ABSTRACT

The Indian higher education is no longer the stuff of dreams and plans. People around the world are watching this transformation with great interest particularly in light of increasing global competition between higher educational institutions and systems for the best students and faculty. “Higher education” is one of the most important service industry that emerged in the last decade. The most of the higher education are involved in marketing themselves to build up a good image, to improve the level of satisfaction of students and the stake holders, to gain competitive advantage with respect to competitors and as well as to increase their market share. This study is to gain more insight into the expectation of students in the higher education level from the institutions and the strategies that has to be followed by the educational institutions to attract quality students.

Keywords: Educational Institution; Marketing; Students’ Expectations; Quality Education

INTRODUCTION

The need for marketing has gone high in educational institutions today. The reason behind this, is the sudden blooming of many educational institutions and universities and the high level of outgoing students from the junior college or schools. About a decade ago, there was never a need for educational institutes or universities to aggressively market themselves, as the demand for quality education generally outgrow supply. Today however, increasing competition there is growing awareness within the community, about the importance of marketing a institution and conscious need establish the institutional brand, attract quality students and stay ahead of competitions at all times.

OBJECTIVES

1. To analyse the factors among students that defines educational experience.
2. To examine the marketing strategies that has to be followed by the educational institution in marketing themselves.

Students’ Expectations

Academic advising effectiveness: This includes university’s role of advising the students regarding their academics issues. It also includes advices related to non-academic issues that relate to the general life of university processes.

Campus climate: This is about, how the students feel about the campus

Campus life: The expectation and experience of social amenities and facilities
Campus support services: Support services include restraints, canteens, and other non-academic facilities.

Quality teaching: Qualified staffs with good subject knowledge always tops the expectations of students when looking for admissions in universities and institutions.

Placement and financial aid: Another top priority given by students while looking for admissions is the percentage of placement and the effort taken by the management for the same. They also expect the management to support the poor students with effective academic background who seek concessions in fee amount.

Safety and security: The students’ feel about the campus safety in terms of noise, crimes, and other related risks

Service excellence: It is how the students feel about the services like library, computer, dormitory and other related services that are provided by the university or institutions.

Student centeredness: This means how the students are viewed by the university and the level of importance given by the institution for their students as well as academically and non-academically.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A large body of the available literature tends to emphasise traditional marketing approaches to higher education institutions. Educational programs being the product and the students as the sole customers (Weaver, 1976; Robinson and Long, 1988; Dondere, 1997; Doyle, 1998; Palihawadana and Holmes, 1999).

As Thomas (1978) mention, the education services is directed at people, and it is “people based” rather than “equipment base”. Just like all other marketable services education services are perishable, inseparable from the production, heterogony and intangible. Each one produces difficult problems and requires deliberate marketing strategies.

As Parasuraman and Berry (1985) mention within their consumer behaviour theoretical model the consumer satisfaction is influenced by the availability of customer service and the provision of the quality customer service which turn out to be important business concerns. Thus, the companies’ attempts to spend substantial resources to measure and manage customer satisfaction should not be surprise. Hence, customer satisfaction has long been an area of interest in academic research.

Universities seeking to achieve success in international markets must undertake a range of services designed to attract prospective students from around the world. A university of college characterised as market oriented must develop an appreciation that understands present and potential student needs. Providing superior education service encourages the systematic gathering and analysis of information regarding students and rival universities (Kohli and Jaworski, 1990; Narver and Slater, 1990).

Analysis of customers and target markets, positioning and image building have become the core competency tools in the education sector. Higher education institutions usually try to build a good image in the eyes of their customers and society as a whole. By having a reputable name, university becomes an assemblage of communities with different ideologies, agenda and academic traditions held together by a common institutional logo and name (Barnett, 1992; Lundsrom, White, and Schuster, 1996; Dickter, 1985).

The higher education industry in order to survive, it must develop successful marketing strategies and learn how to act professionally. They must formulate competitive strategies, which satisfies the needs of potential customers. According to Conway et al. (1994), higher education sector has to become more market oriented. A university characterised as market oriented must understand the unique characteristics of education marketing. Because doing things right does not guarantee success.

Researches in customer satisfaction about the service industry have increased dramatically in recent years. This increment has been aggravated by the increasing growth of the service industries. Also
today’s increasingly competitive environment forces companies to be more customer-oriented (Kotler, 2003).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design: The research design used in this study is descriptive and analytical in nature

Sampling Technique: The sampling technique followed to collect the data is Simple Random Sampling.

Sample Size: The sample size consists of 150 respondents.

Nature of respondents: The nature of the respondents was drawn from students

Data Collection: Primary data were collected from students through distributing questionnaire. Secondary data were collected from articles, journals.

Tools and techniques: Percentage analysis used.

DATA ANALYSIS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S. No</th>
<th>STUDENTS EXPECTATIONS</th>
<th>Strongly Agree (%)</th>
<th>Agree (%)</th>
<th>Neutral (%)</th>
<th>Disagree (%)</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Academic Advising Effectiveness</td>
<td>42.9</td>
<td>57.1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
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<td>60</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Quality teaching</td>
<td>71.4</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Campus life</td>
<td>34.3</td>
<td>54.3</td>
<td>11.4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Campus support services</td>
<td>52.9</td>
<td>37.1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Placement and financial aid</td>
<td>77.1</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Safety and security</td>
<td>67.1</td>
<td>32.9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Service excellence</td>
<td>58.6</td>
<td>40.0</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Student centeredness</td>
<td>30.0</td>
<td>42.9</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>5.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Primary data

Inference: From the above table it is inferred that placement and financial aid, quality teaching, safety and security and campus climate given preferences while choosing an institution for higher studies as it was strongly agreed by more than 60% of the students. Other factors like academic effectiveness, campus life, service excellence, etc also gained good response in choosing an institution for higher education.

FINDINGS

• 57.1% of students agree that they are seeking for an institution that is very much concerned about each student academic issues. They needed an institution that provides effective advices regarding students’ academic issues.

• 60% of the students strongly agree that they would choose an institution that would provide them a comfortable feel inside the campus.

• 71.4% students strongly agree and 28.6% agree that they need an institution with qualified faculties so that they can receive quality teaching. None of the student disagreed this.

• 54.3% of the students feel that institution with good campus life will provide them social amenities and facilities and so they have agreed on that.

• 52.9% of students strongly agreed that campus support services are important for them in choosing institution for their higher education.
77.1% of students strongly agreed that placement is more important for an institution to grab students for admission.

Safety and security inside the institution plays an vital role for students. Hence 67.1% students have strongly agreed on that.

58.6% of students have strongly agreed that services excellence also plays an vital role in students admission.

SUGGESTIONS

Simple Strategies to Increase Admissions

Offer Some Free Classes/Workshops Related to Your Products And/ Or Services – To market their institutions, the institutions can offer free classes or workshops or camps to junior college students for their upcoming board exams. For instance, someone with a aptitude coaching can offer special works on entrance exams. A yoga instructor might offer a class such as Yoga for students.

Join Local Business Organizations And Networking Groups: Many, such as school-based business groups, are inexpensive to join. And the marketing benefits are huge. Once they get to know about the university or institution and what they do, the other business people in the group will mention this business to others and may even give referrals. Local business organizations are also great opportunities to create and participate in some cooperative marketing strategies, such as holding special market days or other events.

Create Or Become Front and Centre in a Charitable Event: A university or institution can get huge amounts of press for events like this – which can translate into new customers. The university don’t even have to take the effort of creating their own event; many charities have established events that institutions can become a very visible part of by becoming a sponsor.

Creating Own Blog: By creating own blogs the institution can use it to build an audience of people who would be interested in getting direct information from the institution itself. Creating a blog is easier than creating a website - and savvier too. They can write regularly about topics related to the events and what the institution is doing.
Join and Use Social Networking Sites: If the university or institutions have time to get to know and use a variety of social media, they can do. If the university has time they can attract students through these social networking sites like, facebook, twitter, google+, youtube, etc.

Ask For Referrals: Institutions can ask for referrals from their current students by offering concession in the tuition fee of the current students. These also make current students to show interest in the development of their institution.

CONCLUSION

The “quality” is customer satisfaction, and that this concept has been extended to services sector such as the education sector. In the education sector, these customers may include a wide range of groups representing all those that are interested in the university with different needs to be met. Management must take quality related initiative on enriching the students’ education experience and satisfaction by focusing on these dimensions.

REFERENCE