Frameworks and Tools in Developing Marketing Strategies for Transnational Education (TNE) Providers: A Literature Review

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Abstract:
Crafting a marketing program for Transnational Education (TNE) providers is a complex process that entails a thorough industry analysis and internal assessment using several strategic frameworks and tools. Educational managers should also have a good grasp of the quality indicators in the education sector that prospective students most likely look at when choosing a university. The study uses the literature review as a means to examine readily available research on the different frameworks, methods, and paradigms in developing an effective marketing program for TNE organizations. The method of content analysis was used. The sources came from the following research databases: Google Scholar, Business publications, Directory of Open Access journals, and other scientific websites. The study concludes that to come up with a strategic marketing plan, the following frameworks can be used: Porter's Five Forces with a focus on competition and differentiation, Structure-Conduct-Performance with a concentration on industry analysis, and the SWOT Analysis which encompasses both internal and external environments of an institution. Quality measures of TNE providers by several research can also be useful when developing a strategic marketing plan. Some of the key areas that potential students look at in the higher education sector are institutional reputation, course quality, and student support.

Keywords: strategic marketing, marketing strategy, transnational higher education institution.

Introduction
This literature review examines the relevant frameworks and tools that are useful in developing strategic marketing programs for TNE providers. It also touches on some key areas that are considered by potential students when looking for a graduate school to enroll in, which could be incorporated into a strategic marketing program. A literature review entails the systematic identification, location, scrutiny, and summary of written materials that contain relevant information on a research problem (Kesse, 2015). Thus, this paper presents in a systematic approach the published literature and researches that provide a backgrounder on the study’s topic.

Strategic Marketing
Biaton (2015) cited the significance of marketing activities’ support in the management process in modern-day organizations, including academic institutions. The nature of marketing tools employed, including the scope, all depend on several factors such as the school’s identity, existing policies in the education sector, and the labor market situation.

There are numerous areas of concern in terms of the slowdown of enrollment in higher education...
programs. The overall attractiveness of universities depends primarily on the curriculum which should be able to equip students with adequate knowledge and skills and help them in their chosen profession while adapting to changes in the workforce. Personality development embedded in the curriculum is also a plus (Biaton, 2015). Another important indicator of excellence is the quality of teaching as well as the competencies of the teaching personnel. A university’s marketing strategy should be able to support the general strategies of the school to maintain its position in the market and also satisfy all stakeholders through quality teaching.

Frameworks / Tools in Marketing Educational Institutions

The marketing strategy is an essential document discussing the long-term goals of the marketing activities, as well as the methods and means to be used. For an academic organization such as a TNE provider, some of the usual goals of their marketing strategy are: 1) increasing the number of students; 2) continuous enhancement of curricula; 3) gaining funds for research; 4) developing instructional materials and research programs/facilities; 5) partnership with social and economic institutions; and 6) attracting academic personnel. Depending on the marketing objectives of an institution, various frameworks and tools must be used to evaluate the internal and external environment.

Porter’s Five Forces Model is an analytical tool that can help marketers better understand competition based on the interplay of five factors: the threat of entrants, power of suppliers, power of buyers, competitive rivalry, and the threat of substitutes (A new version of Porter’s five-forces model, 2016). Another framework that can be used in strategic marketing is the Structure Conduct Performance (SCP) method, which seems to be the most significant and frequently used approach to analyze industries through the years (Lelissa & Kuh, 2018). The SWOT Analysis is the third framework that can be considered, which is a management tool to assess the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of an organization.

Dowling-Hetherington (2019) said there is still limited literature focusing on how potential students decide on which institution to go to, but several authors give some views on certain important considerations in enrolling in a TNE provider. Studies reveal that reputation is a common factor cited by these authors (Mazzarol & Soutar, 2002; Wilkins & Huisman, 2011; Sidhu et al., 2011). With the complex nature of the business of a TNE provider especially today that schools are moving towards online platforms, other factors are certainly considered by students. Phipps & Merisotis (2000) said measures of quality used by leading online education institutions are institutional support, course structure, course development, staff support, teaching/learning, student support, and evaluation and assessment. These identified seven categories are said to be essential in ensuring excellence in distance learning specifically online-delivered classes.

Research gaps

There is scarcity in recent studies on the use of Porter's Five Forces and SCP Framework in the context of the education sector, specifically the transnational higher education providers. While these frameworks were developed several decades ago, researches on their application in today’s educational marketing landscape can be useful in coming up with well-founded and concrete marketing strategies.

There is also limited literature on the decision-making process which graduate students and professionals undertake when choosing a graduate school to enroll in. These types of studies could shed light on students’ perception of a high performing college or university. With the transition of learning mode from the traditional classroom to online platforms, there is a need to revisit this area and obtain more information on the measures of success for TNE providers.
Materials and Methods

The study uses the literature review as an approach to explore readily available published content on the development of strategic marketing programs for TNE providers in the Higher Education sector. The sources came from research databases such as Google Scholar, Directory of Open Access journals, Business publications, and other relevant websites.

The main criterion for choosing the studies to review is relevance to the research objectives. Keywords such as strategic marketing, educational marketing, transnational education, and marketing mix were used to identify the articles to be reviewed. Articles and studies published before the year 2010 were also excluded in the search for materials.

There are four phases undertaken using this method: 1) designing the review; 2) conducting the review; 3) analysis; and 4) writing the review. This sequence of the literature review was developed from various guidelines set by different authors (Snyder, 2019; Liberati et al., 2009).

In designing the review, the first step was to scan through available literature on the topic and decide the suitable objective and scope of the review. The search strategy using keywords, inclusion, and exclusion criteria was also developed. During the conduct of the review, abstracts of the scanned articles were examined to see if they fit the study. Articles whose abstracts are found to be relevant were read thoroughly. Once the relevant literature has been collected, analysis followed. In the analysis, a standard method of abstracting data was conducted. Similar concepts, ideas, and theoretical perspectives were grouped which ultimately answer the research objective. After all these steps were done, writing the review was made.

Results and Discussion

A reputable brand is perceived to be one of the factors that can help gain the trust of prospective students to enroll and take up a degree program in a particular school (Bennett & Ali-Choudhury, 2009; Bick, Jacobson, & Abratt, 2003). This, alongside other essential elements, can help differentiate any educational institution from its competitors. Thus, it is important that when crafting a marketing program, the applicable frameworks and tools, as well as students’ measures of excellence are taken into consideration.

Marketing Strategy

Biaton (2015) underscored that for universities to have marketing efficiency, three basic elements must be integrated and harmonized: 1) the theoretical foundations of marketing; 2) methods for solving marketing problems, and 3) marketing tools suitable for universities. Other factors that influence the efficiency of an academic organization’s marketing strategy are proper analysis of the market of education, the whole education sector, and the public awareness of many social changes.

Table 1. Three-Dimensional Concept of Marketing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimensions of marketing</th>
<th>Theoretical assumptions</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. Carrying out marketing goals</td>
<td>Marketing 1.0 – human/organization - the final buyer of goods and services</td>
<td>Marketing 2.0 – human/organization – prosumer – participant of the process of creating goods and services, the market participant</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Marketing 3.0 – human entirely focused on cooperation, a culture of activity, goal – making the world a better place</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Concept of solving marketing problems taking into consideration the environment</td>
<td>Lateral marketing</td>
<td>Content marketing</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Porter's 5 forces</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Blue ocean strategy
5 I – identification, individualization, interaction, integration, integrity
SAVE – kinds of needs, access to stakeholders, evaluation of benefits, education, seminars, conference

3. Building a marketing tool

Source: Biaton (2015)

The Three-dimensional concept of marketing as the basis for crafting a marketing strategy for educational institutions (Biaton, 2015) reinforces that the appropriate definition of marketing suitable for the higher education sphere must be identified. According to this model, the formulated marketing strategy will form part of the strategic operations of an academic organization internally and externally.

“Marketing is a societal process by which individuals and groups obtain what they need and want through creating, offering, and freely exchanging products and services of value with others” (Kotler et al, 2009). In line with this definition, Biaton (2015) elaborated that the buyers of the education (service) are the potential students, as well as employers, as both generate demand for the school's educational services. Both students and the employers desire an upgrade on knowledge and skills which can be maximized for professional growth, as well as for the utilization of the organization that will employ the graduates. In this context, the universities represent the supplier of educational services. They serve as the initiator of the marketing activities.

In planning a marketing strategy for an academic institution, the competition must seriously be taken into consideration as in the educational market, various colleges and universities offer similar services with somehow the same approach in market positioning and promotion. Main marketing issues are the method of contact between the school and the customer, behavior of the school representatives to attract clients, the content of marketing messages, and organization of the information base (Biaton, 2015; Shaik, 2005). To address these, Biaton (2015) recommended the examination of three concepts in Kotler’s development of marketing:

1) Marketing 1.0 – corporate marketing; 2) Marketing 2.0 – marketing of relationships, relationship marketing; and 3) Marketing 3.0 – marketing of value.

Marketing 1.0 postulates that the buyers of the products or services are unknown to the organization. This concept claims that there is an undefined segment of the market that a company wants to reach. However, the corporate entity is not interested in knowing the identity of the customer. The concept of the marketing mix (4Ps) is applied, but it leads to a question of whether this applies to the education sector. Biaton (2015) said that on this level, the educational services entail complex processes, and cannot be comparable to a simple product where 4Ps is best apt.

While Marketing 1.0 is becoming obsolete, a more modern approach is Marketing 2.0 which involves relation marketing, partnership marketing, and relationship marketing. This concept of marketing states that humans cannot be treated as unknown customers but they should be considered as partners or consultants (Shaik, 2005). This concept introduced the term "prosumer", the combination of producer and consumer, reflecting the shift in the relationship between the producer and consumer. In Marketing 2.0, the goal is to maintain a beneficial relationship between the provider and the client. Biaton (2015) noted that the principle of partnership marketing can be applied to the education sector and the academic institutions. If in Marketing 1.0, the purchase is the start of this relationship, in Marketing 2.0, the researcher postulates that keeping the client is the beginning of a partnership.

In Marketing 3.0, the concept of spiritual marketing is advanced, with the ultimate goal of
reaching all the dimensions of a human which include values, emotions, health, as well as material needs.

The Three-dimensional concept of marketing emphasizes that the chosen concept of an academic institution will affect the selection of marketing tools and methods, as well as the communication embedded in promotional materials. Presented below is a pyramid chart on the Three-Dimensional marketing model (Biaton, 2015):

![Pyramid Chart on the Three-Dimensional Marketing Model](image)

**Figure 1. Pyramid Chart on the Three-Dimensional Marketing Model**

*Source: Biaton (2015)*

In the first dimension of the model, an organization needs to specify the purpose of marketing and the target market. These will be the basis for the components of the two other dimensions. The second dimension, anchored on the first dimension, will identify the methodology to be used to address marketing issues in a specific area. This phase is composed of marketing diagnostic activities to determine the proper tools to address them. This included both internal and external issues, as well as forecasting. Some of the well-known methods in marketing analysis are the SWOT analysis, Porter’s 5 forces, blue ocean strategy, and lateral marketing (Biaton, 2015). The results of marketing analyses using any or some of these methods enable school administrators to diagnose the market and forecast the projected number of enrollees. The data can also be used in developing educational packages or refinements in internal policies and procedures.

Lastly, the third dimension entails the communication strategies to be used to promote the attractiveness of the institution. This is where marketing communication comes in – the selection of information channels and what content should be conveyed in messages. While the choice of communication platforms is crucial, far more important is the content that should be sourced from the selected marketing concept and the characteristics of the target market segments (Biaton, 2015). The third dimension of marketing’s messaging is aimed at developing the identity of the prospective buyer of the educational services. With a vast number of available marketing tools and technologies nowadays, marketing activities must be efficient, in that they will evoke positive attitudes among potential clients before they decide whether to enroll in a university or not.

**Porter’s Five Forces Model**

Porter’s Five Forces Model is an analytical tool to better understand competition based on the interplay of five factors: the threat of entrants, power of suppliers, power of buyers, competitive rivalry, and the threat of substitutes (A new version of Porter’s five-forces model, 2016). Aydin (2017) presented an analysis of the higher education industry using this model:

**Threat of entrants**

Porter (2008) identified the consequences of new entrants to an industry: increased pressure on costs, prices, and most importantly, the rate of investments. It leads to the intensified competition which can affect the profitability of businesses. If there is a low entry barrier, there could be a lot of competitors which usually result in stiff competition. Meanwhile, if there is a high entry barrier, the threat of new entrants will be lower.

Aydin (2017) and Ronquill (2012) argued that existing Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) can be threatened by new entrants, creating a more intense competitive environment. They, together with Martinez and Wolverton (2009),
postulated that four factors can influence the potential for new entrants in the higher education industry: economies of scale, competitor reaction, buyer resistance, and capital requirements:

**Economies of scale** - this refers to an institution’s capability to decrease operating costs or increase productivity through efficient allocation of resources through time. If the existing HEIs can build economies of scale, then the possible impact of the threat of new entrants will decrease.

**Competitor reaction** - Negative reaction of competitors to the new entrants immediately creates barriers. In the HEI industry for instance, naturally, a new university will face the challenge of dealing with existing universities' lukewarm or neutral acceptance of them in the industry.

**Buyer resistance** - There are two types of buyer resistance: unwillingness to absorb the cost of shifting to the new one and resistance to accepting the new product or service. In the HEI industry, students may be hesitant to make the switch to a new university especially if they were with the same university for quite some time. There is a plausibility that there will be a comparison in terms of quality and opportunities. Parents of students are all the more unwilling to bear the cost of transferring to a newcomer in the education industry.

**Capital requirements** – There is a high level of capital required to open a school or any academic institution. The stringent capital requirements further deter the entry of investors into the HEI market.

Aydin (2017) and Collis (2001) postulated that the use of technology is a promising platform that could make it easier to enter the HEI arena due to the low costs it entails as compared to traditional HEIs with formal campuses. Collins (2001) said that educational experience can be easily replicated through the use of online channels and other technological advancements available. Lessons, notes, and assignments can be seamlessly disseminated at minimal cost, which consequently leads to a reduction of entry barriers.

Mathooko and Ogutu (2015) underscored the fact that if in the past, the cost of an academic building is a major barrier to enter the educational market, recent technologies have gradually leveled the playing field. With the utilization of technology, aspiring organizations who wish to enter the higher education industry can find it easier to penetrate the market.

The following factors should be considered and capitalized on by existing HEIs to prepare for possible new entrants (Aydin, 2017; Mathooko and Ogutu, 2015): 1) the length of the period needed to build a good reputation that attracts students; 2) the high certification and accreditation standards; 3) the requirements and restrictions set by regulating bodies, and 4) the creation and reinforcement of a brand name that holds value. These factors can prevent new entrants to come in. Thus, existing HEIs should be more proactive in making sure that they strengthen their operations, particularly in these areas.

**The power of suppliers**

Martinez and Wolverton (2009) defined suppliers as individuals or firms that provide the needed resources – materials, knowledge, or information that enable an organization to produce goods or services. The leverage of the suppliers to threaten to increase their prices or diminish the quality of their goods and services is most likely to impact firms in the following scenarios: the supplier’s products are differentiated from other players in the industry, the cost to switch to another firm has been made higher, or there is no available substitute for the supplier as of the moment (Aydin, 2017; Porter, 2008). If in an industry, there are very few key players who offer important services, then these suppliers have immense power (Martinez & Wolverton, 2009; Aydin, 2017).

In the educational business scenario, the faculty members can be considered as the suppliers due to the increasing number of HEIs and a limited number of competent and trained teachers. In this case, the suppliers or faculty personnel could
have relatively high bargaining power in the higher education industry (Aydin, 2017). Mathooko and Ogutu (2015) supported this theory, stating that scholarly people who serve as "laborers" in HEIs must be considered as one of the most important providers in the academic world. This is so because the professors, lecturers, or instructors are the ones who deliver knowledge, ideas, and even research output (Aydin, 2017; Martinez & Wolverton, 2009). The support staff is also an important element in the supplier side in an HEI, but according to Pringle and Huisman (2011), the faculty personnel, researchers, and administrators, considered as highly skilled "laborers" are still the largest contributor in terms of supplying an HEI. As Wolff, Baumol, and Saini (2014) revealed, the higher education industry is a sector that is heavily dependent on labor.

Several researches (Aydin, 2017; Belanger, Mount & Wilson, 2002; Ho & Hung, 2008; Hoyt & Brown, 2003; Sidin, Hussin & Soon, 2005; Soutar & Turner, 2002; Strayhorn, Blakewood & Devita, 2008; Tavares, Justino & Amaral, 2008; Webb, 1993) referred to the quality of academics as a significant indicator of quality in higher education. Moreover, the said studies revealed that differentiation through teaching methods and research work can give an HEI a great advantage. Duczmal (2006) highlighted that the bargaining power of faculty members can be high due to a lack of realistic substitutes that are at par, if not better than the current roster of professors.

The power of buyers

Customers can maximize their bargaining power if they can demand a higher quality of service and lower prices (Porter, 2008; Aydin, 2017). With an increasing number of HEIs nowadays, more options are made available to the students and their students who are considered the buyers. In this context, the students have more power as opposed to the HEIs who are faced with competition in an industry that is overly abundant with other suppliers. (Aydin, 2017; Pringle & Huisman, 2011; Collis, 2011). This was echoed by Duczmal (2006) who said that there is a surge in the power of students along with the increase in the number of HEIs. Furthermore, Asaad (2011) and Aydin (2017) implied that HEIs should treat their primary customers well, and see to it that the students are highly satisfied with the services they provide.

Several studies have also suggested that the students and their parents are the main buyers of higher education since they pay to acquire quality education in a perceived reputable institution (Aydin, 2017; Ogutu, 2015; Martinez & Wolverton, 2009). Other researchers have added employers and other institutions paying for higher education as primary customers (Huang, 2012; Scrabec, 2000).

The intensity of competitive rivalry

A company has little power if it has many competitors and you are offering the same goods or services. This means that the buyers can easily look elsewhere and jump ship if they are not satisfied with you. The intensity of competition as a major indicator of the level of competitiveness of the industry can be seen in several forms: new product introduction, price discounting, innovation, degree of transparency, level of advertising expense, and service improvements (Porter, 2008; Aydin, 2017).

In the education field, examining various factors such as the profile and capability of existing HEIs and the industry context can reflect the intensity of competitive rivalry (Martinez & Wolverton, 2009; Aydin, 2017):

a. Profile and capability of existing HEIs – There is a need to account for the number and types of HEIs in the industry that serves as a determinant to the intensity of competition for students, funding, faculty, and even research opportunities.

b. Industry context - HEIs are heavily influenced by political, social, technological, and economic dimensions. These factors should be taken into account when there is an operational review of the HEIs.

Aydin (2017) underscored that the key ingredient for the survival of HEIs is to be more attentive to the concerns of their students. This is a sign of positive competition because organizations are pushed to perform better and
enhance customer service. On the other hand, naturally, this intense competition could also be detrimental for HEIs who would not be able to cope up. Bradmore and Smyrnios (2009) suggested then that academic institutions revisit their strategic planning processes and check if adequate attention is being given to look closely into the competition and how they will survive.

The power of the threat of substitutes
"Substitute" is something that carries out a similar function using a different means or approach (Porter, 2008). There is healthy competition if an industry consists of businesses offering similar products of the possibly same quality but competitive and reasonable costs (Ronquillo, 2012). Several studies highlighted that in the higher education field, technology is the first important substitute of graduate studies because it provides more options, greater accessibility, convenience, and flexibility (Aydin, 2017; Kumar, 2011; Mazzarol et al., 1998; Yalcintan & Thornley, 2007). A clearer explanation to support this claim is that long-distance learning has gone beyond geographical barriers and enabled schools to reach out to students in far-flung locations (Aydin, 2017; Chen, 1998). This makes online schools a major alternative for traditional graduate schools, making them a threat to HEIs (Huang, 2012).

Martines and Wolverston (2019) stated that if a distance learning program can effectively use technological platforms to facilitate learning or if it could reduce the time of completion of the graduate program, it will qualify as a substitute and not a new entrant. If business schools could not offer a better advantage to students such as the diversified programs, modularized approach, convenient service delivery, and shorter completion time, distance learning could have a much greater advantage and may gain a larger market share.

Structure- Conduct- Performance
Various researchers have examined the Structure Conduct Performance (SCP) framework, which seems to be the most significant and frequently used approach to analyze industries through the years (Lelissa & Kuhi, 2018). As early as 1956, Bain, in his book entitled ‘Industrial Organization’, discussed that the SCP method defines the relationship between market structure, conduct, and performance. Bain (1956) and Mason (1937) established that firms’ conduct of their operations is greatly influenced by the structure of the market industry that they are in. Consequently, this affects the organizations’ over-all performance (Church & Ware, 2000; Lelissa & Kuhi, 2018). Since the SCP’s inception in literature, it has been widely used to investigate the market and industry trends both in the fields of Economics and Business.

As mentioned, the three components of the SCP framework are Structure, Conduct, and Performance, which are discussed below:

Structure of the Market - In concept, the structure in the SCP approach refers to the basic characteristics of a market, the degree of similarity of products sold, concentration or buyer or seller, and the ease of market entry and exit. Therefore, the structure integrates the elements which affect through time consumers’ and sellers’ behavior, and in turn impacts market demand (Furguson, 1994; Trucker, 2010; Lipezynski, Wilson & Goddard, 2013; Lelissa & Kuhi, 2018).

In terms of buyer or seller concentration, a concentrated market means that there is a low number of firms or there seems to be an inequality in the market share distribution, which usually develops into a monopoly (Bain, 1968; Mohamed, 2013). A highly concentrated market implies no competition at all in the market (Weiss, 1974).

Meanwhile, differentiation is also a critical factor that can affect market structure. Product differentiation can fortify an organization’s market position, market share, and revenues. Most importantly, it can stand as a barrier for competitors’ entry into the market (Church and Ware, 2000).

In the context of the higher education sector, Structure analyzes the enrollment demand, demand for research, number of HEIs, number
of students per institution, and faculty ratios in the industry (Jansen & Bielak, 2007).

**Conduct** – This component illustrates the behavior of the buyers and sellers and how they adjust or adapt to the industry wherein they operate. Conduct means the way how firms behave as they interact with one another, and what decisions they make in terms of attracting customers within the bounds of a given market structure (Wang, 2010; Purcell, 1973; Grigorova et al., 2008). Scherer and Ross (1990) said that the SCP method is also related to organizations’ innovations, advertising, and product strategies on top of pricing strategies which Purcell (1973) has earlier postulated as part of this framework. In economic terms, Conduct is the set of actions involved in the decision-making process of a firm with an emphasis on the pricing strategy (Ferguson, 1994; Greer, 1992).

Another point of view on the SCP framework is that the conduct can also influence the market structure, as opposed to the original tenet of the paradigm. For instance, different kinds of mergers in an industry could result in a shift in the market structure due to the increase in market share and barriers to entry in the industry (Shepherd & Wilcox, 1979). With these varying views, it can be concluded that along with structure, conduct can define performance (Lelissa & Kuhil, 2018).

**Performance** – Ultimately, Performance refers to the economic result of the interplay of structure and conduct (Bain, 1968; Lelissa & Kuhil, 2018). Market performance is significantly related to the following: market structure, organizations’ conduct in terms of pricing, production, and profitability, and growth (Bain, 1956; Lipeznski et.al; 2013). This component can have several dimensions. For example, in the American higher education sector, Performance is equated with fundraising efforts, the value of their graduates, research production, and image and reputation (Jansen & Bielak, 2007).

**SWOT Analysis**

Performance is a key indicator of the level of readiness of educational organizations to compete and adapt to the changes brought about by globalization (Daniela, 2017). With modernization comes the shift in the principles of quality most especially when it is tackled on an international scope. To evaluate the level of quality of universities’ performance, indicators, analyses, and tools are utilized. One of the important tools to assess university education systems is the SWOT analysis.

The SWOT Analysis is a management tool to assess the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of an organization. Köksal (2017) highlighted the delineation between the SWOT analysis components: strengths and weaknesses with internal origins, and opportunities and threats stemming from the external environment. Another differentiation is that strengths and opportunities are favorable features that help in achieving organizational objectives, while weaknesses and threats are unfavorable.

Köksal (2017) also enumerated the factors that encompass the new global contexts that the higher education industry operates in:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2. Factors that encompass the new global contexts that the higher education industry operates in Köksal (2017)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Competition</td>
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<tr>
<td>Open access</td>
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<td>Service Quality</td>
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<td>Management of science and technology</td>
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<td>Internationalization</td>
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<td>International students and staff</td>
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<td>Autonomy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Diversification of funds</td>
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<td>Autonomy</td>
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<td>Increasing bureaucracy and complexity</td>
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<td>Merit pay</td>
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<td>Capacity</td>
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<td>Managing size</td>
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<td>MOOC movement, e-learning</td>
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Khalid, J. et al. (2017) identified Internalization as one of the primary reasons to modify higher education systems (Agrawal & Tan, 2014; Byun & Kim, 2011; Qureshi, Janjua, Zaman, Lodhi, & Tariq, 2014). This phenomenon, which incorporates the concepts of cultures, knowledge, networking, and values, has gradually become a measure of quality in the education sector, specifically HEIs (Urban & Palmer, 2013).

There are two main dimensions in higher education’s internalization: cross-border education and internalization at home (Ashcroft, Abdullahi, Kajberg, & Virkus, 2007). To put it simply, cross-border education refers to overseas educational activities such as research partnership programs, student and staff exchange, and the establishment of overseas branches (Naidoo, 2006). Meanwhile, as the term suggests, internalization at home means the international and intercultural dimension of learning at the base campus.

In support of this, Warwick (2014) suggests that schools in the 21st century should be more driven to improve to survive and compete alongside the implications of globalization and modernization. The majority of educational institutions are aware of this, so they are strengthening their recruitment tactics to get the best students and staff, as well as research programs that elevate and sustain the good reputation of academic organizations.

Khalid, J. et al (2017) attempted to evaluate the higher education sector in Pakistan, in the context of internalization and use the SWOT analysis to recommend strategies for its improvement. Khalid, J. et al (2017) recommended practical solutions to HEIs in Pakistan. First and foremost, it reinforced the significance of making internationalization one of the top priorities not only of the schools but also of the government. The recommendation to develop a strategic plan is based on the following perspectives: faculty, students, curriculum, research, culture, and engagement broken down below:

**Faculty**
- Recruit permanent and visiting faculty with international experience
- Implement faculty exchange programs in foreign countries
- Enhance competencies of faculty members by promoting attendance to global seminars and workshops

**Students**
- Develop internalization activities at home
- Have international scholarships and schemes on fellowships
- Continuously improve the international student experience
- Promote e-learning/distance learning

**Curriculum**
- Open globally accredited degree programs
- Allow international joint degree programs
- Offer educational programs in foreign languages

**Research**
- International joint research collaboration and projects
- Equip universities with advanced technology and innovative instruments for scientific research
- Organize international conferences, seminars, and workshops

**Culture**
- Develop multicultural campus and build harmonization among universities
- Encourage the integration of international and domestic students/staff
Engagement
• Involve international alumni by building a strong alumni network
• Enhance international strategic alliances, networks, and partnerships

Khalid, J. et al (2017) highlighted the significance of having a unique skill set for HEIs to perform better amidst the challenges of globalization. In Pakistan, higher education can be enhanced by having a curriculum tailored to fit the international setting, recruiting international staff and students, offering foreign scholarships, and developing global research programs in collaboration with other entities. The SWOT analysis further sheds light on the factors that are affecting the higher education system, in line with the fundamental assumptions made on internalization.

Assessing the Quality of Higher Education Institutions
Dowling-Hetherington (2019) pointed out that there is still limited literature focusing on how potential students decide on which institution to go to, but several authors revealed that reputation is one of the main things that students look into when planning to choose a TNE provider. They stressed that institutional reputation has something to do with the quality of the faculty, partnership with other known entities, enrollment rate, and the roster of alumni (Mazzarol & Soutar, 2002; Wilkins & Huisman, 2011). Wilkins and Huisman (2011) added rankings and quality of courses and content as indicators of reputation.

A TNE/distance education program is deemed to be effective depending on its performance in two levels: individual and system-level (Miliszewska, 2014; Chute et al., 1999). The following areas are looked into at the individual level: learning experience, the significance of acquired skills in practical applications, and the overall satisfaction with the educational experience. Meanwhile, being effective at the system level entails superiority in the managerial, functional, and instructional aspects. These are some of the significant areas that students look into when evaluating the quality of an educational provider that they are considering.

Satisfaction Indicators over Phases of the Student’s Encounter with the Educational Institution
Source: Boyle & Sastrowardoyo (2012)
In the figure below, the model shows the determinants of satisfaction of students and graduates, depending on the phase they are in. Boyle & Sastrowardoyo (2012) illustrated that a TNE provider's sustainability depends on highly satisfied customers who can also help gain new clients through referrals or recommendations. The model shows that student satisfaction is achieved through several factors in each level of a student's life in the institution: local perceptions of reputation, the value of courses, transfer of learning to skills practice, communication, a collaboration between partners, integration of processes, sense of belonging, and global reputation. More than the academic experience, these factors should be given consideration too by TNE providers who aim to retain and even add more to their clients.

Meanwhile, Phipps and Merisotis (2000) identified measures of quality used by leading online education institutions: institutional support, course structure, course development, staff support, teaching/learning, student support, and evaluation and assessment. These identified seven categories are said to be essential in ensuring excellence in distance learning specifically online-delivered classes.

**Conclusion**

Strategic marketing should nevertheless be based on well-founded frameworks and paradigms in the context of the current industry that an organization belongs to. A good marketing strategy also entails the study of the target markets’ considerations when evaluating products and services.

In the transnational higher education sector, several time and tested frameworks can be very useful in creating a strategic marketing program. The first framework is Porter's Five Forces Model which is an analytical tool to better understand competition based on the interplay of five factors: the threat of entrants, power of suppliers, power of buyers, competitive rivalry, and the threat of substitutes (A new version of Porter's five-forces model, 2016). This tool can give a thorough assessment of the competition in the transnational higher education sector.

The second framework that can be used in strategic marketing is the Structure Conduct Performance (SCP) method, which seems to be the most significant and frequently used approach to analyze industries through the years (Lelissa & Kuhil, 2018). Bain (1956) and Mason (1937) established that firms' conduct of their operations is greatly influenced by the structure of the market industry that they are in. Consequently, this affects the organization's overall performance (Church and Ware, 2000; Lelissa & Kuhil, 2018). Since the SCP's inception in literature, it has been widely used to investigate the market and industry trends both in the fields of Economics and Business. Using the SCP approach in the business of education will most likely provide fresh insights on how to systematically develop a strategic marketing program.

The SWOT Analysis is the third framework, which is a management tool to assess the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of an organization. Performance is a key indicator of the level of readiness of educational organizations to compete and adapt to the changes brought about by globalization (Daniela, 2017). With modernization comes the shift in the principles of quality most especially when it is tackled on an international scope. To evaluate the level of quality of universities' performance, indicators, analyses, and tools are utilized. One of the important tools to assess university education systems is the SWOT analysis.

Further research on success indicators, quality measures, and student criteria when selecting an HEI to enroll in is highly recommended. Some of the known areas that students look at when evaluating a TNE provider are the reputation of the institution and faculty, course content, and student support.
References


