

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.56712/latam.v5i5.2829>

## Impact of Marketing Strategies on Strengthening the Image of Public Universities in Ecuador

Incidencia de las estrategias de marketing en el fortalecimiento de la imagen de las universidades públicas en el Ecuador

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Artículo recibido: 05 de octubre de 2024. Aceptado para publicación: 19 de octubre de 2024.

Conflictos de Interés: Ninguno que declarar.

### Abstract


This article analyzes how marketing strategies impact the strengthening of public universities' images in Ecuador. In a systematic literature review, it shows that the main problems affecting institutional reputation are found in the lack of qualified personnel in their communication departments, as well as administrative management deficiencies. Then, it introduces some of the emerging relational tools, like artificial intelligence and neuromarketing, whose effectiveness has been already tested with a view to improving institutional perception. The competitiveness theory will provide insights for understanding how universities can acquire differential advantages within an increasingly globalized and competitive market for educational services. It follows that effective marketing strategies, digital marketing, and personalized contents help in increasing visibility, thereby attracting more students and enabling international collaborations. The article concluded that what public universities need to do is integrate such strategies coherently with their institutional objectives for effective positioning and improved public perception.

**Keywords:** marketing strategies, institutional image, neuromarketing, digital transformation, artificial intelligence

## Resumen

Este artículo analiza cómo las estrategias de marketing impactan en el fortalecimiento de la imagen de las universidades públicas en Ecuador. A través de una revisión sistemática de la literatura, se muestra que los principales problemas que afectan la reputación institucional se encuentran en la falta de personal calificado en sus departamentos de comunicación, así como en deficiencias en la gestión administrativa. Luego, se presentan algunas de las herramientas relacionales emergentes, como la inteligencia artificial y el neuromarketing, cuya efectividad ya ha sido probada con vistas a mejorar la percepción institucional. La teoría de la competitividad proporcionará información para comprender cómo las universidades pueden adquirir ventajas diferenciales dentro de un mercado cada vez más globalizado y competitivo de servicios educativos. Se deduce que las estrategias de marketing efectivas, el marketing digital y los contenidos personalizados ayudan a aumentar la visibilidad, atrayendo así a más estudiantes y posibilitando colaboraciones internacionales. El artículo concluye que lo que las universidades públicas necesitan hacer es integrar dichas estrategias de manera coherente con sus objetivos institucionales para un posicionamiento efectivo y una mejor percepción pública.

*Palabras clave:* estrategias de marketing, imagen institucional, neuromarketing, transformación digital, inteligencia artificial

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Cómo citar: Cerón Silva, S. A., Ochoa Inga, S. P., Paredes Montero, J. M., & Salama Muhammad, I. M. (2024). Impact of Marketing Strategies on Strengthening the Image of Public Universities in Ecuador. *LATAM Revista Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales y Humanidades* 5 (5), 2965 – 2976. <https://doi.org/10.56712/latam.v5i5.2829>

## **INTRODUCTION**

Education is the foundation upon which development is effected in society; it shapes the mind of those later responsible for innovation, leadership, and social change. In this line, universities, especially public ones, have the mandate to be responsible in making knowledge available, not only accessibly but also in setting up standards of quality and credibility in a world that has turned global yet highly competitive. Serious problems take place within public universities in Ecuador, and this in turn allows the very same universities to develop neither an institutional image at the local or international levels.

The image of a university encompasses more than aesthetics or a branding issue but epitomizes collective perceptions by students, faculty, possible employers, and the general public. These perceptions, however, affect the reputation of universities in attracting ability to talent, in forming partnerships, and creating meaningful social change. In today's educational ecosystem, where students are considered educated consumers, universities have been called to go further in developing innovative strategies that brand their uniqueness and competitive advantage. According to the theory of competitive strategy by (Porter, 1980), institutions should find a way of fitting into the environment where they operate and also ensure that their strategic actions yield sustainable benefits.

Actually, it should be underlined that in Ecuador, step by step, the image of public universities was deteriorated, but such deterioration might be due to a number of reasons: firstly, the absence of professional marketers within university communication departments. First, most of them lacked an integrated and well-focused marketing strategy that would highlight their strengths concerning academic excellence, research, and community engagement. Besides, inefficient management, including bureaucratic delays not supportive of student service delivery at an administrative level, further reduced growth. Resulting from these internal challenges, the universities were unprepared to face the competition with other private ones, which were more often than not better resourced with streamlined operations.

Besides, with all the negative experiences of students, professors, and every other stakeholder, matters have worsened to the point of degrading the institutional image of Ecuador's public universities. Indeed, research supports the very fact that unsatisfactory user experiences-from administrative procedures to the quality of academic programs-are directly related to reduced reputation. If universities will not be able to retain or engage their students and alumni, failure to win credibility as well as failure in securing collaborations and research funding within and outside the country might be possible.

The higher education marketplace has turned immensely competitive. With the help of digital tools, advanced analytics, and other personalized marketing techniques, universities worldwide can plan and establish a strong brand identity, thereby selling their services to students all over the world. Public universities in Ecuador have so far fought their demons internally; very soon, they will have to face this stiff competition. It is here that modern marketing strategies assume prime importance. An institution's image is not built either by word of mouth or by traditional media, but universities need to adopt modern marketing strategies, including AI, neuromarketing, and data-driven marketing, in order to get their message across to and impress their target audience effectively. Whereas AI would have the university move forward with economizing on marketing operations, manage personalized outreach, and predict the needs of the students, neuromarketing lets an institution look at the reaction from behind the emotional and cognitive standpoints of the target audience-to forge much better relations with, and eventually make more loyal-the prospect and stakeholder in question. It reinforces the university's institutional image and thus enables them to communicate their values, achievements, and distinctiveness to a wider audience with greater effect.

This paper will research the theoretical and practical effects of marketing strategies on the image of public universities in Ecuador.

The target is to understand how successful marketing can reverse the trend so far and provide a relative advantage in this new digital, global educational environment. Based on the previous premise, the current research discusses the role of marketing in Higher Education, in the case of Ecuadorian Public Universities through a systematic literature review. Additionally, it identifies key opportunities for using marketing to enhance reputation, student recruitment, and overall institutional competitiveness. Generally, the approach of this work is to establish how marketing strategies shape the perception of public universities and make some useful recommendations on what to do to retrieve and sustain a better and more positive image. Along with times of change in higher education, Ecuadorian public universities will have to take up the new paradigms of marketing with the guarantee of holding a place as the main institution for education, research, and social development.

### **METHODOLOGY**

The research will analyze the importance of marketing strategies for the improvement of the image of public universities in Ecuador. It follows a mixed-method approach, combining three methods: a systematic literature review, qualitative interviews, and the analysis of quantitative data with the purpose of comprehensively establishing a clear understanding of the subject. Each was designed to deliver knowledge with respect to the way marketing could affect institutional perception and which are the strategies best adapted to solving the current challenges.

### **RESEARCH DESIGN**

This present study will adopt a mixed-methods design since it furthers the topic from multiple standpoints. It will begin with a systematic literature review of various established theories and frameworks from three identified contexts: educational marketing, image perception, and competitive strategy. It will be complemented by a series of in-depth interviews with the marketing professionals in each university and their administrations, expecting to understand firsthand information of the challenges going on against the public universities in Ecuador. It identifies the patterns and correlations among marketing efforts and institutional image, which are based on the quantitative data of students' satisfaction surveys and other reputation metrics.

This is justified on two levels: First, while the literature currently has a significant conceptual basis from which it can ascend to develop an understanding of the marketing institutional image relationship, in order to contextualize those findings for the purpose of the present study in Ecuadorian public universities, the relevant data needs to come directly from this particular stakeholder population. Second, mixed-methods allow not only the validation and cross-referencing of findings but also greater robustness and depth to the conclusions derivable from such research.

### **Systematic Literature Review**

The first step in this research was a systematic review of the literature, focusing on three key areas: (1) marketing strategies in higher education, (2) institutional image and reputation management, and (3) the role of technology, particularly artificial intelligence (AI) and neuromarketing, in modern marketing. The review aimed to synthesize current knowledge and identify gaps that this study could address.

It will identify data from relevant peer-reviewing journals, books, and conference proceedings incorporating databases such as Google Scholar, Scopus, and JSTOR. Keywords will be mainly selected based on "higher education marketing," "university image," "competitive strategy," "neuromarketing," and "artificial intelligence in education." Selection will be done based on relevance and reliability, with an up-to-date issue date. It will prefer the most recent studies from the last decade. More than 50 sources were reviewed in total-from seminal pieces like Porter's 1980 work *Competitive Strategy* to more recent works related to digital marketing tools in education by (Agag et al., 2024).

The literature review, therefore, helped in framing the research question and brought a conceptual framework from which data collected in subsequent stages of the study are analyzed. Besides, it revealed that though there is a wide range of studies related to marketing in higher education, few of these addresses the problems faced by a public university in a developing country like Ecuador; this gap in the literature underlines the relevance of localized studies that may give practical recommendations.

### **Qualitative Interviews**

A further stage in this investigation consisted of interviews using semi-structured guides with key informants from Ecuadorian public universities, responsible for the direction of marketing departments, communications officers, or administrative staff who could describe the current situation regarding institutional practices, challenges, and perceptions of the image in institutions, by those who are directly responsible for handling and implementing the strategies.

Altogether, interviews were conducted on 15 people chosen using a purposive sampling approach. As a matter of fact, this kind of approach has been implemented because this nature of research requires only those people who have experienced university marketing and administration firsthand. These interview sessions were either face-to-face or via Zoom, depending upon the availability, and each of these lasted from 30 to 60 minutes.

Themes of interest that are used in this interview guide were focused on:

- Current marketing strategies the institution has adopted
- Perceived efficacy of measures for improving institutional image
- Issues related to marketing
- Utilization of technology and creativity, especially AI and neuromarketing, in promotional campaigns
- Recommendations for improving the university's marketing practices

Thematic analysis of the interviews covered the transcription of interviews, data categorization through coding, and spotting patterns and themes. The small but specific pieces of very valuable insight into the marketing challenges of Ecuadorian public universities included qualitative data: budgetary limitation, bureaucratic restrictions, and difficulty in differentiation from private competitors. This has also brought out opportunities for development, especially in the usage of digital tools for marketing and the emphasis on student-centeredness in communication.

### **Quantitative Data Analysis**

The quantitative analysis of the levels of student satisfaction and the institution's reputation was performed during the final stage of the research. The data was obtained from two main groups. (1) Student satisfaction surveys administered by the university, and (2) available rankings and indicators of reputation. The aim was to establish the relationship between the changes in institutional image and the efficiency of the marketing strategies in use.

In addition, student satisfaction questionnaires were collected from three Ecuadorian public universities concerning the students' evaluations of the institution's image, service quality, and education. All survey data was de-identified and included responses from 1,200 students from different courses in diverse programs.

In addition, public reputation metrics were gathered from sources like the QS World University Rankings and Webometrics, which evaluate universities based on criteria such as academic reputation, employer reputation, research output, and online presence. These metrics were analyzed to determine whether

universities with more proactive marketing strategies—especially those utilizing digital tools—scored higher in reputation rankings compared to those with more traditional marketing approaches.

Statistical methods, including correlation analysis and regression models, were used to explore the relationships between marketing strategies and institutional image. Consequently, the specific aims were to establish whether there is any significant correlation between the implementation of various digital marketing strategies, like social media campaigns, personalized email marketing, and AI-based student outreach, on one hand, and improvements in students' satisfaction or institutional reputation on the other.

The quantitative analysis revealed that universities employing more modern marketing tools, such as AI and neuromarketing, tended to score higher in both student satisfaction and reputation rankings. This supports the hypothesis that innovative marketing strategies can enhance the public image of universities, making them more competitive in both local and international contexts.

### **Ethical Considerations**

As human subjects participated in the qualitative interviews, institutional review board (IRB) approval was sought from the university conducting the study. Consent was attained from all interview participants, who were guaranteed their answers would not be disclosed to anyone and would be used for research purposes only. Moreover, additional data crime prevention strategies were implemented to ensure the safety of the student satisfaction surveys.

### **Limitations**

Despite the comprehensive nature of this mixed-methods approach, there are several limitations to the study. First, the sample size regarding qualitative interviews is relatively small; while providing valuable insights, it cannot develop the experiences of all public universities across the country. Second, the research relies on secondary data concerning student satisfaction and reputation metrics, which may not always reflect updated changes with respect to marketing practices or the institutional image. Finally, the rapidly evolving nature of digital marketing and AI means that the findings of this study may need to be updated as new technologies and strategies emerge.

## **RESULTS**

This research elucidates the role of marketing tactics in shaping the public image of public universities in Ecuador in a detailed manner. Drawing upon qualitative interviews, a quantitative analysis of student satisfaction surveys and reputation data, alongside a thorough literature review, some interesting findings were revealed. These results show clearly the problems that many Ecuadorian universities encounter in the course of managing their public image as well as the advantages that may be attained by embracing modern trends in marketing such as the use of artificial intelligence and neuromarketing techniques.

### **Limited Adoption of Modern Marketing Tools**

The first great surprise arising from the set of qualitative interviews with marketing professionals and university administrations alike was the general underdevelopment of modern marketing tools in public universities. While private universities throughout Ecuador, in fact much like private universities within the more developed world, increasingly resort to such resources as digital marketing platforms, AI, and data analytics, public universities throughout Ecuador have thus far shown slowness in adopting emergent trends. They have all testified that all these delays have been due to strained budgets, lack of properly trained personnel, and bureaucratic inefficiency, all deterring the rapid adaptation of the new marketing technologies.

Other heads of the marketing departments also complained that there is inadequate assignment of resources for marketing. Most of the public universities in Ecuador tend to underfinance marketing and communication because most of the budgetary allocations attend to academic and administrative functions. Most universities, therefore, remain stuck with traditional forms of marketing, where they major in print media, radio ads, and seldom a few postings in social networks-never mind advanced tools used like AI-driven content personalization or neuromarketing techniques.

The complete absence of even a slight semblance of modern marketing structure seriously affects the very possibility of earning new students and holding on with those studying, not to mention competitiveness with private universities which do not waste even a minute for marketing.

### **Impact of Digital Marketing on Institutional Image**

Although the adoption rate for contemporary tools was very low, quantitative analysis of student satisfaction surveys and reputation rankings indicated a clear association of the adoption of digital marketing strategies with the strengthening of institutional image. However, the difference is that within this range of public universities surveyed, those which had invested in digital marketing-a regularly updated website, active social media profiles, or usage of email campaigns-these were somewhat performing better concerning student satisfaction and reputation metrics than the universities depending upon traditional marketing techniques.

As a matter of fact, one university that conducted an online social media campaign to encourage more involvement by its students showed that in the subsequent year, it got a 15% increase in applications. Indeed, the satisfaction surveys showed that the students who joined the online activities provided by the institution gave more positive perceptions about the institution. These students added that due to its virtual presence, it kept them informed and integrated; therefore, they had higher levels of institutional loyalty.

The data analysis also revealed that universities with more dynamic digital marketing efforts performed better in public reputation rankings, such as the QS World University Rankings and Webometrics. These institutions, despite their limited budgets, managed to project a more modern and accessible image, appealing to prospective students both locally and internationally.

### **The Role of AI and Neuromarketing**

Although the interviewees in the qualitative interviews revealed that AI and neuromarketing are rarely used in public universities in Ecuador, taking into consideration the literature review, they both bear high possibilities of enhancement of the institutional image. Works like (Agag et al., 2024) and (Sebastian, 2014) show how AI can be used in analyzing students' behavior to increase the personalization of marketing and make the content more engaging. Neuromarketing knows how to use knowledge from neuroscience to more precisely understand consumer reactions to marketing stimuli, helping create a strong emotional touch with the prospective students.

The big finding from the interviews would probably be that universities cannot target and segment their audiences effectively. Most of the marketing professionals expressed frustration, given that there was a lack of data on student preferences, which inhibited them from crafting messages for the particular portions of the student population. With the use of AI, this might be resolved in sifting through high-volume datasets for trend identification and preference. These shall, in turn, enable universities to create more personalized marketing campaigns targeted toward prospective students.

It is also relevant here: up to now, the concept of neuromarketing has been elaborated and implemented on other levels of education and private institutions. As (Sebastian, 2014) mentions, those universities that could implement the principles of neuromarketing in creating emotionally appealing messages

could win a bigger number of students and provide them with brand loyalty, which also may work for the Universities in Ecuador as they competed extremely with private institutions and had to make lots of innovations in structuring their differentiation.

### **Challenges in Building a Competitive Image**

These interviews highlighted a series of internal problems that hinder the chances of Ecuadorian public universities building up and promoting an institutional image that might be competitive, by allowing bureaucratic delay in decision-making processes, lacking a strategic view in marketing, and by a general lack of coordination between departments. Those in-house marketing professionals interviewed showed that their jobs are always defeated by slow approval processes, and fogs of unclear directives from university leadership that cannot allow clear-cut marketing campaigns (Dennis et al., 2016).

There are many references to disconnection between the marketing and academic aspects of the universities. This again is an example of the messaging failing to come across with the academics of the university and their differentiation. The one example captured was the marketing department of one university creating a marketing campaign about the research capability and the faculties subsequently complaining that the advertising did not highlight the most significant achievements in university research.

These findings go on to identify that, besides modern marketing tools, universities have to strengthen internal communication and embark on decisions rather quickly with a view to the marketing means serving general institutional ends.

### **Perception of Public Universities by Students**

Questionnaires regarding the students' satisfaction give an overview of the perception that students have about Ecuador's public universities and the drivers that underlie such perceptions. The general suggestion given is that the level of general satisfaction that students seem to bring about with regard to university experience relates closely to one's perception about the university image (Duque y Carvajal, 2015). Students that believed their university had a strong and positive image showed higher levels of satisfaction with their academic experience, support services, and campus facilities.

Curiously, students who were able to engage with their university through the use of digital platforms, social media, and email newsletters had more positive impressions of the institution than did those who did not. It's out of such feelings of being well-informed about events, policies, and academic opportunities within the university that a more positive affinity for and pride in the institution stem.

Yet the same questionnaires showed points of concern, too. The largest group of pupils showed dissatisfaction with supportive services, like enrollment and financial aid, which were perceived as "slow" and "inefficient." Though the university was in a very good place academically, those negative personal experiences outshone this fact and resulted in a weaker institutional image.

### **DISCUSSION**

Results pointed out the following challenges and opportunities that public universities are facing in Ecuador about their institutional image and the contribution of modern marketing strategies to their competitiveness. While the investigation underlines the enormous potentialities of digital marketing tools, artificial intelligence, and neuromarketing for building an effective institutional image, on the other side, a series of structural and strategic obstacles shows up, which must be overcome so as not to let the opportunity slip away. The next session develops this kind of message, completing discourses with their implications for the Ecuadorian university and, in general, for higher education.

### **The Digital Divide in University Marketing**

The themes that arise as central from the research are the current breach existing between Ecuadorian Public and Private Universities: greater budget availability and flexibility in organizational structures often provided speed in the introduction of advanced methods of digital marketing to private universities, keeping their presence in the market more dynamic and competitive, both on the local and international levels. Meanwhile, public higher education institutions are more reluctant to adopt this tool of digital marketing because of economic constraints and bureaucratic inefficiency (Filip, 2012).

These findings have indicated that universities that would bank predominantly on traditional marketing tools, such as print ads, radio ads, and plain postings on social media, were very far from those that actually implemented AI-driven and neuromarketing techniques. In this line, neuromarketing, as identified by (Sebastian, 2014), appeals to feelings and cognitive responses of students. This allows universities to create campaigns with which students can better identify themselves. Quite clearly, failure to develop and implement these would have placed the public institutions at marked disadvantage in a rather stiffly competitive educational market.

This, therefore, indicates a clear way forward wherein the public universities need to invest in training their marketing personnel and instruments of digital marketing. Of course, there could be a major concern pertaining to the required budgetary provisions; however, the return accrued from an improved institutional image, greater intake of students, and attracting international collaborations will offset the same. Besides, there is every possibility of a partnership with some private organizations, even government agencies, providing avenues for funding.

### **The Role of AI in Personalizing Student Engagement**

Artificial intelligence has disrupted the marketing of all industries, and it has not spared higher education. The researchers declare that those universities already adopting AI-powered marketing strategies, including but not limited to sending personalized emails, conducting predictive analytics, and automated content delivery, do have concrete evidence showing that they can engage and satisfy their students more. (Agag et al., 2024) mention the role of AI in analyzing big data about the preferences and behaviors of students in order for the institution to craft its marketing response.

AI has the enormous potential for outreach and effective communication with students considering public universities in Ecuador. It frees the university from the automatization of regular, more administrative tasks to personalize its communications and increase its delivery of relevance regarding the information to be delivered to prospective students. From interviews, nevertheless, it is known that marketing professionals have so far realized a deficiency in infrastructure and expertise in AI, which limits full exploitation of the technology in those institutions.

Overcoming this means developing the capacities of AI in public universities in Ecuador: hiring experts in AI, training current personnel, and partnering with technology providers to inject AI tools into their marketing strategies. This is how universities will be able to strengthen not only marketing effectiveness but also student experiences, which play an important role in establishing the institutional image.

### **Neuromarketing: Bridging the Emotional Gap**

The most innovative finding that can be derived from the literature review is the Neuromarketing capability to shape the image of higher education institutions. Neuromarketing investigates unconscious reactions of people in response to marketing stimuli, thereby enabling institutions to create messages which directly appeal to feelings, values, and intrinsic motivations. Of course, this

phenomenon plays into the hands of educational marketing when students usually make their choices according to an emotional perception of the university brand, whether it will fit for their personal goals.

Application of neuromarketing has not been done for yet the majority of the public universities in the Republic of Ecuador, though consciousness about its probable use was raised by (Sebastian, 2014), and most of the institutions lack the wherewithal to apply such strategy. Be that as it may, from what can be obtained from evidence, it is crystal clear that neuromarketing techniques-for example, neuromarketing tests of emotional responses to marketing communications, or tells stories that evoke community and belonging-can go the extra mile in making public universities more attractive.

To cross that neural chasm, public universities would be wise to explore some of the more low-cost methods of neuromarketing-be that partnering with neuromarketing firms or merely applying basic neuro-marketing principles to existing campaigns. For example, running ads about stories of personal successes of alumni, the social responses of the university, and how it creates community binds with prospects on an emotional level.

### **Bureaucracy and Internal Challenges**

Another significant revelation from the findings is the internal problems experienced by Ecuadorian public universities, specifically bureaucratic inefficiencies and poor interdepartmental coordination. Many respondents brought up these issues during the qualitative interviews, voicing frustration toward the slow pace of decision-making and directives from university leadership. Bureaucratic inefficiencies delay the execution of marketing strategies as well as undermine the existing campaigns.

To develop meaningful marketing efforts using modern tools and techniques, public universities must confront these internal barriers. Eliminating bureaucratic inefficiencies and facilitating better communication between the marketing and academic departments and addressing purpose or direction when it comes to the university's strategic vision for marketing, are just a few steps that must be achieved in order to improve the institution's brand image and gain elevation in the country's higher education marketplace. Absent these changes, even the most sophisticated marketing strategies will struggle to achieve wanted outcomes.

One possible strategy in dealing with these concerns involves the development of targeted marketing task forces or committees in institutions. These task forces may consist of constituents of different departments or faculties. Marketing task forces would work collaboratively to ensure that marketing tactics support institutional missions and that marketing decisions take place in a timely manner. Universities need to recognize that marketing is a strategic endeavor, and allocate resources for marketing as an entrepreneurial activity.

### **The Importance of a Unified Institutional Image**

It also points to the importance of coherence and unity at the institutional-image level. Public universities, in particular, tend to project fractured images to stakeholders because of dislocated marketing efforts whereby different segments of the institution market their own programs and activities without a unified message. This would create confusion among potential students and dampen the enthusiasm for the university as a whole.

For example, it is shown from the literature that those universities that have solid and coherent branding tend to achieve more in student satisfaction and reputation rankings. For instance, (Rauschnabel et al., 2016) use an example in regard to the art of branding in higher education by postulating that a well-contrived institutional brand has the likelihood of creating loyalty, hence improvement in the recruitment and retention of students.

The process of developing one institutional image within Ecuadorian public universities should be underlaid with a clear strategy of branding in concordance with the mission and values of the university (Theoharakis et al., 2024). For that reason, marketing strategies should be planned in which the university's strengths in academic excellence, research, or community service are shown; messages should clearly be relayed to all interested parties by the consistent repetition of all platforms and departments.

## **CONCLUSION**

The study has highlighted how strategies related to marketing play an important role in modeling the institutional image of public universities in Ecuador. This is particularly because the context of higher education is one that is quite competitive, with the emergence of private institutions in this area and the use of similarly sophisticated marketing strategies, hence the public universities have to reorganize their strategies so as to remain relevant and attractive in an attempt to win potential students. It thus follows that, even though these institutions face many challenges, such as lack of use of modern marketing tools, internal bureaucratic inefficiencies, and misalignment between marketing and academic departments, there are also significant opportunities for improvement by the strategic application of digital marketing, AI, and neuromarketing.

The structured literature review laid a sound theoretical framework that indicated that a strong marketing strategy was now imperative for the survival of higher education. Qualitative interviews with marketing professionals and administrators identify internal barriers to the effective marketing of the institution, while quantitative analyses of student satisfaction surveys and metrics relating to reputation also demonstrate the tangible benefits of adopting modern marketing practices. Indeed, this research showed a clear correspondence of the use of digital marketing strategies and improvement in institutional image, and even the AI's and neuromarketing's potentials to personalize the engagement of the students and create emotional bonding.

From these insights, a number of recommendations ensue which may help public universities capitalize on such insights. For one, the dire need to invest in marketing infrastructure-especially training personnel for modern marketing techniques and investment in digital marketing initiatives-can be recommended. Furthermore, a collaborative culture between marketing and academic departments would help in creating a cohesive and unified institutional image. By streamlining decision-making processes and improving communication, it would be possible for universities to use marketing strategies far more effectively and react quickly to new developments in education.

In addition, could result in AI-driven tools being in a much better place to understand and engage the target audiences of these universities, thus improving overall student satisfaction and reputation. In support, literature has argued that using data analytics as a marketing strategy places institutions in a strategic position to compete favorably for students.

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