Chapter 5

Research Methodology
SYNOPSIS

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RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

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5.1 Introduction
The present research study basically a marketing research which has been defined by The American Marketing Association as

"Marketing research is the function that links the consumer, customer, and public to the marketer through information—information used to identify and define marketing opportunities and problems; generate, refine, and evaluate marketing actions; monitor marketing performance; and improve understanding of marketing as a process."

Marketing research specifies the information required to address these issues; designs the methods for collecting information; manage and implement the data collection process; analyzes the results; and communicates the findings and their implementations.¹

In other words, Marketing Research is the systematic and objective identification, collection, analysis, dissemination, and use of information for the purpose of improving decision-making related to the identification and solution of problems (and opportunities) in marketing. Thus, systematic planning is required at all the stages in the marketing research process. The procedures followed at each stage are methodologically sound, well documented, and, as much as possible planned. Therefore, in the present study the following six steps of marketing research process have been used to carry out the study systematically and conceptually sound.

1. Problem Identification
2. Approach To The Problem
3. Research Design
4. Fieldwork Or Data Collection
5. Data Preparation And Analysis
6. Report Preparation And Presentation

5.2 Problem Identification

Education marketing is a part of service marketing and as the name suggest it is concerned with marketing of the services i.e. education. Education incorporates the system benefit concept as suggested by Donald Cowell, because customer is not buying the goods or services they are only buying the specific benefits and value.

However, before going into the subject of education services marketing, it is important to understand the concept of education as a service. Going by the modified definition of A.M.A

"Service are those separately identifiable, essentially intangible activities, which provide want satisfaction and are not necessarily tied to the sale of a product or another services"

Providing a service may or may not require the use of tangible goods. However, when such use is required, there is no ownership transfer of these tangible goods in service buying transaction. Education as a service; then, it can be said to be fulfilling the need for learning, acquiring knowledge providing an intangible benefits (increment in knowledge, professional expertise, skills) produced with the help of a set of tangible (infrastructure) and intangible components (faculty expertise and learning), where the buyer of the service does not get any ownership. He may have tangible physical evidence to show for the services exchange transaction but the actual benefit accrued is purely intangible in nature. There are many issues related to the marketing of education, therefore it requires a due consideration and empirical study to take right decision.
5.3 **Approaches To The Problem**

Development of an approach to the problem includes formulating an objective or theoretical framework, analytical models, research questions, hypothesis and identifying characteristics or factors that can influence the research design.

The present study primarily focuses on “Marketing Practices of Education: A Study with Special Reference to Management Institutes”

5.3.1 **Scope of The Study**

The study tried to collect primary as well as secondary data regarding marketing practices in management institutes i.e. media selection, advertising budgets, public relations, various extra curricular activities etc to market the institutes. The institutes are bifurcated into three categories viz “A”, “B” and “C”. To make the study more authentic one more dimension is being added i.e. Self Finance and Grant-in-aid. Having selected the above dimensions, a survey was conducted throughout India to know that how marketing orientation help in bringing the institutes in the supreme category i.e. “A”

5.3.2 **Objectives**

1. To know whether the management institutes create awareness about the course package offered with a traditional way i.e. once in a year they advertise for the admission notice for creating awareness about the programme or using modern tools and of marketing i.e. throughout the year they create the awareness about the institute.
2. To find out the promotion mix used by the management institutes
3. To Study the strategy of public relation of different management institutes
4. To know which Unique Selling Proposition do they use
   - Core Services (Faculty Expertise and Accumulated Experience at the Institute)
• The Facilitating Services (Registration and Administration Services, Counseling Services, Course Curricula, Study Material, Teaching Aids and other Infrastructure Facility)
• Supporting Services (Placement Cell, Quality Residential Facilities, Good Network of Exchange Relationship with Business Organization) highlighted by the management institutions and why?

1. **Awareness of the Course Package**

The traditional way to create the awareness about the course is through advertisement once in a year at the time of admission in the leading newspapers. However, with the passes of time and competition educational institutions have started realizing that the traditional mode is not sufficient and something more is required to be done so that the institutions remain in limelight throughout the year. Therefore, the first objective is to understand the innovative marketing practices by the management institutes to keep the institutes in limelight.

2. **To Find Out The Promotion Mix Used By The Management Institutes**

The promotion mix plays a very significant role in creating the awareness about the institutions. Selection of the right mix of promotion gives maximum mileage to the institutes with the minimum cost. Since the education comes under the service category, deciding the right and socially acceptable promotion mix like seminars, workshops, events, publication of college magazines, alumni association etc decides the fortune of the institutes. Hence, one of the objectives of the present study is to find out the promotion mix of the different management institutes in India.

3. **To Study The Strategy of Public Relation of Different Management Institutes**
Public Relation plays a significant role in marketing of services in general and educational institute in particular. It is therefore, necessary to know the PR practices in education institute with the objective to market their institutes.

4. **To Know Which Unique Selling Proposition Do They Use**

Unique Selling Proposition requires differentiating ones product or services from others. Unique Selling Proposition (USP) has to be incorporated properly so that a special niche can be developed in the consumers’ mind.

Following are the major USP used by the educational institutes

- Core Services (Faculty Expertise and Accumulated Experience at the Institute)
- The Facilitating Services (Registration and Administration services, Counseling services, Course Curricula, Study Material, Teaching Aids and other Infrastructure Facility)
- Supporting Services (Placement Cell, Quality Residential Facilities, Good Network of Exchange Relationship with the Business Organization) highlighted by the management institutions and why?

5.3.3 **Hypotheses Of The Study**

1. The management institution invest and highlight more in the hardware facility: Physical infrastructure facility to market their institute
2. The private or self-financed institutions get more number of applications compared to their intake capacity.
3. The private and self-financed institutes are organizing more number of seminars, workshops, symposia, inviting more number of guest faculty etc
5.4 Research Design

A research design is a framework or a blueprint for conducting the marketing research. It details the procedures necessary for obtaining the required information needed to structure or solve marketing research problem. Its purpose is to design a study that will test the hypothesis of interest, determine possible answer to the research questions, and provide the information needed for decision-making. Research design may be broadly classified as exploratory or conclusive research, descriptive research and causal research.

For the present study, a descriptive research design has been used, which is typically more formal and structured than exploratory research. It is based on large, representative samples, and the data obtained are subject to quantitative analysis. Descriptive research design is the most suitable research design to the present study because it describes in detail the marketing practices in education. It also intended to find out the relevance of marketing practices on the ranking of the institutes i.e. ‘A’, ‘B’ and ‘C’.

5.4.1 Sources of Data

The study uses two sources of data i.e. primary data and secondary data.

Primary Data

After scanning various secondary data sources, primary data is collected to meet the objectives of the present study. To collect primary data, a structured questionnaire was prepared. Different ordinal, nominal scale is used to collect first hand responses from the director of institutions. These primary data have been used for further statistical analysis to find out some useful information and inferences with respect to the objectives of the study.

Secondary Data
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The published material from books on Service Marketing and Brand Management have been referred to clarify the concept of marketing of education and its impact on the overall ranking of the institutes. Attempts have also been made to study the various diverse research papers from journals both national and international on service marketing, education, and marketing management to find out gap in the area of marketing practices in education and to understand the research methodology used in education research. Magazines in the area of service marketing and management education have been referred to know the emerging trend in educational field. Further, data have been collected from reports, working paper on education by various Research Firms and from newspapers like Business Standard, Business Line, and Economic Times. In order to review some scholarly journals, several e-journal databases have been examined. These references have been taken in form of secondary data are used in literature review and in some other chapters.

Sampling —

Sampling is the method of obtaining information from a portion of the large group of population and the sample is a sub-set of the population selected for investigation by some sampling methods. A sample design is a definite plan for obtaining a sample from a given population. It refers to the technique or procedure the researcher would adopt in selecting items for the sample. The details of the present study with respect to the above discussion are as under-

The Population

A population is the aggregate of all the elements that share some common set of characteristics, and that comprise the universe for the purpose of the marketing research problem. In other words, population represents the total set of things under consideration about which, some information is desired. The population of the present study consists of total number of management institutes in India. In India there are 1100 total number of management institutions which are offering M.B.A or
equivalent to M.B.A degree. The study carried out by selecting 148 institutions across the nation of various categories (A, B and C) and type (Self financed and Grant-in-aid).

**Sampling Unit**

A sampling unit is an element or a unit containing the element that is available for selection at some stage of the sampling process.9

A total of 160 management institutes of different type and category were contacted as per the Consortium of Strategic Management & Organization Development (COSMODE) model, which gives ranking of the B-Schools using subjective and objective parameters with minor rectification considering the present ranking of the B-School.10 Out of 160 respondents, 148 respondents sent the questionnaire with all the details. 12 questionnaires were rejected on the ground of inadequate information. The bifurcation of different type and category of the management institutions are as under:

Out of 148 total number of institutes, 94 belongs to self-financed institutes and out of 94 self-financed institutes, 26, 39 and 26 represent “A”, “B” and “C” category respectively. The remaining 54 belongs to grant-in-aid institutes and out this 54 grant-in-aid institutes, 19, 21 and 14 represent “A”, “B” and “C” category respectively.

**Sampling Techniques**

Sampling techniques may be broadly classified as probability and non-probability sampling. Non-probability relies on the personal judgment of the researcher rather than chance to select sample elements. While in probability sampling, sampling units are selected by chance. The main non-probability sampling techniques are
Convenience Sampling, Judgment Sampling, Quota Sampling, and Snowball Sampling. Probability sampling includes Simple Random Sampling, Systematic Sampling, Stratified Sampling, Cluster Sampling, and other sampling techniques.\textsuperscript{11}

Since the data has been collected from the three broad categories (A, B and C) of the management institutions, prominent institutes from each category had been selected using appropriate method of sampling for each category. In order to study the above categories of the institutes sample quotas have been fixed for all three categories of the institutes. The main reasons for using quota sampling was to prevent the field investigators to apply their personal judgment in selection of respondents and to assure that study would include all types of institute.

**Sampling Size**

The study will be regarding the various management institutes of India. Looking to the total number of management institutions in India i.e. 1100, 150 institutes had been selected for the study (i.e. approximately 14% of the total number of management institutes). 50 management institutes from each category (i.e. A, B and C) had been as a sample size for the present study.

**5.4.3 Instrument for Data Collection**

The present study used the questionnaire as an instrument of data collection for the various aspects of marketing practices in education. In addition to the questionnaire, Personal discussion was conducted with the director, subject experts, and customers. The main study was carried out through structured questionnaire in order to collect the data to fulfill the objectives of the study.

**Pre-Testing of Questionnaire**

Pre-testing refers to the testing of questionnaire on a small sample of respondents in order to identify and eliminate potential problems. All aspects of the questionnaire
had been tested, including question content, wording, sequence, form and layout, question difficulty, and instruction.¹²

Personal interview of few respondents (director) and extensive literature review had been carried out to prepare the preliminary questionnaire. Subject experts have been approached with this preliminary draft of questionnaire to ensure that the questions were properly phrased and logically sequenced. At the second stage, the questionnaires were sent to 15 respondents on the basis of convenient sampling. After studying their written response, some variables were modified. Finally, the responses obtained from the pretest, were coded and analyzed. The analysis of pretest responses served, as a check on the adequacy of the problem identification. After such pilot survey, which enabled to modify and add, and/or eliminate a few variables, and final questionnaire was designed

5.4.4 Method of Data Collection

There are several methods of collecting primary data, particularly in survey and descriptive researches, main methods are (i) Observation method, (ii) Interview method, (iii) Questionnaire method, (iv) Schedules method and (v) Some other methods.¹³

To gather data from the management institutes large the respondents were sent the structured questionnaire consist of closed format multiple-choice questions ware used. Two-measurement scaling methods included in questionnaire i.e. nominal scale and ordinal scale to measure the media preferences, amount of money spent on publicity/library, strength of alumni association and many questions related to marketing of institutes to different categories (‘A’, ‘B’ and ‘C’) and types (Self Financed and Grant-in Aid) of institutions.
5.5 Field Work

Fieldwork is the forth step in marketing research process. During this phase the field workers make contact with respondents and administer the questionnaire. To collect the data systematically, in this study well educated field investigator with marketing management background have been assigned the job of data collection. They have approached the respondents at three categories of institutions. They have been given complete explanation and understanding of each and every aspect of questions. Constant supervision and follow up have been done to collect the data correctly and within specified time limit. Data have been collected simultaneously from all the 148 institutions.

5.6 Data Preparation and Analysis

Data preparation includes the editing, coding, transcription, and verification of data. At the end of each day whatever the responses have been received through questionnaire undergone for fair editing. The information, which has been missed and doubtful, was reconfirmed. The questionnaire with less then half response had been rejected and not considered for analysis. After editing the data number codes have been assigned to each response to each question. A data sheet has been prepared containing all the variables and responses for each question in a code form with the help of MS excel. For more detail on coding, refer annexure number-9.

Analysis of data is the process by which data is converted into useful information. Raw data as collected from questionnaires cannot be used unless it is process in some way to make it amenable to drawing conclusions. There are various data analysis techniques available to analyze the data. Broadly, we can use three type of analysis

1. Univariate, involving single variable at a time
2. Bivariate, involving two variables at a time and
3. Multivariate involving three or more variable simultaneously.
Decisions about which technique should be used were made on the basis of (a) the scales and other characteristics of data, (b) objectives of the study, (c) characteristics of the research design etc. Various data analysis techniques used for the overall analysis are given as follow

- Frequency Distribution and percentile
- Cross-tabulation
- Chi-square test

5.7 Report Preparation and Presentation

Finally, the entire study was documented in a written report that includes eight chapters introducing various concepts related to Service Marketing Management, Brand Management and overview of marketing and history of management education and also incorporated the 7Ps of service marketing general and for an education institute in particular. Report also includes core aspects of the study, research methodology, analysis, and interpretation of the data followed by conclusion and recommendations to Self Financed and Grant-in-aid institution with respect to ‘A’, ‘B’ and ‘C’ category of institutions.

5.8 Limitation of the Study

Sending questionnaire to get the information is very difficult task because the majority of the respondents take the matter not seriously. Moreover, researcher had to take extra ordinary care for incorporating cross verification of the feedback given by the respondents.

The partly filled in questionnaires had to be filled-up by meeting them in person or contacting them on telephone. Despite of great care taken to avoid all likely pitfalls inadequacy might have crept in.

The present study focuses on two dimensions i.e. A, B and C category and type (Self-financed and Grant-in Aid). The study took all aspects of marketing of management
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5.9 Concluding Remarks

In order to study the marketing practice in education in terms of oldness of institute, money spent on publicity, number of seminars, workshops, M.D.Ps, strength of alumni association etc of different categories and types of colleges, descriptive research was used. In all 148 institutions were selected from different parts of India through quota sampling. The data collected through structured questionnaire was analyzed with help of some primary and advanced statistical analysis.
References


2 ibid.-p. 12


5 K.R. Sharma, “Research Methodology” National Publishing House, New Delhi, p.40


8 K.R. Sharma, “Research Methodology” National Publishing House, New Delhi, p.40


11 ibid, 334.
