

## **A REVIEW ON THE ADVERTISEMENT EFFECTIVENESS IN SERVICE SECTOR: HIGH EDUCATION ATTRACTIVENESS**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Advertisement is one of the marketing technique for promoting service to the prospective customers that often been used by many service companies. The main objective of an advertisement is to escalate the number of customers but in many service companies it does not turns into that favorable result. This is due to the effectiveness of the advertisement itself whereby the advertisement made fail to reach the prospective customers and fails to achieve the main objective of advertising. The objective of this paper is to review recent research into the understanding of the advertisement effectiveness in service companies particularly in high education institution and to provide conceptual framework on factors that lead to the attractiveness of the high education institution.

**Purpose** – This paper aims to review recent researches in the nature of effectiveness of marketing in service sectors, particularly in the point of attractiveness of a high education institution as a service sector business, in order to overcome the challenges on attracting students to further studies.

**Design/methodology/approach** – A variety of recent research outputs are reviewed including the topics of factors attracting students to study in universities, marketing and promotion and barriers of education.

**Findings** – The paper concludes that there are many factors that may contribute to the attractiveness of a high education institution. But to sustain the three factors which are the promotional activities, perceived reputation and customer relationship will escalate the number of students enrolled in a high education institution. These are the most recent factors that have been the key factors in many recent researches on marketing a high education institution.

**Research implications/limitations** – The research reported in this paper would benefit from further in-depth study especially in the marketing of a service business issues.

**Originality/value** – The paper summarizes the most recent literature review regarding the factors attracting student to enter the high education institution and come out with three main contributing factors to the issues. The paper gives guidance on the related factors that may contribute to the effectiveness of promotions.

**Keywords** : Higher education, marketing, promotion, advertisement.

## **KAJIAN TINJAUAN KEBERKESANAN PENGIKLANAN DALAM SEKTOR PERKHIDMATAN: TARIKAN PENDIDIKAN TINGGI.**

### **ABSTRAK**

Iklan adalah salah satu teknik pemasaran untuk mempromosikan perkhidmatan kepada bakal pelanggan yang sering digunakan oleh banyak syarikat perkhidmatan. Objektif utama iklan adalah untuk meningkatkan jumlah pelanggan tetapi dalam banyak syarikat perkhidmatan ia tidak berubah menjadi hasil yang menguntungkan. Ini adalah kerana keberkesanan iklan itu sendiri di mana iklan tersebut gagal mencapai pelanggan prospektif dan gagal mencapai matlamat utama pengiklanan. Objektif bagi kertas ini adalah untuk mengkaji semula penyelidikan baru-baru ini ke dalam pemahaman tentang keberkesanan iklan dalam syarikat-syarikat perkhidmatan khususnya di institusi pendidikan tinggi dan untuk menyediakan kerangka konseptual mengenai faktor-faktor yang membawa kepada daya tarik institusi pendidikan tinggi.

**Kata kunci :** teknik pemasaran, pengiklanan

### **INTRODUCTION**

Marketing is an important tool for any field of business whether in service - based sectors or product-based sectors. Marketing involves strategies that an organization needs to pursue in order to gain customers and sales. According to Chuang et al. (2014), attractiveness of a service comes from the various proportions, affordable price, and various activities held by the service provider. Moving towards achieving organization's goal, organization needs to understand its strengths and weaknesses in building strategy to penetrate the market (Orville & John, 2014). For organization that involves in service-based sector, the marketing strategy may be different with those in the product-based sector. This is due to the difficulty in measuring the quality of a service in which different customers will have different preferences and perceptions (Jay & Barry, 2014)

There are advertising agencies that use their creativity and strategic advertising planning in order to help new products or services to succeed. The goal is to increase the level of consumer loyalty by building a positive brand image in customers' minds (Ansari & Riase, 2016). According to Azarnoush and Arash (2016), the most noticeable style of communication in advertising is promotion and it is important for organization to study and understand the factors that lead to success. The most popular style of communication that can be used in order to encourage consumers to purchase products/services is advertising (Huang *et.al*, 2012). Watjarakul (2013) also stated that if a university implements the student-as-

customer concept, the customers which are the students will have confidence in receiving a better service quality from the university. Promotion is the strategy used by many firms to attract customers to buy their product or service (Ivy, 2008). There are many approaches can be taken by firms in promoting their products or services. Promotion comprised of distinct category of segments such as public relations, advertisement and publicity (Gauatm, 2011).

## **HIGHER EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION**

Higher educational institution sector is also one of the service sectors in the market. Marketing the higher institutions is critical in order to stimulate the young generations to further their studies at a higher level which consequently help to improve the development of the society (Wienstein & Palmer, 2013). In view of the increasing number of private higher educational institutions established in Malaysia, private colleges and universities are facing intense competition in attracting students to pursue their studies at the institutions. Therefore it is critical for these institutions to understand the reasons prospective students choose specific institutions to further their tertiary level of education which will enable the institutions to develop institutional positioning in today's competitive higher education environment (Lau, 2009). Various studies have been performed by researchers in investigating the factors that influence the students' choices in selecting higher educational institutions to pursue their tertiary level of education. According to Kusumawati *et al.* (2010), a number of important factors have been identified as the factors that influence students in making consideration for their choice of colleges or universities. However, the levels of importance of each factor are different for each student. The paper will focus on the previous studies supporting the selected factors that are considered as important in attracting prospective students to a higher educational institution as one of a service sector business.

## **PROMOTIONAL ACTIVITIES**

Promotion involves activities done by a firm as its effort to keep its products or services in the minds of the customers. A successful range of promotional activities will be able to stimulate demands and increase sales of the products or services. One of the factors that contribute to the number of students' enrolment in an educational institution is the promotional activities done by the institution. There are various promotional activities that can be performed by the institution as part of its effort to attract prospective students to further their studies at the institution such as advertising, having good publicity, maintaining positive public relations as well as other sales promotional effort. For a college, using only its prospectus or college's website to communicate with an array of its target audiences might be ineffective and thus, different promotional elements are used

for different groups of society. This is especially essential for the college as it target its promotion to prospective students by employing various tools in order to inform, remind and persuade them to select the institution (Ivy, 2008). Garwe (2016) indicated that in order to effectively market their institutions and programs to the prospective students, their families and friends, a variety of promotional tools should be adopted by private universities. Promotional information and marketing such as promotional materials, websites, radio and television advertisement, public exhibition and others are among the strongest factor that influences the students' decision to join private universities (Garwe, 2016). Ming (2010) suggested that a significant relationship can be established between advertising and college choice decision. Media advertising such as through radio and television contribute in building the image and visibility of an institution. However, Wee & Thinavan (2013) indicated that the Internet and newspapers are two most effective sources of information for students.

## **PERCEIVED REPUTATION**

The perceived reputation of the college is seen as one of the factors that attract prospective students to choose a certain institution to pursue their studies. How the potential students see the institution as a reputable college as compared to other colleges greatly influence their decision. A college's perceived image and reputation are mostly built based on the institutional factors such as the academic reputation (Urbanski, 2000), the ranking of the institution (Schoenherr, 2009), the brand image of the institution (Mupemhi, 2013), how the institution is portrayed by the media, the perceived quality of the programs offered and others. Kusumawati *et al.* (2010) proposed that the reputation of an academic institution plays a significant role in attracting prospective students. Ming (2010) stated that in Malaysia, the image and reputation of the institution greatly affect the students' consideration in making the choice. The researcher suggested that there is a significant positive relationship between college's reputation and college choice decision. Sojkin *et al.* (2015) also found that recognition and prestige of a university is the most important factors that influence decisions about pursuing tertiary education. On top of that Abdolalizadeh (2014) posited that despite the differences in how prospective students perceive the reputation of an institution due to dissimilar opinions, ideas and impressions that they have on the institution, the academic reputation and quality of an institution is one of the most imperative factors that influence the students to select the college or university.

## **CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP**

Customer relationship can be referred to as the degree to which a company develops a continuous connection and interaction with its customers and potential customers. According to Ansari & Riasi (2016), “an appropriate customer relationship means high levels of consumer involvement, fair treatment of customers, friendly relationship with consumers, offering high quality products/services, and improving customer satisfaction” (p.27). In the context of educational sector, educational institutions are increasingly recognizing their target markets which are the prospective students and even the parents as their customers. According to Lau (2016), various past researches have indicated that students should be recognized as customers since they pay for the fees and receive the delivery of the programs from the educational institutions. Alonderiene & Klimaviciene (2013) stated that students are acting as consumers in the decision making process of choosing the colleges or universities as they go through the stages of making purchase decisions. Bearing this fact in mind, it is therefore inevitable that colleges and universities strategize their marketing activities by attempting to develop good relationship with their potential customers.

Gordan, Apostu & Pop (2012) further proposed that a higher educational institution should engage in relationship marketing where the institutions aim to develop a long term relationship with their stakeholders such as the existing and potential students, parents, relatives, friends and etc. An approach of addressing multiple audiences is essential since these stakeholders directly or indirectly influence the choice of higher educational institutions in addition to creating a competitive advantage for the institution. In adopting the concept of students as customers, higher educational institutions should promote their quality services not only to students but those who are important to the students such as family and friends because potential students are influenced by their social environment in their decision making process. This could be achieved by conducting events or programs engaging this target market (Watjarakul, 2014).

## **SUMMARY**

According to Urbanski (2000), students go through a three-stage process in their decision making of college choices. The first stage is the predisposition stage where the students have the desire and awareness to continue their study at a higher level after finishing high schools. The second stage is the search stage where the students started to search for the information on the different potential institutions available. The final stage which is the choice stage is the stage where the students evaluate the information gathered in the second stage, compare between institutions and finally making a decision to apply for admission.

Below is the table showing the factors discussed in this paper and the supported researches.

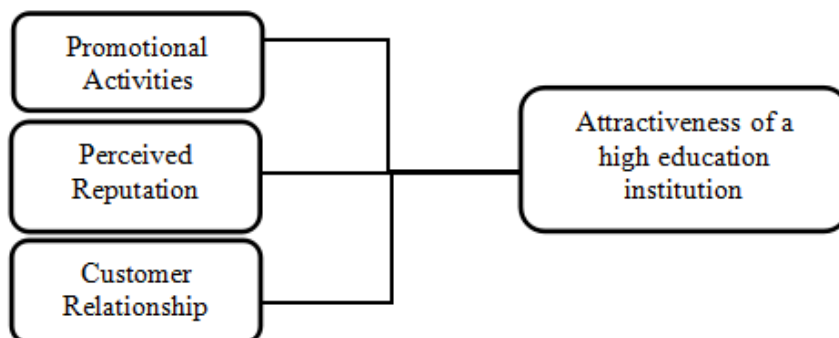
Table 1: Contributed Factors and Literatures References

Factors	Literature
Promotional Activities	Ivy, (2008), Ming, (2010), Huang <i>et.al</i> , (2012), Wee & Thinavan, (2013), Chuang et al. (2014), Garwe, (2016).
Perceived Reputation	Urbanski, (2000), Schoenherr, (2009), Ming, (2010), Kusumawati <i>et al.</i> (2010), Mupemhi, (2013), Heizer & Render, (2014), Abdolalizadeh (2014), Sojkin <i>et al.</i> (2015).
Customer Relationship	Gordan, Apostu & Pop (2012), Alonderiene & Klimaviciene (2013), Watjarakul, (2014), Ansari & Riasi (2016), Lau (2016).

## CONCLUSION

Based on the latest finding and researches on the factors that contribute to the attractiveness of a high education institution, there are three factors that highly recently discussed in the literature. These factors can be proposed as a conceptual framework for this paper as the figure below.

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework



When evaluating and choosing the colleges, the prospective students are influenced by various factors including the institutional characteristics, study cost, students' characteristics and etc. (Garwe, 2016). The characteristics of an institution may represent how attractive the institution is in attracting prospective students to study there. Researches done by Garwe (2016) demonstrate that institutional factors ranked the highest in students' choice of college. These characteristics include the college's image, geographical location, academic program, social life and facilities, academic reputation and prestige as well as other various characteristics. This information can be obtained from a variety of sources such as from the word of mouth and past experiences in addition to the marketing activities done by the institutions (Ivy, 2001).

Therefore, in the effort to increase enrollment and attract more students to the institutions, analyzing and identifying the institutional factors that can enhance an institution's attractiveness is critical so that the institution can be differentiated from its competitors and able to present a distinct image to its prospective students. But to sustain the three factors which are the promotional activities, perceived reputation and customer relationship will help in escalate the number of students enrolled in a high education institution. These three factors are the most recent factors that have been the most factors discussed and discovered in many recent researches on marketing a high education institution.

For future research and study, researchers may use these factors to examine and evaluate the attractiveness of a high education institution since this paper only provides the latest literature review and conceptual writing based on the related factors. Future researchers also may differentiate between the public education institutions and the private education institutions during the examination and study.

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*A Review On The Advertisement Effectiveness In Service Sector: High Education  
Attractiveness  
Nuur Su'aidah Haji Zakariah, Nor Diyana Abd Rahman, Nurul Ain Dolmat*

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