Research Article

Positioning factors of distance education at the national university of Loja: Ecuador

Abstract

Based on the differentiating factors proposed by Kotler[1] research "factors for positioning mode distance studies in the national university of shop" it was structured. The study begins with the aim to analyze the differences of perceptions of positioning mode to Distance Studies students, administrative personnel, graduates and teachers same as was achieved with the development of research. The results show that students, staff, students and teachers value positively supply base, peripheral offers, image and quality manner; Teachers and administrators, also valued positively to the pricing policy, concentration and form institutional management. Instead, students and graduates, value these three aspects negatively.

Keywords: concentration, management, image, offer, quality, strength

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Introduction

The present study was carried out in the Republic of Ecuador, city and province of Loja, National University of Loja, Mode of Distance Studies. The problem examined in the study is Are there differences in the perceptions about positioning, from the perspective of students, administrative staff, graduates and teachers of the Distance Learning Mode of the National University of Loja? From the practical point of view this research is important because it allowed to explore the perception about the positioning, the attributes perceived as most important and to determine the consistency of the perception comparing the opinions of three groups of units of analysis, in such a way that from Hence specific studies can be carried out on the attributes that must be improved both at the level of processes and at the level of perception. From the methodological point of view, it maintains the subjective approaches in research. On the other hand, it makes available to the scientific community valid and reliable instruments to obtain information on variables of a qualitative nature and the intention to quantify these variables in order to approximate the truth about them. The study verified the perception of teachers, students, graduates and administrative staff on the presence of positioning factors. For the theoretical basis of the present research was based on the bibliographical information, documentaries, reports and reports of the distance studies modality that allowed to support the proposed objective. Finally, from the theoretical point of view, the research study allowed to validate approaches and theoretical models of the elements that influence the positioning and infer conclusions.

Methodology

For the development of the research, a questionnaire was designed based on the theories analyzed. This questionnaire was tested for content validity and reliability (Cronbach's alpha) the indices were 0.8989 and 0.8 respectively. The questionnaire was applied to a sample that includes 9 administrative and for (authorities), 3 teachers, 144 graduates and 212 students. It indicates that the investigation refers to four different samples randomized and observed only once. In order to fulfill the objectives set forth in the present investigation, the empirical, and inductive and comparative method of group difference was used.

Theoretical bases

Positioning: The positioning in the market of a service is the way in which the consumers define a service from its important attributes, that is to say, the place that occupies the same in the minds of the customers in relation of the products of the competition, In addition, for authors such as Kotler[1] positioning is defined as an organized system that is based on the concept that communication can only take place in the right time and under the right circumstances. The best way to penetrate the mind of another is to be the first to arrive. The type of positioning that will be used by the Mode of Distance Studies of the National University of Loja.

Based on the differentiation factors proposed by Kotler[1] the research was structured "positioning factors of the modality of distance studies in the national university of loja". The study starts with the hypothesis that "significant existences between the perceptions of students, graduates, administrative staff, teachers and authorities on the positioning factors", which was corroborated with the development of the research. Porter identifies three generic strategies that organizations generally use: cost leadership strategies, differentiation strategies, and segmentation strategies. Kotler[1] proposes that organizations seek to position themselves in the market based on factors of differentiation. The positioning factors proposed by Kotler are: base offer, peripheral offers, image, quality, price, concentration, modality of providing the service. The study on positioning factors of the Distance Learning Mode at the University of Loja, verifies the perception that teachers, students, graduates and administrative staff have on the presence of the positioning factors exposed by Kotler (except for the modality To provide the service), additionally includes the institutional management dimension.[2]

The positioning in the market of a service is the way in which the consumers define a service from its important attributes, that is to say, the place that occupies the same in the minds of the customers in relation of the products of the competition, further For authors such as Kotler,[1] positioning is defined as an organized system that is based on the concept that communication can only take place at the right time and under the right circumstances. Thus proposes to be realistic to be able to achieve something. Under this approach of positioning, one

should not start from something different, but from manipulating what is already in the mind, rearranging existing connections. Institutional image and positioning is assumed as the capacity of universities to face current changes and take advantage of the opportunities presented by the new circumstances of their environment Albrighton points out that universities, like all organizations, undertake actions aimed at forming a Positive image or a certain positioning, since as they require a favorable opinion environment to develop. It is not enough to provide a good service, you have to convince the public of it, in addition all this can bring a series of benefits for the university. At the same time, it should be noted that the task of fostering a deep understanding and meaningful support for the university must start with itself. It must seek to be seen as reliable, to be understood, esteemed and valued, first by its internal community and it is determined that a successful linkage with the various social and/or productive sectors improves the image and positioning of universities Alcantar.[3]

Regarding the considerations of the bases of positioning Chavez Sánchez José Luis[4] it proposes to be realistic in order to achieve something. Under this approach of positioning, one should not start from something different, but from manipulating what is already in the mind, rearranging existing connections. The strategies no longer work in today's market, because today there are too many products, too many companies and too much "noise". Society is over-communicated, requiring a new approach to marketing. In terms of communication, the means to emphasize is to know how to choose, concentrating on few objectives, practicing segmentation and "conquering positions". The mind, as a defense against the volume of information that is given to it, rejects much of it, and only accepts what fits with its previous knowledge and experiences.[5]

When analyzing the mental scales and positioning one must better understand what the elements to consider in a successful message, we must consider more closely the human mind, in which, each data has a location. As a defense against the volume of today's communications, the mind rejects information that does not "fit" with its needs, expectations or ratings, it only admits if it does.

In the theory of positioning, communication and advertising, it is assumed that the consumer is more emotional than rational. Otherwise, marketing would not make sense. The consumer "sees what you want to see" and "savor what you want to savor". If this is so, then the prime objective of all publicity will then be to raise expectations and perform the Hernández Sampieri[6] expected miracles. If the human mind rejects information that does not fit with past experiences, and if it does not have much knowledge or experience to function, then it becomes a totally inadequate "vessel." To face the complexity of communication, people simplify everything. Given the diversity of products, people have learned to mentally order the same and their brands. If a new competitor wants to achieve market share, he must dislodge the well-placed brand, or resemble the other organization. When analyzing the brand,[2] it proposes that the key to owning a strong brand, is necessary to increase its concept, so that it includes dimensions and perspectives. It explains that the identity of the brand should not be designed from a restrictive perspective, such as identifying the brand with the basic product Parra lópez Ana,[7] including only associations related to its nature, Uses or attributes there of You can also define the brand, as "the set of signs and symbols that express the identity of a company and its products in the market." A brand implies combining four elements: Quezada Miguel[8] a visual-iconic element or graphics; a name expressed in the singular form of a logo; A concept or fundamental idea that represents the company; and a proposition that determines a dominant trait or attribute in the

public's perception. Obviously, this that identifies the company and "marks" its products and services, offer the consumer a promise of reliability, and imply for the organization a support of their identity and their permanence in the market.[9]

Results

The field study on the educational agents of the Mode of Distance Studies on the positioning factors is presented in the following results through multi-variable analysis. The above table shows from another perspective the results of the assessment of educational agents by the different aspects of the positioning of distance learning mode. It is observed that in general students, administrative staff, graduates and teachers, value in a positive way the basic offer, peripheral offers, image and quality; the teachers and administrative staff, also value positively the price policy, concentration and institutional management. On the other hand, students and graduates value these three aspects negatively.

For the administrative staff it qualifies in its totality this aspect like good or very good in contrast the teachers consider it as very good. When comparing the perception of students, administrators, graduates and teachers on the different aspects of positioning, the results show significant differences (Sig.<0.05) in the assessments regarding the basic offer; In this case, although everyone values it favorably, however, the perception of administrative and teaching staff, about 5 points, is almost one point above students and graduates. In relation to peripheral offers, there are also important differences in valuation, especially in teachers compared to the rest of the agents; the teachers show a valuation close to 5 points, while the other agents value it with averages close to 4 points. The image of this modality of studies is also more favorably valued by teachers (Sig.<0.05). Those who reach an average of close to 5 points, in contrast the students, administrative and graduates, value it with averages of Around 4 points. As for the quality, the trend is similar, the teachers have a valuation near the optimal of the scale of 5 points, while the rest of agents, Valued with approximately 4 points, showing significant differences (Sig. <0.05) between both assessments.

In terms of price, concentration and institutional management, students 'and graduates' valuation is close to two points, significantly (Sig.<0.05) well below the assessment of administrative and teaching staff, who value it with About 4 points. The level of positioning of the Distance Learning Mode is also favorably assessed by the four educational agents, however, it is the teachers who have a better perception, exceeding significantly (Sig. <0.05) to the assessment of the administrative staff, Students and graduates.

Discussion

The study on the positioning factors reveals the perception of the educational agents of the Mode of Distance Studies in the following dimensions.

The basic supply: Regarding the basic offer the average valuation is around 4 points in the case of students and graduates and close to five points in the case of administrative staff and teachers. In both cases the average valuation approaches the optimal value of the five-point scale. These results indicate that the different educational agents consider that the MED complies with the service offered, including the opening of the courses offered; the virtual platform is permanently available, complies with the academic calendar, with the curriculum and puts Arrangement syllables and curricular contents of courses in a timely manner. Likewise, the study reveals that the respondents

consider that the MED uses the resources offered for the development of curricular contents, complies with the offered tutoring services, the pre professional practices and the titling processes offered.

Peripheral offers: The opinions of students, administrators, graduates and teachers on peripheral offers also show the same tendency, that is to say, the evaluation is generally favorable, with averages close to 4 points in the case of students, Administrative and graduates and about 5 points in the case of teachers. These results indicate that, from the perspective of the agents involved in the research, the university entrance level courses are developed according to agreed terms and are trained in the use of the online enrollment system; It is also observed that English, computer and physical education courses are developed in agreed terms; Is trained in the use of the system of academic and student monitoring, as well as in the use of the library system, didactic of the courses and is complied with the service of validation. It is also observed that training in the use of the online assessment system, delivery of teaching material in the quantity and quality required; The courses and seminars of continuous formation are developed periodically with normality and develop extracurricular activities of formative character and of support to the human development of permanent way.

The institutional image: As for the image of distance studies, the perception is favorable, with averages varying between 4 and 5 points, especially in the case of administrative and teaching staff. These assessments imply that the respondents consider that the MED has the best teaching, administrative and laboratory facilities; Also consider that this institution has the best service of university welfare, parking, green areas, medical service, bars, telephones, banking, transportation, sports, security, commissary, and vocational guidance, among others. The study also shows that it has the best technological resources, has social acceptance and is managed with criteria of transparency; the image of the institution is demanding, expensive, has the best contacts, is well accredited, makes the best publicity and is concerned with projecting a good image to students.

Quality: Regarding the quality of MED services, the results show that the MED has a modern infrastructure, the material delivered, reflects the quality of the service, the virtual platform is easily accessible, the content structure Curriculum in the virtual platform is fully compressible, said platform allows development without difficulty. The results show that the MED provides materials such as: books, guides for use of the platform, in sufficient quantity. PowerPoint presentations used on the platform are adequate, as are audio or visual materials such as virtual videoconferencing. The study also reveals that a variety of technological resources are used: videoconferencing, virtual library, on-line evaluations, e-mail, chat, and blog, discussion forums, as a complement in the teaching-learning process.

The price: The assessment that students and graduates make in relation to the price, is unfavorable; There is considerable disagreement with the affordability of tuition fees, both groups believe that the MED does not have sufficient budgetary resources to carry out its purposes, and that the institution lacks budgetary policies that help them, in the absence of resources and Evidence of high academic performance. The opposite happens with the opinion of teachers and administrators, who agree that the MED complies with these aspects, achieving an average valuation close to 4 points in the case of administrative staff and 5 points in the case of teachers.

Concentration: In the case of the concentration dimension of the studies, the opinion of students and graduates is unfavorable; the

averages found of about 2 points indicate that these two groups of investigators consider that not all people have the possibility to continue studies in the MED and they disagree that the MED has a privileged geographical location. The opposite happens with the opinion of the administrative staff and the docenes who value them with about 5 points. In the case of restrictions on accessing the university's MED, the average perception of students and graduates of about 4 points, it is clear that both groups strongly agree that there are restrictions to access MED, a view that Is not shared by administrative staff and teachers, whose assessment is close to the two points. Institutional Management In relation to the institutional management, the results show that both students and graduates consider it inefficient, by qualifying it with an average of the two points, indicating their disagreement with the different aspects of this dimension. The opposite happens with teachers whose assessment is close to four points in the case of administrative staff and 5 points in the teaching staff. Students and graduates consider that there is no adequate planning in the activities of the MED, they do not apply nor they exist policies of decentralization of the academic and administrative management, that entity does not apply a policy of investment in acquisition of books, specialized periodicals, in information And access to international information networks for the use of teachers and students. According to these two groups, there are also no health plans and prevention of occupational risks for the university community, there are no contingency plans for natural disasters within the institution, it does not reflect an organization, nor detailed structure of activities Of the MED.

Conclusion

The relationship between positioning and its different factors; From the perspective of the students; A significant relationship (Sig.<0.05) between the base offer, peripheral offers, image, quality, price and concentration, with the positioning, being the basic offer, the quality and the image that are most related, in That order of importance. The factors that are less related to positioning, according to the students, are concentration and institutional management, whose correlations, although significant (Sig<0.05), are however the lowest and with little practical use because their values Are less than 0.3. From the perspective of the administrative staff, the aspects that are most related to the positioning are the image, basic offer, price and institutional management, in that order of importance. Their correlations are significant (Sig. <0.05) and positive. In contrast, no significant relationship was found between the peripheral offers, quality and concentration, with the positioning of this modality of studies. From the point of view of the graduates, the factors that are most related to the positioning are in order of importance, the basic offer, the image, the quality and the peripheral offers; The correlations are significant and of practical value (Sig.<0.05, r>0.3); The rest of the factors are not significant, indicating that from the point of view of this group, the positioning of Distance Learning Mode is not related either to price or to institutional concentration or management.

From the perspective of teachers, although the correlations between the basic offer, concentration and institutional management, are high, however they are not significant; In this case it is necessary to clarify that nothing can be concluded because only 4 teachers have been analyzed, so that the correlations may or may not be valid. There is a favorable perception of the positioning of Distance Learning Mode, in percentage terms from the perspective of the four educational agents, however, it is the teachers who have a better perception, surpassing significantly (Sig.<0.05) to the assessment of administrative staff,

students and graduates The results show significant differences (Sig.<0.05) in the analyzes of the units of analysis, in terms of the base supply; In this case, although everyone values it favorably, however the administrative and teaching staff's perception of about 5 points is almost one point higher than that of students and graduates. In relation to the peripheral offers, there are also important differences in the valuation, especially in the teachers with respect to the rest of the agents; The teachers show a valuation close to 5 points, while the other agents value it with averages close to 4 points. The image of this modality of studies is also more favorably valued by teachers (Sig.<0.05), who reach an average of close to 5 points, whereas the students, administrative and graduates, value it with averages of Around 4 points. In terms of quality, teachers have a valuation close to the optimum of the 5-point scale, while the other agents value it with approximately 4 points, showing significant differences (Sig.<0.05) between the two assessments. In terms of price, concentration and institutional management, students 'and graduates' valuation is close to two points, significantly (Sig.<0.05) well below the assessment of administrative and teaching staff, who value it with About 4 points. The achievement of institutional objectives of the Distance Studies modality is directly related to the implementation of publicity management strategies and human talent of the institution. Given that the design of management strategies and human talent contains the technical support and expectations for its implementation, this is applicable in the strategic administration of the Mode of Distance Studies of the National University of Loja.

Acknowledgments

Conflicts of interest

The author declares that there are no conflicts of interest.

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