and duration in different universities. In comparative paradigm, it was found that promotion was at 6th rank in Pakistan and on 5th rank in Malaysia, reference to importance in marketing practices. It is higher in Pakistan and lower in Malaysia.
7. The easily approachable location of the institution in the city attracts the students. In Comparative paradigm, it was found that Program was at 4th rank in Pakistan and Malaysia, reference to importance in marketing practices.
8. People were followed by place of universities, including faculty members i.e. professors, associate professors, assistant professors and lecturer and their qualification e.g. Ph.D. and M S/ M Phil, which catches the student's attraction for admissions. In Comparative paradigm, it was found that 'people' were at 9th rank in Pakistan and on 8th rank in Malaysia, reference to importance in marketing practices.
9. Process was also studied. It focused on practices of marketing used in different universities i.e. admission process, teaching learning process, evaluation process. In Comparative paradigm, it was found that Process was at 3rd rank in Pakistan and on 2nd rank in Malaysia, reference to importance in marketing practices. They are nearly at the same rank.
10. Physical facilities do contribute the marketing practices. These included Infrastructure, buildings, classrooms, libraries, laboratories, furniture, and availability of drinking water. In both countries, physical facilities are at the top of the ranking

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11. Another factor in this regard was prominence. It was found that most of the universities used their fame, distinction, and reputation for their marketing. In Comparative paradigm, it was found that prominence was at 8th rank in Pakistan and on 7th rank in Malaysia, reference to importance in marketing practices.
12. Students were motivated through different prospectus, brochure, booklet, pamphlet, and banner. A good prospectus always plays a vital role in marketing.
In Comparative paradigm, it was found that prospectus was at 7th rank in Pakistan and on 9th rank in Malaysia, reference to importance in marketing practices. This is the only place where the difference is more than one rank.
13. Last but not least was premium. Students were greatly influenced by premium, which included position and HEC Ranking were also main dimensions of marketing. In Comparative paradigm, it was found that premium was at 10 8th rank in Pakistan and Malaysia.

Conclusion

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

1. Physical Facilities, Process, People and Place are the most important elements in educational marketing practices for both countries.
2. Promotion, Price, program and Prominence are less important elements in education marketing practices in Pakistan and Malaysia
3. Prospectus and Premium are considered as least important with reference to practices of higher education in both countries.

Recommendations

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

1. New and advanced programs may be initiated in the universities and highly qualified faculty should be hired to attract the students. Educational expos may be organized being good informational gathering platform.
2. A regular department of Marketing may be established in each university to devise strategies of marketing for admissions.

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