

A Study on Effect of E- Branding Practices Adopted by Selected Higher Educational Institutes of Gujarat for Pursuing Higher Education

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Received:17 Dec 2024	Social media users are growing steadily worldwide. Social media has been harnessed by educational institutions. LinkedIn is a popular social networking site with expanding user numbers. Higher education is essential for a better nation. Universities were founded worldwide to meet educational and intellectual needs. Many governmental and private universities have been founded in India. Technology, globalization, and competition have changed higher education worldwide in the recent decade. In an ever-changing industry, institution branding goes beyond logos. The education industry in India has a big untapped market due to low literacy, rapid urbanization, and rising per capita income. Without the brand promise, brand advertising is typically ineffective. This study emphasizes higher education branding in education markets where government-funded institutions can't meet population demands, but in sound economic regions where free education is practiced and state-owned institutions operate, this study's scope is limited.
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I. INTRODUCTION

Social media users are growing steadily worldwide. Social media has been harnessed by educational institutions. LinkedIn is a popular social networking site with expanding user numbers. With 562 million members, LinkedIn is about connecting with people you know and people your connections know. LinkedIn is unusual for branding since it is a social networking platform for specialized people with a professional interest in a certain skill or organization. LinkedIn is regarded the most potent social networking tool for making new connections, word-of-mouth exposure, brand building, and lead generation. Thus, many companies have developed official LinkedIn pages with their full information to increase their audience and commercial benefits. However, posting good material and convincing status updates consistently is necessary to develop an industry leading brand. LinkedIn is vital for all organizations, but some social media experts believe it may be a game-changer for B2B enterprises. Social media has become a strong global communication tool in the previous decade. The higher education system has also changed drastically, making it difficult for educational institutions to keep in touch with stakeholders. Educational institutions are increasingly using social media because it is cost-effective, easy, and has the ability to reach prospective students.

Professional social networking site LinkedIn is well recognized for developing ties amongst coworkers. Educational institutes can use it for professional development, career networking (for placement drive, training, and placement through references), and staying connected with alumni, faculty, parents, and other academic community stakeholders as part of their social media marketing strategy. Encouraging current students, alumni, faculty, administrators, parents, and community members to follow/join Institute page on LinkedIn in the same way they do Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc. can manage the show and boost branding. LinkedIn, with 562 million users in 200 countries, is a leading B2B social network. Event news, achievement, accolades, program launches, and thought leadership pieces help solidify your organization's brand image. However, checking LinkedIn metrics is equally essential for digital branding success. Few scholars have surveyed education institutions' social media use. These studies are not social media or institution-specific. None of these case studies apply to Indian higher education. Considering the circumstances, this study evaluates the LinkedIn platform used by six oldest Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) to build their brand images.

Higher education branding initiatives

Higher education is essential for a better nation. Universities were founded worldwide to meet educational and intellectual needs. Many governmental and private universities have been founded in India. The University Grant Commission (2017) lists 42 public and 96 private universities in India. It's sad that no university can maintain its international ranking. Additionally, many colleges worldwide strive to boost their reputation and attract attention. University branding has only gotten more essential in the market due to superior placement. Companies welcome students with excellent brand value because they are more likely to get valuable degrees from these «branded» schools. When units, courses, and degrees are plainly recognisable from other institutions, students and employers are more likely to recognise the institution's «name». Effective marketing and branding are essential for industry viability. These events are becoming more important as institutions seek a more diverse student body. Effective branding may boost enrollment, fundraising, and other results. Branding is how many educational institutions worldwide recruit top students, faculty, researchers, and staff. Branding originated as a consumer choice channel and has expanded to reflect an organization's values. Brand development requires

«points of differentiation» (POD) and «points of parity» (POP).

These two branding concepts have established and communicated technical and professional degree programmes to stakeholders including candidates, students, parents, alumni, employers, and the community. Institutional branding uses hardcore marketing (selling included). The business sector brands differently than academic institutions. Institutional branding aims to boost academic status, which affects brand image, qualities, and advantages. Institutional branding sustains a strong marketing technique to move an organisation from its purpose to its vision. Brand creation by creating and delivering distinctive promises and brand marketing are two parts of institute branding. Due to competition and infringements that parodied their services or marks, corporations use trademark licensing programs to brand. Global firms seek to stand out from competitors with comparable products. This study studied the importance and perceived influence of branding in Indian higher education institutions. Higher education institutions care a lot about the quality and kind of students they attract because student diversity is crucial to their success. Prospective students see the university as a structure that will teach, place them in jobs and graduate schools, and provide a lifetime community. An institution can improve its position through recruiting outstanding teachers, creating new programmes, and attracting top recruiters. Students and alumni must be ambassadors and supporters to increase the university's endowment, grow, and interact with the world. Communications agency Noir Sur Blanc found that 93% of higher education

administrators saw their school as a brand.

Technology, globalisation, and competition have changed higher education worldwide in the recent decade. In an ever-changing industry, institution branding goes beyond logos. Academic integrity, employability, and most significantly, student experience should be established and expressed by the school. To whom will it speak? India views students and parents as educational value receivers. The university must interact with current and prospective students, their parents, business houses, and other stakeholders. This research will determine university brand equity methods for diverse stakeholders. Students are drawn to a university for a variety of reasons: a) as a brand that is historically recognised based on how long it took to found the university; b) fascinating campuses with luxurious grass-filled and modern or historical buildings that pride themselves on up-to-date facilities; c) internationally recognised teachers and researchers; and d) perception of p. With this context, higher education branding projects and their present difficulties must be examined and study directions given. This research examines the literature review on branding initiatives in higher education institutions, how they work, the need for branding in Indian higher education, and the challenges of branding universities.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

1. To conduct research on the impact of certain e-branding practices used by a selection of higher educational institutions.
2. To do research on the various branding strategies being implemented in educational institutions of higher learning

In today's world, there are a great number of institutions and colleges all over the world that are consistently working to use the theories and concepts of marketing in order to achieve a competitive edge. Taking this into consideration, countries on the very populated continents of Asia and Africa, as well as governments in the West that provide outstanding education, are active education marketplaces. People in rural areas and metropolitan areas alike have shown signs of developing a feeling of responsibility in regard to the quality of education they get, and their desire to advance their education is growing at an ever-increasing rate. This may be attributed to the fact that the global literacy rate as a whole is improving. College grads from smaller towns and cities often travel to larger cities in search of further education opportunities, which often leads them to enroll in university programmes. Because of this demand, the competition between universities to attract students has created an environment of perfect competition. As a direct result of this environment, marketing practices have become an integral part of the education sector, and each university is pulling out all the stops to market itself as a provider of education of the highest possible caliber. This red ocean has penetrated the borders of differentiation between public and private institutions, and universities are increasingly becoming more like brands, which are maintained via the use of appropriate marketing tactics and management of brands. This practice is without a doubt successful in terms of the financial benefits it offers, but there is also a negative aspect to it that has an effect on the universities that truly deliver great education. These universities' lack of brand management causes them to be less well known in the public and in the job market than the majority of institutions that engage in aggressive marketing.

THE STRATEGIC QUESTIONS INVOLVED IN BRANDING AN ACADEMIC INSTITUTION

Due to factors such as the country's low literacy rate, its large concentration in metropolitan areas, and its rising per capita income, the education industry in India presents an enormous untapped market opportunity. In the context of growing liberalization, privatization, and globalization, India has aspirations to develop a knowledge society. These goals are founded on the

notion that higher and technical education fundamentally equips individuals with the necessary competitive skills and knowledge. Globalization has also played a role in these aspirations. Because of this, there has been an increase in the amount of focus placed on the quality and excellence of higher education. Many educational colleges and universities run by the private sector have recently sprung up all across India. This is due to the expanding opportunities and opportunities for growth in the education industry in India. The highly active edupreneurs are exerting a lot of work in order to get an increasing number of admissions. It is now generally acknowledged that a brand's owners enjoy genuine and considerable financial value as a result of the brand's existence.

Consequently, establishing and subsequently sustaining a brand is an endeavor that unquestionably calls for stewardship that is deliberate and strategic. As a result, educational entrepreneurs in today's world are putting into practise every strategy conceivable in order to establish a reputation for the institute or university they run. It is common knowledge that there is a certain number of space available at IITs and IIMs; hence, it is not feasible for all applicants to be accepted into these prestigious educational institutions. The children will need to search elsewhere in order to find educational opportunities that meet their needs. Students are now willing to pay tuition costs in the tens of thousands of rupees to get admission to any college, even one that guarantees them a job after they have completed their studies in a certain field. The consistently increasing demand for high-quality education has resulted in the proliferation of educational institutes and universities across the country. It has been observed that persons whose primary companies are in other industries, such as clothes, real estate, sweets, iron and steel, vehicle dealerships, manufacturing, and other areas, are transitioning into "edupreneurs" and have begun joining the educational sector. In recent years, several educationists and other professionals have entered the area of education and built up institutions in order to give students with a quality education. A few of educational establishments have established a particularly reputable name in the industry, and as a result, they are able to completely fill all of their available seats within just a few short days of making their application process public.

To recruit students from far away, it is highly important to first establish a brand identity for the institution and then promote that name. The fundamentals of branding are applicable everywhere. The educational organisation is responsible for defining its brand, determining what it stands for, articulating the elements that make it unique, developing a brand plan, and then putting the plan into action. Intangible characteristics of an educational institution, such as the standard of instruction it provides, the character of its teaching staff, the traditions it upholds, and the resources it makes accessible to students, are the elements that comprise a school's brand name. Other aspects, such as the size of the campus, the types of infrastructure and facilities that are available, the caliber of the students who graduate each year, and their success rate in finding employment, as well as the aid that is provided to students in finding jobs after they have finished their education, are all very important considerations. In the context of educational establishments, the "product" is the education itself, and the "potential customer" is the student. Typically, a consumer cannot take advantage of two goods that compete with one another at the same time. In order to earn a good reputation, an educational establishment has to priorities the following extremely fundamental concerns:

1. Instructional Pedagogy and Course Curricula.
2. Learning that is facilitated by technological means.
3. A state-of-the-art infrastructure that has great promise.
4. A Faculty that is Highly Qualified

Accreditation and affiliation that are in keeping with standards.

1. The Greatest Number of Classes at a Single Location
2. Proper Industry Linkages.

3. The provision of fellowships and scholarships to members of the academic and student body.
4. Programs that allow students and teachers to switch places.
5. Services in the areas of Career Counselling and Placement.
6. Improving one's "soft skills," or interpersonal and communication abilities, among other "soft skills"
7. Engaging in Creative and Scholarly Activity

It is important to point out that the money collected by students in the form of fees and other charges is a significant factor in determining the financial health of an educational institution. The level of competition in the field of higher education is currently at a level that is several times higher than it was in the past. In today's market, educational establishments compete with one another based on price, quality, service, and reputation. Now, as a result of the proliferation of online educational opportunities and the growing mobility of students, it has become extremely challenging for educational institutes to get the enrollment of students, which is necessary for the survival of educational institutes.

Adoption of the Following Measures to Build the Brand: In these times of cutthroat competition, branding an educational institution is more important than ever, and a reputable brand name may actually be of tremendous advantage to an educational institution in a variety of ways. An educational institution that has a fantastic brand image finds it extremely simple to recruit the top instructors in the world, students who are academically talented, and staff members who put in a lot of effort. Because the lives of an educational institution's students, parents, alumni, teachers, and other supporting staff members are directly attached to it, the branding of an educational institute has important strategic consequences. establishing a brand should not be restricted to the introduction of a new logo or a slogan. In fact, in order to be successful, establishing a brand should involve taking a comprehensive look at the organisation and capitalising on its distinct advantages and characteristics. Several well-known strategies utilised by these educational entrepreneurs have been dissected, and they are as follows:

The educational establishments have begun devoting a significant portion of their annual budgets to various forms of advertising and marketing. These kinds of advertising are not just published in well-known newspapers and journals; rather, these establishments have begun publishing their commercials on a number of well-known television channels, such as Aaj Tak, NDTV India, Star Plus, and Zed TV, to mention just a few. Lovely Professional University (LPU), located in Phagwara, Chandigarh University, located in Morinda, and Desh Bhagat University, located in M. Gobindgarh are just a few of the private institutions in the state of Punjab that have been actively advertising its brand via the use of television, radio, newspapers, the Internet, and a variety of other channels and mediums that are at their disposal in this day and age of advanced technology. Nearly all of these types of educational institutions have developed one-of-a-kind ways and procedures to evaluate the efficiency of their advertising efforts across a variety of media. As part of its PR drive, the OP Jindal Global University in Haryana has been having conversations with reputable educational institutions in the state of Uttarakhand. The renowned private institution of higher education that is Amity University is famous for the aggressive marketing methods it employs. The students at IIPM are inspired to challenge themselves to think in ways that go beyond the IIMs.

A select number of educational institutions are currently promoting their brand identity through the use of celebrity endorsements. The Manipal Education organization has the support of cricket player Anil Kumble. The Indian Institute of Performing Arts and Management (IIPM) has extended an invitation to Bollywood Superstar Shahrukh Khan to chair their annual business and marketing quiz. Educational institutions have to bear in mind that they cannot purchase a good reputation; rather, a reputation can only be built up gradually over time by the caliber of its teaching

staff, the caliber of its student body, the caliber of its infrastructure, and most significantly, the caliber of the research that is being carried out by the school.

Many brand-new educational institutions compete for students by highlighting their exceptional facilities and innovative approaches to classroom instruction in an effort to win admissions. These kinds of endeavors are only useful in the short term; in the long run, what really counts is the quality of the product. There are some students who make their decision on which educational institution to attend based purely on the recommendations of other students who have already graduated from that particular educational establishment. This includes the students' parents.

The current period is characterized by a digital environment that is continually undergoing change. The use of information and communications technology has fundamentally altered the ways in which young people interact, network, and obtain information. Educational institutions have a responsibility to make concerted efforts to meet the requirements of this in an online setting. In order to pique the interest of the students, it is necessary to make use of a variety of social media tools, such as Twitter and Facebook.

In an effort to cultivate a positive reputation among members of the community, a number of educational institutions have launched various social welfare programs. Notable actions include organizing a blood donation camp, providing scholarship testing for students who are in need, and organizing HIV/AIDS awareness campaigns among rural masses, among other things.

Utilizing one's own school's alumni network is one of the most efficient and cost-effective ways to establish and subsequently market a brand name.

Utilizing the internet in a productive manner is another essential component of brand building. Long- term investments in social media solutions are something that educational institutions absolutely need to do. This will assist them in developing and establishing a positioning, engaging prospective customers, and responding to adverse criticism.

When establishing a reputation for an educational institution, the academic and research activities of the institution's quality should be prioritized above all other considerations. The core platform, which consists of academics and research, needs to be supported by the other facilities and resources that are available.

In addition to focusing on factors such as research skills, academic reputation, and excellent infrastructure, the educational institution should make an effort to form an emotional connection with the students who are considering enrolling there.

Educational Institutions and Universities may decide to take efforts to make the campus more pedestrian- and environmentally-friendly. In addition, they may decide to take additional distinctive actions in order to establish a brand. These educational institutions are obligated to honor the concept of becoming green and to make every attempt to involve their students, teachers, and staff in their efforts to promote sustainability.

Take into consideration how the language of your brand campaign can be received within the company. The fact that there is no one term that adequately describes an educational institution or university should be acknowledged and appreciated by those organizations.

It is important for educational institutions and universities to present their best selves to the public. Communication strategies include posters, direct mail, radio advertisements, and online content. Parental response suggests that the campaign was successful in establishing the university's reputation as an institution that provides a high-quality education.

Educational Institutions and Universities have a responsibility to be ready to combat the misunderstandings in an efficient manner.

Students should be encouraged to participate in the activities that go into developing a brand by educational institutions and universities. In other words, students ought to be given the

opportunity to participate in the branding effort that is being undertaken. By catering their course offerings to a certain demographic, educational institutions may increase their exposure and strengthen their brand among prospective students.

The message about the brand needs to be delivered to the audience in such a manner that all of the constituent groups experience a sense of being appreciated. Students, alumni, contributors, and trustees should not be given material that is intended for the general public to read because they are different groups.

Educational Institutions and Universities should make every effort to build a branding handbook that is both thorough and easy to understand. It encourages a look and feel that is uniform across all printed and electronic assets.

Instead of focusing on the normal statistics and figures that are found in a regular college brochure, educational institutions and universities need to include certain characteristics, such as actual tales of students, teachers, and alumni, in order to create something that is at least a little bit distinctive for the admissions process. In point of fact, these establishments ought to use your admissions application as a technique for brand building.

It is imperative that educational institutions and universities work to establish brand relationships both within and outside of the classroom. In addition to this, it is essential to make certain that each member of the team embodies the brand.

Establish a connection between the interests of donors and the goals of the institution. The marketing materials should make it possible for development officials and others to start talks and move them forward.

Create a web site that is reserved only for former pupils and current ones. Develop a unique character for your virtual tour. Online campus tours may present prospective students with a more personal experience that recognizes the distinctive features and culture of the university. This can be accomplished through the use of audio, video, and graphics. all of these events are intended to provide prospective students with a glimpse of the kind of people that attend the school.

Put a mark on that milestone. A range of print materials, shirts and other items, television advertisements, and a website dedicated to the anniversary are all included in the promotional pieces. Events for alumni and members of the community will take place all across the United States and the rest of the world, and there will also be a historical exhibit that travels from place to place.

Refreshing the appearance of a vehicle is an option for educational institutions and universities. Get yourself a lovable mascot. People are more likely to remember you if you have a recognizable visual representation. Educational Institutions and Universities need to place a greater emphasis on their areas of expertise and ensure that they fulfil their obligations to students in accordance with the commitments they made in the past. They have an obligation to make the most of the chance by seizing the initiative while it is still available, but this must come at the expense of the quality of education they give their students. They need to be ready to pounce on unplanned ideas that have the potential to drive the message of the brand.

II. CONCLUSION

Without the brand promise, brand advertising is typically ineffective. The institute must meet advertising campaign goals. Modern students are clever and cannot be fooled by placement record fraud, misleading promises, or fraudulent statistics. Social media branding of an educational organisation is unquestionably LinkedIn. Educational institutions may boost their brand image in several ways. The examined IITs use LinkedIn for branding, finding potential students, faculty, and student placement initiatives. This study emphasises higher education branding in education markets where government-funded institutions can't meet population demands, but in sound economic regions where free education is practised and state-owned institutions operate, this study is limited. Higher education branding resource allocation is also not

included in this study. Conversely, low- population-density countries diminish competitiveness overall.

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