

Research on International Students' Perceptions of University Marketing Strategies (Part III)

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Abstract

The main objective of the case study was to conduct research to identify international students' perceptions of the Romanian higher education market, as well as the marketing elements that universities use to attract international students. The present work explored three specific aspects: The conceptual framework in which the scientific approach was launched, setting forth the standards to ensure research questions' definition (Part I); The method applied in the approach of the empirical scientific work, relying on systematic data collection, observation, and experimentation to test hypotheses representing the core of a theory (Part II); Interpretation of the results of the scientific approach, conclusions and proposals for improvement (Part III).

Keywords: Higher Education Market, University Marketing Strategies;

International Students' Perceptions

JEL Classification: I23; M31; M37; D11; D83

Part III: Interpretation of the results of the scientific approach, conclusions and proposals for improvement

3.1. Conclusions regarding the hypotheses

Following the results of the application questionnaire, each formulated hypothesis will be analyzed in order to confirm or reject them.

The hypotheses formulated before conducting the application questionnaire were formulated with the aim of identifying the perceptions and attitudes of international students on the educational market in Romania, as well as the educational market offer present in Romania and its characteristics, as attractive or not.

Hypothesis 1: In the descriptive coordinates of the sample, there are respondents from different age categories, from different countries of origin and with different current countries of residence.

The hypothesis was tested and validated using the first 3 questions of the application questionnaire. The highest percentage was 61.2% of respondents as having an age between 18 and 29 years, most respondents came from countries of origin such as: Italy (17.7%) and equally from Japan, France and Belgium in a percentage of 11.5%.

Regarding the current countries of residence, only 6 respondents out of the 113 currently live in Romania, while the vast majority, in a percentage of 15% are in Denmark and 13.3% in Sweden, followed equally in a percentage of 11.5% by those who currently live in Italy and Germany.

Hypothesis 2: The hypothesis was confirmed through question number four of the application questionnaire.

A total of 87 respondents out of 113 answered that they liked the experience in Romania a lot and very much.

44.2% of them answered with the indicator 4, and 32.7% of them answered with the indicator 5.

Hypothesis 3: The hypothesis was confirmed through questions number 7, 8 and 9 of the application questionnaire.

53.1% of respondents find studies in Romania to be expensive or very expensive, almost 60% of respondents had a good and very good relationship with teachers, and almost 70% of them found the curricula taught to be very informative and useful.

Hypothesis 4: The hypothesis was confirmed through question number 11.

Respondents had the opportunity to choose multiple answers regarding the main factors that motivated them to study in Romania.

Among these factors, high-speed Internet and mobility, diverse and unique culture, growth opportunities, as well as welcoming people and communities with other nationalities were found with a percentage of over 50%.

Hypothesis 5: The importance of this hypothesis also records the need for universities to continue to have a greater presence in the online environment, the space in which the vast majority of international students seek new opportunities.

The hypothesis was also confirmed by question number 18 of the application questionnaire, where respondents identified mainly 2 methods through which universities used certain marketing strategies to keep in touch with potential students, and to attract them to enroll in a University in Romania.

The question allowed multiple answers, and as such, the results showed that over 50% of students identified email marketing campaigns as the most prevalent, but also that marketing strategies with Alumni students were predominant, with over 50%.

At the same time, the media content and marketing activity constantly present on Social Media platforms, as well as other marketing tools used to promote content related to universities and university programs, were observed and voted on.

45.1% of respondents identified marketing content on Facebook/Instagram, and 32.7% of them identified content in one form or another, either on search engines or as paid advertisements on social media platforms.

Hypothesis 6: In the online space, it is increasingly important for universities to have a web footprint that is as visible and accessible to students as possible.

The hypothesis aimed to test both the importance of educational web portals such as those of the company Studyportals, but also to see if students identify and navigate these portals to search for new educational opportunities.

The hypothesis was also confirmed, with 33.6% of respondents finding the university in Romania they studied at on one of these educational portals.

Hypothesis 7: Although the experience of a new country can be perceived as quite a burdensome challenge when you have to adapt to a new lifestyle, the hypothesis was confirmed by meeting the expectations of the respondents.

First, almost 80% of the respondents appreciated that the period they spent in Romania was easy to handle, taking into account essential aspects related to mobility, such as transportation, but also aspects necessary for living and life, such as language or shopping. The orientation that an international student would need and the necessary indications, seem to have been easily accessible and easy to assimilate, so that only a small percentage of 1.8% of the respondents identified difficulties in living and managing in Romania.

The second aspect of the hypothesis was related to the difficulty that international students perceived in applying to a university in Romania. The aim was to capture the respondents' perception related to the experience they had in the enrollment process.

The statistical data of the application questionnaire shows us that more than 80% of the respondents had a pleasant and easy experience in the registration process, not encountering problems due to lack of information. This being a very important aspect and closely related to the experience of any international student, statistically speaking, only a percentage of 3.5% declared themselves partially dissatisfied with the registration process.

The last aspect measured within this hypothesis was the students' perception of the cultural differences they observed between Romania and their country of origin. The hypothesis was also confirmed, although the percentage of respondents who exceeded the threshold was small. A percentage of 41.6% of the respondents observed very visible cultural differences, while 47.8% were in the middle, observing very small differences.

References

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