

Research Article

COLLEGE STUDENTS' ASSESSMENT OF MARKETING STRATEGIES AND EDUCATIONAL SERVICES: IMPLICATIONS ON THEIR INTENTION TO STAY

* JONAS DIU GAMBA

Philippines.

Received 28th February 2024; Accepted 29th March 2024; Published online 30th April 2024

ABSTRACT

Aims: The study aimed to assess whether marketing strategies and students' educational experiences influence students' intention to stay enrolled in a private institution. It sought to identify effective marketing strategies and determine the impact of positive educational experiences on student retention. **Study design:** This research employed a descriptive correlational research design. This design allows for the exploration of relationships between variables. **Methodology:** This research used a descriptive correlational research design and survey to gather the data and applied stratified random sampling with 160 respondents. T-test and ANOVA were used to determine the significant difference in the participants' intention to stay when grouped according to their demographic profile. Pearson R was used to determine if there is significant relationship between the students' intention to stay and the student's educational experience, and multiple linear regression was used to determine if the independent variables influence the dependent variables. **Results:** The study found that participants viewed the institution's marketing strategies (including advertising, events, public relations, direct marketing, and word-of-mouth) and educational experiences (classroom instruction, participation in activities, quality of learning, and academic support) positively. There were significant differences in intention to stay based on participants' sex and enrolled school. Additionally, a positive correlation was observed between intention to stay and educational experiences. Both effective marketing strategies and positive educational experiences were linked to higher intention to stay, highlighting the importance of tailored strategies and student-centered policies. Recommendations include investing in market research, using data analytics for targeted marketing, incorporating student feedback in course design, and promoting student-centered education policies. **Conclusion:** The study supports Expectancy Theory, showing that students' intention to stay is influenced by their expectations of positive outcomes from their educational experiences. There's a significant, positive relationship between students' intention to stay and their educational experience, suggesting that students value their schooling, which increases their commitment to staying enrolled. The positive impact of identified marketing strategies and educational experiences on intention to stay further confirms the theory's role in shaping student behavior. Factors like education quality and perceived value communicated through marketing efforts influence students' decision to remain enrolled. Additionally, while compensation showed a statistically significant relationship with turnover intention its effect was minor, indicating that better compensation can slightly reduce the intent to leave the organization.

Keywords: College students, marketing strategies, educational satisfaction, intention assessment, implications, Philippines.

INTRODUCTION

In an era marked by heightened competition among private educational institutions, effective marketing communication strategies have become indispensable tools for attracting and retaining students. Marketing campaigns often serve as the initial point of contact between prospective students and institutions, shaping their perceptions and expectations. Social media marketing facilitated prospective students to communicate and collaborate to gather information relevant to higher education institutions and their respective brand equity. More complex and dynamic models focusing on customer-based brand equity often lack empirical support in higher education sectors, particularly from more than one country. (Perera *et al.*, 2022). Aligning marketing strategies with the actual educational experiences of college students in a private educational institution is crucial for several reasons. Firstly, it fosters trust and credibility among prospective students and their parents, as they rely heavily on promotional materials when making educational decisions (Laufer, 2020). Secondly, a congruent strategy helps attract students whose aspirations and goals align with the institution's academic and extracurricular offerings, resulting in a more engaged and motivated student body (Jung, 2018). This alignment serves as a powerful retention tool, as students are more likely to persist in their studies when their initial expectations are met or exceeded

(Hossler *et al.*, 2019). This study holds significant importance in the realm of higher education as it seeks to bridge the gap between marketing strategies employed by educational institutions and the resulting educational satisfaction experienced by college students. By understanding how students perceive and respond to various marketing initiatives, institutions can tailor their strategies to better meet the needs and preferences of their target audience. Furthermore, assessing educational satisfaction provides insights into the overall quality of the educational experience, influencing student retention, engagement, and academic success (Cabeliza, 2021).

THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The study is anchored on the Expectancy Theory (Solomon, White and Dahl, 2014). This theory essentially explains that consumers' decisions are driven by "positive incentives". Choosing a certain product rather than any other alternative provides a consumer with a more positive result, like a higher social status. This helps the readers and the researcher of the study in a deeper understanding of "Exploring the College Students' Assessment of Marketing Strategies and Educational Satisfaction: Implications on their Intention to Stay" which will be built upon various concepts and perspectives from the fields of marketing, education, and consumer behavior. The study will be supported by the Engagement Theory (Pellegrino and Chudowsky, 2009). This theory emphasizes the importance of students' active participation and involvement in their learning experiences. This theory suggests that when students are actively engaged in various

school activities, such as clubs, sports, and community service, they are more likely to develop a sense of belonging, motivation, and commitment to their educational goals, leading to positive academic outcomes and enhanced satisfaction with their schooling. The study will be also supported by Cognitive Load Theory (Sweller *et al.*, 2011). This theory focuses on how the quality of learning materials and information affects students' cognitive processing and learning outcomes. According to this theory, effective instructional design should manage the cognitive load imposed on students' working memory to optimize learning. The quality of learning and information provided to students significantly influences their cognitive processing and understanding of educational content. When learning materials are well-organized, relevant, and presented in a manner that reduces extraneous cognitive load, students are better able to engage in effective learning processes, leading to improved educational experiences and academic performance.

In a nutshell, it shows the dependent and independent variables of the study. The independent variable included an assessment of marketing strategies such as advertising and promotion, events, public relations, direct marketing, and word-of-mouth marketing. The student's educational experience considered classroom instruction, participation and engagement in school activities, quality of learning, and academic support. The study's dependent variable will only focus on students' intention to stay.

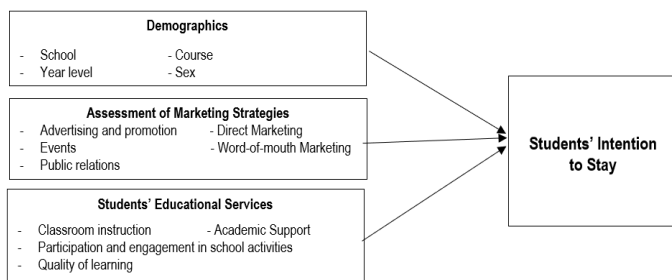


Figure 1. The Schematic Presentation of the Study

RESEARCH METHODS

The study used a descriptive correlational research design. This design will be appropriate in the study in determining the significant difference in the participants' intention to stay when grouped according to their demographics, the significant relationship between the student's intention to stay and the student's educational experience, and in analyzing the influence of marketing strategies and students' educational experiences on their intention to stay. T-test and ANOVA were used to determine the significant difference in the participants' intention to stay when grouped according to their demographics and Pearson R in determining the significant relationship between the students' intention to stay and the student's educational experience.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

How are the participants characterized in their demographic considering School, Year level, Course; and Sex?

Table 1. Respondents' Profile

School	Frequency	Percentage (%)
College 1	130	81%
College 2	30	19%
Year Level		
1 st -year	93	58%

2 nd -year	67	42%
Course		
BEEd	9	6%
BSEd-SS	1	.6%
BTLE	2	1%
BSEd Filipino	6	4%
BSEd English	21	13%
BECED	4	3%
BSEd Values Education	5	3%
BSBA FM	16	10%
BSBA MM	23	14%
BSHM	62	39%
BTVTED	6	4%
BSBA HRM	3	2%
DHT	2	1%
Sex		
Male	34	21%
Female	126	79%
N = 160, 100%		

Table 1 shows the frequency and percentage distribution of the respondents according to their demographic characteristics. A significant proportion, comprising 127 or 79.4 percent, represents Lourdes College, whereas Vineyard International Polytechnic College accounts for 33 or 20.6 percent of the total participants. This breakdown provides significant information about the participant composition and underscores Lourdes College's predominant presence within the sample. The majority of participants, constituting 93 or 58.1 percent, are first-year students, followed by 59 or 36.9 percent who are second-year students. Only a small percentage of participants, 4 or 2.5 percent each, are in their third and fourth years.

The frequency and percentage distribution of participants are categorized by their respective courses. The data reveals a diverse representation of academic disciplines within the participant pool. The most prevalent course is Bachelor of Science in Hotel Management (BSHM), constituting 62 or 38.8 percent of the total participants. This is followed by Bachelor of Science in Business Administration Major in Marketing Management (BSBA MM) and Bachelor of Science in Business Administration Major in Financial Management (BSBA FM), comprising 23 or 14.4%percent and 16 or 10.0 percent of participants respectively. The frequency and percentage distribution of participants categorized by sex. The data demonstrates a significant disparity in gender representation within the participant pool, with females comprising the majority at 126 or 78.8 percent, while males represent a smaller proportion at 34 or 21.3 percent.

What is the participant's assessment of the marketing strategies of the educational institution in terms of advertising and promotion, events, public relations, direct marketing, and word-of-mouth marketing?

Table 2. Participants' Assessment of the Marketing Strategies of the Educational Satisfaction in terms of Advertising and Promotion, Events, Public Relations, Direct Marketing, and Word-of-Mouth Marketing

Participants' Assessment of the Marketing Strategies	Mean	Interpretation
Advertising and Promotion	4.29	Effective
Events	4.15	Effective
Public Relations	4.26	Effective
Direct Marketing	4.09	Effective
Word-of-Mouth Marketing	4.24	Effective

Table 2 shows that the overall mean for the advertising and promotion is 4.29 which suggests that participants generally perceive the advertising and promotional efforts of the institution as effective. This implies that the participants believe that these strategies are influential in shaping their perception of the institution and its offerings. Cassidy et al. (2018) highlights the importance of effective marketing strategies in enhancing the visibility and reputation of educational institutions. For the events, it shows that the overall mean is 4.15, which means effective. This finding suggests that participants generally perceive the institution's event-based marketing efforts positively. Events serve as potent platforms for institutions to engage with various stakeholders, including prospective students, current students, alumni, and community members (Findler et al., 2019). The data shows for the public relations is that the overall mean is 4.26 or effective. This finding underscores the importance and effectiveness of the institution's efforts in managing its public image and relationships. The result suggests that participants believe the institution effectively communicates its values, achievements, and contributions through its public relations efforts. According to Okafor et al., (2018), successful public relations initiatives can enhance the institution's visibility, credibility, and influence, thereby attracting prospective students, engaging current students and alumni, and strengthening partnerships with external organizations. The overall mean in direct advertising is 4.09 or effective indicates that participants find these direct marketing initiatives effective in capturing their attention, conveying relevant information, and stimulating interest in the institution's offerings. Direct marketing encompasses various strategies such as email campaigns, direct mail, personalized communication, and targeted advertising aimed at reaching specific audiences (Dibb et al., 2019). In the word-of-mouth, the overall mean is 4.24 which means effective. This finding suggests that participants perceive word-of-mouth marketing as highly effective in promoting the institution and its offerings. Word-of-mouth marketing relies on recommendations and referrals from satisfied customers, students, alumni, and other stakeholders, making it a powerful tool for building credibility, trust, and engagement (Harahap et al., 2018).

What is the participant’s level of satisfaction with their educational experiences in terms of Classroom instruction satisfaction, Participation and engagement in school activities, Quality of learning, and Academic Support?

Table 3. Participant’s level of satisfaction with their educational experiences in terms of Classroom instruction satisfaction, Participation and engagement in school activities, Quality of learning, and Academic Support

Participants’ Assessment of the Educational Experiences	Mean	Interpretation
Classroom Instruction Satisfaction	4.29	Effective
Participation and Engagement in School Activities	4.15	Effective
Quality of Learning	4.26	Effective
Academic Support	4.09	Effective

Table 3 revealed that the overall mean for the classroom instruction satisfaction is 4.43 which is rated as effective, suggests that participants value the quality, effectiveness, and relevance of the teaching methods, content delivery, and interactions with instructors. Participants' satisfaction with classroom instruction reflects positively on the institution's faculty members, highlighting their dedication, competence, and commitment to delivering high-quality education (Murillo-Zamorano et al., 2019). For the participation and engagement in school activities, the data revealed that the overall mean is 4.28 or effective. This finding suggests that participants perceive their level of

engagement and participation in school activities as being at a high level of satisfaction, reflecting positively on the institution's efforts to foster a vibrant and inclusive campus community. Satisfaction with participation and engagement in school activities is indicative of students' involvement in extracurricular, co-curricular, and social activities beyond the classroom (Bovill, 2019). The data showed that the overall mean for the quality of learning is 4.38 which means effective. The result suggests that participants value relevance and effectiveness of the educational experiences provided by the institution, perceiving them as conducive to their intellectual growth, skill development, and academic success. Quality learning experiences are characterized by engaging and challenging coursework, opportunities for critical thinking and problem-solving, access to up-to-date resources and technologies, and supportive and knowledgeable faculty members (Ribeiro, et al., 2018). For the academic support, the data revealed that the overall mean is 4.31 which means effective. This finding indicates that participants hold a positive perception of the academic support services offered by the institution, suggesting that these services effectively meet their academic needs and contribute to their overall learning experiences. As per Baik et al., (2019), the availability, accessibility, and effectiveness of academic support services, such as tutoring, advising, and academic resources, play a crucial role in assisting students in navigating academic challenges, developing study skills, and accessing resources necessary for success in their coursework.

Is there a significant difference in the participants’ intention to stay when grouped according to their demographics?

Ho1. There is no significant difference in the participants’ intention to stay when grouped according to their demographics.

Table 4. Test of difference on the participants’ intention to stay when grouped according to their demographics.

Profile	t-value	p-value	Decision to Ho
Sex	-40.118	.000	Reject
School	-49.560	.000	Reject
	F-value	p-value	Decision to Ho
Year Level	.099	.961	Accepted
Course	1.021	.433	Accepted

Significant if p-value <0.05

Legend: Ho is rejected if Significant

Ho is accepted if Not Significant

Table 4 presents the analysis of the significant difference in participants' intention to stay when grouped according to their demographics. For the variables of sex and school, the t-values of -40.118 and -49.560 respectively, accompanied by p-values of .000, suggest a rejection of the null hypothesis (Ho), indicating that there is a significant difference in intention to stay based on these demographics. This implies that gender and school affiliation have a notable impact on participants' intention to stay within the educational institution. Gender has long been recognized as a factor influencing various aspects of educational experiences and outcomes. Research has shown that male and female students may have different motivations, preferences, and perceptions regarding their academic environment, which can ultimately affect their decision to persist in their studies (Reilly, et al., 2019). However, for the variables of year level and course, the F-values of .099 and 1.021 respectively, along with p-values of .961 and .433, indicate an acceptance of the null hypothesis (Ho). This suggests that there is no significant difference in intention to stay among participants based on their year level or course of study.

Is there a significant relationship between the student’s intention to stay and the student’s educational experience?

Ho2. There is no significant difference between the students’ intention to stay and the students’ educational experience.

Table 5. Correlation Matrix between Students’ Intention to Stay and the Students’ Educational Experience

	Classroom Instruction	Participation and Engagement in school activities	Quality of Learning	Academic Support	Intention to Stay	
Classroom Instruction	Pearson R	-				
	P-Value	-				
Participation and Engagement in school activities	Pearson R	.600**	-			
	P-Value	.000	-			
Quality of Learning	Pearson R	.600**	.575**	-		
	P-Value	.000	.000	-		
Academic Support	Pearson R	.574**	.451**	.496**	-	
	P-Value	.000	.000	.000	-	
Intention to Stay	Pearson R	.592**	.606**	.584**	.577**	-
	P-Value	.000	.000	.000	.000	-

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 5 presents a correlation matrix examining the relationship between students' intention to stay and various aspects of their educational experience, including classroom instruction, participation and engagement in school activities, quality of learning, and academic support. The analysis reveals significant positive correlations between students' intention to stay and each aspect of their educational experience. Specifically, strong correlations are observed between intention to stay and classroom instruction (Pearson's $r = .592$, $p = .000$), participation and engagement in school activities ($r = .606$, $p = .000$), quality of learning ($r = .584$, $p = .000$), and academic support ($r = .577$, $p = .000$). These findings suggest that students who perceive higher levels of classroom instruction, engagement in school activities, quality of learning, and academic support are more likely to express an intention to stay within the institution. This finding also implies that students' perception of their educational experience strongly influences their decision to remain enrolled in the institution. A positive educational experience, characterized by factors such as quality of instruction, academic support, campus environment, and extracurricular opportunities, is associated with a higher likelihood of students expressing an intention to stay. Conversely, negative experiences or dissatisfaction with aspects of the educational environment may lead to a decreased intention to stay and potentially higher attrition rates.

Do the participants’ assessment of marketing strategies and their satisfaction with their educational experiences significantly influence their intention to stay?

Ho3. The participants’ assessment of marketing strategies and students’ educational experiences do not significantly influence their intention to stay.

Table 6. Multiple Linear Regression on the Influence of participants’ assessment of marketing strategies and their satisfaction with their educational experiences to their intention to stay

Independent Variable	B	T-Value	P
Marketing Strategies	.499	4.925	.000
Students’ Educational Experience	.494	5.367	.000
Dependent Variable	Intention to Stay		
Constant: .234	R ² : .480	F-Value: 74.5508	P-Value: .000

$$\text{Intention to Stay} = .234 + .499MS + .494SEE +$$

Table 6 presents the results of a Multiple Linear Regression analysis examining the influence of participants' assessment of marketing strategies and their satisfaction with their educational experiences on their intention to stay within the institution. The analysis includes two independent variables: Marketing Strategies and Students' Educational Experience. With F-value of 74.5508 and p-value is less than 0.001, results indicate that the overall regression model is statistically significant. The R-squared value (R²) of 0.480 indicates that approximately 48% of the variability in the intention to stay can be explained by the independent variables in the model. The remaining 52% of the factors may be considered in future studies. With these results, the Ho3 is rejected. Both variables show statistically significant positive influences on the dependent variable, Intention to Stay. For Marketing Strategies, the coefficient is .499, indicating that for every one-unit increase in Marketing Strategies, the intention to stay is expected to increase by approximately 0.499 units. The associated t-value of 4.925 is highly significant ($p < 0.001$), indicating that this relationship is statistically significant. Similarly, for Students' Educational Experience, showing that for every one-unit increase in Educational Experience, the intention to stay is expected to increase by approximately 0.494 units. The associated t-value of 5.367 is also highly significant ($p < 0.001$), indicating a significant relationship. These results indicate that participants perceived marketing strategies positively and report higher levels of satisfaction with their educational experiences are more likely to express an intention to stay.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions are drawn:

The results of the study align with the principles of the Expectancy Theory, indicating that students' intention to stay in school are influenced by their expectations of achieving positive outcomes. The significant, positive relationship found between students' intention to stay, and their educational experience supports this theory, suggesting that students value their educational experiences, thereby increasing their intention to stay enrolled. Moreover, the positive identification of marketing strategies and educational experiences on students' intention to stay further confirms the role of expectancy theory in shaping student behavior. This means that students increase their chances of staying in school is dependent on factors such as the quality of education offered, and the perceived value communicated through marketing efforts.

The implications of these findings are significant for educational institutions aiming to enhance student retention and overall satisfaction. Recognizing the importance of students' perceptions of their educational experiences is important so that institutions may prioritize quality teaching, engaging curricula, and supportive learning environments. Investing in these areas can not only improve students' academic outcomes but also foster a sense of belonging and commitment to the institution, which may increase retention rates.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, conclusions, and significance of the study, the following recommendations are given.

1. School Administrators may Invest in comprehensive market research to understand students' preferences and satisfaction levels regarding educational services and can collaborate with the marketing department to align marketing strategies with students' expectations and satisfaction metric
2. Marketing Officers may conduct surveys and focus groups to gather insights into students' perceptions of marketing strategies and can use data analytics to evaluate the effectiveness of current marketing campaigns and tailor future strategies accordingly and may collaborate with other departments to ensure marketing efforts reflect the institution's commitment to educational excellence and student satisfaction
3. Teachers can actively participate in discussions and feedback sessions aimed at understanding students' assessment of marketing strategies and may incorporate student feedback into course design and delivery to enhance educational satisfaction.
4. Students can provide constructive feedback on marketing strategies and educational experiences through surveys, focus groups, and other feedback channels and may engage with academic and administrative staff to communicate needs and preferences effectively.
5. Government Officials may support initiatives aimed at improving educational quality and student satisfaction within private educational institutions and can advocate for policies that promote transparency, accountability, and student-centered approaches in higher education and can allocate resources to support research and development efforts aimed at enhancing the student experience.

6. The Community may engage with the institution to understand its educational offerings and marketing strategies, provide feedback and support initiatives aimed at improving the educational experience for students, and collaborate with the institution to create opportunities for community involvement and partnership.
7. The Admission Office may communicate effectively with prospective students about the institution's educational offerings and commitment to student satisfaction and can collect and analyze data on students' satisfaction levels to inform admissions strategies and decision-making.

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