

Brand Positioning of Management Institutes - A Study of National Capital Region

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A brand in the common language is a particular name, symbol, logo, design, and concept that differentiate the services and products from one company to other company. Brand positioning has a significant impact on the process of shaping a brand. Increasing numbers of b-schools are presenting considerable challenges before the education providers. Due to intensive competition among competitors the management institutions of National Capital Region of Delhi is struggling to establish and maintain their positions within the region. This paper seeks to identify the strategies of brand positioning which can be utilized by management institutes for distinguishing and promoting their reputation in order to attract talented students and academic staff. The survey of 50 management institutes has revealed opinions of 300 students and 232 faculty members on the strategies of brand positioning of management institutes. Independent Sample T-test analysis has also compared their opinions and preferences. In addition, four tools have been explored to fill the gap of stakeholders' expectations.

Keywords: Positioning, Strategies, Students, Faculty members, Stakeholders, NCR

INTRODUCTION

Branding is essential when many competitors offer same services or products in the market. The marketers are responsible for highlighting the attributes of products or services to the customers. Brand positioning is a topical subject to extensive research and has become more important in today's society as many industries are characterized by fierce competition (Hem and Teslo, 2005). According to Ries and Trout (2003), "Positioning is not what you do to a product. Positioning is what you do to the mind of the prospect i.e. you position the product in the mind of the prospects. Brand positioning is a crucial decision in the attainment of a successful brand. It directs perception of consumers and choices for making purchase decision. Essentially, a well positioned brand focuses on a particular need of a customer segment, generates loyalty defines their preferences and belief about the value of a brand and also derives significant desire to search for the brand" (p.6). The management education drivers are facing greater regulatory responsibilities than in the past. In the present scenario, students have myriad options of management institutions available in the education sector. Therefore, the expectations of students and other stakeholders have increased and become a big challenge for organizations. 'Closer associations' are required for creating a brand with a compelling and authentic brand promises that would differentiate the institution from the competitors. For the purpose of present study, branding refers to those unique compelling factors that reveal the distinctive quality features of management institutes. The strategies must be

identified with a defined scope and distinctiveness that persuade the interest of stakeholders in achieving their aspirations. The marketers of the institutions have to determine targets (students and faculty) whether regional, national, or international bearing in mind the strategies of competitors in the market.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature gives several definitions of brand positioning which indicates that the process of brand positioning starts with consumer perception and lies on the differentiation of product or services among competitors. Chattopadhyay and Singh (2012) stated that "positioning a brand is about interaction with people, shaping their perception, style of advertising, quality of products and efficiency of after-sales service" (p.44). Branding is nothing but positioning a product successfully in the minds of the customers. If a brand is well positioned in a customers' mind, half job of directing customers to buy their products or services is done. The power of a brand is all about how customers associate their feelings with the brand. Long-term customer association can be built only through building emotional associations around a product. The act of imprinting the brand image firmly in the minds of customers is a great challenge to marketers. The act of image building has two basic components i.e. positioning and consistent delivery of quality. A customer feels motivated when his emotional or rational needs are realized with the association of a brand. Mamoria and Gankar (2001) determined that "motivation is a willingness to expend energy to achieve a goal or reward. It is a force that activates dormant energies and sets in motion the action of the people". Further, Schiffman and Kanuk (2009) stated that "motivation is a highly dynamic construct that is constantly changing in reaction to life experiences. Needs and goals change and grow in response to an individual's physical condition, environment, interactions with others and experiences. As individuals attain their present goals, they develop

new ones for future. Due to certain reasons if these goals cannot be achieved, they continue to strive for old goals or develop substitute goals" (p. 109). Similarly, students and faculty members of the institutes are influenced with these factors.

Thus, planning of brand positioning should be done carefully considering all the factors which influence the decision of students and other individuals. An institute explores certain questions in relation to their brand positioning as-

- 1) What : It entails defining the essence of what a university "is", what it "stands for" and what it is going to be known for, requiring precision and consistency in the formulation as well as internal commitment to the brand (Waeraas and Solbakk, 2009);
- 2) Why: It includes tangible and intangible as well as functional and non-functional attributes and benefits which consumers (students / stakeholders) desire from the institutions;
- 3) For Whom: It shows the target segment of the consumers (students/stakeholders) which would be focused whether regional, national, or international;
- 4) Against Whom: The organizations should observe the competitors offering the same and better facilities and services in the market.

According to Keller, Parameswaran and Jacob (2008) "positioning means finding the proper 'location' in the mind of a group of consumers or market segment, so that they think about a product or service in the 'right' or desired way to maximize potential benefit to the firm" (p. 98). Moreover, Gioia et al. (2000) have revealed prominence of identity and image in the current era and introduced "process model of identity-image interdependence" in which the researchers have compared identity via questions of self-reflection and constructed external image through questions of others-reflection. There were interrelationships between identity and image in two ways first - changing organizational identity

with thinking differently about organization for desired future image, second- change in transient image by changing outsiders' perception about the organization for establishing corporate identity that indicates projected image which consequently builds reputation of the organization in case of any perceived discrepancy. The strategic concern of management is no longer the preservation of a fixed identity but the ability to manage and balance a flexible identity in the light of shifting external images. Maintenance of consistency becomes the maintenance of dynamic consistency. Instability fosters adaptability. Brand associations are defined as "informational nodes linked to the brand node in memory that contains the meaning of brand for consumers" (Keller, 1998; Low and Lamb Jr., 2000) (p. 351) whereas, According to Aaker (1991) brand associations are extremely important to both the marketers and consumers. Marketers use brand associations to differentiate, position, and extend their brands, these help in creating positive attitudes and feelings toward brands and also suggest attributes or benefits of purchasing or using a specific brand. Consumers use brand associations in order to process, organize and retrieve information in memory which also aid them in making purchase decisions (Moisescu and Gica, 2007).

In 21st century, several organizations have determined the importance of intangible offers which facilitate in brand positioning of product or service. Sinclair and Keller (2014) have found one of the new approaches of business combination standards of the International Accounting Standards Board (IASB) which refer brands, as cash-generating units. The researchers reported that "brand is one of the links between the company and its customers and also assists in earning economic benefits. The value of an organization is strongly associated with its intangible assets including brands, customer retention, licenses and franchises and is closer than with physical assets" (p. 301). Hence, they favoured that brands are needed to include among intangible assets of the business which contribute in its development.

In an institution a student expects to obtain certain benefits (customer value) that would satisfy his present requirements and also secure his future. Therefore, brand positioning strategies of the institutes facilitates in selecting their future b-schools. Harsha and Shah (2011) indicated that increasing number of private institutions is strengthening the need of educational branding with change in people's attitude towards education and different scope for various courses being offered. Education was purported as an experiential and intangible service. The researchers advocated that branding strategies in education sector must not be restricted to only marketing and advertising campaigns. The challenge of building an educational brand is also based on ranking methodologies which form value propositions of the institutions. The statistical analysis of institutions which claim to be focused on quality brings forth that brand and talent acquisition is directly related to each other. Thus, institutions should aim to build its public identity. The descriptions of quality were likely to vary with the local circumstances and need to be measured differently. The researchers stressed on the fact that higher education institutions should emphasize on creating value of its brand in order to acquire highly talented faculty-members and students at both national and international level.

In this regard, Landroquez, Castro and Carrion (2013) have ascertained the possible relationship between customer perspective and firm perspective, and its likely effect on the value created for the customer service. They attempted to form an integrated vision of customer value. Furthermore, the researchers recommended that the firms should combine the value creation and the value appropriation rather than just concentrating on one of these aspects. Both values need to accomplish a sustainable competitive advantage and the organization has to decide the extent to which one or other predominates. It also facilitated in analyzing the share of firms' scarce resources between its value creation and appropriation capabilities, since firms are forced to assign a priority to resource allocation. The value creation of firms should be guided by the

value perceived by the customers in order to link value creation and customer perceived value.

OBJECTIVE

The present paper aims to identify strategies of brand positioning utilized by management institutes in the NCR and compare the preferences of students and faculty members on those strategies.

With regard to the objective following hypothesis was formulated in order to determine significant differences in the opinions of students and faculty members on brand positioning strategies which will be investigated during the research.

Hypothesis

H0: There is no significant difference in the opinions of students and faculty members regarding brand positioning strategies of management institutions.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The investigation included 50 institutions of the NCR (Delhi) affiliated to Uttar Pradesh Technical University, India for the purpose of study. These institutes were successfully operating management courses in NCR. The sample for the study consisted of 232 faculty members and 300 BBA and MBA/PGDM students. The data has been collected through self developed questionnaire. The reliability of the data was tested through SPSS 17.0 software that has achieved 0.922 on Cronbach's alfa in reliability statistics. Expert validity was used to verify the significance of questionnaire before the survey. For identifying the variables having impact on students and faculty members 31 statements of brand positioning strategies were considered for study which was determined through literature review. The statements were evaluated on 3 point scale of agreement and disagreement. Factor analysis was employed to identify the major factors of brand positioning. Further, the comparison of opinions of students and faculty members has been done through Cross-tabulation for each factor. Independent sample T-test was used to explore the

significant differences in the opinions of students and faculty members among factors of brand positioning.

DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

Before proceeding for Factor analysis the sample sufficiency has been tested through Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy. In addition, Bartlett's test of sphericity has shown the significance of correlation matrices which supported the validity of Factor analysis of data.

Table1: KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.901
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	3528.262
	df	465
	Sig.	.000

In Table 1 the value of KMO was found 0.901, which signifies high correlation among variables which indicates that the data set is highly desirable for factor analysis. The analysis of Bartlett's test of sphericity implies that the data is approximately multivariate normal and acceptable for factor analysis where Chi square value is 3528.26, df= 465, p= 0.000 (Mittal and Gupta, 2013). Refer Table 1 for KMO and Bartlett's test of sphericity.

In Factor analysis, the method employed for extracting factors was Principal component analysis through Orthogonal rotation with Varimax method and the number of factors was finalized on the basis of 'Latent root criteria'. All variables with loadings greater than or equal to 0.40 have been interpreted. The initial eigen values of each factor was greater than 1, hence considered for the study. The analysis has revealed seven factors which reported 57.96% of total variance. Seven major factors of brand positioning have been extracted and have been given suitable names sourced from various variables present in each case. The variables with their factor loadings and percentage of variances are explained by each factor in Table 2. Refer Table 2 for Factor analysis.

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Table2: Result of Factors Analysis

Label		Factor Loadings
F₁	Level of Collaboration (30.81 per cent variance, eigen value= 9.550)	
	Guest lectures by professionally acclaimed	0.76
	Foreign collaborations	0.77
	Corporate house alignment	0.60
	Initiative taken by the institute for international recognition of courses	0.66
	Launching of international courses of foreign university	0.70
	Arranging foreign tours	0.59
	Arranging experts' sessions for overall personality development programmes for students	0.44
F₂	Procedural Aspect (6.39 per cent variance, eigen value= 1.982)	
	Admission process	0.61
	Wide choice of subjects/courses	0.62
	Campus discipline	0.71
	Screening of students	0.53
	Placement track record	0.54
F₃	Informative Prospectus (5.47 per cent variance, eigen value= 1.697)	
	Creating awareness brings different recognition at national and international media	0.48
	Owners' Trustworthiness	0.55
	Faculty profile of institute (PhD's, Post doctoral Degrees)	0.49
	Publications (journals/ magazines)	0.68
	Infrastructure of the institute (including facilities of Campus area, Accommodations, Medical, Recreational, Internet, Wi-Fi, Library)	0.65
F₄	Accreditation and Academic Alliances for Global Exposure (4.127 per cent variance, eigen value= 1.279)	
	UGC Degree from NAAC accredited A grade University full time programme	0.64
	Economical fee of the programmes inclusive of laptop and study material	0.58
	Global Exposure : Foreign tours, Foreign language certification, Guest lectures by Industry experts	0.61
	Highly experienced faculty from reputed National and International institute	0.46
	Provision of internship /corporate training	0.51
	ISO certification/Six Sigma certification	0.58
F₅	Unique Association (3.84 per cent variance, eigen value= 1.190)	
	Matching brand name with expectations of people	0.56
	Brand distinctiveness	0.63
	Building the institute as people centric	0.69
	Focus on training and development sessions for faculty and staff	0.44
F₆	Societal Contribution (3.79 per cent variance, eigen value= 1.174)	
	Extra-curricular activities undertaking social causes	0.65
	Community Participation	0.71
	Corporate social responsibility undertaken by the institute	0.56
F₇	Promotional Expenditure (3.53 per cent variance, eigen value= 1.094)	
	High promotion expenses	0.66

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Seven Factors of Brand Positioning of Management Institutes

The brand positioning strategies of the institutions considered for investigation form the ground for building the institute as a brand in this competitive edge. The factors were named as-1). National/International collaborations; 2). Procedural aspects; 3). Informative prospectus; 4). Accreditation and academic alliances for exposure; 5). Unique associations; 6). Societal contribution; and 7). Brand promotion expenditure. Cross-tabulation for each factor has also provided the comparison of opinions of students and faculty members.

1) National/International Collaborations

It is the first important factor constituting seven strategies of brand positioning of the institute. The strategies for development of collaboration-culture with corporate and foreign institutions that facilitate in accomplishing international standards have substantially influenced both stakeholders (students and faculty members). The loading pattern has revealed that strategies of foreign collaboration, guest lectures by professionally acclaimed, international courses of foreign universities and corporate house alignment have created an impact on both groups. Table.3 has depicted various strategies of national/international collaboration of the institutes and revealed the responses of students and faculty members of NCR institutes on the aspects. It was found that majority of students and faculty (74.8 %) agreed on arranging experts' sessions for overall personality development programmes for students. It appears as some respondents (14.5 %) were unaware of its importance and few (10.7 %) of them denied its inclusion, whereas remaining found to be least interested in this feature. It showed that both of the stakeholders wish for professionally commended lectures in their institutions and are desired for international

recognition of the courses. However, more than half (57.7 %) of the respondents favoured arrangement of foreign tours, it is worth noted that students (64.7 %) are more interested in the feature in comparison to faculty (48.7 %) possibly due to exposure, knowledge enrichment, and charm of visiting international countries. There is a need to spread awareness of foreign collaborations among the stakeholders. Launching of international courses of foreign university is quite prevalent in the management institutes and both respondents substantially agreed for it. Merely half of the respondents have agreed on corporate house alignment wherein 27.6 % faculty members have not preferred for same. However, some stakeholders have also shown unawareness of the aspect. It seems as stakeholders in NCR institutes are not equipped with proper knowledge of national/international arrangements for collaborative programmes.

A study of University of Glasgow (2012) has revealed that these arrangements offer an opportunity to institutes, make them committed strategically, and build portfolio of global partnerships through the development of sustainable and mutually beneficial alliances with highly regarded organizations that share common aims and interests. These partnerships bring many benefits to faculty and students. It will extend global reach and likewise, enhance reputation of the institutions. Therefore, NCR management institutes are needed to improve their institutes' framework. Refer Table 3 for Cross-tabulation.

2) Procedural Aspects

It is the second essential factor of brand positioning for the institute which comprised of five strategies positively loaded on the factor. It refers to the execution of procedure from admission till placement, and disciplined maintenance in the environment. 'Placement' was considered as the most important variable

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since major number (74.8 %) of the stakeholders agreed on it as shown in Table. 4. The importance given to each strategy of procedural aspect by the respondents may vary due to the variations in their need. Amazingly, Gandhi (2013) in his research stated that in Gujarat state placement was ranked first by the students while selecting B-school for higher education. It can be noted that wider choice of subjects or courses has been received nearly same response as placement. It indicates that stakeholders in NCR expect new options of subjects and courses to be introduced in the institutes. Both

stakeholders are desired to promote discipline in the campus equally. More than half of the respondents agreed that admission process and screening process of students in the institute affect their decision. In this regard, Nicolescu (2009) opined that providing good educational and support services plays a major role in ensuring student satisfaction. Institutional image, reputation and brands are also based on delivering quality services towards students and other stakeholders. Refer Table 4 for Cross-tabulation.

Table 3: Cross-tabulation of Strategies of National/International Collaborations

Dimension	Agree		Disagree		Don't Know		Total	
	S	F	S	F	S	F	S	F
Guest lectures by professionally acclaimed	206	147	53	57	41	28	300	232
Per cent within group	68.7	63.4	17.7	24.6	13.7	12.1	100	100
Total	353(66.4)		110(20.7)		69(13.0)		532(100)	
Foreign collaborations	170	132	62	45	68	55	300	232
Per cent within group	56.7	56.9	20.7	19.4	22.7	23.7	100	100
Total	302(56.8)		107(20.1)		123(23.1)		532(100)	
Corporate house alignment	159	127	58	64	83	41	300	232
Per cent within group	53.0	54.7	19.3	27.6	27.7	17.7	100	100
Total	286(53.8)		122(22.9)		124(23.3)		532(100)	
Initiative taken by the institute for international recognition of courses	180	132	55	61	65	39	300	232
Per cent within group	60.0	56.9	18.3	26.3	21.7	16.8	100	100
Total	312(58.6)		116(21.8)		104(19.5)		532(100)	
Launching of international courses of foreign university	185	116	54	61	61	55	300	232
Per cent within group	61.7	50.0	18.0	26.3	20.3	23.7	100	100
Total	301(56.6)		115(21.6)		116(21.8)		532(100)	
Arranging foreign tours	194	113	57	57	49	62	300	232
Per cent within group	64.7	48.7	19.0	24.6	16.3	26.7	100	100
Total	307(57.7)		114(21.4)		111(20.9)		532(100)	
Arranging experts' sessions for overall personality development programmes for students	213	185	50	27	37	20	300	232
Per cent within group	71.0	79.7	16.7	11.6	12.3	8.6	100	100
Total	398(74.8)		77(14.5)		57(10.7)		532(100)	

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Table 4: Cross-tabulation of Strategies of Procedural Aspects

Dimension	Agree		Disagree		Don't Know		Total	
	S	F	S	F	S	F	S	F
Admission process	194	158	53	50	53	24	300	232
Per cent within group	64.7	68.1	17.7	21.6	17.7	10.3	100	100
Total	352(66.2)		103(19.4)		77(14.5)		532(100)	
Wide choice of subjects/courses	237	160	26	53	37	19	300	232
Per cent within group	79.0	69.0	8.7	22.8	12.3	8.2	100	100
Total	397(74.6)		79(14.9)		56(10.5)		532(100)	
Campus discipline	208	162	40	54	52	16	300	232
Per cent within group	69.3	69.8	13.3	23.3	17.3	6.9	100	100
Total	370(69.6)		94(17.7)		68(12.8)		532(100)	
Screening of students	195	153	38	54	67	25	300	232
Per cent within group	65.0	65.9	12.7	23.3	22.3	10.8	100	100
Total	348(65.4)		92(17.3)		92(17.3)		532(100)	
Placement track record	213	185	38	32	49	15	300	232
Per cent within group	71.0	79.7	12.7	13.8	16.3	6.5	100	100
Total	398(74.8)		70(13.2)		64(12.0)		532(100)	

3. Informative Prospectus

The prospectus of an institute represents its framework including the vision, mission, facilities, and information of the faculties, directors, recruiting companies, academic partnerships and alliances, accreditations and co-curricular activities that would help the prospective students (investors) to form their attitude and take decision for admission. The factor analysis has extracted five strategies positively loaded on the factor and it is evident from the Table.5 that third essential brand positioning factor of the institute is its 'informative prospectus'. It is noteworthy that infrastructure of the institute plays a significant role in positioning of the institute; therefore, both group of respondents (73.3 %) majorly agreed on the aspect, while few (14.1 %) disagreed and only 12.6 % neglected the aspect. More than half (66.4 %) of stakeholders accepted the importance of faculty profile of institute

(PhDs, Post doctoral degrees), while few (16.2 %) were not interested and some (17.5 %) denied it. In addition, both respondents considerably (65.8 %) believed on creating awareness of the institute at national and international recognition by using different media have an impact on positioning of the institutes. Minor differences were found between the responses for the institutes' publications (journals/magazines), and the trustworthiness of owners. The stakeholders probably rely on the information given in the prospectus of the institute because it is one of the tangibles which facilitate in acknowledging the reputation of the institute. Refer Table 5 for Cross-tabulation.

4. Accreditation and Academic Alliances for Exposure

This factor has shown six strategies positively loaded in factor analysis and covered the issues in relation to importance given to obtain

certification of excellence through accreditations and provisions for academic exposure to students. The strategies of fourth crucial factor depicted that students and faculty majorly (70.9 %) agreed for the requirement of highly experienced faculty from reputed national and international institutes (see Table. 5). Similarly, they have same opinion on UGC degree from NAAC accredited A grade university full time programme. The great number of responses signified the awareness of stakeholders regarding accreditation and affiliation of the institute. Interestingly, Painuly (2014) found that university affiliation matters a lot to MBA aspirants since it gives them surety that their degree is recognized. However, provision of internship corporate training has gained lower importance among the faculty members than students. It seems students and faculty members are not exposed to global exposure including foreign tours, foreign language certification, guest lectures by industry experts. Probably NCR institutes did not promote these attribute. According to the outcome stakeholders have not bothered about fee (inclusive of laptop and study material) they are ready to pay if the services of the institutes are appropriate, moreover ISO certification/Six Sigma certification of the institute has created less impact on them. Refer Table 6 for Cross-tabulation.

5). Unique Associations

It is the fifth imperative factor of brand positioning of the institute and constituted four strategies in factor analysis. The factor has included the strategies which have created unique impact and anticipate long term implication among students and faculty members. Table. 7 showed that faculty training and development has received large number (70.7 %) of responses from both the

stakeholders. It is realized that the institutes of NCR are required to arrange training and development programmes for not merely students but for their faculty also. The faculty members should be assumed as tangible assets for the institutes, if not groomed well it could damage the reputation of the institutes. More than half of the respondents agreed that matching brand name with expectations, people centric environment of the institute and brand distinctiveness have stimulated the reputation of the institutions. It should be noted that strategies of unique association have scope for benefiting institutes' positioning. The institutes of NCR should emphasize on these aspect. Refer Table 7 for Cross-tabulation.

6). Societal Contribution

The sixth factor societal contribution has included strategies which have focused on expectations of society from higher education institutions. The analysis revealed (see Table. 8) that corporate social responsibility undertaken by the institute has an impact on positioning of the institute. It is noteworthy, that faculty and students have accepted its significance equally (nearly 60 %). However, few faculty members (24.1 %) have conflict in opinion and some students (21.3 %) displayed ignorance, the possible reason may be their lack of knowledge regarding the attribute. Rational numbers of stakeholders (60.7 %) have realized the value of extracurricular activities undertaken and community participation. The disapproval and unawareness from both group was also noticed. Besides, it has potential towards growth of the institute, as involvement in these activities brings confidence in execution and overall development which is essentially required for future managers. Refer Table 8 for Cross-tabulation

7). Brand Promotion Expenditure

This factor has its own importance since it has ascertained the importance given by respondents to high disbursement on promotional activities in relation to contribute the status of 'brand' to the institute. The outcome of Table.9 has single dimension which created an impact on students (58.7 %) in relation to faculty members (51.7 %). It has again given the

impression that students are attracted to tangibility. Few students and faculty were not found thoughtful towards its importance in building institutes' reputation. Refer Table 9 for Cross-tabulation

The analysis of brand positioning factors has provided an insight of the difference in perception of students in comparison with faculty members.

Table 5: Cross-tabulation of Strategies of Informative Prospectus

Dimension	Agree		Disagree		Don't Know		Total	
	S	F	S	F	S	F	S	F
Creating awareness for national and international recognition by using different media	196	154	53	55	51	23	300	232
Per cent within group	65.3	66.4	17.7	23.7	17.0	9.9	100	100
Total	350(65.8)		108(20.3)		74(13.9)		532(100)	
Owners' trustworthiness	197	140	48	53	55	39	300	232
Per cent within group	65.7	60.3	16.0	22.8	18.3	16.8	100	100
Total	337(63.4)		101(19.0)		94(17.7)		532(100)	
Faculty profile of institute (PhDs, Post doctoral Degrees)	204	149	40	46	37	300	232	
Per cent within group	68.0	64.2	13.3	19.8	18.7	15.9	100	100
Total	353(66.4)		86(16.2)		93(17.5)		532(100)	
Publications(journals/ magazines)	193	149	49	57	58	26	300	232
Per cent within group	64.3	64.2	16.3	24.6	19.3	11.2	100	100
Total	342(64.3)		106(19.9)		84(15.8)		532(100)	
Infrastructure of the institute (including facilities of Campus area, Accommodations, Medical, Recreational, Internet, Wi-Fi, Library)	209	181	40	35	51	16	300	232
Per cent within group	69.7	78.0	13.3	15.1	17.0	6.9	100	100
Total	390(73.3)		75(14.1)		67(12.6)		532(100)	

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Table 6: Cross-tabulation of Strategies of Accreditation and Academic Alliances for Global Exposure								
Dimension	Agree		Disagree		Don't Know		Total	
	S	F	S	F	S	F	S	F
UGC Degree from NAAC accredited 208 A grade University full time programme	169	43	51	49	12	300	232	
Per cent within group	69.3	72.8	14.3	22.0	16.3	5.2	100	
Total	377(70.9)		94(17.7)		61(11.5)		532(100)	
Economical fee of the program inclusive 192 of laptop and study material	129	55	43	53	60	300	232	
Per cent within group	64.0	55.6	18.3	18.5	17.7	25.9	100	100
Total	321(60.3)		98(18.4)		113(21.2)		532(100)	
Global Exposure: Foreign tours, Foreign language certification, Guest lectures by Industry experts	203	131	53	60	44	41	300	232
Per cent within group	67.7	56.5	17.7	25.9	14.7	17.7	100	100
Total	334(62.8)		113(21.2)		85(16.0)		532(100)	
Highly experienced faculty from reputed National and International institute	217	166	45	45	38	21	300	232
Per cent within group	72.3	71.6	15.0	19.4	12.7	9.1	100	100
Total	383(72.0)		90(16.9)		59(11.1)		532(100)	
Provision of internship corporate training	216	154	41	59	43	19	300	232
Per cent within group	72.0	66.4	13.7	25.4	14.3	8.2	100	100
Total	370(69.6)		100(18.8)		62(11.7)		532(100)	
ISO certification/Six Sigma certification	177	141	58	51	65	40	300	232
Per cent within group	59.0	60.8	19.3	22.0	21.7	17.2	100	100
Total	318(59.8)		109(20.5)		105(19.7)		532(100)	

Table 7: Cross-tabulation of Strategies of Unique Associations								
Dimension	Agree		Disagree		Don't Know		Total	
	S	F	S	F	S	F	S	F
Matching brand name with expectations of people	159	137	69	52	72	43	300	232
Per cent within group	53.0	59.1	23.0	22.4	24.0	18.5	100	100
Total	296(55.6)		121(22.7)		115(21.6)		532(100)	
Brand distinctiveness	153	130	67	80	35	300	232	
Per cent within group	51.0	56.0	22.3	28.9	26.7	15.1	100	100
Total	283(53.2)		134(25.2)		115(21.6)		532(100)	
Building the institute as people centric	163	123	64	71	73	38	300	232
Per cent within group	54.3	53.0	21.3	30.6	24.3	16.4	100	100
Total	286(53.8)		135(25.4)		111(20.9)		532(100)	
Focus on faculty training and development	211	165	45	48	44	19	300	232
Per cent within group	70.3	71.1	15.0	20.7	14.7	8.2	100	100
Total	376(70.7)		93(17.5)		63(11.8)		532(100)	

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Table 8: Cross-tabulation of Strategies of Societal Contribution								
Dimension	Agree		Disagree		Don't Know		Total	
	S	F	S	F	S	F	S	F
Extracurricular activities undertaken for social causes	191	132	43	66	66	34	300	232
Per cent within group	63.7	56.9	14.3	28.4	22.0	14.7	100	100
Total	323(60.7)		109(20.5)		100(18.8)		532(100)	
Community Participation	197	119	46	40	57	73	300	232
Per cent within group	65.7	51.3	15.3	17.2	19.0	31.5	100	100
Total	316(59.40)		86(16.17)		130(24.44)		532(100)	
Corporate social responsibility undertaken by the institute	184	145	52	56	64	31	300	232
Per cent within group	61.3	62.5	17.3	24.1	21.3	13.4	100	100
Total	329(61.8)		108(20.3)		95(17.9)		532(100)	

Table 9: Dimension of Promotional Expenditure								
Dimension	Agree		Disagree		Don't Know		Total	
	S	F	S	F	S	F	S	F
High promotion expenses	176	120	55	45	69	67	300	232
Per cent within group	58.7	51.7	18.3	19.4	23.0	28.9	100	100
Total	296(55.6)		100(18.8)		136(25.6)		532(100)	

Table10: Independent Sample T-test of Factors of Brand Positioning of Institutes Students versus Faculty					
Factor	S (N=300)		F (N=232)		t-value
	Mean	S.D	Mean	S.D	
National/International Arrangements for Collaborative Programmes	2.44	0.57	2.36	0.62	1.56
Procedural Aspects	2.57	0.50	2.50	0.65	1.45
Informative Prospectus	2.51	0.52	2.45	0.60	1.19
Accreditation and Academic Alliance for Global Exposure	2.51	0.52	2.42	0.61	1.89*
Unique Association	2.37	0.57	2.34	0.68	0.48
Societal Contribution	2.48	0.58	2.33	0.74	2.50**
Promotional Expenditure	2.40	0.78	2.32	0.78	1.17

Note- S=Students, F =Faculty *Significant at 0.05 level, **Significant at 0.01 level

Gap Model of Expectations of Stakeholders

For meeting the gap of students and faculty expectations, the institutions are needed to equip their employees with tools that can facilitate them in acknowledging their stakeholders' expectations. It would be beneficial in building long-term relationship with both stakeholders.

Athiyaman (1997) have found an important implication for higher education and stated that service encounters should be managed to enhance consumer satisfaction. This in turn would enhance the perceived quality. Perceived service quality is described as an overall evaluation of the good or poor state of a product or service. It allows forming an attitude or opinion about the concept or object. When a student becomes interested in the class, he/she immediately acquires an attitude towards the class. Since an attitude facilitate in evaluating the product and service, so it helps in comparing one's attitude towards a product or service with one's product or service quality perceptions (an overall evaluation). Consumer satisfaction forms an attitude. "A student enrolls in the class and finds his or her expectations negatively disconfirmed, confirmed or positively disconfirmed. Note that subjective disconfirmation is the students' judgment about the discrepancy between what he/she expected (expectations) of the class and what was obtained (perceived performance). Thus, if the student believes that performance is less than expectations, then negative disconfirmation occurs; if performance matches expectations, then confirmation arises; and if performance exceeds expectations, then positive disconfirmation occurs".

This behaviour is same in the case of faculty members.

Similarly, Harris (2007) stated that "people are the main constituent in any branding effort. It is the actions of people inside an organization that feed the experience of those outside the company. The journey of providing quality customer experience is long and can be difficult. It begins at the heart of an

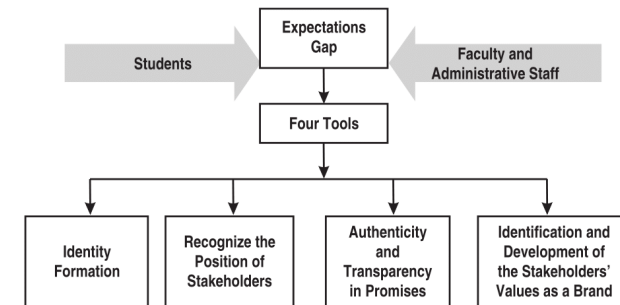
organization. It starts with employees who are being a part of the strategy and living the brand". He also highlighted the need to supply employees with tools- as identity and guiding principles; "identity" can used as a tool which allows individuals to increase their overall understanding of the organization and to personally ingest its meaning. Workshops, training programmes and promotion of good dialogue are good methods to achieve this aim. The next step suggested was helping staff to support their understanding with appropriate behaviours as "guiding principles". Both identity and guiding principles together help to form employee behaviour and to channel employee actions and decisions in desired directions. These tools help an employee in creating a consistent and high-quality customer experience externally. Both customers and organizations can determine the overall worth of individual customer exchanges by the presence of brand values. Since faculty members are the key personnel to be in direct contact with the students. Therefore we can recognize the importance of the role of faculty in institutions' branding.

The present research has introduced gap model of expectations of stakeholders including four tools which can facilitate the management institutes in meeting the gap of students and faculty expectations. It may also help in building long and sustainable relations with their stakeholders (Refer to Figure. 1). They are-

1) Identity Formation

Any product or service requires an identity for marketing, which creates its recognition in the market. An identity is an essential corporate asset, which provides an internal focus for employees and an interrelated and comprehensive network of consumer perceptions (Love and Roberts, 1997; Harris and De Chernatony, 2001; Hemsley and Goonawardana, 2007). The authors found that universities are moving towards corporatization or a corporate brand approach, where all the departments and schools are

Figure. 1 Gap Model of Expectations of Stakeholders



expected to be strongly aligned with the brand identity and brand values of the university. The benefits of engendering identity could provide employees a stronger personal sense of organizational purpose. They would know what to do and why they should do it and be less affected by significant organizational changes that will occur inevitably. They would be better equipped to see how their role can make a difference to the company as a whole and further allow a spirit of involvement and responsibility in action for the company. They can, in effect, be the strategy (Harris, 2007).

2) Recognize the Stakeholders' Position

For discovering the expectations of stakeholders the institute requires to demonstrate the gap in internal focus. It would be helpful in ascertaining the essential efforts required and right order of events for delivering the desired experience. Sometimes the needs of different stakeholders do not completely coincide. The institutes have to make its activity more complex and satisfy more constituents. Students, as primary clients are usually segmented and treated differently, but all other stakeholders are more difficult to segment. The segmentation of other stakeholders should be done according to their priority in the institutes.

Besides students, employers, and society, there are other stakeholders that have an interest in higher education- the parents, the government and other funding bodies, quality assurance agencies, and other regulating authorities, professional bodies (Chapleo, 2004; Voss, Gruber, and Szmigin, 2007; Kantanen, 2007; Nicolescu, 2009).

Authenticity and Transparency in Promises

In today's marketplace it is imperative that any promises made to stakeholders need to be entirely genuine. In addition, the services delivered by the institution should be transparent. Students and stakeholders now obtain information through the internet, mobile, and peer to peer connectivity and gather plenty of information before taking any decision. Therefore, it becomes necessary for the institutions to be authentic and transparent, as a responsible organization. This can have a far reaching effect on the reputation of institutions. Babu, Appalayya, and Jayabal (2007) stated that brand promises can be framed or shaped in the form of product or service benefits that stir up the expectations of customers. The promises made to consumers and their anticipation must be measured to monitor the success of brands. An anticipation of benefit will not stay long if it is not fulfilled

consistently. Branding is the creation of a system consisting of both arousing anticipations for and providing fulfillment of brand benefits (promises).

Identification and Development of the Stakeholders' Values as a Brand

Brand values are presented as a currency to measure the worth of exchanges between organizations and their customers (Harris, 2007). It refers to identify the compelling strategies that derive the students or stakeholders towards management institutions. The scope of the services should be responsive, straightforward, truthful, and vibrant. It could be any emotional associations, innovative thoughts, and unique offerings which can be linked to be recognized as values for the stakeholders in accordance with the demand of education industry standards. Chernatony (1999) stated that managers can lever two types of knowledge in order to develop the unique cluster of functional and emotional values that characterize individual service brands. They are explicit knowledge and tacit knowledge. Explicit knowledge can be formally communicated between service staff so that they appreciate the processes involved in delivering the service brand and tacit knowledge is personal knowledge unique to each employee arising from their personal experiences with their customers and behaviour that results from their attitudes and values.

Differences in the Opinions of Students and Faculty Members

The analysis of Independent sample T-test (see Table.10) revealed that among seven factors of brand positioning 'accreditation and academic alliances for global exposure' and 'societal contribution' has created a significantly different impact on the students and faculty members. It was noted that strategies of 'accreditation and academic alliances for global exposure' (see Table. 5) including UGC degree from certified accredited university, fee, laptop and study material, global exposure, guest lectures by industry experts, highly experienced

faculty from reputed national and international institute, provision of internship or corporate training, and certifications along with strategies of 'societal contribution' including extracurricular activities undertaken, community participation, and corporate social responsibility undertaken by the institutes are possibly important to students since these give a notion of branded institute which associate them virtually with the institute, as well as for faculty members, same dimensions become tools that authorize them to add meaning to their institutes framework of representation and also brings exposure to their career growth. This study has assessed the differences in the opinions of students and faculty members on brand positioning strategies of management institutes of NCR which is found significantly different among both stakeholders. Hence, the hypothesis is proven and also helped in achieving the objective of the study.

CONCLUSION AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Today, India is poised to become a super power; the focus is on building a knowledge society of tomorrow. The branding of education industry enables potential to develop long term relations with stakeholders for becoming competent and competitive organizations. Hence, management education assumes a crucial role. The impact of globalization is remarkably prevalent in the Western and Asian countries. It has encouraged cross-border movements of students and teachers. Thus, initiatives for international competitiveness and collaborations should be done. Several authors have realized the significance of research on b-schools and advocated faculty research work supported with training, research methods and collaboration. The stakeholders are extremely important and any actions taken by the institutions create a direct impact on them. Unique strategies are the compelling aspects that attract the attention of stakeholders. Therefore, the rationale and significance of institutions' existence has to be determined with excellent planning. The scope of

key services provides range of services and facilities and its benefits which represent the institutes' competence and competitiveness. The present and potential competitors should be adjudged properly for the convenience of brand positioning. There should be transparency in moving direction to establish a strong position at regional, national and international level among the competitors. It is visible that strategies of brand positioning factors are greatly affecting students and faculty members in the NCR. Therefore, these strategies are needed to be monitored in the institutions and tailored accordingly for brand positioning. During the study it was found that all the seven factors have played significant role in brand positioning of management institutes in NCR. Among all, national/international collaboration is highly contributing. Therefore, the dimensions of first factor should be explored by the management institutes. Several students and faculty were either not interested or unaware about their institutions' foreign collaborations, corporate house alignment, and community participation. The possible reasons may be lack of efforts in gaining awareness for these aspects, fear of losing authority, or unwillingness to change. Hence, the institutes are required to up-grade knowledge and awareness for development of institutes positioning among stakeholders. 'Placement' and 'wide choice of subjects or courses' has majorly attracted the attention of the stakeholders. The prospectus of an institute is a source through which stakeholders can get an idea of reputation of the institutes. The infrastructure of any institute can greatly affect decision of stakeholders. The students and faculty members are significantly influenced by UGC degree from NAAC accreditation and are willing to have faculty of national and international repute. Both stakeholders considerably favoured training and development programmes for faculty members. The interest of both groups in the aspects of societal contribution is rationally less. However, inclusion of these activities would be beneficial in bringing self-belief and exposure to both groups. On the other hand, there is a good scope of creating impact on

students and others through promotional activities.

In order to meet the gap of expectations of students and the faculty from the institutions four tools i.e. 1) identity formation, 2) recognize the stakeholders' position, 3) authenticity and transparency in promises, 4) identification and development of the stakeholders' values as a brand, have been introduced which may be helpful in managing the brand status of the institutes. Along with the conventional media means like newspapers, magazines, hoardings, television, public relations and latest media tools such as- internet, open-house, and sponsoring events could be utilized for stakeholders' involvement. Various types of media and use of emotional appeals in advertising formulate success in brand communications. These four tools can be utilized by the management institutes of NCR for bridging the gap of expectations of students, faculty members from the institutions, if employees are empowered with these tools, it can explore the innovative ways of brand building of the institute that can lead to emotional, and rational understanding of the educational branding.

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