

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF MARKETING
COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES EMPLOYED
BY UNIVERSITIES AND TECHNIKONS IN
THE CAPE PENINSULA WITH SPECIFIC
REFERENCE TO CAREER EXHIBITIONS AND
OPEN DAYS IN ATTRACTING FIRST-YEAR
STUDENTS

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DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the work contained in this thesis is my own original work and has not previously in its entirety or in part been submitted at any university or technikon for a degree.

Signature:

..... *mjos*

Date:

..... *26.02.2003*

Abstract

The challenges presented by the restructuring of higher education through The National Plan for Higher Education and the implementation of the National Qualifications Framework will create new possibilities for tertiary institutions. Tertiary institutions will have to be creative and innovative over the next five years to meet these challenges. The National Qualifications Framework will endeavour to provide learners with mobility and easier access to education and training. Competition will be intense and tertiary institutions will have to market themselves effectively. This is exacerbated by the fact that an increased number of private education service providers have entered the market. The successful implementation of the National Plan will require tertiary institutions to develop marketing communication strategies in order for them to attract the desired profile of students. In a restrictive financial environment, tertiary institutions will have to assess and reassess their marketing communication strategies aimed at attracting first-year students. A proper assessment will enable them to allocate funds more efficiently and effectively.

In an attempt to address the above concern, this research focused on determining the effectiveness of marketing communication tools employed by Universities and Technikons in the Cape Peninsula with specific reference to career exhibitions and open days in attracting first-year students.

The sub-problems that were identified were:

- Appropriateness of marketing communication tools in attracting desired first-year students and
- The impact of marketing communication strategies on the student's decision to study at a chosen tertiary institution.

An intensive literature study was conducted followed by an empirical study carried out in two phases. Phase I consisted of in-depth interviews conducted with marketing officers at universities and technikons in the Cape Peninsula, namely: Peninsula Technikon, Cape Technikon, University of Cape Town, University of Stellenbosch and University of the Western Cape, to identify which marketing communication tool is most effective in attracting desired first-year students. Interviews were conducted

with marketing officers, or other persons responsible for marketing the tertiary institution, namely recruitment officers and schools liaison officers.

Phase II consisted of conducting a survey in the form of a structured questionnaire with a sample of first-year students at the selected tertiary institutions. This established to what extent the marketing communication tools had an influence on the student's decision to study at the chosen tertiary institution.

Conclusions arrived at were that career exhibitions and open days are viewed as a source of information that does not influence the student's decision to study at a particular institution. Marketing communication tools have very little or no influence on the student's decision to study at a particular institutions. Family and friends have been identified by the students as the factors having the greatest influence on their decision to study at a particular tertiary institution.

In order to use marketing communication strategies that attract first-year students effectively, it is recommended that higher education institutions, when communicating with prospective students, should exploit the reasons why students attend a particular institution, by

- emphasising the courses offered, especially in terms of how it is different to those offered by other institutions,
- informing students of bursaries and financial aid available and
- using the status and reputation of the institution as a competitive advantage.

Parents should be included in the target market for career exhibitions and open days, as is the case with UCT. Institutions should make an effort to evaluate the impact of the communication tools employed.

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- A. Interview guide for marketing officers
- B. Letter requesting an appointment to conduct an interview with marketing officers at the five higher education institutions
- C. Letter sent to relevant lecturers requesting time for students to complete questionnaire
- D. Questionnaire on student decision-making: Choice of academic institution

CHAPTER 1

PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION

"A problem is a chance for you to do your best"

Duke Ellington

1.1. Introduction

The challenges presented by the restructuring of higher education through The National Plan for Higher Education and the implementation of the National Qualifications Framework will create new possibilities for tertiary institutions. Tertiary institutions will have to be creative and innovative over the next five years to meet these challenges. The National Qualifications Framework will endeavour to provide learners with mobility and easier access to education and training. Competition will be intense and tertiary institutions will have to market themselves effectively. This is exacerbated by the fact that an increased number of private education service providers have entered the market.

The National Plan for Higher Education provides a framework for the restructuring of the higher education system to achieve the goals for the transformation of the higher education system outlined in the Education White Paper 3: A programme for the transformation of Higher Education (July 1997). The National Plan for Higher Education will force higher education institutions to re-evaluate their mission and overall strategies.

The following proposals by the National Plan for Higher Education will impact on the marketing communication strategies at tertiary institutions:

- Increasing access to tertiary institutions for black, disabled and female students
- Additional recruitment of students from the Southern African Development Community region
- Increasing the total student numbers by 5% over the next 5 to 15 years. (currently only 15% of students eligible to study at tertiary institutions are doing so)
- Shifting the balance of enrolments over the next 5 to 10 years from the humanities, to business and commerce, science, engineering and technology.

The successful implementation of the National Plan will require higher education institutions to develop marketing communication strategies in order for them to attract the desired profile of students. In a restrictive financial environment, higher education institutions will have to assess and reassess marketing communication strategies aimed at

attracting first-year students. A proper assessment will enable institutions to allocate funds more efficiently and effectively.

1.2. Background study

Schultz (1996:85) is of the opinion that it is impossible for a marketer to establish effective communication with the target consumers by using only mass techniques like advertising and publicity. It is the rapport, the empathy, the dialogue, the relationship and the communication the marketer establishes with the prospect that makes the difference (Koekemoer, 1998:4).

Jain (1997:25) states that marketing plays a vital role in the strategic management process of a firm. The experience of companies well versed in strategic planning indicates that failure in marketing can block the way to goals established by the strategic plan.

Considering all the challenges that tertiary institutions are faced with, it is evident that institutions will have to become marketing-orientated. Higher education institutions will have to build marketing orientation into their strategic planning process to remain competitive.

Smith and Cavusgil (1984:104-116) in an article "Marketing Planning for Colleges and Universities" demonstrate how institutions of higher education can implement strategic marketing planning. The article states that one of the first promotional tasks is to learn how students make their decisions about which institution to attend with the hope that the institution will be able to assist in the decision-making process. They claim that students have a two-part decision-making process. First the student decides which institution to attend. For some of the non-traditional students, just confronting the idea of attending a higher education institution is a major step. The second step is deciding on a particular institution. The promotion of higher education institutions can occur through innumerable means and marketers must find creative ones at all times. The authors claim that a balanced communication mix that is most effective at a minimum cost should be accomplished.

Kotler (1999:422) refers to the marketing communication mix, also called promotion mix, as a blend of advertising, personal selling, sales promotion and public relations tools that a company uses to pursue its advertising and marketing objectives. He also claims (*ibid.*:423) that too often marketing communications focus on overcoming immediate awareness, image or preference problems in the target market. Marketers are moving towards viewing communication as the management of the consumer buying process over time, during pre-selling, selling, consuming and post- consuming stages. Kotler states that consumers are different and therefore marketing communication programmes need to be developed for specific niche segments and even individuals. He claims that the communication process should start with an audit of all potential interactions target consumers may have with the product and company. Marketers need to assess the influence that each of these communication experiences will have at different stages of the buying process. This understanding will help marketers allocate their communication funds more efficiently and effectively.

Before higher education institutions can communicate with their target audience by employing marketing communication tools, marketers must understand the communication process.

Lasswell (in Belch and Belch, 1993:195-196) developed his 5-W model. The basis of this model is a message flow whereby the communication, starting with the source, is formulated and transmitted through a medium or channel to receivers who are the target audience. The impact of the message is measured by the feedback from the receiver to the source. However, when marketers develop a communication plan, the reverse happens. The receiver is the starting point, since the success of the marketing communications programme is affected by the nature of the target audience. The medium is chosen based on the characteristics and profile of the target audience. For marketing communication to be successful, higher education institutions must select appropriate tools that will reach their desired target audience and that will deliver the message effectively.

Universities and technikons in the Cape Peninsula have been using career exhibitions and open days as marketing communication tools to communicate with potential first-year students. The Exhibition Association of South Africa (EXSA) claim that they have experienced a 100 percent growth in the number of exhibitions held in South Africa over the last three years, making exhibitions the fastest growing marketing medium available (The Future, 2001:44).

Although exhibitions have been regarded as an important tool of marketing communication, relatively few studies have examined the effectiveness of the medium.

1.3. Formulation of the research problem

Universities and technikons compete not only for funds from both public and private sectors, but also for potential students. In order to survive they have to engage in aggressive promotions. Funds are limited and institutions have to determine how effective their marketing communication tools are in attracting first year students to their institution.

This research study focused on determining the effectiveness of career exhibitions and open days aimed at attracting first year students as employed by Universities and technikons in the Cape Peninsula.

1.3.1 The sub-problems

1.3.1.1 Sub-problem one

The appropriateness of marketing communication tools in attracting desired first-year students.

1.3.1.2.Sub-problem two

The impact of the marketing communication strategy on students' decision to study at a chosen tertiary institution.

1.4. Hypothesis

1.4.1 Hypothesis one

Marketing communication strategies, with specific reference to exhibitions and open days, create awareness of the institution but does not directly influence student enrolments.

1.4.2 Hypothesis two

Tertiary institutions employ a marketing communication tool based on availability of funds, but the communication tool is not market specific.

1.4.3 Hypothesis three

Exposure to a marketing communication tool does not influence a student's decision to study at a particular tertiary institution.

1.5. Delimitations of the research

The study focuses on marketing communication strategies employed consciously by tertiary institutions to attract first-year students. These marketing communication tools consist of advertising, personal selling, sales promotion, direct marketing and public relations. Unconscious marketing communication can occur through word-of-mouth or opinion leaders, namely alumni. The latter was not considered in this study.

The technikons and universities in the Cape Peninsula referred to in this study are the Peninsula Technikon, the Cape Technikon, the University of Cape Town, the University of Stellenbosch and the University of the Western Cape. First-year students who formed part of the study included students at the first level of study as well as full-time students registered with the relevant institutions.

Personal in-depth interviews were conducted with marketing officers or persons responsible for the marketing of the institution to determine which marketing communication tools are employed to attract desired first-year students. The research highlights the marketing communication tools employed by the designated institutions.

but the effectiveness of exhibitions and open days in attracting desired first-year students was the primary focus.

1.6. Research Methodology

Research was undertaken to determine the effectiveness of these higher education institutions' marketing communication strategies in attracting potential first-year students.

1.6.1 Primary Data

In-depth interviews were conducted with marketing officers at the selected tertiary institutions to identify which marketing communication tool is most effective in attracting desired first-year students. Interviews were conducted with marketing officers or other persons responsible for marketing the tertiary institution to potential first-year students.

A survey in the form of a structured questionnaire was distributed to a sample of first-year students at the selected tertiary institutions. This established to what extent the marketing communication tools had an influence on the student's decision to study at the chosen tertiary institution. Cluster and availability sampling was used to develop a representative sample.

1.6.2 Secondary data

A literature survey was conducted on general marketing theory, to identify elements of a marketing communication strategy and to identify stages of the consumer's decision-making process. A literature survey on marketing practices at higher education institutions was also conducted.

1.7. Significance of the Research

The research gives education marketers an indication of the effectiveness of each marketing communication tool. This enables the institution to use limited funds more efficiently to attract students who conform to the desired student profile. Tertiary institutions can use the results of the research to plan marketing communication strategies effectively. The study identifies factors that influence the student's decision-making process. Marketing officers can use this information to make marketing communication strategies more market-oriented. Students can also benefit, because marketing communication strategies can then be directed at specific target groups. The marketing communication messages will be student-centered, and students will be able to make more informed decisions about the tertiary institutions they wish to attend and the field of study they wish to pursue.

1.8. Objectives of the Research

1.8.1 Primary objective

To determine the effectiveness of exhibitions and open days as a marketing communication strategy employed by technikons and universities in the Cape Peninsula in order to attract desired first-year students.

1.8.2 Secondary objective

1.8.2.1 Secondary objective one

To identify whether appropriate marketing communication strategies aimed at attracting first-year students are being employed by universities and technikons in the Cape Peninsula.

1.8.2.2 Secondary objective two

To determine the impact of marketing communication strategies on students' decision-making process.

1.9. Researcher's qualifications

Academic qualification: Higher Diploma: Marketing
Position: Lecturer
Experience: 2 years commerce and industry experience
7 years teaching experience

1.10. Outline of thesis

1.10.1 Chapters

Chapter 1 Problem identification
Chapter 2 Marketing principles and practices for higher education institutions
Chapter 3 Marketing communication strategies for higher education institutions
Chapter 4 The decision-making process for prospective students in terms of the choice of higher education institution
Chapter 5 Empirical investigation in the higher education institutions in the Cape Peninsula
Chapter 6 Research results
Chapter 7 Summary, conclusion and recommendations

1.10.2. Timeframe

1. Literature study	3 months
2. Data collection	
2.2.1 Making appointments	1 month
2.2.2 Personal interviews	1 month
2.2.3 Questionnaire design	1 month
2.2.4 Piloting questionnaire	3 weeks
2.2.5 Questionnaire distribution and completion	1 month
3. Final analysis and interpretation	3 months
4. Integrating the results and writing the report	3 months

1.11. Budget

Travelling	1 000 km @ R1,50 per km.	R1 500
Photocopying	<u>10x5@20c</u> per page	R10
	<u>2500x5@20c</u> per page	R2 500
	Miscellaneous	R 500
Field workers	5x R200	R1 000
Proof reading		R300
Typing	350x R5 per page	R1 750
Binding		R200
Telephone		R300
Miscellaneous		R500
TOTAL		R8 560

1.12 SUMMARY

In this chapter, the background to the study is given. The problems, objectives and hypotheses are stated and a review of the related literature is given. The significance of the research is stated, the research methodology is outlined and the structure of the research is presented.

CHAPTER 2

MARKETING PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICES FOR HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

“Education can be defined as working with people, to prepare them to live in the future. The future may be bright. The future may be grey. But, most importantly we must ensure that there will be a future”.

William J. Jacobson

2.1 Introduction

The transformation of tertiary education in South Africa will involve matters such as capacity building, campus diversity, women in higher education and multiculturalism. The government, in an attempt to reduce costs, has encouraged institutions to merge or to rationalize through the development of consortia. For example, the Cape Higher Education Consortium (CHEC), is a consortium based on co-operation between the five tertiary institutions in the Western Cape. Government funding is also decreasing and institutions have to find ways to cover costs. Some institutions are aggressively marketing their courses to prospective students as well as to members of industry. The transformation of higher education can indeed be seen as a marketing challenge, requiring tertiary institutions to promote the quality of their educational programmes and to meet the demands of South Africa's human resource needs, which is in line with the government's economic policy, and also to satisfy societal requirements. The need for higher education institutions to adopt marketing principles is therefore further recognized.

This chapter is a literature review of marketing principles and practices as they pertain to higher education institutions. To develop a better understanding of how marketing relates to higher education institutions, the following aspects will be covered:

- What is marketing?
- How marketing has evolved
- The need for marketing in higher education
- Identifying markets for higher education

- Marketing tools appropriate for higher education
- The influence of the environment on higher education and
- Strategic marketing planning in higher education.

2.2. What is marketing?

Various definitions of marketing have been developed over time.

Effective marketing can be attained by at least considering the appropriate target markets upon which to concentrate, market research into customer's existing and latent needs, customer behaviour and the development of the product and marketing mix which is geared towards meeting those needs more effectively than those of competitors (Williams, Lui and Shi, 1997:153-154).

Marketing seeks to identify customer needs and to satisfy them. The key to achieving these two objectives is the idea of exchange (Berkowitz, Kerin, Hartley and Rudelius, 2000:9).

Zikmund and d'Amico (2001: 7) view marketing as a process that seeks to influence voluntary exchange transactions between a customer and a marketer. The marketing process involves communication and requires a mechanism or system to carry out the exchange of the marketer's product for something of value.

Marketing in its simplest form is merely an exchange between two parties. In primitive times, exchange took place only when both parties were satisfied that the items exchanged were more or less equal in value. In modern society exchange media such as

money and credit cards are used to facilitate exchange between a buyer and a seller. There is a wide market consisting of people with a variety of needs that need to be satisfied. Sellers try to satisfy these needs, in order to satisfy their own. Today the buyer does not merely buy the product; he buys a market offering which combines the product with other need-satisfying qualities. The market offering consists of a product available at a convenient place, at a price which reflects the value for the buyer (Van der Walt, Strydom, Marx and Jooste, 1996:4-6).

In higher education, this exchange process is very complex. Students pay course fees to the institution in exchange for education. There is also exchange between the higher education institution and the government and society. The government also funds public higher education institutions in exchange for graduates who will make a meaningful contribution to society and who will help develop the country globally and economically.

There are many more definitions of marketing but the above capture the essence of marketing. Marketing has developed rapidly over the past few years and many different industries have realized the importance of marketing in an organization.

2.3. The evolution of marketing

Before marketing principles are related to higher education, there needs to be an understanding of the evolution of marketing. Marketing has evolved over the past half century, starting with organisations becoming marketing-oriented by adopting the

marketing concept. The marketing concept means that an organization aims all its efforts at satisfying the customer- at a profit (Mc Carthy and Perreault, 1993:34). This philosophy of marketing was adopted mainly by profit-seeking organizations. In the 1970's and 1980's attention shifted to non-profit organizations and service sectors. Brassington and Pettitt (2000:990) state that the techniques used in commercial situations are being transferred, tested and evolved to cope better with the complexity of courses, ideas and attitude change in a wide range of situations.

Most higher education institutions have set up marketing departments. They adapted marketing techniques used in commercial situations to help them cope with the challenges that they faced in a changing environment. Shoemaker and Muston (1998: www.marketinged.com) state that the purpose of marketing strategies in higher education is to assure a rational, deliberate methodology to recognise, anticipate and react to market changes.

The most recent development in marketing is relationship marketing. A definition of relationship marketing that encapsulates the views of most of the various authors is that relationship marketing refers to all the activities necessary to identify, establish, maintain and enhance profitable relationships with internal and external customers and other stakeholders, so that the objectives of all parties involved are met through mutual exchanges and the making, enabling and keeping of promises (Lamb, Hair, Mc Daniel, Boshoff and Terblanche, 2000:179). The recent trend towards relationship marketing suggests the relevance of marketing to education. Bob Topor (Topor,

1998:www.marketinged.com) is of the opinion that, in building relationships, institutions should develop and maintain strong relationships based on positive interaction and perceptions. He believes that relationship building and maintenance is the essence of marketing. In the article he states that many institutions are trying to learn everything they can about their audiences. They have realized that people on the other end of marketing exchange are critical to their success. Although marketing has evolved over the years, Shoemaker (in Topor, 1998: www.marketinged.com) indicates that after a full decade of discussion about the merits of strategic planning and marketing in higher education, marketing has not been uniformly accepted.

2.4. The need for marketing in higher education

Although many higher education institutions engage in marketing practices, not many of them follow a philosophy of marketing, which is made up of three core elements:

- Customer orientation
- Total company effort, and
- Long-term objectives and profitability.

As pointed out by Kotler (in Nicholls, Harris, Morgan, Clarke and Sims, 1995:31-38), a customer orientation towards marketing holds that success will come to organizations that best determine the perceptions, needs and wants of their target markets and satisfy them through the design, communication, pricing and delivery appropriate and competitive viable offerings. Applying a customer orientation in higher education would mean that institutions would have to understand their customer behaviour, and they

would have to offer programmes that their customers needs. Although it is evident that educational institutions should become involved in marketing, there is a concern that higher education institutions do not fully understand customer orientation and how far they need to understand the wants and needs of those customers. The issue is further complicated by the fact that marketing requires a total effort by all departments, meaning that the responsibility of marketing lies with everyone in the institution, not only the marketing department. Academics should not lose sight of their professional aspirations, but in today's changing educational environment a new balance must be found between commercialism and professionalism, with the adoption of a marketing orientation (Nicholls, Harris, Morgan, Clarke and Sims, 1995:31-38).

Shoemaker (1998) claims that for higher education institutions to embrace and receive a full measure of value from embracing a marketing orientation there must be an understanding that marketing is a culture that must be pervasive throughout the institution. This means having a clear appreciation for what marketing comprises. All institutional stakeholders must understand and support essential enabling marketing strategies. Marketing also helps organizations achieve long-term objectives. The National Plan for Higher Education has set objectives for higher education institutions in South Africa. The plan has brought about radical changes in the structure and funding of higher education institutions, as they now operate within a much greater competitive context. As a result, higher education institutions need to incorporate a greater marketing orientation into their strategic planning process to acquire a competitive edge (Harvey, 1996:23-32).

Higher education institutions need to take cognisance of the fact that marketing is currently in the relationship marketing era and, as the name implies, relationship marketing means developing long-term bonds with users by making them feel good about how an institution of higher education relates to them. Many non-profit organizations such as educational institutions have until recently rejected the idea of marketing as a means of growth and even survival (Rix, 2001:20).

Customers are at the focal point of marketing. Before higher education institutions can satisfy the needs of its customers, customers have to be identified.

2.5. Who are the customers of higher education?

It is evident that for higher education institutions to survive, identification and satisfaction of customer needs are vital. However, before customer needs are satisfied, higher education institutions need to identify their customers. Many researchers see the identification of customers as problematic, because there are so many groups of people who can benefit from this service.

Macbeth (in Harvey, 1996:26-32) suggests that there are four groups of people who benefit from an education system:

- the student (who receives the instruction),
- the parent (who delegates authority),
- the administrator, or state authority
- and society.

Robinson and Long (in Conway, Mackay & Yorke, 1994:31) distinguish between primary, secondary and tertiary customers. They see primary customers as being students, secondary customers as the paymasters, i.e. local education authorities, employers and tertiary customers as validating bodies, ex-students, employers and parents (Conway, MacKay and Yorke, 1994:31).

Rudduck *et al.* (in Harvey, 1996:26-32) regard students as the primary clients of education and parents, employers, society as secondary beneficiaries. Owing to the vocational nature of higher education, Conway, MacKay and Yorke (1994:31) claim that students can either be seen as customers (with courses as the higher education products) or as products with the employers being the customers.

For the purpose of this study, students will be viewed as customers of higher education because traditionally most of the institutions' marketing efforts are directed at satisfying the needs of the student. Parents, employers and society will be regarded as secondary customers because of their influential role in the student's choice of course and institution.

2.5.1. Profile of student markets in South Africa

In South Africa, the pool from which tertiary institutions recruit their students has decreased due to the decline in matriculation exemption, which is an entrance requirement for most tertiary institutions. In an attempt to increase the pool of recruits to

higher education, the ministry has decided to recruit non-traditional students i.e. workers and mature learners, in particular women and the disabled (National Plan for Higher Education, 2001:28). The National Plan further suggests that the South African *Development Communities (SADC) is an untapped market.*

Institutions across South Africa have also seen a shift in the demographics of student enrolments. More specifically, between 1993 and 1999, African student enrolments

- decreased by 7 000 in historically black universities;
- increased by 22 000 in the historically black technikons;
- increased by 10 000 in the historically white English-medium universities;
- increased by 56 000 in the historically white Afrikaans-medium universities;
- increased by 49 000 in the historically white technikons; and
- increased by 22 000 in the two dedicated distance education institutions.

(National Plan for Higher Education, 2001:37)

There is a perception that white students, influenced by perceptions of instability and declining standards at state-funded institutions, are moving to private higher education institutions. There is also a perception that technikon qualifications are more likely than university qualifications to increase employment prospects. Institutions have seen a change in student enrolments by gender. Female students in the higher education system have risen from 43% in 1993 to 52% in 1999. What remains hidden, however, is that blacks and women students are severely under-represented in science, technology, engineering and commerce. Post-graduate programmes are also under-represented and

this impacts on the human resource needs at senior management levels in the private and public sectors.

In the Western Cape, the area in which this research was conducted, student enrolments in the five public tertiary institutions are expected to remain constant in 2002. Any institutional growth will be at the expense of the other institutions (Bunting, 2000).

It is clear that the customer mix for higher education institutions in South Africa has changed. It is heterogeneous in nature, and higher education institutions need to engage in market segmentation and positioning, which is an important marketing function. Higher education institutions need to recognize that these different customers have differing needs and wants. Harper and Cross (1999:12) state that there are serious challenges for institutions in that they have to develop a conducive campus climate, redirect their programmes and methodologies and generate effective strategies to cater for an increasingly diverse and complex student population. Once again the need for institutions to become more marketing focused is emphasized.

Although institutions have submitted five year strategic plans to the Minister outlining the size (total enrolments) and shape (type of public higher education institution) of each institution, the question still remains: "How market-driven are higher education institutions?"

2.6. Marketing tools appropriate for Higher Education

Marketers of educational services need to understand the development of marketing strategies and use the tools of marketing referred to as the marketing mix or the 4P's to

satisfy customer needs. For higher education, which is classified as a service, 7 p's have been identified as products, price, promotion, place, people, process and physical evidence. All seven elements will be covered in terms of their implications for higher education. The elements of the marketing mix for higher education can be seen in Figure 2.1.

Figure 2.1: Elements of the marketing mix for higher education

Product	Price	Place	Promotion	Processes	Physical evidence	People
Knowledge and skill Programmes Buildings Social activities Cultural activities Sports facilities Residences	Fees Financial aid	Location Delivery methods	Promotional mix	Logistics Service delivery	Premises Atmosphere Image	Capability Efficiency Effectiveness Student interaction Internal marketing

Source: Adapted from: Brassington and Pettitt, 1997:927

2.6.1. Product

A product is a physical item, service, idea, person or place that is capable of offering tangible and intangible attributes that individuals or organizations regard as so necessary, worthwhile or satisfying that they are prepared to exchange money, patronage or some other unit of value in order to acquire it (Brassington, Pettitt, 2000:262).

Education is classified as a service. In a review of marketing in the service industries, Edgett and Perkinson (in Nichols, et.al,1995:31-38) point out that it is generally accepted

that the marketing of services is different from the marketing of physical goods and therefore require separate treatment.

Rushton and Carson (in Harvey, 1996:26-32) define the characteristics which service industries have in common (all of which is applicable to education) and which distinguish them from manufacturing industries as:

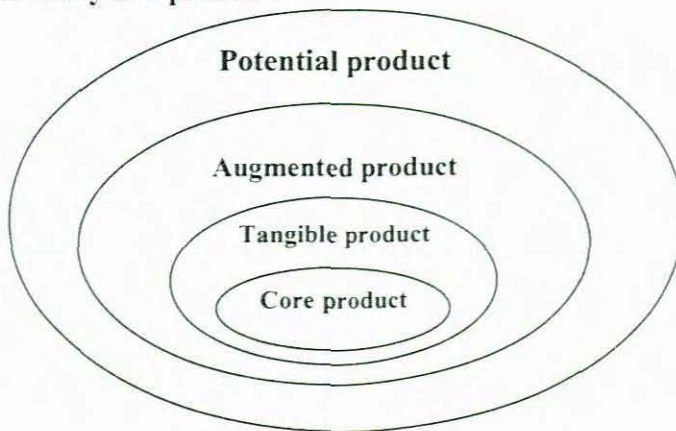
- *Intangibility*:- The intangibility makes it difficult for potential customers to assess the quality of the service, except by looking at the tangible elements.
- *Heterogeneity*:- The human element involved means that they cannot be standardized. The people involved, providers (academic staff) and customers (students) are all different and therefore homogeneity cannot be achieved. Teaching is dependent on the teacher's interpersonal skills and social interaction with groups of students. Even if the curriculum is prescribed, how staff members teach and how students respond will vary.
- *Perishability*:- The process of education is perishable because it is consumed partially at the point of delivery. In education, a lesson missed by an absent student cannot be repeated exactly as taught originally, although much of the content may be conveyed. Web based materials may also reduce perishability.
- *Inseparability*:- The provision of a service cannot be separated from its consumption. This is particularly the case with education, where students' participation in their learning is a critical success factor. Education has long been undertaken within a group. Effectively, students both produce and consume the

educational product, knowledge. Some institutions turn their inseparability into their advantage by featuring their providers as part of the benefit of the service.

Brassington and Pettitt (2000:262) further state that whatever the product is, it can be broken down into bundles of benefits that mean different things.

Figure 2.2 shows the basic anatomy of a product as a series of four concentric rings representing the core product, the tangible product, the augmented product and the potential product.

Figure 2.2: The anatomy of a product



Source: Brassington and Pettitt, 2000:262

(i) Core product

The core product represents the main reason for the existence of the product. Smith and Cavusgil (1984:111) identify the product as an intangible offering, which includes the creation of knowledge and skill. The intangibility of the product makes it difficult for

potential clients to assess the quality of a service, except by looking at the tangible elements associated with it (Harvey, 1996:26-32). The definition of the core product is important, because it influences the next layer, the tangible product.

(ii) Tangible product

The tangible product is the means by which marketers put flesh on the core product, making it a real product that communicates the offer of the core product (Brasington and Pettit, 2000:263). For higher education institutions, the courses, subjects, libraries and the physical surroundings can be viewed as tangible.

(iii) Augmented product

The augmented product represents the add-on extras that may be used to increase the product benefits and attractiveness. Social activities, cultural activities, job placement, sports facilities and residences can be viewed as add-on extras. With regional collaboration between five public higher education institutions in the Western Cape, institutions try not to compete with each other on the basis of programmes that are offered, however institutions can use this aspect of the product to differentiate themselves from their competitors.

(iv) Potential product

The potential product acknowledges the dynamic and strategic nature of the product. The potential product reflects what must be done in the future. Institutions have over the years, changed the curriculum, course offerings and programme to suit their customer needs. The five institutions in the Western Cape, through the Cape Higher Education Consortium, attempt to reach consensus with regard to programmes offered, to avoid overlap and duplication. Ramphela (in Vergnani, 2000: page?) states, "There are not

too many institutions, but too many institutions trying to do the same thing. An element of restructuring is to assist institutions with a fundamental re-examination of their own strengths and where they have the capacity to grow and develop quality programmes in the future.”

All four layers of the product lead to the customer’s satisfaction.

The complexity of educational products makes marketing a terribly difficult task. Businesses rely on repeat sales and brand loyalty, but for most students, one single choice is made during a relatively immature age. However, in future students will have more portability due to the National Qualifications Framework (NQF). The NQF is a means of transforming the education and training in South Africa and has been designed to create a single, integrated national education and training framework for the whole nation. It will make it easier for learners to enter the education and training system and to move and progress within (Isaacs: 2000:3). This will enable students to select subjects that will ultimately be recognised as a qualification.

2.6.2. Price

Price is the value that is placed on something. From a buyer’s perspective, price represents the value attached to whatever is being exchanged (Brassington and Pettitt, 2000:382). Nicholls, Harris, Morgan, Clarke and Sims (1995:31-38) identify price for higher education as fees, bursaries, and administrative requirements. Smith and Cavusgil (1984:112) state that pricing includes tuition and financial aid offerings.

As education is intangible, its pricing can be difficult to set and to justify (Brassington and Pettitt, 2000:953). Higher education institutions, although free to decide their own prices for different courses, must consider donor assistance, their competitors, and the perceptions and needs of students. Price is normally used to measure quality. Institutions should be careful of opting for low student fees as a method of attracting students, because such institutions could be viewed as low prestige ones. However, considering the difficult economic times in South Africa, pricing could become a major determinant in a student's choice of institution, rather than prestige. There is also the question of what is affordable to impoverished students. While funding to the national student financial aid scheme increased from R296 million in 1998 to R385 million in 1999, administrators say it does not meet the demand (Vergnani, 2000).

The government also pays a price through subsidizing public higher education institutions. The South African government spending on universities and technikons during 2002/2003 will be more than R8-billion. This represents 13,5% of the total government allocation to education. More than R7-billion will be allocated to universities and technikons in terms of a subsidy formula based on student enrolments, achievements and support for research. Another R1-billion will be provided mainly for financial aid schemes, redemption of loans, research grants and support for post-graduate students.

In exchange, the government in South Africa expects public higher education institutions to produce high quality graduates, and to produce knowledge and knowledge-based services to fuel economic growth to enable them to compete on a global scale (*The Sunday Times*, 3 February 2002:page?).

2.6.3. Promotion

Students need advice and support when making choices, particularly in the face of such a large number of levels and types of programmes. Before institutions can decide on which promotional tools to use, institutions need to understand how students make decisions about which higher education institution to attend. The students' decision-making processes are covered in Chapter 3. Higher education institutions use many different tools to attract students. *Marketing communication tools are covered in Chapter 4. The focus of this study is to determine the effectiveness of open days and exhibitions used as marketing communication tools to attract first-year students.*

2.6.4. Place

Place can include delivery methods, location, timetables and teaching styles. Educational services are supplied directly from the provider (institution) to the consumer (student).

This direct supply takes place at a particular location. Location can refer to the geographic location and the place in which the learning takes place, for example the lecture room or lecture theatre. With the diverse nature of students in public higher education institutions, delivery methods have changed. Teaching styles need to develop

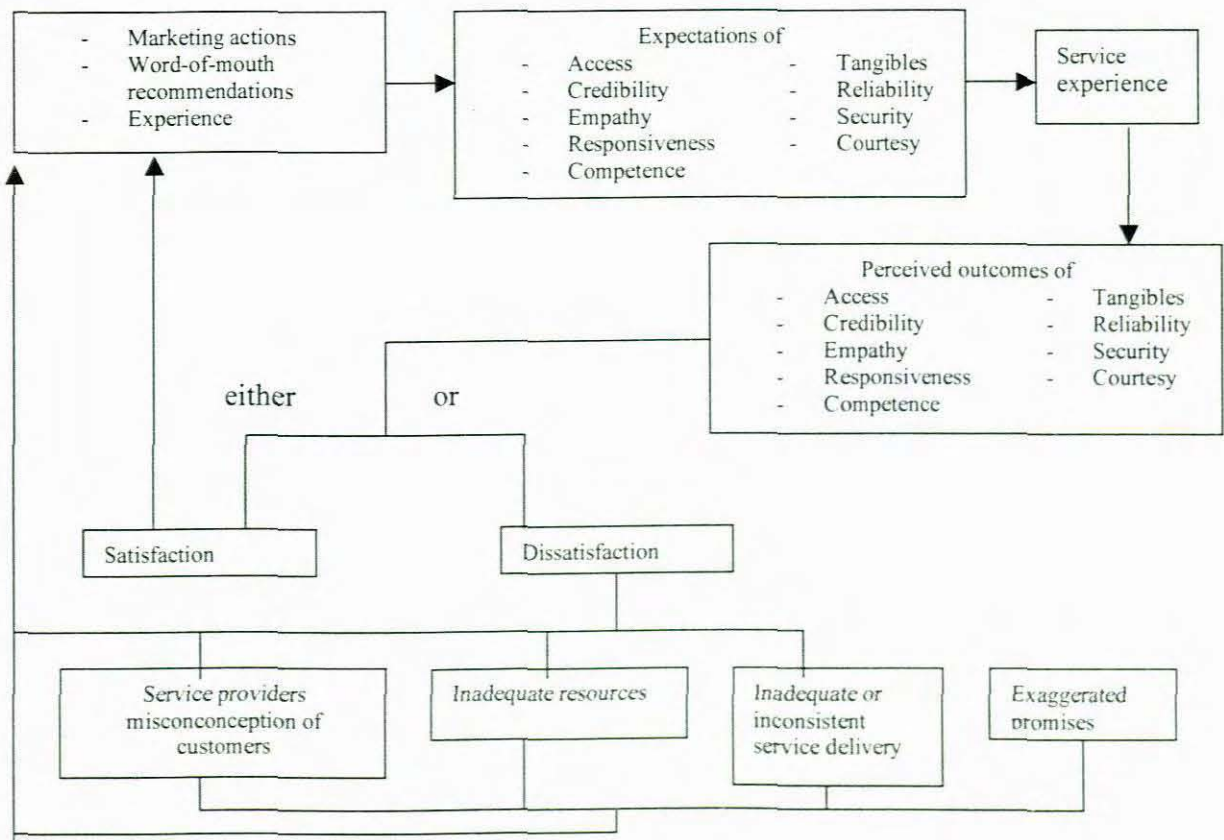
students who have computer skills, knowledge configuration skills, information management, problem solving, team building, networking, negotiation, competencies and social sensitivity (National Plan for Higher Education, 2000:31).

2.6.5. People

To some extent the quality of the service depends on the personal skills and attributes of each provider within an organization, who is in contact with the client (Harvey, 1996:26-32). If staff members are committed and enthusiastic, this could enhance the student's experience. The quality of the service delivered could have a major impact on the institution in the future. Staff can also attract potential students through their reputation. Heskett et al. (in Brassington, 2000:957) highlights the connection between employee and customer satisfaction within services in Fig. 2.3.

Brassington and Pettitt (2000:27, 957) state that people add value and a dimension to the marketing package way beyond the basic product offerings. The ability of staff to cope with customers, to deliver the service reliably to the required standard and to present the image consistent with what the organization would want are vital concerns. This is known as internal marketing. In the submission of their five-year rolling plans, institutions will have to indicate how they are going to develop their staff to produce student who can compete globally.

Figure 2.3: Service quality: Expectations, perceptions and gaps



Source: Brassington and Pettitt, 2000:957

2.6.6 Process

Process covers logistics and service delivery. Marketing requires a system to carry out the exchange process. From a marketing perspective, higher education management must give careful consideration to service delivery. Quality controls must be built in so that the

student will know what to expect each time the service is consumed. Higher education institutions in South Africa face challenges in terms of the demands of continuous assessment and the requirements of the National Qualifications Framework. The diverse nature of student profiles presents a gap in terms of service delivery. Members of staff have to develop teaching methodologies that address the dysfunctional school system and develop competent products that can compete globally.

2.6.7 Physical evidence

Brassington and Pettit (2000:27) identify physical evidence as singling out some of the factors of the traditional 4p's approach such as atmosphere, ambience, image and design of premises. For image, physical evidence would relate to the lecture theatre in which students learn. It is evident that physical evidence goes beyond the concerns of "being neat and tidy". One of the reasons students attend exhibitions and open days at institutions is to experience the ambience of the place. When prospective students visit the campus, they look for clues. Topor (1999: www.marketinged.com), in his article on the impact of environment on higher education users and providers, suggests that these clues are influential in communicating an organization's image and purpose, and may strongly influence a user's ultimate satisfaction with the service. He further suggests that *the institution's environment should support the needs of both service providers and users simultaneously.*

2.7. The marketing environment in which higher education operates.

Institutions of higher education will no longer be able to rely on student enrolments as indicators of growth. Growth will increasingly reflect the institution's ability to monitor and adapt to the continuous changes taking place in the marketing environment, to identify opportunities and threats. The factors that can present opportunities and threats can be classified as political, social, technological, economic and competitive (Lamb *et al.*,2000:34).

2.7.1. Political factors

The transformation of education through the National Plan for Higher Education (2001) is a political goal that has been set in order to serve the ends of democratization. This transformation includes:

- Producing graduates needed for social and economic development
- Achieving equity in the South African higher education system
- Achieving diversity
- Sustaining and promoting research and
- Restructuring the institutional landscape of the higher education system

The aims of this transformation are to promote the quality of education and meet the demands of the South African economy.

2.7.2 Economic factors

The impact of higher education on the economic environment is twofold. Firstly higher education contributes to the overall human resource need of the country. Badat (1999)

states that South Africa's transition is occurring during a period that has witnessed the emergence of a global economy and changes in the world captured by the concept of globalisation. A challenge that faces higher education institutions is to produce, through research and teaching-learning programmes, the knowledge and human resources that will enable South Africa to engage with and participate in a highly competitive global economy.

Colin Bundy (Leadership, February 2000:) claims that the inability of students to pay fees, with the resulting bad debt, is affecting every single campus and is not a problem that can be fixed at campus level. The problem is a fundamental mismatch between providing student access, which most institutions are committed to, and the inability of many families to pay fees (Leadership, February 2000). Many institutions have adopted a policy of not allowing students with debt to register. This has led to a further decrease in student enrolments. However, institutions need to consider the social and economic consequences for South Africa.

2.7.3 Social factors

Social factors include attitude, values and lifestyles (Lamb *et al.*,2000:34). Social factors will determine where a student chooses to study, what to study and what fees to pay. Subotzky and Cooper (*Mail and Guardian*, 22 March 2000:) say a crucial factor shaping recent trends of an increase in black students at white technikons and universities, and a decrease in white students, has been student and parental choice rather than government policy. Students claim that getting a degree or diploma to land a well-paying job and so

move out of a working-class environment, is an important factor in students' choosing what to study and where. Subotzky and Cooper (*Mail and Guardian*, 22 March 2000) further indicate that students prefer technikons to universities due to the following:

- Lower cost
- The perception that science and business are easier to study there, and
- Technikons are more vocation specific and therefore the chances of employment are better.

The lack of role models in science and engineering also affect enrolments. Although there has been an increase in black women entering higher education, there is still an under- representation in Science, Engineering, Technology, Business and Post-graduate programmes. Peninsula Technikon, in an attempt to improve the enrolment of female students in engineering, host a "Women in Engineering" week.

The AIDS epidemic will also have a major impact on higher education institutions. The infection level for technikon undergraduate students is currently close to 24.5% and will have increased considerably by 2005. HIV/AIDS has the potential to affect the demand for education and the potential consumers of education. The primary customers of higher education are students, most of who are in the 19-30 age group. This is the age range within which HIV infection normally peaks in most countries. The presence of AIDS-infected individuals in the student and academic community necessitates new forms of social interaction. HIV/AIDS therefore also has the potential to affect the supply and

process of education. Higher education institutions will therefore need to take the impact of HIV/AIDS into account in their strategic planning.

2.7.4 Technological factors

If South Africa wants to remain competitive globally, higher education institutions need to embrace information technology. Institutions need to give some serious thought to what it means for teaching and learning. In recent years the concept of e-learning has gained acceptance in other developed countries. E-learning is basically the use of technology to design, deliver, select, administer and extend learning. This however has implications for higher education with regard to learners having access to databases and websites, and staff members needing to be trained in the use of technology within the learning environment. Students also have greater access to education globally through technology.

2.7.5 Competitive environment

Government expenditure of higher education as a percentage of Gross Domestic Product was at 0,72% in 2001/2002 and is projected to decline to 0,68% in 2003/2004 according to the Medium Term Framework.

The Council on Higher Education (National Plan for Higher Education, 2000:9) argues that a competition driven higher education results in:-

- A lack of institutional focus and mission coherence

- Rampant and destructive competition in which historically disadvantaged institutions could reinforce its inherited privileges
- Duplication of activities and programmes
- Excessive focus on paying programmes
- Little attention to social and educational goals, and
- Insufficient attention to quality.

The competition driven developments have thus far given rise to distance education programmes and private higher education institutions. These developments are in contradiction to the White Paper, which calls for an approach based on collaboration and attention to national needs. However, this does not mean that institutions are not allowed to compete with each other. Competition between institutions that serves to promote and enhance innovation and quality is welcomed by the Ministry of Education, but must be regulated within a framework that will facilitate and sustain higher education. The Cape Higher Education Consortium (CHE) hopes to facilitate this in the Western Cape. There also needs to be more regulation regarding public higher education institutions so that they can compliment the public institutions.

For higher education institutions to address the changing environment that is described here, educational leadership should develop a strategic marketing framework.

2.8. Strategic marketing planning in higher education

Shoemaker and Muston (1998:www.marketinged.com) state that for higher education institutions to embrace and receive a full measure of value as a result of embracing a

marketing orientation, there needs to be an understanding that marketing is a culture that must be practiced throughout the institution. This means a clear appreciation for what marketing comprises and what it can do for the institution. An institution-wide marketing orientation means involving individuals in developing a marketing attitude, sharing expertise, building commitment and good communication. Marketing should be the foundation of the institution's strategy.

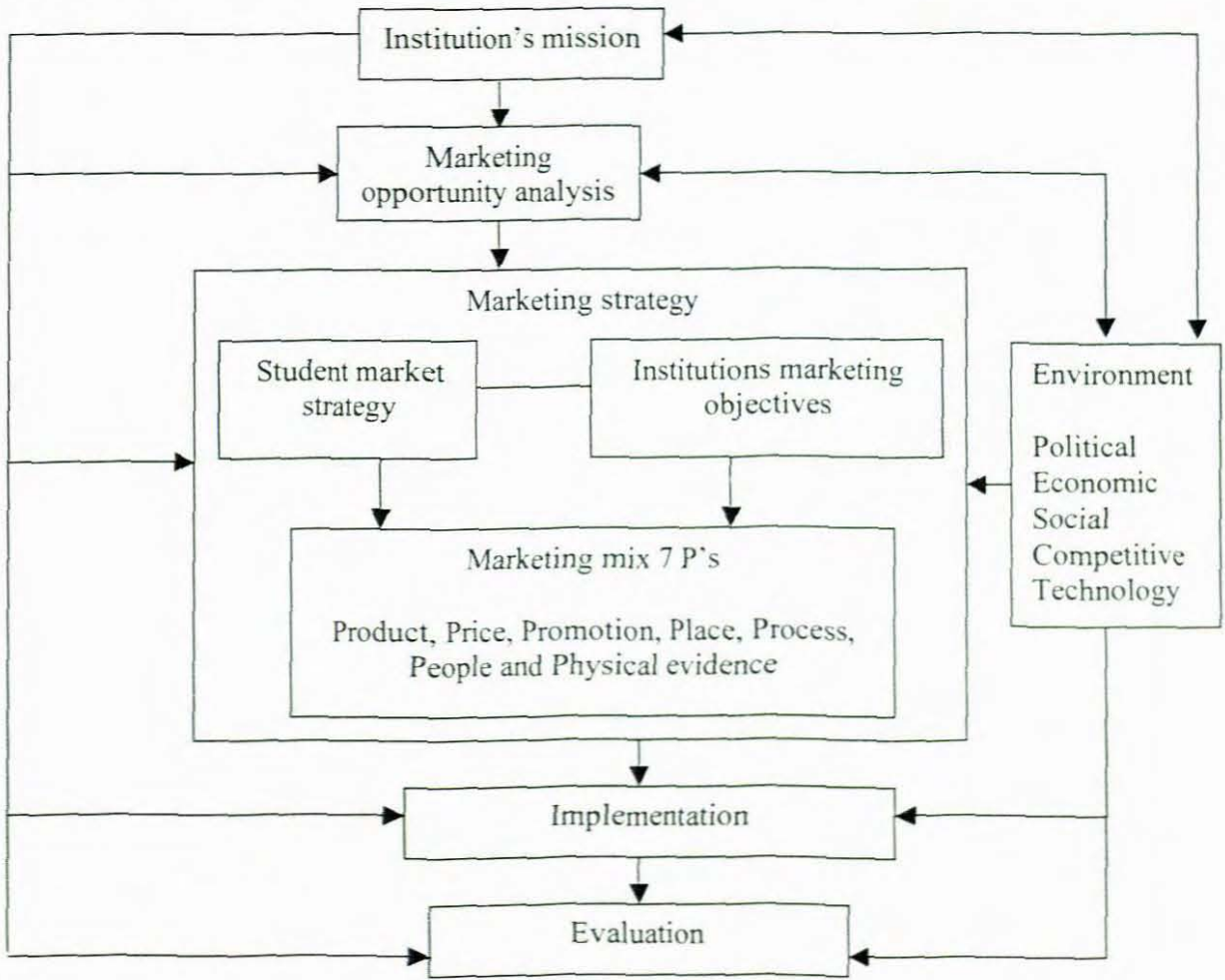
Figure 2.4 illustrates the marketing strategy process that can be employed by higher education institutions. Cravens (2000:31) states that strategic marketing is a market-driven process of strategy development that takes into account the constantly changing environment and the need to achieve high levels of customer satisfaction. The focus of the organization is on its organizational performance. Strategic marketing links the organization with the environment and views marketing as a responsibility of the entire organization rather than as a specialized function. Higher education institutions can benefit from following the marketing strategy process presented in Figure 2.4.

The situational analysis includes a product market analysis, market segmentation, competition analysis and continuous learning about markets. These analyses guide the choice of marketing strategy by the institution. The objective is:

- to describe the consumers of higher education,
- to understand why they chose a particular course,
- to understand the size of the market and
- to understand which other institutions are competing in the market.

Market segmentation further identifies at which group of students the institution is going to direct their products. Competitive analysis requires institutions to identify their key competitors. Because these markets are ever changing, the institution needs to have continuous information on the impact of the environment so that they can make more informed decisions.

Figure 2.4: The marketing strategy process for higher education institutions



Source: Adapted from Lamb, Hair & Mc. Daniel, 2000:31

Designing the marketing strategy is the second phase. The situation analysis serves as a guide for institutions in identifying the target market, and their positioning strategy. The

positioning strategy will indicate how the institution will position itself in order to satisfy its customer needs. The relationship strategy will outline the collaboration with the students, other institutions, government, parents and staff.

The third phase consists of developing a market-focused programme. Specific marketing mix strategies, such as the 7p's discussed earlier, must be developed to implement the positioning strategy.

The last phase consists of implementing and managing the marketing strategy. This is the *action phase of the marketing strategy* which focuses on implementation and design. This process is ongoing and higher education institutions need to realize that marketing does not take place in a vacuum.

2.9 Summary

The literature review implies that marketing principles and practices are applicable to higher education. It is clear that higher education institutions need to become more customer-oriented by identifying customer needs. This means that instead of students competing for selection, institutions should actively market themselves, making students more aware of how the higher education institution can satisfy their needs.

CHAPTER 3

MARKETING COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES FOR HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

“Our present choices determine our future rewards”

Anonymous

3.1 Introduction

The face of higher education in South Africa is changing and institutions will have to find effective ways to meet the challenges of:

- decreased government funding,
- the influx of private higher education institutions,
- decreased student enrolments and
- the transformation of higher education through the National Plan for Higher Education.

Many higher education institutions are turning to marketing communication tools to publish courses in an attempt to maintain market share. Some institutions have established communication departments or allocated more funds to marketing, while others have appointed marketing managers and external communication companies to oversee their promotion activities.

It has become clear that higher education institutions have discovered the importance of communicating effectively, and have turned their attention to using advertising on radio, television, newspapers, buses, taxis as well as using traditional open days. There has been a shift towards more professional approaches to brochures and promotional material. Higher education institutions can no longer depend on pass-rates to attract students.

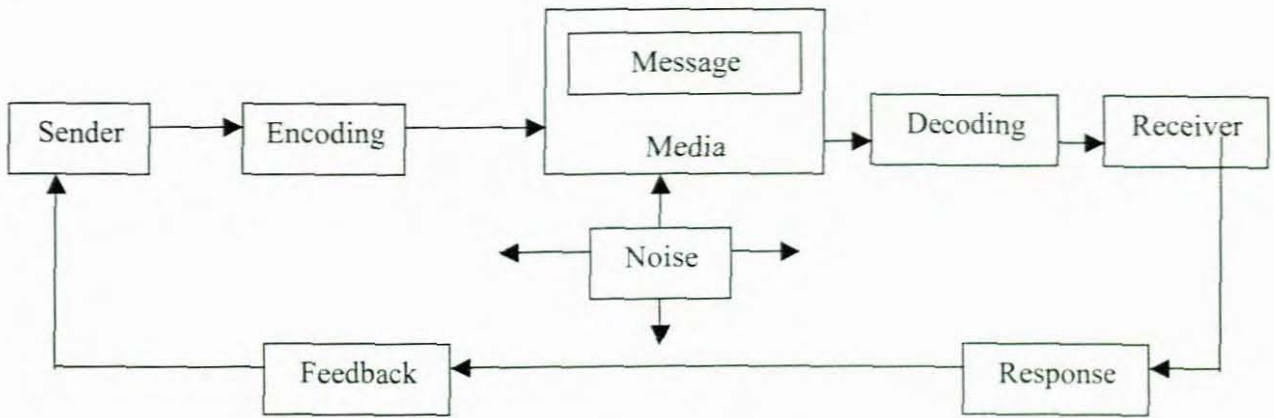
This chapter aims to give an overview of the following with reference to higher education:

- Understanding the communication process
- Understanding the concept of integrated marketing communication and how it relates to higher education institutions
- The steps an institution takes when planning marketing communication strategies, and
- The elements of the marketing communication mix.

3.2. The communication process

Before an institution can develop a marketing communication plan they need to understand the communication process. Communication is viewed as a two-way process. The communication process involves the following eight elements as shown in Figure 3.1.

Figure 3.1: The communication process



Source: Kotler & Armstrong, 1999:424

To explain Figure 3.1, consider the example of an advertisement placed by a higher education institution. The **communicator** is the advertiser (higher education institution) who needs a certain reaction from the **receiver** (the target audience, who are prospective students). The communicator must know the receiver well in order to **encode** a **message** (using codes such as pictures and words) that will elicit the required reaction. The message is contained in an advertisement in the mass **media** (newspaper, radio or television). The prospective student pays attention to the message and must interpret (**decode**) its meaning. The sender anticipates that the prospective student will react. The communicator receives **feedback** through enquiries from students or through application to the institution. The whole communication process is affected by **noise**. Noise interferes with the acceptance of the message. The communicator causes noise when the

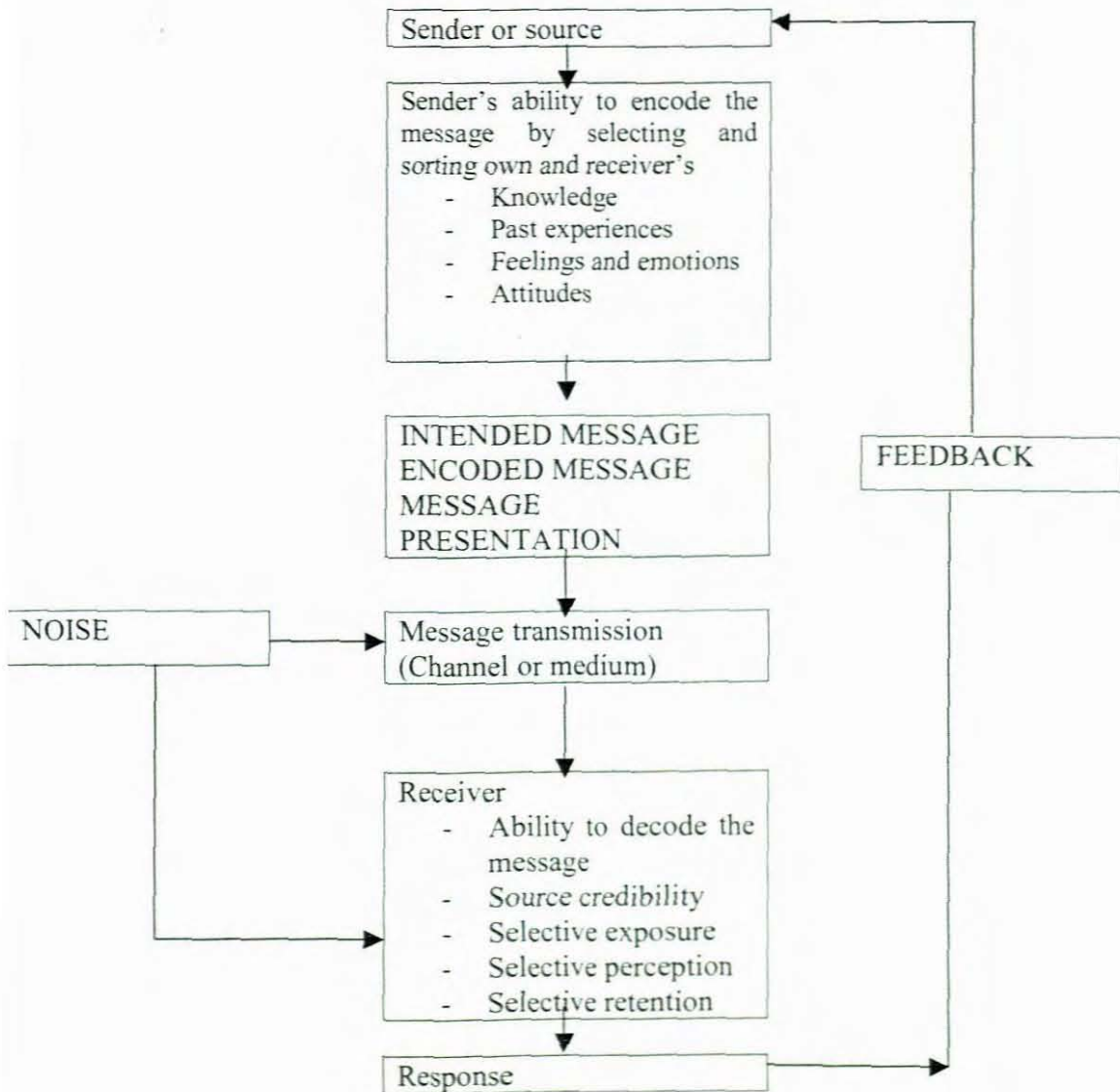
message is encoded incorrectly and when the incorrect media is used. Noise is also caused by messages from competing higher education institutions that can confuse the prospective student (Strydom, 1998:153).

For the message to be effective, the encoding process must mesh with the receiver's decoding process. Higher education institutions therefore need to use words and symbols that are familiar to the receiver. A more comprehensive communication model seen in Figure 3.2 was developed by Koekemoer (1998:35). The sender's ability to successfully encode the message depends on his or her knowledge, past experience, feelings, emotions and attitudes, as well as his or her knowledge of the receiver's past experience, feelings, emotions and attitudes that will motivate the receiver to act.

The model applies to higher education institutions in the following way:

- **Encoding.** In order for higher education institutions to encode successfully, knowledge of the language of their prospective students, knowledge of forms of communication and general background is needed. Experience in human relations and life in the broadest sense is also required. Feelings or emotions also play an important part. It is vital that the institutions should have empathy for other people's cultural backgrounds. Attitudes can cause barriers to communication if the sender's attitude is completely different to the receiver's attitude.
- **The encoded message.** The identification of the appropriate intended message comes from the communicator's understanding of the target market. Higher education institutions therefore need to fully understand the target markets.
- **Message** transmission happens through a medium or channel. The medium of communication the sender chooses is the means of communication. Higher education institutions use many different channels to communicate with prospective students, such as advertising, exhibitions and open days, letters sent to prospective students and school visits.

Figure 3.2: A more comprehensive communication model



Source: Koekemoer, 1998:35

- **The receiver.** The receiver, who is the prospective student, must have the ability to decode. The student's ability to decode the message in many instances is influenced by his/her past experiences, feelings, emotions and attitude. The interpretation of the message by the receiver is also dependent on the receiver's perception of the institution. The students must also be aware of the message.

- **Response.** Through communication the institution has an opportunity to influence the student's behaviour by:

- creating awareness,
- positioning themselves in the mind of the student,
- changing the student's attitude toward the institution,
- or by encouraging the student to apply to the institution.

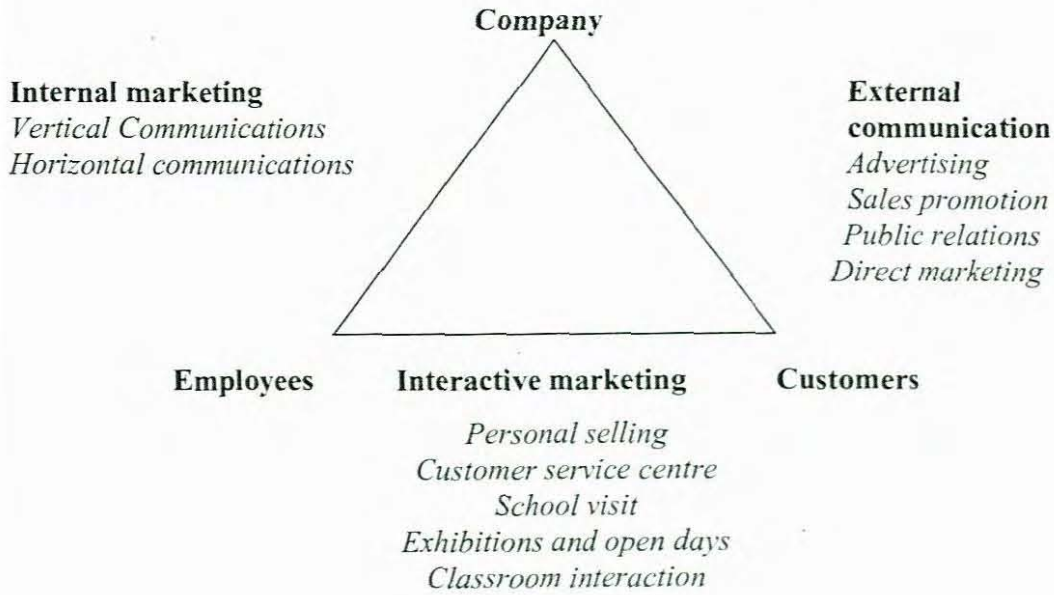
It is clear that for higher education institutions to communicate effectively with prospective students, they need to develop an understanding of their target audience and their behaviour. This topic will be covered in Chapter 4.

3.3 Integrated Marketing Communication

Marketing communication is currently in the era of Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC). Integrated marketing communication is the concept according to which an institution carefully integrates and co-ordinates its many communication channels to deliver a clear, consistent and compelling message about the organisation and its products (Kotler & Armstrong, 1999:439).

For higher education institutions, this means that the institution co-ordinates all its communication channels. The concept requires a *complete communication programme* that involves staff behaviour, every interface the institution has with its students, stakeholder influences and the community at large. Zeithaml and Bitner (2000:405) suggest that a more complex integrated form of communication is needed for services. Not only are external communication channels important, but internal communication channels must also be managed so that the same message is communicated to the customer. As figure 3.3 shows, this requires that both vertical (typically called internal marketing communication) and horizontal communication across departments is necessary. Zeithaml and Bitner (2000:405) has named this more complicated version of IMC Integrated Services Marketing Communication (ISMC). This requires that everyone involved with communication clearly understand both the institution's marketing strategy and its promise to its students.

Figure 3.3: Communication and the services marketing triangle



Source: Zeithaml & Bitner, 2000:403

Schultz (in Koekemoer, 1998:4) is also of the opinion that it is impossible for a marketer to establish effective communication with target consumers using only mass techniques like advertising and publicity. He believes that it is the rapport, the empathy, the dialogue, the relationship and the communication the marketer establishes with the prospect that makes the difference.

3.3.1. External marketing communication

Firstly the institution uses external marketing communication, which extends from the institution to the student, and this includes the traditional communication tools such as advertising, public relations, sales promotion and direct marketing. These tools will be discussed in detail under the marketing communication mix.

3.3.2 Interactive marketing

Secondly, interactive marketing communication involves the messages that staff give to students through channels such as personal selling, which would include exhibitions and

school visits as well as customer service centres. These tools will also be discussed under the marketing communication mix. Interactive marketing also includes classroom interaction. In order for administration and academic staff to send the same messages, that was sent through external marketing communication, the institution must manage internal marketing.

3.3.3. Internal Marketing

Internal marketing can be defined as: "...the process of planning and executing marketing activities aimed at the creation and improvement of exchange processes within the firm, with the objective of accomplishing the firm's objectives and processes in a more efficient and effective way" (Lamb *et al.*, 2000:191).

Internal marketing is also very important in the delivery of the promises made by the marketing function to external markets. The foundation for maintaining relationships is the fulfilment of promises made to customers regarding what they can expect and how it will be delivered. Marketing communication elements communicate these promises. Internal marketing makes the keeping of those promises possible. For the internal market to be effective, it must be empowered to deliver promises. This means ensuring that employees possess the necessary skills, abilities, tools and motivation to deliver. Internal marketing depends on exchange processes to make it function properly. The following exchange processes can be identified:

- Exchange process between the institution and the employees. The best employees should be recruited to accomplish the institution's objectives and the institution in turn should offer the employees sufficient benefits to retain them
- Exchange between top management and the departments. The main objective of these exchange processes is to create conditions that enhance sound practices. Strategic plans are developed from the top down. Departments are responsible for achieving these objectives
- Exchange processes between departments. A feature of marketing-oriented institutions is the exchange of information between departments, and
- Exchange processes between departments and its employees. Exchange processes between departments and employees primarily focus on management tasks such

as co-ordination, leadership and the allocation of tasks and budgets. The goal of internal marketing is to improve the synchronisation of all activities

Internal marketing is beyond doubt very important for external marketing (Lamb *et al.* 2000:191-192).

Integrated marketing does not only have implications for the institution, but the student also plays a vital role. The following must be considered when the higher education institution plans integrated marketing communication strategies:

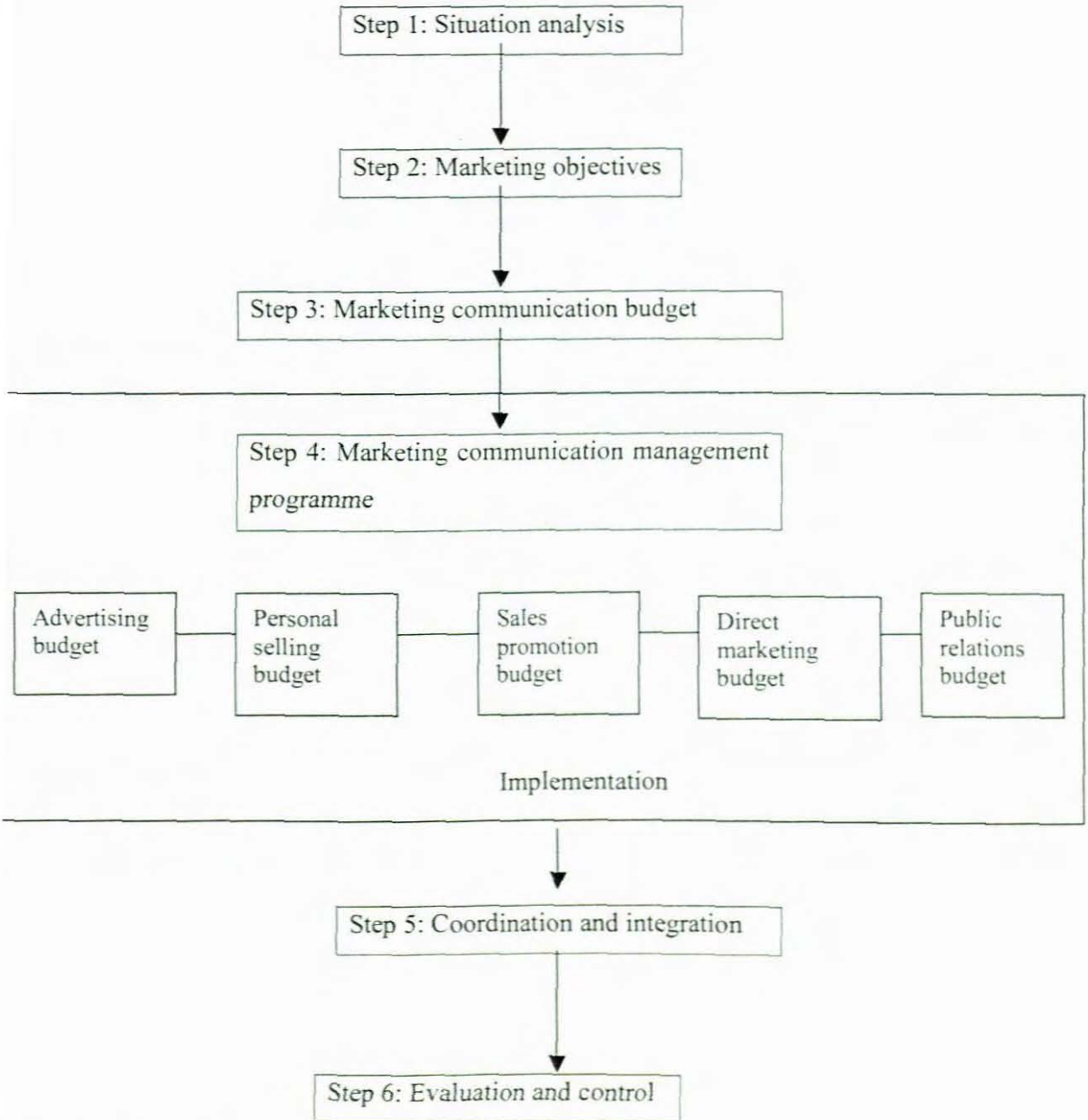
- How do students perceive the institution?
- Why do they attend the institution?
- How do they perceive other higher education institutions?
- How will the student benefit by attending a higher education institution?
- How will the institutions make the benefits they offer believable to students?
- How do we distinguish ourselves from other institutions?
- What action does an institution want students to take as a result of communication efforts?
- What are an institution's contact points, so that its message can reach the targeted students? (Koekemoer, 1998:3-4).

Integrated marketing communication also entails carefully working out the roles the various marketing communication mix elements play in the marketing mix. Promotional activities are co-ordinated and each campaign is carefully monitored to improve the use of the marketing communication tool.

3.4 Marketing Communication Planning and Strategy

Koekemoer (2000:16-18) explains the process involved in planning a marketing communication strategy (See figure 3.4).

Figure 3.4: Marketing communication management process



Source: Koekemoer, 1998:17

3.4.1 Step 1: Performing a situation analysis

This includes the examination of the following:

3.4.1.1 Internal organisational strengths and weaknesses.

- The institution has to review its *monetary resources*. Funds allocated towards communication or promotion will determine the tools that can be used to promote the institution to prospective students
- *Established policies and procedures*. Institutions may be guided by their five-year rolling plans submitted to the Minister of Education in 2001 to attract the desired profile of students. Emphasis on promoting certain courses may also be due to the increased emphasis by the Government on Science and Technology
- *Personnel*. Some institutions have more personnel to market the higher education institution, while others may have a smaller staff complement who are expected to perform the same functions and deliver the same results
- *Management track record*. The management of higher education is also crucial to the success of the marketing communication strategy. Management must understand the benefits of investing in a communication strategy. Management should also realise the importance of being marketing oriented. Higher education is changing considerably and management styles therefore have to adapt to a more business-like setting.
- *History of the brand*. The brand of the institution should embody the vision, mission, values, culture and style of the institution. Students form their own image of the institution through exposure to messages, signage, staff behaviour, advertising, communication with other students and the environments in which they operate. The student makes judgements about the way an institution uses its image. The institution must therefore ensure that the student's perception of the institution is the image the institution intends the student to have. The institution's identity and the staff's understanding of that identity play an important role in creating a good reputation. The crucial point is that advertising, exhibitions and open days are only part of the institution's communication programme. The institution's courses, administrative staff,

academic staff and interaction with students at all levels contribute towards the institution's brand image.

- **Reputation.** An institution can build a good reputation by maintaining good relationships with students. If this is properly managed, an institution with a good reputation:

- Becomes the prospective students' first choice and
- Enables the institution to recruit the top students from the top schools in the country

It also helps the institution become the first choice to recruit graduates (Slack, 2000:35). Building a good reputation is an investment that will cost money, time and commitment.

3.4.1.2. Market segmentation and positioning. For institutions to develop effective communication strategies, it is vital that they base the plans on target market research information. *The process of evaluating a service and how the student, in relation to other institutions, perceives it, is the key to marketing success.* Segmenting or dividing potential students based on common characteristics is necessary in order to deliver programmes and attributes in ways that are significant to the potential student. Communicating these attributes, as perceived by a target audience member, in terms and ways that are meaningful, is particularly important. Higher education institutions can use different bases such as demographic characteristics, lifestyle characteristics, service usage or loyalty to the institution. By focussing on the perceptions of students in terms of values and quality, institutions can decide to react to these preferences. Institutions could modify their programmes, offerings and attributes including monetary costs or expenditure of time and effort on the part of the users. They could also modify their promotional strategies and where their marketing events are located.

However, this concept has been very difficult for higher education institutions to accept. The ability to achieve product significance based on target market

research will become more important as audiences shrink and pressure builds. Higher education institutions should be motivated to research, plan and execute market segmentation if the result exceeds what the result would be without such modification and input effort. This idea of productivity, benefit, achievement and related accountability is important to recognise, especially at many of the institutions that face diminishing resources, budgetary problems, tightening markets and declining pools of students. This will require the addition or deletion of service aspects as well as a repositioning of current services.

Market segmentation, perceived service attributes, institutional image and positioning of the institution as it relates to an audience's perception of an institution in comparison to competing institutions, form important parts of the marketing mix. How well institutions understand the marketplace, educational offerings, perceptions and attitudes of students, related strategies, internal realities and competitive environment form the basis for the marketing plan.

Rather than thinking of target audiences as an undefined group of potential users, attendees, donors or students, institutions are able to use market segmentation to divide and define external and internal targets. Market segmentation helps the institution to understand their internal offerings as perceived by the students and helps to define their target audience (Topor, 1998: www.marketinged.com).

3.4.2. Step 2: Setting marketing objectives

The marketing objectives for higher education institutions are set in accordance with the institution's strategic objectives. The communication objectives in turn are set in accordance with the marketing objectives.

3.4.3. Step 3: Determining the marketing communication budget

This involves the determining of monies allocated to each marketing communication mix element. The following ad index in Table 3.1 for the period

March 2001- February 2002 reflects the allocation of monies toward the various marketing communication mix elements per higher education institution in the Western Cape.

**Table 3.1: Ad index for higher education institutions in the Western Cape
March 2001-February 2002**

Higher Education institution	Total(R)	Print(R)	Cinema(R)	Radio(R)	Outdoor(R)	TV (R)	Internet (R)	Knock and Drop (R)
Cape Technikon	673863	558363	0	115500	0	0	0	0
University of Cape Town	1331957	392275	0	4050	0	935632	0	0
Peninsula Technikon	344529	303870	0	40659	0	0	0	0
University of Stellenbosch	1947850	1868466	0	79384	0	0	0	0
University of the Western Cape	869380	740282	0	129098	0	0	0	0

Source: A.C.Nielsen, Adindex March 2001- February 2002

3.4.4. Step 4: Management of the marketing communication mix

Within the limitations of the promotion budget and the monies allocated to each of the marketing communication mix elements, institutions have to set objectives, develop a strategy, decide on a method and implement the strategy. The marketing mix elements and its role in higher education will be covered later in this chapter.

3.4.5. Step 5: Coordination and integration of efforts

The issues involved here are:

- How to achieve a proper balance between the various marketing communication mix elements to get the best effect
- Scheduling the activities
- Utilisation of personnel and outside agencies, and
- Budget appropriation revision to allocate resources strategically to the various mixes elements

3.4.6. Step 6: Evaluation, control and follow-up

This step involves the setting of standards, measurement of each communication element and of the programme as a whole, preparing revised strategies and following up on the implementation.

Every effort should be made to prepare a marketing communication plan bearing in mind the institution's culture, strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. Records should be kept of what works and what does not. Communication tools should change to adapt to the changing environment. Research therefore becomes central to the success of the marketing communication plan (Koekemoer,1998:16-18).

3.5 The Marketing Communication Mix

The marketing communication mix, also referred to as the promotion mix, consists of all the vehicles that communicate information to customers about products and services. The traditional components of the marketing communication mix include advertising, personal selling, sales promotion, public relations and direct marketing. Higher education institutions can use all these elements to persuade prospective students to choose their offerings. The institution must decide which mix is the one that will meet the needs of the target audience and which will enable the institution to realise the institution's objectives.

3.5.1. Advertising

The American Marketing Association (in Koekemoer, 1998:55) defines advertising as:

“...any paid form of non-personal presentation and promotion of ideas, goods and services by an identified sponsor.”

Engel, Warshaw & Kinnear (1991:13) defines advertising as paid, non-personal communication through various media by business firms, non-profit organisations and individuals who are in some way identified in the advertising message and who hope to inform and/or persuade members of a particular audience. It includes communication of products, services, institutions and ideas.

(Koekemoer, 1998:17) defines advertising as any paid form of mass presentation of ideas, products and services by an advertiser, addressed to selected target audiences with the objective of creating awareness, reminding, influencing and persuading them to buy the product or service or to be favourably inclined towards these ideas, products or services.

Although the above definitions contain similar elements, Koekemoer’s definition will be used to outline the elements in advertising and how it relates to higher education.

From the above definitions, the following factors are involved:

- **Paid form:-** Advertising is a deliberate paid for message disseminated through a medium such as television, radio, cinema, newspapers, magazines, books, direct mail, billboards, advertising on busses, taxis and at bus stops, or through electronic media such as the Internet, e-mail and faxes
- **Mass communication:-** Advertising is a means of communication that enables the advertiser to deliver a message to a large number of potential customers at the lowest possible cost per contact. Although the cost per contact is low, the total cost to advertise is high
- **Advertiser or identified sponsor:-** Advertising discloses the source.
- **Selected target audience:-** Each advertisement has a target audience it is intended to reach. The message is tailor made to reach a selected target audience

- **Objective of the advertisement:-** Each advertisement has its own objective. The common advertising objective is to create awareness of your service or brand, to provide the target audience with relevant information about your brand or service and to remind them of your brand or service.

3.5.1.1 How does advertising relate to higher education institutions?

From the ad index in Table 3.1 it is evident that higher education institutions are investing more and more in advertising as the competition increases. Print, cinema, radio, outdoor, television, Internet and knock-and-drop are all tools used to advertise higher education institutions. Not many institutions advertise on television as it is expensive and reaches a general audience. Higher education is directed at a specific target audience and most of the institution's advertising expenditure is spent on print advertising, in newspapers, study aids, journals and posters. An advantage of newspaper advertising is that it is geographically selective and it is directed at a specific audience. Study aids and journals have a longer lifespan. Matriculants, who are the major target audience for higher education, use study aids. This also gives them national coverage at a lower cost than advertising. Radio advertising is also popular because it is also geographically selective and a certain audience can be reached at certain times. Internet advertising is a new and exciting medium. It is interactive, and learners can communicate directly with marketing officers and faculties to gain information. Institutions can also change information immediately. Most higher education institutions have websites. This expenditure may however not come from the marketing budget, which is evident from the ad index in Figure 3.1.

Although outdoor advertising may not be widely used by higher education institutions, Natal University was very successful with their "Adopt a Light" campaign, which won a Loerie Award in 2001. The concept was a commercial use of electric light standards throughout the country. Natal University placed posters on light stands in front of targeted schools. The idea of the poster was that it depicted specific faculties, for example, Engineering showed an electric light pole with zigzags in combinations and joins at the top. The effect that this created was that when driving down the road one

actually saw the light stand, rather than the poster (SA fm, 10 July 2001). This advertising was very appealing to prospective students and their parents. This type of advertising is evidence that higher education institutions are shifting to more creative advertising. Whichever medium the institution chooses to relay the message, the institution will be directed by the marketing communication objectives, the target audience and the budget available.

3.5.2. Personal selling

Personal selling is a situation in which two people communicate in an attempt to influence each other in a purchase situation (Lamb et al, 2000:310).

Personal selling is a personal presentation by a representative from the firm to make sales and build customer relationships (Zeithaml & Bitner, 2000:404).

Personal selling is a person-to-person process by which the seller learns about the prospective buyers' wants and seeks to satisfy them by offering suitable goods or services and making a sale (Koekemoer, 1998:196).

Regardless of which definition is used, personal selling is different to advertising because the communication is person-to-person and the core of personal selling is to persuade the prospective customer to buy your product or service.

Personal selling has many advantages over advertising in that prospects are more obliged to pay attention to a salesperson. Messages can be tailored to suit the needs of the customer. A salesperson can communicate a great deal of complex information. Personal selling can be specifically directed at qualified prospects. The size and cost of the sales force can be varied, depending on the number of calls to be made. While advertising, public relations and sales promotion pave the way for personal selling, the sales function has direct bottom-line responsibility for obtaining orders.

3.5.2.1 The role of personal selling in higher education

“Any salesperson will tell you that the best way to convert a prospect is to meet them face-to-face. This is also true within higher education, particularly as the product we are selling is intangible, it cannot be seen, it is bought and then taken home” (www.heist.co.uk). *Personal selling functions are therefore very important to higher education.* Although higher education institutions do not have a sales department with a sales force, various departments within the institution perform personal selling functions. The typical sales functions that are performed in higher education institutions are as follows:

- Selling. The task of selling includes servicing established accounts and prospecting for new accounts. Higher education institutions have schools liaison officers, recruitment officers and student counsellors who are responsible for advising prospective students on which programmes to enrol for in order for them to pursue a specific career. They are also responsible for informing prospective students about new and existing programmes that the institution has to offer.
- Maintaining relationships. It is the salesperson's duty to maintain relationships with various distribution channel members. Salespeople also help their customers with managerial problems ranging from administrative to motivational. Schools liaison officers and recruitment officers carry out these duties at higher education institutions. It is their responsibility to maintain good relationships with the education department, principals, guidance teachers and school governing bodies because they are the decision makers when it comes to allowing learners to attend open days and career exhibitions. Institutions often host social events to improve relationships with people who guide students with tertiary and career choices. Institutions also offer assistance to matriculants in the form of winter schools and career workshops during the vacation period to create brand awareness and to foster relationships with prospective students. This has proved to be very successful for the Civil Engineering department at the University of Stellenbosch. The department hosts a career workshop for students interested in pursuing a

career in Civil Engineering. Students spend a week on campus experiencing student life in the residences, they are addressed by guest speakers from industry and are taken on site inspections. Research by the department has shown that most of the students who attend the workshop apply to the institution for the course. Other institutions also assist matriculants who have problems with specific subjects such as mathematics and science. Education marketing professionals should realise the importance of using the relationship marketing concept. Marketing professionals know that it costs five times more to get a new customer than it does to keep an existing one. Education marketing professionals are starting to realise that it probably makes sense to invest more of the marketing budget to convert an applicant or enquirer into an enrolled student.

- *Planning.* Because of intense competition, salespeople also spend a major portion of their time planning. In higher education institutions there is a limited number of people responsible for the recruitment of prospective students. Schools liaison officers and recruitment officers have to determine which schools to visit and how many times a year to visit these schools. Many institutions visit schools throughout the country. They also have to decide on which exhibitions to attend. Many of these are time consuming and very costly. They have to engage in *strategic planning to achieve the institution's strategic objectives.*

Most of the above functions form part of the responsibility of the recruitment officer or the schools liaison officer, which implies that they should be knowledgeable about the institution, its reputation, mission, vision and values. Schools liaison officers and marketing officers should understand the policies of the institution and the transformation of higher education. To recruit students and to show them how they will benefit by studying at their institution, there is a need for information on the various programmes that the institution offers, including the pricing structures of these programmes. A clear understanding of student requirements and the competitive environment is also vital. Extensive training is therefore required

It is evident that schools liaison officers and recruitment officers play a vital role in the success of the institution, yet one finds that these departments receive very little attention from the institutions. Some institutions have from 2-8 people performing these functions while other institutions rely on academic staff for assistance.

3.5.3. Public Relations

Public relations is the element in the promotional mix that evaluates public attitudes, identifies issues, may elicit public concern and executes programmes to gain public understanding and acceptance (Lamb *et al.*, 2000:345).

The International Public Relations Association (IPRA) defines public relations as: “...the art and social science of analysing trends, predicting their consequences, counselling organisation leaders, and implementing planned programmes of action which will serve both the organisation and the public interest” (Koekemoer, 1998: 348).

The Public Relations Institute of Southern Africa states that: “Public relations is the management, through communication of perceptions and strategic relationships, between an organisation and its internal and external stakeholders” (Koekemoer, 1998:348).

Public relations is a promotional management function that uses traditional two-way communication to mesh the needs and interests of an institution or person with the needs and interests of the various publics with which that institution must communicate (Engel, *et al*, 1991:692).

All the above definitions contain the following elements that can be applied to higher education institutions:

- Public relations mean that the person or institution is engaging in persuasive communication with its publics.

- Publics refer to the group at which the message is directed. Publics include the general public, community, customers, government, suppliers, media and local community.

3.5.3.1. The role of public relations in higher education

Public relations in higher education have a long history. It first started with news releases that were sent to a list of newspapers, but with the advent of computers and marketing communication strategies, public relations has undergone an incredible transformation. Although the methodology has changed, the substance of public relations is still the same. Public relations play a vital role in higher education institutions. Successful public relations involve strategic thinking, a close relationship with the overall integrated marketing plan and professionals who know their business (Topor, 1999;www.marketinged.com).

In most higher education institutions, the public relations department manages marketing functions. Institutions however need to understand that public relations is not marketing. Public relations have the goal of attaining and maintaining accord with social groups on whom the organisation depends in order to achieve its mission (Koekemoer, 1998:349).

3.5.3.2. Tools and techniques used in public relations

In order for higher education institutions to achieve this goal, a variety of tools and techniques can be used to communicate effectively between the institution and the publics.

3.5.3.3. Tools used to communicate with internal publics

Communication with internal publics forms an important part of internal marketing. Employees within the institution should be kept informed about the institution's practices and other matters that affect their work and welfare. Most institutions use employee publications such as faculty newsletters, in-house journals and annual reports to keep staff informed. Faculty newsletters are easy to prepare and are cost effective. In-house

academic journals enable academics to be kept up-to-date with research activities. With the current transformation of higher education, institutions are constantly in the process of developing policy and procedure manuals. The intranet has become a frequently used tool to disseminate information. Meetings, however, are still used when discussion and debate is necessary.

3.5.3.4. Tools used to communicate with external publics

The public relations department should maintain media relations for print and broadcast media. Public relations officers should research the available media, identify media contacts, brief the contacts and provide them with background material. The department is also responsible for designing information brochures that are user friendly and cost efficient. They also design the logo of the institution and monitor all publications sent to external publics to make sure the image of the institution is not compromised. The institution is offering a service and is often measured by the physical evidence such as premises and facilities. Public relations therefore also include ensuring that these reflect the image of the institution. Web pages have also become an important marketing tool that is inexpensive and interactive. Networking is another important marketing tool, which assists in developing relationships with external publics. With the decrease in government funding, institutions rely on support from industry, alumni and the community. Conferences have become important in building the reputation of the institution. It gives the institution exposure to industry and it encourages research, which is one of the criteria against which the institution is evaluated and funding is provided.

Career exhibitions and open days are the most common tools used by most institutions to market the institution to the external publics. This tool often forms part of the total marketing effort. The advantage of this technique is that it brings faculties, staff, students, learners, parents and teachers together in one place at one time. It is therefore cost effective and saves time. The main reason for institutions placing so much emphasis on these tools is:

- to create an awareness of the institution and the programmes it offers,
- to create a positive attitude towards the institution,

- to create a demand for certain programmes,
- to *communicate the institution's achievements*,
- to enhance the status of the institution and
- to convert an interested student to an enrolled student.

Lew-Kiedrowski (2000:44) is of the opinion that exhibitions are the fastest growing marketing media available. He sees the main objective of exhibitions as identifying opportunities for leads that can be followed up and converted into orders.

The disadvantage is that the event normally takes up the budget allocated for promotion and advertising. Institutions therefore need to give exhibitors, who are normally senior students and academic staff members, appropriate training before the exhibition or open day so that they can enhance the chances of a successful return on the investment in the exhibition. Career exhibitions should be evaluated by the visitors so that they can create more of an experience rather than simply being a procession from stall to stall to collect pamphlets. Career exhibitions and open days are however regarded as important marketing communication tools, yet relatively few studies have examined the effectiveness of the medium in attracting prospective students to the institution. This study therefore concentrates on the effectiveness of this medium.

3.5.4. Direct marketing

Direct marketing is defined as the use of mail, telephone, fax, e-mail and other non-personal tools to communicate directly with specific consumers to obtain a direct response (Zeithalm & Bitner, 2000:404).

The American Direct Marketing Association defines direct marketing as an interactive system of marketing that uses one or more advertising media to affect a measurable response and or transaction at any location (Koekemoer, 1998:287).

Direct marketing has grown as fast as exhibitions. Cooper (1997:252) claims that the reason for this growth is the advancement of information technology, increased competition and increased customer awareness.

3.5.4.1 The role of direct marketing in higher education

Higher education institutions often use direct mail, direct response advertising and telemarketing as direct marketing tools.

(i) Direct mail

Institutions use direct mail to invite schools to open days and career exhibitions.

Institutions gather information on prospective students through career exhibitions, open days, school visits and general telephonic enquiries. They can use this as a mailing list to provide prospective students with information on the programmes that the institution offers. Institutions should see this as an opportunity to develop a relationship with the student at an early stage in their decision-making process.

(ii) Direct response advertising

Direct response advertising may generate enquiries for more information, which can be provided through direct mail or telephonically. This is also then used as an initial screening, because students have to meet certain criteria for different courses.

(iii) Telemarketing

Institutions also use call centres as a direct marketing tool. Inbound calls may be generated through direct response advertising and outbound calls may be generated through students who request more information at career exhibitions or open days.

3.5.5 Sales Promotion

Sales promotion is defined as short-term incentives such as coupons, premiums or discounts that stimulate customer purchases (Zeithalm & Bitner, 2000:404).

Sales promotion refers to those promotion activities, other than advertising, publicity and personal selling that stimulate interest, trial or purchase by final customers or others in the channel (Perreault & Mc Carthy, 2000:359).

Koekemoer (1998:235) defines sales promotion as a blend of marketing activities and materials designed to intensify the efforts of the marketers sales force, induce intermediaries to stock and sell the marketers product offering, and or persuade consumers to buy the product offering within a specified, limited time period.

All of the above definitions contain the following elements of sales promotion that will be used to relate sales promotion to higher education institutions:

- (i) Sales promotion is action focussed
- (ii) Sales promotion requires specific sales promotion material
- (iii) Sales promotion can be targeted at different audiences
- (iv) Sales promotion is short-term.

3.5.5.1 The role of sales promotion in higher education

Sales promotion could take the form of specific events to encourage students to enrol for a specific course. Peninsula Technikon, in an attempt to increase the enrolment of female students in the Department of Engineering, hosts a "Women in Engineering Week." Promotional material such as t-shirts, folders and pens are manufactured to promote the event. During open days and exhibitions, faculties design promotional material to remind students of their visit to the institution. Institutions also use sales promotion tools targeted at different audiences. For example the institution may design a competition for the best stall at the open day. Institutions also use Olympiads in Science, Mathematics and Accounting as sales promotion tools. This enables the institution to expand its database and to identify the top students in the country so that bursaries and scholarships can be offered as an incentives for students to study at a particular institution. These can also be identified as sales promotion tools.

Higher education institutions have all these marketing communication mix variables at their disposal, but they need to achieve a balanced communication mix that is most effective at a minimum cost. The most important issue for higher education institutions in developing marketing communication strategies is understanding the student. If the

institution does not understand how students make decisions about what courses to study and which institutions to attend, the institution's communication efforts may be in vain.

3.6 Integrated marketing communication in practice at higher education institutions

Now that the marketing communication mix elements have been identified, an open day hosted by a higher education institution will be used as an example to observe integrated marketing communication in practice.

3.6.1 Objective of the marketing communication tool

The marketing communication objective of an open day is to create an awareness of the institution and to encourage grade 12 learners to apply for specific courses.

3.6.2 Budget allocation

The institution allocates a budget to the event and delegates the planning and co-ordination to the public relations department.

3.6.3 Planning

The public relations department may decide on a theme for the event, a date and place of the open day. These details have to be communicated to the staff, internal publics and the prospective student who are external publics. Memos and the intranet may be used to inform the internal publics of the event. Direct mail may be used to invite schools to the event. Meetings may be held with faculties to co-ordinate and plan the event. Sales promotion tools may be directed at both staff and prospective students. Competitions may be used to encourage academics to dress up the stall to make it more attractive. Faculties may design promotional material such as printing the department or faculty logos on t-shirts, pens and rulers to hand out to visitors at the open day.

3.6.4 Media selection

The public relations department, depending on the budget available, may advertise the event in newspapers and on radio, and place posters in strategic places such as career resources centres and outside targeted schools. The public relations department should

ensure that the advertisements reflect the correct image of the institution and should approve all marketing communication material. It is important that the institution speaks with one voice. The public relations department may use media contacts to gain publicity for the event. Schools liaison officers and recruitment officers may visit schools months prior to the event to create awareness and enthusiasm. Direct mail may be used before the event to remind schools to send learners.

3.6.5 Implementation

On the day of the event the public relations department is responsible for maintaining the image of the institution by ensuring that the faculties, facilities and staff project a positive image.

3.6.6 Follow-up

Direct marketing may once again be used after the event to thank schools for attending. *Information brochures and application forms may be sent to prospective students who indicated that they are interested in studying at the institution.* Recruitment officers and school liaison officers may do a follow-up visit after the open day to ensure that learners complete application form and to ensure that learners meet the requirements for a specific course.

3.6.7 Evaluation

The public relations department may host a follow-up meeting with staff and students who manned the stalls to evaluate the event.

3.7 Summary

In this chapter the marketing communication strategy for higher education institutions is explored. *The communication process for higher education institutions is outlined.* The concept of integrated marketing communication is explained and how it relates to higher education. The steps higher education institutions should take to plan marketing communication strategies are outlined. The marketing communication mix tools that higher education institutions can use are identified and the role it plays in higher education is explored.

CHAPTER 4

THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS FOR PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS IN TERMS OF THE CHOICE OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION

"If one does not know to which port one is sailing, no wind is favourable."

Seneca

4.1 Introduction

The first promotional task institutions need to undertake is to learn about the decision-making process students engage in when selecting which institution to attend, so that the institution can be there at the right time and place with the right information (Smith and Cavusgil, 1984:113). Engel, Warshaw and Kinnear (1991:117) regard understanding the consumer as the most important issue in promotional strategy.

This chapter gives an overview of the literature in the area of decision-making of students when choosing a particular higher education institution. In order to determine the effectiveness of exhibitions in attracting students to an institution, it is crucial to understand consumer behaviour in the education market. Consumers basically go through a decision-making process that can include up to five steps, which include:

- need recognition,
- information search,
- evaluation of alternatives,
- purchase,
- and post-purchase.

In this chapter the adapted version of these steps will be applied to the student decision-making process in the higher education market.

4.1.1 The Decision-Making Process for prospective higher education students

Prospective higher education students in South Africa undergo an extensive decision-making process when applying for a course of study. The process commences in Grade 9 when learners have to make a choice of commerce, science and technical subjects that is carried through to Grade 12. These subjects play a role in the career paths learners pursue, as it forms part of the entrance requirements for tertiary education and the prerequisites for certain programmes. Learners normally only enquire about institutions and programmes when they reach Grade 12. Most prospective students have to choose

two courses (a first choice and a second choice) from many courses available at universities and technikons. Learners apply to more than one institution. If the institution accepts the application for the first choice, the learner must decide whether to accept the offer. The student's second choice is often a "back-up" (an insurance) if they do not meet the requirements for their first choice. Their second choice normally requires a lower grade. The decision-making process for the student is therefore a lengthy process.

Gray (in Pimpa, 1999: www.marketinged.com) views the purchase of higher education as a high involvement purchase, due to its high cost, high personal relevance, variety of different alternatives available and time taken to make the decision. Because of the risks that students face, higher education institutions need to find ways of reducing that risk and to aid the students in the decision-making process. This can include feedback to enquiries, further use of interviews as a two-way process of information gathering and a greater use of alumni who can act as opinion leaders since students seek personal advice (Nicholls *et al.*, 1995:31-35)

Many consumer decision-making models have been developed for high involvement purchases. Generally there is a sequence consumers go through when making purchasing decisions and this process is no different for students making a decision about higher education. The stages are as follows:

- Problem recognition
- Search for information
- Evaluation of alternatives
- Purchase
- Post-purchase behaviour.
-

The decision making process for students is longer and there is a greater perceived risk in this purchase. The student makes a decision approximately twelve to six months before the purchase decision phase from the initial enquiry to enrolment. There are very few services where partially committed consumers have so long to make a final decision.

This purchase decision takes the student on average three to four years (the duration of a diploma or degree). The risk involved is great because the student may feel that the decision in terms of the institution or the course is incorrect. If this does happen the student is still liable for the course fees. This process is further complicated because students are forced to plan in advance not knowing what the outcome of their Grade 12 (matric) results are going to be.

Kerry Dworkin (*The Sunday Times*, 17 February 2000:page??) says that students should consider the following factors before choosing where and what to study:

- Students should choose a career path. Students need to know themselves and the different career options available in order to make wise and realistic choices. Higher education institutions offer career counselling that can help students make informed decisions
- Students need to investigate which institutions offer the courses they want to pursue. Universities and technikons offer different types of training
- Students should check the entry requirements and see whether they qualify
- Student should investigate whether the institutions will equip them with the skills required by industry and whether the institution offers practical training and assists with job placements
- Students should decide what size of institution they should study at. Larger institutions may have large numbers of students in the class, while smaller institutions may have fewer students in class and the students may receive more individual attention
- Student should decide whether recreational and sporting facilities are important
- Awards, scholarships, bursaries and loans awarded by the institution should also be considered.

4.2 A proposed decision-making model for higher education

Stiber (2001:93) defines the decision-making process for master's students as:

- problem recognition,
- search for information,

- alternative evaluation,
- *applicant choice*,
- enrolment, and
- outcomes.

There are a number of variables that affect the decision process, namely: individual factors, social influences and situational influences. Figure 4.1 is adapted from the model used by Stiber (2001:94) to explain the process prospective students go through when making decisions about which higher education institution to attend.

4.2.1 Problem recognition

Problem recognition is the consumer's realisation that he/she has a purchase goal stemming from a need that requires a decision (Pimpa, 1999: www.marketinged.com). For students, problem recognition may occur through the realisation that secondary education is not sufficient and tertiary education is necessary to obtain a well-paid position in industry. However, the student may be aware of the need, but may not be able to do anything about it because of the inability to fulfil this need. This could be because the student does not meet the academic criteria or that the student does not have the financial ability. In a survey conducted among Grade 12 learners in August 2001 by Cosser and du Toit (2002:1-2), which aimed at investigating factors affecting learner choice with regards to higher education, the results proved that there is a positive correlation between intention to enter higher education and the average Grade 11 symbol of learners. A regression analysis reveals that the odds of learners with an A-average Grade 11 symbol indicating that they intend entering rather than not entering higher education are 8.6 times higher than the odds of learners with an F-G symbol indicating that they intend entering rather than not entering higher education. Problem recognition, if it is going to progress to the next stage, requires the student to have both the ability and willingness to fulfil the need.

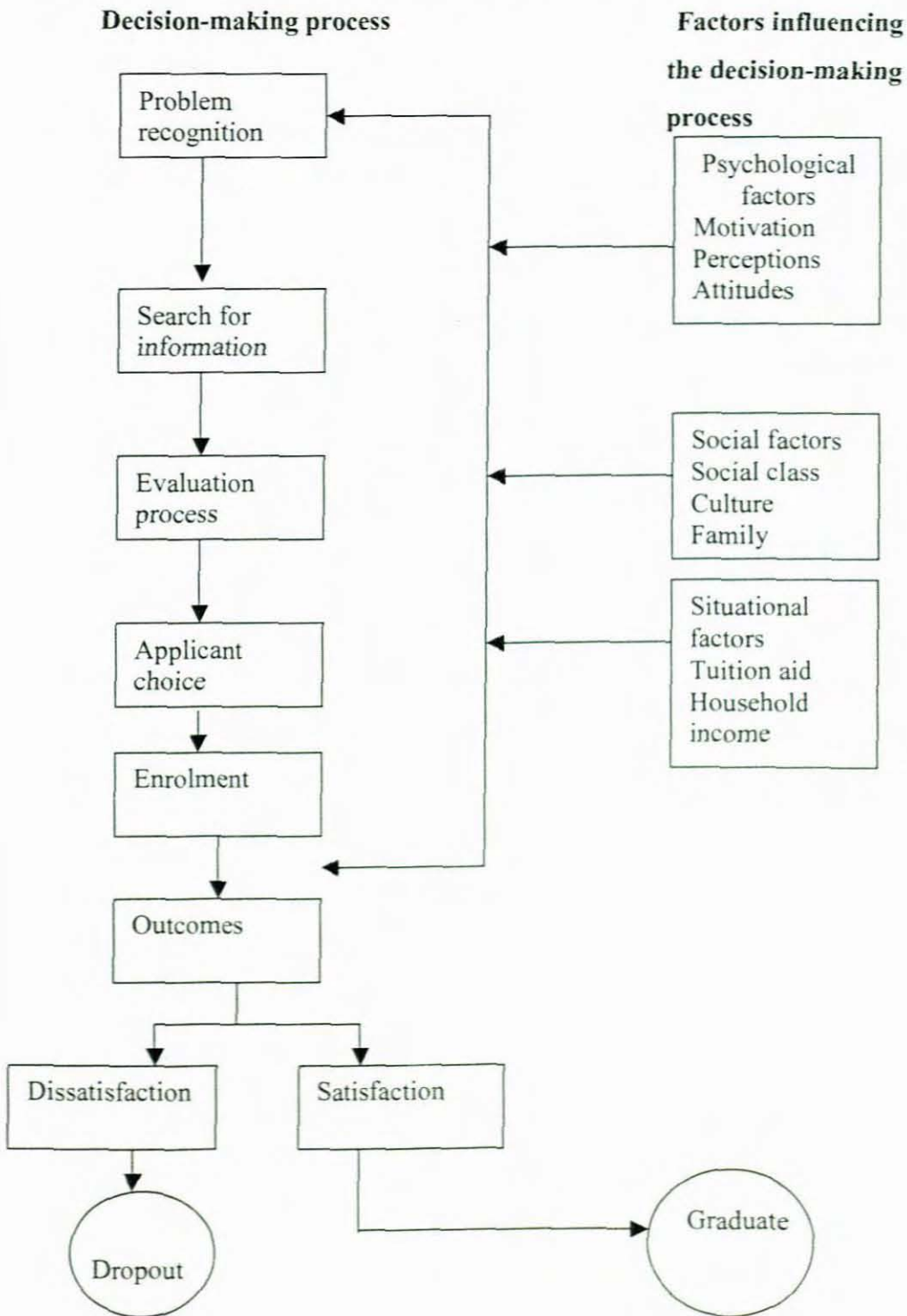
Moogan, Baron and Bainbridge (2001:179-187) claim that at this stage a gap exists between the ideal and actual state. The ideal state refers to the position consumers would

like to be in and the actual state is the consumer's current perception of their present situation. Prospective students must therefore decide whether or not to fill this gap. The larger the disparity between these two states, the greater the level of motivation, ability and opportunity, and the student is more likely to act. Prospective students who find themselves in this position will therefore have to decide if continuing their studies will solve this dilemma. In the study by Cosser and du Toit (2001:2) nearly nine out of ten learners viewed higher education as a gateway to employment. Students also viewed higher education as a means of earning a higher income. Students will therefore have to decide whether they should seek employment for a minimum wage or to continue with their studies with the possibility of later earning a higher income. Although the student recognises the problem, higher education institutions can use the marketing mix to bring the problem to the student's attention.

This stage can be very complex, especially when students take the following into consideration (Cosser and du Toit, 2002:4-12):

- The region they wish to study in. More than a quarter of the institutions derive support from at least three provinces. These include the University of Cape Town, Cape Technikon and Peninsula Technikon. The University of Stellenbosch also draws substantial support from the Northern Cape. The province in which the learner goes to school is most strongly associated with the choice of institution.
- The mode of learning (distance or contact). The vast majority of learners (86%) intended studying through a contact rather than a distance mode. More than a quarter of those who have chosen to study in a distance mode, cite studying part-time while working as a main reason for their choice.
- Whether to study at a University or a Technikon. The results reveal that 55% of learners surveyed intended to study at a Technikon. 35% of learners intended to study at a university, while 10% were undecided.

Figure 4.1: A decision-making model for higher education



Source: Stiber, 2001:94

- Whether to study at a private or public institution. Learners choosing to study at a private institution (9.6% of those intending to enter higher education) rate their reasons as follows:
 - o It prepares the student better for the job market than a public university can;
 - o It has a better reputation in the field of study than any public university;
 - o It has a better reputation than any public university;
 - o It offers better personal security than a public university does;
 - o It will prepare the student better for further study overseas than a public university; and
 - o The fees are more affordable than at a public university.
- Which course to study? The results reveal that 26% of learners opted to study in Business and Commerce, 40% in Science and Technology and 19% in the Humanities. A large percentage of the learners do not know either the name of the qualification towards which they will be studying (48%) or the major subjects that will comprise their study programmes (42%).

The above considerations give rise to a series of other problems, such as where they will stay, how they will travel, which institution is better and whether the course will provide them with job opportunities. .

4.2.2 Information search

At this stage the student has no experience of higher education and will therefore search for information by whatever means. The student can either use internal or external sources of information.

4.2.2.1 Internal sources

Internal sources refer to a person's past experience with similar types of purchases. For first-year students, the designated group for this research, the main source of information will be through external sources.

4.2.2.2 External sources

External sources from which information might be obtained are personal sources (friends, family and career guidance) and non-personal sources (mass or selective media). When purchasing a service such as education, consumers rely to a greater extent on personal sources for several reasons because mass media can convey very little about experience qualities. By asking friends, family and experts, more information can be gained about experience qualities. Non-personal sources can be very costly at higher education institutions, especially as public institutions do not have the required funds. Personal influence then becomes pivotal as the product complexity increases. Zeithaml and Bitner (2000:32-33) state that the service industry recognises the strong influence of word-of-mouth. Word-of-mouth gives the student the opportunity to reduce the risk since it gives the student the opportunity to receive feedback. Students may therefore be more willing to attend an exhibition or open day to secure first-hand information rather than rely on mass media. Friends, family and peers may all give advice whether based on experience, knowledge or opinion. Students may seek advice from friends and family who have already studied at various institutions to narrow down their number of options, because this source is assumed to be unbiased and trustworthy. Their information is derived from first-hand experience. The study by Cosser and du Toit (2001:3) shows that family urging students to continue their studies appear fourth in a list of fourteen, while teachers appear tenth. This could be due to the absence of specialist career guidance teachers in the public high schools.

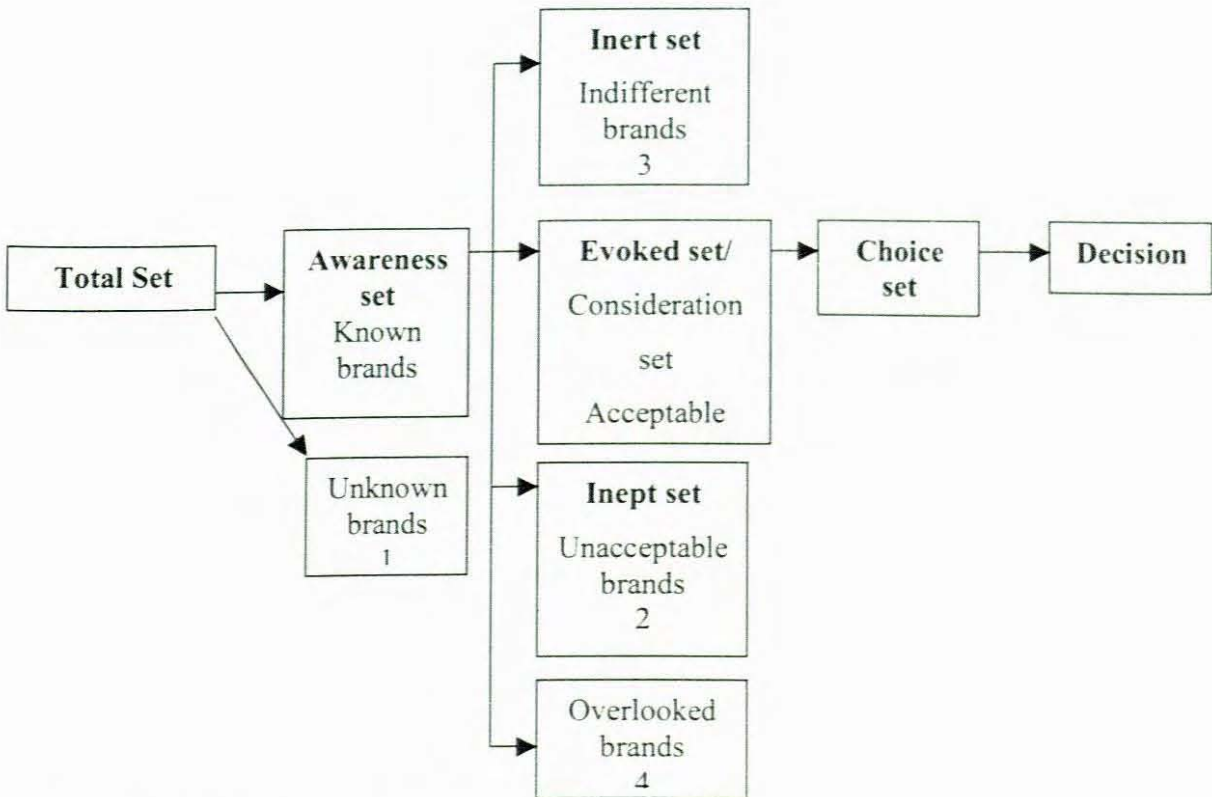
Hauser *et al.* (in Brassington and Pettitt, 2000:96) emphasise that time pressure can also interfere with the information search. They found that consumers spend less time searching for different sources as pressure increases. Students often do not give much thought to tertiary studies, and a decision is only made once the matric results are available. The information search is therefore less intense and the student's choices are also limited. This is bound to influence the quality of the eventual decision.

4.2.3 Evaluation process

As the consumer is engaged in a search activity, there is also an active engagement in information evaluation (Loudon and Della Bitta, 1993:513). How students gather information and learn about competing brands is captured through the brand elimination process. The definition of a brand is a name, term, sign, symbol, or design or a combination of those intended to identify the goods or services of one seller or group of sellers and to distinguish them from those of their competitors (Kotler & Armstrong, 1999:245). For higher education institutions the brand does not only consist of the name and the symbol of the institution, it should also embody the vision, philosophy, culture, values and style of the organisation. The brand gives the institution a personality, identity and image.

Figure 4.2 depicts the brand elimination process leading to higher education institution acceptance or rejection by a student deciding to study at a particular institution.

Figure 4.2: Five Stage Brand Elimination Model



Source: Adapted from Rosen, Curran and Greenlee ,1998:64

4.2.3.1 Five Stage Brand Elimination Process

- (i) The total set refers to the entire set of possible alternatives a student may consider for higher education studies. The student may not be aware of all these alternatives.
- (ii) The awareness set is the entire set of alternatives known to the prospective student. Higher education institutions have to increase their potential of being included in the awareness set. At this stage the institution may not know whether it is part of the awareness set, but any contact made with the prospective student may move them from the awareness set into the consideration set.

From the awareness set the student makes the first choices narrowing down those brands in the awareness set into three subsets called the evoked set, the inert set and the inept set. This process is an attempt to reduce the alternatives to a more manageable number and to allow a rational choice from among the most viable alternatives. The evoked set, also referred to as the consideration set, consists of a small number of institutions that students are familiar with, remembers and finds acceptable. In the study by Cosser and du Toit (2001:4) students ranked the University of Cape Town ninth, Cape Technikon twelfth, the University of the Western Cape twenty-first, the University of Stellenbosch twenty-eighth and Peninsula Technikon twenty-ninth out of thirty-six higher education institutions in South Africa as their choice of institution for higher education study.

The inept set consists of institutions that are excluded from the choice consideration because they are unacceptable or inferior. The inert set consists of institutions that are eliminated from further consideration because the student is indifferent towards these brands. Because the decision process is a multiple step procedure, the institution cannot be content with being included in the awareness set of the student. The student may indicate through

enquiries that the institution is in his/her consideration set (or in the inert set with the potential of moving into the consideration set.) Higher education institutions should therefore examine their recruitment tools to ensure that the institution remains part of the consideration set and moves into the choice set.

- (iii) In the choice set the student would have narrowed down alternatives to a few choices. In the choice set the student would have to evaluate each of the institutions in the consideration set according to a set of criteria. These criteria are the standards and specifications students use in evaluating institutions.

The subject of choice criteria has been widely researched. Chapman (in Joseph and Joseph, 1998:90-96) claims that there are three external influences that affect a student's choice, namely:

- Significant persons: friends, parents and high school personnel
- Fixed institution characteristics: cost, location and availability of programmes and
- Institutions' effort to communicate with students: written information, campus visits and admissions/recruitment

Joseph and Joseph (1998:90-96) also address several other studies on the issue of student choice criteria and identify the following determinants:

- Good faculty, high academic standards and special programmes are what students are looking for
- Academic reputation and costs as determinants of choice. Peer influence, financial aid and location are also important factors. Higher education institutions should not only strive to gain their place in the choice set, but must also be prepared to address the issues of importance to their prospective students to allow students to make an informed decision. LeBlanc and Turley (in Rosen, Curran and Greelee: 1998, 65) claim that an

organisation's ability to influence consumers is stronger during the awareness and consideration set than it is at the time of choice.

The terminal positions in the model that do not end up in purchase would appear to be caused by perceptual problems:

- (1) Institutions may be unknown because of students' selective exposure to advertising and selective perception to advertising stimuli
- (2) Institutions may be unacceptable because of their poor attributes and positioning
- (3) Institutions may be perceived as not offering sufficient benefits, or
- (4) Institutions may be overlooked because they have not targeted a particular segment.

No higher education institution would want to be in the above positions.

Communication techniques therefore have to be developed to impart a favourable image to the institution's desired target market. Maguire, Ball and Macrae (1999:1-17) are also of the opinion that choice is problematic. Firstly, choice is not the same for all students; some avoid choice, while others do not have any choice at all. A minority are "active choosers", that is, they consider a range of options, scan brochures, attend open days and may be seen as susceptible to persuasion through skilful marketing and promotion. Secondly, making a choice is more complicated than merely thumbing through a few brochures. Other factors such as where friends are going, accessibility and special community expectations, comfortable attractive environments and the feel of the place play various roles in choice-making and transcend simple marketing appeals.

It is clear that a variety of criteria are used in the decision-making process. The information evaluation stage differs according to the type of decision-making namely: high, low or routinised involvement. Under conditions of high involvement, consumers have been found to use a compensatory model (Pimpa, 1999: www.marketinged.com). Consumers using a compensatory rule will allow perceived favourable ratings to offset unfavourable evaluations i.e. institutions' strengths in certain areas can compensate for weaknesses in others.

4.2.4 Choice

Although the student goes through the evaluation process when deciding which institutions to apply to, it is the institution that will make the final decision with regards to the acceptance or rejection of the student's application based on the institution's selection criteria. When the student has selected to study a particular course, a decision is taken regarding which institution to study at. In most instances, students apply to more than one institution. Some students choose a course for the sake of getting in. Institutions should consider whether it is ethical to accept a student into a particular stream for financial gain. The decision regarding which institution to study at may be a natural outcome of the evaluation process. At this stage the student may have completed the application and may have been accepted. However, acceptance does not mean enrolment. Now the institution has to ensure that the student's acceptance leads to enrolment.

4.2.5. Enrolment

This stage is the beginning of a long-term process involving the student and the institution. The process from application to enrolment can take from a year to six months to complete. An application proceeds through a number of stages, which can be identified as follows:

1. Completion of the application form

The Western Cape higher education institutions do not operate on a central application system. Students therefore have to apply to as many institutions as possible to secure a place at a particular institution. Submission of the application form includes an application fee of up to R120, which is non-refundable on rejection of the application.

2. Data-capturing

The information from the application form is captured onto the institution's system and a reference number is allocated. The reference number should be

able to track what has been sent to whom and when, so that if any applicant calls in to find out how the application is progressing, the applicant can be reassured without contacting a third party. The whole recruitment process should be managed via a computerised database that should offer open access so that academic staff can view each individual's record for follow-up and control. A personalised letter should be sent immediately to the prospective student confirming receipt of the application form and informing the student of the evaluation process.

3. Application screening

Academic staff, using criteria that are communicated to prospective students via the prospectus, initially screen application forms. Most institutions use a point system based on matriculation results to evaluate prospective students.

4. Selection outcome

A letter informs students regarding the status of the application; the student is accepted, conditionally accepted or rejected.

5. Interview and testing

Students who have been conditionally accepted may have to write a battery of tests. Interviews may also be used to evaluate students on an individual basis.

6. Submission of results

Although students may have passed the test and the interview process, acceptance to a higher education institution is still subject to passing the matriculation examination with the required aggregate. In the Western Cape, final acceptance at certain institutions may be delayed until January of the following year.

7. Orientation and Pre-registration

Certain higher education institutions have orientation before registration to orientate the accepted student to the higher education institution's environment and to offer guidance with regards to choice of subjects. This period is also used to introduce the prospective student to the registration process.

8. Enrolment/ Registration

Enrolment is the commitment stage. A prospective student becomes a student when s/he pays a registration fee for the course. Up until that point the institution has no way of confirming student enrolment. However this purchase is like any other consumer purchase. The student can still cancel his/her registration, but forfeits the fee.

Higher education institutions therefore have to engage with prospective students in some form at many intervals to win the commitment of well-informed students who will be assured that enrolling at the institution is the right choice. Higher education institutions also need to realise that relationships with prospective students start once the first enquiry is made. Some higher education institutions have set up call centres to centralise the admissions system so that it can provide students with up-to-date information on courses. This prevents the student from being sent from person to person in search of information.

Kathryn Jones, Media and Public Relations Manager at the University of Wolverhampton in the United Kingdom, has seen the importance of developing a relationship strategy for enquiries and applicants. The institution has set up an "applicants club" complete with a membership card, called "Future Card", to nurture the applicant to the logical conclusion of enrolment. The idea is for applicants to feel that early contact with the institution entitles them to join a learning community. The "Future Card" comes with a number of benefits to prospective students, including a free advice line, invitations to encounter tours of the institution and a free subscription to *Ahead*, a student magazine launched by the institution. The magazine enables the institution to disseminate information to prospective students and their parents on issues like cost, the likely benefits of higher education and employment prospects. Applicants are also invited to events offering them detailed information on the courses, learning outcomes and career prospects (Wyatt, 1999:www.heist.co.uk).

Although research has shown that students select higher education institutions on rational criteria such as the courses offered, institutional reputation, tuition and location, emotional experiences also play an important role. In service marketing terms these experiences are known as critical points of contact (Quilter, 1998: www.heist.co.uk). The points of contact the student has with the institution are of critical importance. Higher Education institutions therefore have to adopt customer service for all areas of the recruitment process to bridge the gap between promotion and personal contact. This is important because prospective students are paying customers and demand higher levels of customer service and attention.

4.2.6. Outcome

The outcome stage is also referred to as the post-purchase phase, which is the final phase and deals with the students re-evaluating their decision. After enrolment, the student determines the level of satisfaction or dissatisfaction. This will be determined by the relationship between the student's expectations and the institution's perceived performance. The student had expectations before attending the institution. These expectations were based on information received from the institution, friends, family and other sources. If the student's expectations are met, there will be satisfaction. Students who are satisfied will probably recommend the institution to friends and family. The best marketing device is a personal recommendation. For the institution, this means access to new students and retaining existing ones. The decision to stay at a technikon or university beyond the first year represents a crucial human capital decision. A satisfied student who returns is an important component in marketing. However, students whose expectations are not met will be dissatisfied. Institutions should monitor early warnings and follow these up. Some of the early signs are:

- poor performance
- lack of social integration and
- disadvantages because of family background.

The following can be used to assist the student before s/he reaches the drop-out stage:

- career planning
- social interaction
- financial planning
- faculty peers and administrators
- faculty counselling and
- advice.

Institutions should therefore measure student satisfaction regularly and not rely on student complaints before they react. This stage is vital for institutions because student numbers are vital for survival. This stage, if managed correctly by the institution, can assist it in retaining existing students and recruiting new ones.

4.3 Factors that influence a student's decision-making

Consumers' purchases are strongly influenced by cultural, social, personal and psychological characteristics (Kotler and Armstrong, 1999:135). Marketers have no control over these factors, but they must take them into account. This section will look at how these factors influence the student's decision-making process when s/he chooses further education, a particular institution and a field of study.

The following factors in Table 4.1 are ranked according to the extent to which they exert an influence on learner choice with regards to entry into Higher education in South Africa. Table 4.2 ranks factors according to the extent to which they exert an influence on learners' choices of fields of study. Table 4.3 ranks factors according to the extent to which they exert an influence on learners' choices of institutions for higher education in South Africa.

Table 4.1: Factors affecting learners' choice with regards to entry into higher education in South Africa

Ranking	Factors affecting learners' choice with regards to entry into higher education in South Africa
1	HE enhancing employability
2	Intrinsic interest in a field of study
3	HE leading to higher income
4	Family urging HE study
5	Offer of a bursary
6	Family urging HE study to support learner and /or themselves
7	Ability to finance study through the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS)
8	Ability to finance study through the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS)
9	Offer of a scholarship
10	Ability to finance study through a bank loan
11	Teacher urging HE study
12	Classmates intending to enter HE
13	Being unsure about direction in life
14	Parents having money to finance HE study
15	Boyfriend / girlfriend going to HE

Source: Cosser and du Toit (2002:2-3)

Table 4.2: Factors influencing learners' choice of field of study

Ranking	Factors influencing learners' choice of field of study
1	Interest in this field of study
2	Opportunities of finding a job in South Africa after qualifying in this field
3	Ability to use a qualification in this field to contribute towards development
4	Ability to follow a practical course of study
5	Opportunities of finding a job overseas after qualifying in this field
6	The reputation of the school / faculty / department
7	The amount of money to be made with a qualification in this field

8	Ability to follow a theoretical course of study
9	The possibility of obtaining a study loan from a bank / other financial institution
10	The offer of a scholarship to study in this field
11	Persuasion by parents/relatives to study in this field
12	Not being able to study within the field of first choice
13	Persuasion by friends to study in this field
14	A parent / relative having studied in this field
15	A boyfriend / girlfriend having decided to study in this field

Source: Cosser and du Toit (2002:8)

Table 4.3: Factors exerting an influence on learners' choice of institutions for higher education study in South Africa.

Ranking	Factors exerting an influence on learners' choices of institutions for higher education study in South Africa.
1	Reputation of institution
2	Reputation of school / faculty / department
3	Far from home, allowing accommodation in residence
4	Better sporting facilities
5	Lower fees
6	Recommended by friends
7	Allows study via correspondence
8	Near home, allowing residence at home
9	<i>Alma mater</i> of relatives
10	Award of scholarship to study at institution

Source: Cosser and du Toit (2002:6)

The factors in the above tables can be categorised into psychological factors, social factors and situational factors.

4.3.1 Psychological factors

A student's choice can be influenced by four psychological factors: - motivation, perception and attitudes.

4.3.1.1. Motivation

Motivation means that the student has a need that is sufficiently pressing to direct the person to seek satisfaction of the need (Kotler and Armstrong, 1999:146).

Dhesi (2001:14-24) claims that students attend a particular higher education institution to improve social prestige. Students who come from low positions in society consider education as a viable route to achieving social mobility. Cooper and Subotzky (Mail and Guardian, 22 March 2000) state that getting a degree or diploma to land a well- paid, middle-class job, and so to move out of a working-class environment, is an important factor for South African students choosing what and where to study. This is confirmed in the Cosser and du Toit (2001:3) study where students' view of higher education as a gateway to employment was cited as the main reason for learners deciding to engage in further studies.

4.3.1.2 Perception

Kotler and Armstrong (1999:147) defines perception as the process by which people select, organise and interpret information to form a meaningful picture. A motivated student is ready to act, but this is influenced by perceptions of the situation. Perception of the quality of higher education is thought to have considerable impact on the decision-making process to attend higher education institutions. Good academic programmes, leadership opportunities, and job placement determine perceived quality after graduation, opportunities for financial aid and good value for money (Plank and Chiagouris, 1997:55-67).

4.3.1.3 Attitudes

Institutions should be interested in the beliefs of students, because student beliefs affect buying behaviour. Attitude describes a person's relatively consistent evaluation, feelings and tendencies toward an object or idea. Students' attitudes to different higher education institutions are important factors in determining trends in the market. Students also have feelings about the nature of their forthcoming experiences, which are important determinants of their choice. Attitudes are culturally bound and class and income are major discriminating factors in the United Kingdom population for pre-entry applicants (Clarke & Brown, 1998:85). This seems to be similar in South Africa. Of all the population groups in South Africa, the Coloured group has the lowest number of students who intend entering higher education. Access to funds for higher education study is one of the main disincentives for entering higher education. Of the other groups, significantly more Indians and Whites than Africans and Coloureds wish to study at a university rather than a technikon and vice versa (Cosser and du Toit, 2002:10). Owing to the legacy of *apartheid*, historically White Afrikaans institutions in South Africa are believed to be the institutions offering a higher standard of education. Merten (*Mail and Guardian*, 22 March, 2000) writes that black students tend to regard Afrikaans universities as better equipped, and believe future employers rate the degrees offered by these universities more highly than those of historically black universities. Although the number of black students has increased, a portion of Coloured and Indian students seems to have moved on to formerly white universities. The historically black institutions that served the disadvantage students in the past are often viewed as being inferior because of the student market they have served and the financial status of the institution.

4.3.2. Social factors

Social factors include all effects on a buyer's behaviour that result from interactions between a consumer and the external environment. Social factors can include social class, family, culture and reference groups and opinion leaders (Lamb *et al.*, 2000:83). Social class, culture, subculture and family are social factors that have an influence on students' decision-making when choosing higher education institutions in South Africa.

4.3.2.1. Social class

The choice of institution can be influenced by a set of socio-economic variables. South Africa has experienced the migration of students in higher education. Financially well-off students are attending International Institutions. Black and Coloured students who have attained the required grade have applied to the historically white institutions, leaving the historically black institutions with students from disadvantaged backgrounds. Merten (*ibid.*) refers to a study by Subotzky and Cooper that found that some 30 000 white students left the university system, leading to an overall drop in white student enrolments at universities from around 150 000 in 1988 to around 125 000 in 1998, with males leaving more rapidly than females. They hypothesise that one reason is the impact of emigration, especially of English-speaking families. Another reason includes the perception among many from conservative backgrounds that the Africanisation of higher education institutions has caused a drop in standards. Social norms that give importance to learning and achievement would encourage students to study further.

4.3.2.2. Culture

Culture has an important influence on all consumer behaviour. Individuals are brought up to follow the beliefs, values and customs of society (Schiffman & Kanuk, 200:346). Societies can be subdivided into smaller subcultures that consist of people who are similar in terms of their ethnic origin, customs and the way they behave. Race is one category of subculture. In South Africa racial subcultures are White, Indian, Coloured and Black. From Cosser and du Toit's study (2002: 2-12), it is evident that racial groups are influenced differently when it comes to higher education institutions. The following information was extracted from the study:

- Africans and Coloureds were more likely to study at a technikon than at a university
- Indians and Whites were more likely to study at a university than a technikon
- Coloured and Indian learners were more influenced than Africans and White learners by the notion that private higher education institutions prepares one better for the job market and for studying abroad

- Africans are more influenced than are Coloured, Indians and Whites by offers of better sporting facilities and lower fee structures, and are far more influenced than are the other three groups by scholarship awards
- More Africans and Coloureds than Indians and Whites want to get away from home to study
- Indians and Whites want to live at home while studying
- A quarter of learners in all four population groups want to study in the field of Business, Commerce and Management Studies. More Africans than other population group, on a downward continuum from Africans to Coloured to Indian to White, want to study in the field of Manufacturing, Engineering and Technology. The percentage of Indian learners choosing Health Sciences and Social Services is significantly higher than the percentages of the other three groups
- Africans are more influenced than the other three groups by parental and peer persuasion to study a particular field
- Africans and Coloureds are more influenced in choosing a field of their first choice than the other three groups.

Although South Africa is trying to move away from segmenting the market according to race, there are behaviours inherent to different racial groups. Information on factors that influence the buying behaviour of the different race groups is very relevant to higher education institutions, because higher education institutions are pressurised to achieve equity with regards to student composition. This information assists in developing marketing communication strategies directed at under-represented racial groups.

4.3.2.3. Family

Family members can strongly influence buyer behaviour. In the discussion of the evaluation of alternatives, reference was made to the family as an information source. Family contacts also provide useful channels for information regarding higher education. If parents are paying for higher education, the perceptions towards higher education institutions will be vital. Financial capital in the family determines the availability of physical resources that aids physical and mental development, a fixed place in the home

for studying, materials that aid learning, good nourishment and opportunities for interaction in a stimulating environment. Capacity to invest in education is largely determined by the individual family background (Dhesi, 2001:14-24).

A parent's education contributes to the enhancement of the child's education. For any given income, better-educated parents may be prepared to make greater economic sacrifices to help their children in their intellectual development. The odds of learners whose fathers have a higher education intending to enter higher education, as compared to those who do not have higher education, is nearly three times higher. A similar relationship prevails with regard to learners with educated mothers. A regression analysis reveals that learners with siblings with higher education connections are nearly twice as likely to say that they intend entering rather than not entering higher education than are learners without siblings with higher education connections (Cosser & du Toit, 2002:3).

4.3.3. Situational factors

Stiber (2001:94) identifies situational factors such as tuition aid and household income as factors that influence student decision-making.

4.3.3.1 Tuition Aid

Cosser and du Toit's study (2000:3) reveals that offers of bursaries, availability of finance through government support and bank loans all influence the learner's decision to enter higher education. Lower higher education fees also influence the learner's choice of higher education institution. The government is currently the major source of funding for higher education, with the rest of the funds drawn from student fees and the private sector. For 2002 the government has allocated R8 billion to higher education, R1 billion of which has been allocated mainly to financial aid schemes, redemption of loans, research grants and support of post graduate students (*Sunday Times*, 3 February 2002:page?). However, if the government is to increase the number of black students in higher education, the government may have to allocate more funds because Cosser and du Toit's study reveals that external sources of funding for higher education study, a

National Student Financial Aid Scheme, bank loans, bursaries and scholarships are more important for Africans than for any other group.

4.3.3.2 Household Income

Income levels of parents also influence whether learners attend higher education institutions. The socio-economic status of learners, with reference to the education and income levels of their parents, reveals that 78% of learners fall into the low socio-economic bracket, 17% into the middle and 5% into the high socio-economic bracket. Among Africans this division is 84% low, 13% middle and 3% high (Cosser and du Toit, 2002:1). This could be the reason for the greater influence of financial aid on African learners than on any other group. The ability of higher education institutions to assist students with funding therefore becomes more important. Higher education institutions that are financially strong will therefore be in a better position to provide incentives for students.

Whatever factors are involved in determining students' preference, some factors may be more important than others. To determine the higher education institution preference, students will consider what is important to them and consciously or unconsciously trade-off between these attributes. An understanding of the trade-off process and the relative importance attached to the various factors should provide a good foundation for formulating sound marketing strategies that would appeal to prospective students.

4.4 Implications of student decision-making on the marketing communication strategy

The ultimate marketing efforts directed at prospective students is to get them to enrol at the institution. This is the result of a long process of student decision-making. Topor (www.marketinged.com:1999) identifies six decision-making stages a potential student may be in with respect to educational institutions:

(i) Awareness

Institutions need to determine how aware their target audience is of the institution. Some students may be totally unaware of the institution, others

may recognise the name and others may have some information. This has implications for the institution with regards to its communication strategy. Building awareness may mean repetition at every opportunity, whether in writing, verbally or electronically. Institutions would have to market extensively. *Building awareness takes time and it requires consistent messages.*

(ii) Knowledge

Some students may be aware of the institution, but may not have sufficient knowledge. Educational marketing professionals should know what information students require and this information should be transmitted using the different marketing communication mix tools discussed in Chapter 3.

(iii) Liking

If the target audience knows about the institution, the question is; “ How do they feel about it?”

If the target audience views the institution unfavourably, the institution needs to find out why and develop marketing communication strategies that will create favourable feelings. If however the unfavourable view is rooted in the inadequacies of programmes and offerings, the institution has to improve its programmes and this then has to be communicated to the prospective students.

(iv) Preference

The target audience may like the institution but may not prefer the institution's service to others. The services may be among several others acceptable to the client. In this situation there is a need to promote the institution's quality, value, performance and other positive attributes. Measuring or surveying the target audience to see if preference for the institution has changed is essential.

(v) Conviction

A target audience may prefer an institution but may not develop conviction. The institution's job is therefore to convince the target audience. This is not an easy task, as it requires the coordinated efforts of administration, academic

and faculty staff. This is why integrated marketing communication is important, so that the entire institution speaks with one voice.

(vi) Commitment

A member of the target audience may have conviction, but may not be ready to participate. The student may be waiting for additional information before taking action. It is the communicator's job to lead the client into taking action. In personal selling, this is called "closing the sale". This is the final step in client acceptance. This is the stage at which enrolment takes place.

At some time during the decision-making process the prospective student will pass through one or more of these stages. The job the educational marketing professional is to identify which stage the student is in and to develop effective marketing communications that will lead them to the next step.

4.5 Summary

The decision-making process for higher education is a lengthy process. Students have to progress through six stages namely:

- problem recognition,
- search for information,
- alternative evaluation,
- applicant choice,
- enrolment and
- outcomes.

The decision-making process does not take place in isolation, as it is influenced by psychological, social and situational factors. Higher education institutions can assist the prospective student through the use of marketing communication tools. These can make the decision-making process less tedious, assist them in making an informed choice and ultimately to choose the institution. Higher education institutions have to realise that the use of relevant communication tools and good customer service during

the recruitment process brings them closer to becoming the prospective student's first choice.

CHAPTER 5

EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION IN THE HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS IN THE CAPE PENINSULA

"It is good to have an end to journey toward, but it is the journey that matters in the end".

Ursula K Le Guin

5.1 Introduction

This chapter introduces the study objectives and the methodology used to collect data for the purpose of determining the effectiveness of marketing communication strategies employed by universities and technikons in the Cape Peninsula with specific reference to career exhibitions and open days in attracting first-year students.

With the current transformation of higher education in South Africa, a decreased pool of matriculants who qualify for further studies and decreased government funding, higher education institutions will have to develop cost efficient and effective ways to attract prospective students. Higher education institutions will have to evaluate the marketing tools currently being employed and measure whether these tools have any effect on students' decision-making process.

This study refers to public higher education institutions in the Cape Peninsula namely, The University of Stellenbosch, The University of Cape Town, The University of the Western Cape, Cape Technikon and Peninsula Technikon. All five institutions use career exhibitions and open days to attract prospective first-year students to the institution and institutions record between three thousand to twelve thousand attendees at the event every year. However, very little research has been done to determine whether these marketing communication tools have an impact on students' decision-making.

5.2 Research Objectives

The primary objective of the research is to determine the effectiveness of exhibitions and open days, as a marketing communication strategy employed by technikons and universities in the Cape Peninsula to attract desired first-year students.

One secondary objective is to identify whether appropriate marketing communication strategies are being employed by universities and technikons in the Cape Peninsula in order to attract first-year students.

Another secondary objective is to determine the impact of marketing communication strategies on students' decision-making processes.

5.3 Scope of the research study

The study focuses on marketing communication strategies employed consciously by tertiary institutions to attract first-year students. These marketing communication tools consist of advertising, personal selling, sales promotion, direct marketing and public relations. Unconscious marketing communication can occur through word-of-mouth or opinion leaders, namely alumni. The latter will not be considered in this study. Career exhibitions and open days refer to events hosted by the respective institutions and will not include career exhibitions hosted by the Cape Careers Exhibition Association (CCEA). 'First-year students' refer to full-time students only and does not include part-time students. 'First-year' is inclusive of first level of study, and students in first and second semester.

5.4 Design of the research project

Research was undertaken to determine the effectiveness of these higher education institutions' marketing communication strategies in attracting potential first-year students. The research was divided into two phases:

Phase I consisted of in-depth interviews conducted with marketing officers at the above-mentioned universities and technikons in the Cape Peninsula, in order to identify which marketing communication tool is most effective in attracting desired first-year students. Interviews were conducted with marketing officers, or other persons responsible for marketing the tertiary institutions, namely recruitment officers and schools liaison officers.

Phase II consisted of conducting a survey in the form of a structured questionnaire with a sample of first-year students at the selected tertiary institutions. This established to what extent the marketing communication tools had an influence on students' decision to study at the chosen tertiary institution.

5.5 PHASE I: Personal Interviews conducted with marketing officers

5.5.1 Methodology

A semi-structured interview guide was developed for in-depth discussions with employees responsible for marketing the higher education institution to prospective first-year students, namely: marketing officers, schools liaison officers and recruitment officers. The interview guide covered the following areas:

- Marketing tools used to market the institution to prospective first-year students and
- The effectiveness of open days and career exhibitions as marketing communication tools

A copy of the interview guide can be found in Appendix A

5.5.2 Sampling

Each institution was contacted to identify the relevant departments and employees involved in the recruitment of prospective first-year students. Letters were e-mailed or faxed to request an appointment (See Appendix B for a copy of the letter sent to the relevant employees). Appointments were made with the relevant employees and each interview lasted approximately one hour. Each interview was recorded using a cassette recorder to ensure that all the relevant information was collected. The interview guide was tested on the marketing officer at Peninsula Technikon, and the Head of Public Relations and Development participated in the final interview. An administrative assistant working for the schools liaison officer was interviewed at the University of the Western Cape. At the time of the interviews, the two schools liaison officers were preparing of the careers exhibition hosted jointly by the University of the Western Cape and Peninsula Technikon, and were therefore unavailable for interviews. At the University of Stellenbosch a student advisor working in the schools liaison office was interviewed. Two student recruitment officers participated in the interviews at the University of Cape Town. One was from the Recruitment and Enrolment Management Office and the other was from the Admissions Office. At Cape Technikon, an officer responsible for public affairs and communication was interviewed.

5.6 PHASE II: Structured questionnaire distributed to first-year students

5.6.1 Methodology

Primary data was collected through surveys, by using self-administered questionnaires as a research instrument (See Appendix C for a copy of the questionnaire). The questionnaire was directed at first-year students currently studying at the five institutions in the Cape Peninsula. The questionnaire covered the following areas:

- Personal details
- Information sources that had an impact on the student's decision to study at his/her current institution
- The student's perception of the effectiveness of open days and career exhibitions, and
- The factors that played a role in the student's final decision.

The types of questions that were used in the questionnaire were:

- Dichotomous questions
- Scaled questions
- Multiple-choice questions and
- Open-ended questions.

Letters were e-mailed or faxed to the relevant lecturers requesting twenty minutes of lecture time so that students could complete the questionnaire (See a copy of the letter in Appendix D).

5.6.2 Sampling

Probability sampling was used to develop a representative sample. The population as stated in defining the research objectives consisted of first-year, full-time students at the institutions mentioned previously. Cluster sampling was used in more than one phase to develop a representative sample. The process was as follows:

- Firstly, three faculties were drawn from each institution, namely the Faculties of Business, Science and Engineering. Engineering is not offered at the University of the Western Cape.

- Secondly, from the three faculties, courses that were common to all institutions within the three faculties were identified, namely: Management Studies in the Faculty of Business, Chemistry in the Faculty of Science and Civil Engineering in the Faculty of Engineering. To compensate for Engineering not being offered at The University of the Western Cape, the course that offered subjects closest to Civil Engineering, namely Mathematical and Statistical Sciences, was included in the sample.
- Finally subjects were drawn from those courses using availability sampling.

The sample thus included first-year students studying Management and Chemistry at all five institutions, Civil Engineering at Peninsula Technikon, Cape Technikon, The University of Cape Town and the University of Stellenbosch, and Mathematical and Statistical Sciences at the University of the Western Cape (See table 5.1).

Table 5.1: Composition of sample

Institution	Faculty	Course	Subject
University of Stellenbosch	Economic and Management Sciences	Bcomm: Financial Management	Investment Management
	Science	Chemistry	Chemistry I
	Engineering	Civil Engineering	Mathematics
University of Cape Town	Commerce	Bachelor of Commerce	People, work and organisation
	Engineering	Civil Engineering	Civil Engineering I
	Science	Chemistry	Chemistry I
University of the Western Cape	Economic and Management Sciences	B. Comm. Management	Management

	Natural Science	Chemical Sciences	Chemistry I
		Mathematical and Statistical Sciences	Mathematics I
Cape Technikon	Management	Management	General Management
	Applied Sciences	Analytical Chemistry	Organic Chemistry
	Engineering	Civil Engineering	Civil Engineering
Peninsula Technikon	Business	Management	Management I
	Engineering	Civil Engineering	Civil Engineering
	Science	Analytical Chemistry	Analytical Chemistry I

5.6.3 Response rate

852 students completed the questionnaires. Table 5.2 gives the response rate per institution and faculty. Two students did not indicate the course and faculty.

Table 5.2: Response Rate

Institution	Faculty	Course	Subject	No. of questionnaires completed
University of Stellenbosch	Economic and Management Sciences	Bcomm: Financial Management	Investment Management	87
	Science	Chemistry	Chemistry 1	69
	Engineering	Civil Engineering	Mathematics	55
University of Cape Town	Commerce	Bachelor of Commerce	People, work and organisation	55

	Engineering	Civil Engineering	Civil Engineering I	30
	Science	Chemistry	Chemistry I	89
University of the Western Cape	Economics and Management Sciences	B. Comm. Management	Financial Management	76
	Natural Science	Chemical Sciences	Chemistry I	62
		Mathematical and Statistical Sciences	Mathematics I	29
Cape Technikon	Management	Management	General Management	48
	Applied Sciences	Analytical Chemistry	Organic Chemistry	40
	Engineering	Civil Engineering	Civil Engineering	29
Peninsula Technikon	Business	Management	Management I	66
	Engineering	Civil Engineering	Civil Engineering	61
	Science	Analytical Chemistry	Analytical Chemistry I	54
	Total			850

5.6.4 Analysis of data

852 questionnaires were collected. The questionnaires were coded into a statistical programme resulting in each questionnaire having 62 variables. SPSS version 11 was used to analyse the data.

5.6.5 Evaluation of feedback

Obtaining the sample was dependent on the lecturer's willingness to allow the questionnaire to be completed in class time and the class attendance on that day. Lecturers teaching in these programmes were contacted to get permission to allow the students to complete the questionnaire during class time. The advantages of this was that:

- Students were encouraged by the lecturer to complete the questionnaire, and
- The response rate in some courses was high because of class attendance.

The disadvantages were that:

- The response rate was dependent on class attendance
- Students were preparing for mid-term exams and lecturers were reluctant allow students to complete the questionnaire during lecture times. Most of the questionnaires were completed during tutorial or revision sessions, which decreased the number of respondents. Students from two courses, namely Management at the University of Stellenbosch and Chemistry at Cape Technikon, completed the questionnaires at the beginning of the second semester. The students were handed the questionnaire and returned it within a week because lecturers did not want to lose momentum. This however hampered the process of timeously analysing the data.

Overall, the lecturers were very helpful and institutions were keen to participate because of the benefits they would receive from the research.

5.7 Summary

This chapter provides a comprehensive description of the empirical study conducted at the universities and technikons in the Cape Peninsula. The research objectives, one primary objective and two secondary objectives are stated. The project was divided into two phases. Phase one consisted of personal interviews conducted with marketing officers at the five institutions. The research process followed in phase one is explained. Phase two consisted of a questionnaire distributed to first-year students at the five institutions. The sampling method used to define the sample of students to whom the questionnaire was distributed is also explained in this chapter.

CHAPTER 6

RESEARCH RESULTS

“In all human affairs there are efforts and there are results, and the strength of effort is the measure of results.”

James Allen

6.1 Introduction

This chapter deals with the analysis and interpretation of the results of both phases of the research. In Phase I, personal interviews were conducted with marketing officers. The nature of the research conducted in this phase does not allow for simple statistical interpretations, but rather interpretations of each personal interview conducted to establish facts about the marketing tools that are employed by the institutions. The results of the statistical test conducted in phase II, the structured questionnaires completed by first-year students are also presented with clarifying comments.

6.2 PHASE I: - Results of personal interviews conducted with marketing officers

This section presents and discusses the results of the personal interviews conducted with the marketing officers at the University of Cape Town (UCT), The University of Stellenbosch (SUN), The University of the Western Cape (UWC), Cape Technikon (Capetech) and Peninsula Technikon (Pentech).

6.2.1 Section A: Personal information

Section A covers the personal information of the person interviewed.

Persons interviewed and their responsibility

UCT: Name: Mary Hilton and Phuti Mogase

Job title: Student Recruitment

Main area of responsibility: Recruitment and enrollment management office. The recruitment and enrollment unit is responsible for co-ordination of the open day. The unit consists of one person per faculty and a representative from each faculty. Other duties: counselling, general awareness, other career exhibitions and school visits.

SUN: Name: Celeste Swanepoel

Job title: Adviser: prospective students, schools liaison office.

Main areas of responsibility: Counselling, open day, attending career exhibitions and school visits.

UWC: Name: Sandra Waterboer

Job title: Administrative assistant at schools liaison unit

Main areas of responsibility of school liaison officers: Counselling, school visits, radio talk shows, and motivational talks. Staff and students manage the stall to give hands on information.

CAPETECH: Name: Bigboy Zanemvula Gozongo

Job title: Public affairs and communication

Main areas of responsibility: School liaison workshops, planning the open day and attending exhibitions. Developing innovative ways to market the institution for example, invitations to Directors of the Western Cape Education Department to provide them with information so that they can encourage schools to attend the open day.

PENTECH: Name: Yusuf Abrahams

Job title: Head: Public Affairs and Development

Main areas of responsibility: Overseeing the marketing functions of the institution.

Discussion:

The responsibility of recruiting prospective first- year students falls within different departments at the five institutions. At UCT student recruitment officers are responsible for recruiting first- year students and each faculty has a recruitment officer. At SUN advisors in the Schools Liaison Office are responsible for recruiting first-year students. Each advisor is responsible for a faculty. At UWC the advisors in the Schools Liaison Unit are responsible for recruiting first-year students. The unit is made up of two advisors and one administrative person who serves the entire institution. At Peninsula Technikon, the Schools Liaison Officer in the Public Relations Department is responsible for recruiting first-year students.

6.2.2 Section B: Marketing tools used

This section covers questions pertaining to all marketing tools employed by the institutions.

Question 1

What marketing tools do you use to market the institution to prospective students?

Answers:

UCT: The prospectus is the main marketing tool used to promote the institution. Other marketing tools used to promote the institution include the internet and brochures. The communication department oversees institutional marketing and television advertising. Exit interviews are also conducted with students to assist the institution with strategic planning. UCT believes that the institution's good reputation serves as a good marketing tool.

SUN: School visits, campus tours, the prospectus and brochures are marketing tools used by the institution. The marketing communications department is responsible for marketing the image of the institution and the schools liaison unit focuses on giving advice to learners and building relationships with prospective students. Relationship building is seen as an integral part of the institution's marketing process.

UWC: Its website, brochures, motivational talks to prospective students, school visits and radio talk shows are tools used to promote the University of the Western Cape.

CAPETECH: Open day, school visits, advertising mainly in newspapers and on radio, brochures and the prospectus are tools used by Cape Technikon.

PENTECH: Careers exhibition, advertising in newspapers (*The Argus* and *Rapport*) and on radio (mainly community radio stations including areas such as Namaqualand, Riversdal, etc.), advertising in booklets available at resource centres and learner study guides are marketing tools used to promote the institution. The institution's advertising campaign runs from June –July before applications close at the end of July.

The Technikon also uses marketing groups per faculty who visit schools and host exhibitions at schools on request. However, only the engineering group is operating effectively.

Discussion:

All five institutions use a host of marketing tools to promote the institution. However, what was not clarified, was whether all the marketing tools used form part of an integrated marketing communication system.

Question 2

Do you target prospective students outside of the Western Cape?

Answers:

UCT: All prospective students who qualify are targeted.

SUN: The target market is defined by the institution's strategic plan. The schools liaison unit visits feeder schools and other schools. The institution's focus is mainly on schools. The institution is promoted countrywide by attending career exhibitions and education fairs hosted by organisations other than the university. *Grade 12 is the main target because they are the students who are going to apply and grade 11 is targeted so that the prospective students know what the requirements are for entry to the institution.*

UWC: Prospective students who qualify are targeted.

CAPETECH: The target market for Capetech is changing. Capetech would like to target schools in the township and rural areas, where learners are unable to attend an open day. All schools in the Western Cape and Southern Cape are targeted and schools from as far as Mossel Bay have attended in the past. *The main target is the Grade 12's, but Grade 11's who are interested are also welcome, because other grades are viewed as an investment. The services of the unit are not confined to feeder schools. Targeting is strategically planned and predominantly black schools will be approached to find more black students for particular courses.*

PENTECH: Advertising is confined to the Western Cape. The Technikon uses the Sowetan and Rapport, which are national newspapers, to attract prospective students

from other regions. The Technikon is aware that most of the applications are from students from the Eastern Cape.

Discussion:

From the above information it is evident that schools outside of the Western Cape are also targeted. SUN promotes the institution countrywide, Capetech targets all schools in the Western and Southern Cape. Grade 12 is the main target, although other grades are invited to attend to create an awareness of the institutions. Targeting is part of the strategic plan for SUN and Capetech, which indicates that there is an element of customer orientation in the approach to the marketing plan.

Question 3

Which marketing tools have proved to be the most successful in attracting students?

Answers:

UCT: Some faculties have done their own research, but they have not done any scientific research.

SUN: No formal research has been done.

UWC: Public Affairs are responsible for marketing the institution.

CAPETECH: No formal research has been done.

PENTECH: At the beginning of 2002, a sample of 1 400 was used to find out where they heard about Peninsula Technikon. 25% said that they heard about Pentech at the Careers Exhibitions.

Discussion:

No formal research has been conducted to measure the effectiveness of the marketing tools the institutions employ. It is significant that the units or the institutions have not conducted any formal research to measure the effectiveness of the marketing tools they

employ. The institutions therefore cannot justify the use of various marketing tools and cannot motivate why funding and resources should be allocated to marketing communication tools.

Question 4

Do you think institutions need to allocate more funding towards marketing? Why?

Answers:

UCT: The unit has funding for co-ordination, setting up of the stands, administrative support and marketing of the open day and school visits only. The faculties are responsible for funding their own stalls. Budgets differ in accordance with how important the faculty views the importance of the open day. The communications department has a budget for other marketing tools employed by the institution.

SUN: Funding covers marketing, invitations and erection of stalls at the careers exhibition and school visits only. The faculties are responsible for their own marketing tools employed during the career exhibition. Funding plays an important role in planning the event. Other marketing tools employed by the university to attract first-year students are funded by the budget of the communications department.

UWC: Funding covers marketing, invitations and erection of stalls at the career exhibition and school visits only. The faculties are responsible for their own marketing tools employed during the career exhibition. Funding plays an important role in planning the event.

CAPETECH: Each faculty has its own budget for the exhibition. The unit is responsible for erection of the stalls and the co-ordination and marketing.

PENTECH: Budget covers the co-ordination, marketing and erection of the stalls at the career exhibition. Each department is responsible for allocating a budget for the career exhibition.

Discussion:

The above question could only be answered in the context of career exhibitions and open days because the departments only manage these tools. The communications department or the public relations department manages the other marketing tools employed by the institution. The responses indicate that open days and career exhibitions are viewed as a separate marketing communications element, which proves that the marketing communication tools are not integrated. With reference to career exhibitions and open days, the budget allocated covers the erection of stalls, invitations and visits to schools. The faculties also have a responsibility to allocate funding to the event. The funding will therefore depend on how important the faculty views the career exhibition or open day.

Question 5

Does your institution make use of a professional marketing organisation?

Answers:

UCT: Yes, it is the responsibility of the communications department..

SUN: Responsibility of the communications department.

UWC: The responsibility of the public relations department

CAPE TECH: Yes.

PENTECH: Yes, but employing an advertising agency is very expensive and the budget is limited.

Discussion:

Most institutions employ a professional marketing organisation to oversee the marketing of the institution. The officers could not elaborate because this was the responsibility of another department. This response again provides evidence that the career exhibition and open days are not integrated into the marketing communication plan.

6.2.3 Section C: Effectiveness of open days or career exhibitions

Question 1

What is the purpose of open days and career exhibitions?

Answers:

- UCT:**
- To create an awareness of the institution;
 - To advise prospective students so that they can make informed decisions;
 - To change perception of “elite varsity on the hill”;
 - To provide exposure to a university environment, academic services and support services.
- SUN:**
- To inform students about “What Stellenbosch has to offer”;
 - To expose students to new courses;
 - To create an awareness of the environment;
 - To attract learners to student life.
- UWC:**
- To build relationships with learners;
 - To expose students to the university environment.
- CAPETECH:** - To sell the services of the institution.
- PENTECH:**
- To showcase what the Technikon has to offer;
 - To change perceptions of learners. As the Technikon previously concentrated on disadvantaged communities, there is a perception that the previously disadvantaged, historically black institutions are not on par with the historically white institutions.

Discussion:

All the institutions have objectives that will attempt to influence the student’s choice in some way. None of the institutions’ objectives are to use the exhibition as a process of encouraging applications. The common purposes of career exhibitions and open days at all the institutions are as follows:

- to create awareness,
- to provide information on courses and services that the institution offers, and
- to change perceptions and to build relationships.

Question 2

How important are open days and career exhibitions in attracting students to the institutions?

Answers:

UCT: Open days are used to assist with relationship marketing and it helps build the reputation of the institution.

SUN: Open days are used merely to create awareness, change perceptions and to provide information

UWC: Viewed as a very important marketing tool.

CAPETECH: Open days have an important marketing function.

PENTECH: The career exhibition is an important marketing tool.

Discussion:

Career exhibitions and open days are important marketing tools used to attract students to the institutions, because they:

- create awareness,
- provide information on courses and services that the institution offers,
- help change perceptions and introduce the learner to the institution's environment and
- assist the institution with developing relationships with prospective students.

Question 3

How much energy and time is spent in preparation for an open day or career exhibition?

Answers:

UCT: Planning starts the year before by providing general information about the proposed dates for the events to the faculties. At the beginning of the year, approximately 3 months before the events the schools are informed by sending invitations and letters.

SUN: Planning starts the previous year, by informing the task force comprised of members of various faculties. Formal planning starts in January by inviting schools and planning the event.

UWC: Planning starts at the end of the year prior to the events. The first invitation is sent to schools in January, with a reply requested by March. If the schools do not respond, a reminder is sent in April. Meetings are held with Pentech on a regular basis to plan the events because they are run concurrently because of the close proximity of the two institutions.

CAPETECH: Planning starts the previous year.

PENTECH: Planning starts the beginning of January.

Discussion:

Most institutions start disseminating information internally to the faculties a year before the events take place. Information is sent to schools at the beginning of the year during which the events take place. Providing the faculties with information towards the end of the year may not be the ideal time, because academics are finalising marks which takes first priority. At the beginning of the year, when schools and the institutions are in the process of registrations they may not be interested in a career exhibition or open day that is going to take place in a few months' time. The challenge for marketing officers would be to find an appropriate time when academics and students are able to give the event their full attention. The cooperation between UWC and Pentech is also an indication that the institutions in the Western Cape are combining scarce resources in an attempt to be cost effective.

Question 4

Who takes responsibility for addressing prospective student queries at the careers exhibition or open day?

Answers:

UCT: Academic staff together with students (the same students used for orientation are used for open days because they have undergone extensive training). Students are used because learners can relate to them.

SUN: One person is responsible for the co-ordination, with the assistance of three advisors and representatives from each faculty. The students and staff of the various faculties take responsibility for addressing the students on the day of the event.

UWC: One person is responsible for the planning and co-ordination of the event with the assistance of one other advisor and an administrative assistant. Students and academics from the various faculties take the responsibility of addressing the learners at the exhibition.

CAPETECH: Three members in the team are responsible for marketing and co-ordination with departments. Academics and students take responsibility for manning the stalls.

PENTECH: The Public Affairs Department is responsible for the event. This falls under the portfolio of the schools liaison officer. Students take responsibility for manning the stalls and answering student queries. Students seem to be more effective because learners can relate to them. The faculties decide who mans the stalls.

Discussion:

The responses indicate that students and academics take responsibility for manning the stalls. Students are used because learners can relate to students and learners are likely to ask questions when faced with students of their own age. The assumption is that the students are adequately trained to provide the relevant information. These students and academics, in the context of marketing, are viewed as salespeople and as ambassadors of the institution. First impressions are lasting and if the learner does not develop a favourable image of the institution through the students and academics, this could affect their perception of the institution.

Question 5

Are you aware of the impact the open days and career exhibitions have on applications?

Answers:

UCT: No. Some students who attend the open day are not focused. Those who know what they want to study, go away better informed. Not all students know what they want to do, while others are simply gathering information. To make the event worthwhile, students need to be more focused. More guidance is needed at schools so that learners ask relevant questions and so that they go away more informed regarding their choices.

SUN: No. Students who have options ask relevant questions. Students who are confused go away confused. Students who are not focused need guidance before attending an exhibition, and this problem can be solved by the guidance teachers or visits to schools by advisors from the institutions, who can offer career guidance.

UWC: No. Not all students are focused, and some merely see it as a day off from school. Those who are focused find it very informative.

CAPETECH: No. The event is a learning process for the students. This is a new experience for them, and many are excited. The event must be fun. However, this process is dependent on the learner. The institution must ensure that learning takes place. The institution must try to change the perceptions of the students.

PENTECH: No. For some students it is a day off from school. The grade 12 students are more focused; they make informed decisions and seem to ask relevant questions.

Discussion:

Institutions are not aware of the impact career exhibitions and open days have on applications. The events are used to provide information in the hope that such information will encourage learners to apply. Most officers indicated that learners are not focussed in making a choice when the events are attended and it is therefore difficult to determine the impact they have on applications. Each institution puts a concerted effort into planning the event and a fair amount of time is invested in the event from both the

unit responsible and the academics and students from various faculties. Considering the resources and the budget allocated to the event, it is vital that the institutions determine the effectiveness of the career exhibition and open day. It does not make good business sense to continue using a tool if the performance of the tool cannot be measured, especially at higher education institutions where funding is limited and the pool of applicants is diminishing. It is vital that institutions should know how effective the tools are that are employed. From the responses it is clear that more guidance is needed before the learner attends the event. The question is: "Whose responsibility is it to provide the guidance - the school's or the higher education institution's?"

Question 6

How many attendees do you normally have at an open day or career exhibition?

Answers:

UCT: Approximately 3 000 people, including learners and parents, attend the open day.

SUN: Because the open day was held on the last day of the term, fewer students attended, but there was more quality (students were more focused). Approximately 5 000 students came from all over the country.

UWC: Approximately 15 000 – 17 000 learners visited the exhibition over 4 days.

CAPETECH: Approximately 5 000 – 7 000 schools attended the open day. The institution's communication officer was of the view that the institution has to find ways to encourage schools from the rural areas to attend. One of the solutions could be to provide transport so that these schools can attend the open day.

PENTECH: Approximately 12 000 learners attend the career exhibition over the 4 days.

Discussion:

UCT, SUN and CapeTech have fewer attendees, which could be due to the event being hosted for one day only. However there is a perception that these institutions attract a

better calibre of student as opposed to UWC and PenTech, because those students who are interested in attending UCT, SUN and CapeTech make a concerted effort to attend. In this case it is a question of whether quantity will result in a better calibre of student attending an institution. Less funding is also required if the event is hosted over one day only rather than over four days. This result could mean that students who are interested in further study are more likely to make an effort to attend because it is hosted for one day only. UWC and PenTech on the other hand may be receiving more exposure, but there is no proof that the exposure is converted into applications because no research has been conducted. If the event is held over fewer days, the institutions can use the funds on other marketing tools that may prove to be more effective.

Question 7

Who is your main target market for an exhibition or open day?

Answers:

UCT: Invitations are sent to all schools in the Western Cape and outside of the Western Cape. Grade 10-12 are the targeted grades for the open day on a Saturday. These students are targeted because they are more focused. UCT views the parents as the main target because they make the final decision.

SUN: All schools countrywide are invited, and while grade 11 and 12 are targeted, other grades are also welcome.

UWC: All grades 10-12 in schools in the Western Cape are invited. The purpose of inviting grade 10 and 11 is to create awareness of the institution. Radio P4 is used to market the event. Parents are the main target as they are influential in the student's choice, and make the final decision regarding which institution their child will attend.

CAPETECH: All schools in the Western and Southern Cape are invited. Past experience has shown that schools visit from as far away as Mossel Bay. Grade 12's are the main target, although grade 11's who are interested are welcome. The institution views other grades as an investment.

PENTECH: UWC sends invitations to schools. Because the institutions are close in proximity to each other this relationship saves cost.

Discussion:

All schools in the Western Cape are invited to attend. Grade 10-12 is the targeted group. Different grades require different information, therefore staff and students manning the stall should be aware that different methods should be used. The fact that all schools are invited to attend could be an indication that the institutions are not targeting specific schools.

Question 8

In your opinion, do exhibitions and open days enjoy the support of your staff? What is the basis for this opinion?

Answers:

UCT: The institution recognises that the open day is a vital event. The university is changing and the deans are realising the importance of recruitment, especially when numbers are down. The institution can no longer rely on the fact that it will always have students applying because of its reputation. The support of the deans is vital. Departments have become very competitive and creative at open days and every department and faculty wants its stall to look the best.

SUN: Academics feel that the open day is necessary, but they are not always enthusiastic about the process. The unit works with representatives from the faculties. Responsibility for stalls lies with the faculties. Faculties have *carte blanche* with preparing their stalls, which makes it quite exciting.

UWC: The institution supports the event.

CAPETECH: All faculties and departments within student affairs participate. The support is good and there is an excitement on campus prior to and during the event. Academics and students manage the stalls. There is competition between departments for the best stall.

PENTECH: The Public Relations Department co-ordinates the activities. The Maintenance Department is responsible for the erection of the stalls. Academics and students are responsible for manning the stalls. The event receives strong support from the Technikon community.

Discussion:

Although the institution receives support from the staff and students, academics need to understand the importance of the event as a marketing tool, rather than see it as a hindrance to the academic schedule.

6.2.4 Other questions asked:

Question 9

When is the career exhibition or open day held?

Answers:

UCT: Open day is held on a Saturday. Helen Zille, when in office, requested that career exhibitions be held on Saturdays or after school hours so that it did not interfere with school time.

SUN: Open day is held once a year. Open day for 2002 was held the day schools closed for the first term, as schools are not very busy on the last day of term. Many students attended unsupervised by teachers.

UWC: Over 4 days, one day till 19:30. The career exhibition is run in conjunction with Pentech.

CAPETECH: The event is hosted mid-week for one day only. The institution has moved away from hosting the event on Mondays and Fridays due to poor attendance. The ideal would be for the event to run twice a year.

PENTECH: Over 4 days, with 1 day continuing until 19:30. The career exhibition is run in conjunction with UWC.

Discussion:

The career exhibition for Pentech and UWC is held over four days. UCT, SUN and CapeTech only have one open day each. UCT hosts the open day on a Saturday because learners can attend with their parents. In this way, they attract a more focussed learner to the event. CapeTech would like to host the event for a longer period, but they are confined by budgetary constraints. SUN hosts the open day on the last day of the first term for 2003 because of Zille's request that open days should not be hosted during school time.

Question 10

How is the event promoted?

Answers:

UCT: Posters and invitations sent to schools are used to promote the event.

SUN: Marketing is dependent on funds. Marketing takes the form of direct marketing:

- Flyers
- Invitations to principals and guidance teachers
- Advertising in newspapers.

UWC: The event is marketed by Pentech. UWC markets the event on radio using P4 and GHFM. Not all advertising is paid for, as UWC gets publicity by selling the concept as part of the radio stations' social responsibility.

CAPETECH: Invitations are sent to all schools in the Western Cape. The institution advertises on community radio stations, and banners are placed strategically in the CBD area advertising the event. Marketing the event is dependent on funding. Standard brochures are used for handouts at the open day.

PENTECH: The event is marketed by sending invitations to schools, which is done by UWC. The institution advertises in newspapers and on community radio stations.

Discussion:

Promotion of the event is dependent on the availability of funds. Most of the institutions use other marketing tools to promote the event. The effort and use of promotional tools used to promote the event is an indication that the institutions view the event as very important. The use of other marketing tools also indicate that the institutions' budgets for the events are substantial. The institutions could use some of the funding used to promote the event on visiting schools in order to provide learners with information on what can be expected at the open day and career exhibition. This will enable students to leave the event better informed instead of merely collecting pamphlets.

Question 11

What activities take place at the careers exhibition and open day?

Answers:

UCT: Each department or faculty has a stall. Learners have the choice of attending any presentation hosted by the different faculties. Activities at the stalls are interactive. Application forms are also available to those who are interested in applying.

SUN: Faculties realise that they are responsible for their numbers so they make the activities as interactive as possible.

UWC: The activities are very interactive. Science is the main attraction because of the experiments they perform at the exhibition. Certain departments give students memorabilia. Last year students received a stress ball imprinted with the institution's logo and slogan. Application forms are also handed out on request.

CAPETECH: Very interactive brochures are handed out. Applications are available to grade 12 learners.

PENTECH: Very interactive. A competition is held for the best stall, so departments make it as interactive as possible.

Discussion:

Each faculty has a stall at the careers exhibitions or open day. Learners are free to solicit information from academic staff and students. Departments are encouraged to make the stall as attractive as possible and as interactive as possible.

Question 12

What kinds of follow-up activities do you engage in after the careers exhibition or open day?

Answers:

UCT: During school visits, students are required to do more research regarding their career choice and also to compare similar courses offered by different institutions. Students who require more information are asked to fill in a card and that will require a follow-up.

SUN: Faculties do their own follow-up from requests at open day.

UWC: Each grade 12 gets a card to complete at the open day for follow-up purposes, posting of an application form or other information required.

CAPETECH: Learners are requested to complete a questionnaire and the faculties do the follow-up.

PENTECH: Follow-up is only done with names collected at career exhibitions hosted by organisations other than the technikon. Some faculties do their own follow-up from queries at the careers exhibition.

Discussion:

Follow-up is necessary to encourage students to make an institution their choice. Answering unanswered questions from the career exhibition or open day also helps build relations with learners. However, follow-up seems to be viewed as a function that is not part of the career exhibition and open day. This function needs to be centrally monitored, because the institution could use this as an opportunity to evaluate the event. In a sales

context, the follow-up is viewed as the most important part of the sales, but this does not seem to be the case with the five higher education institutions.

6.2.5 General Comments

UCT: Prepare guidance teachers so that there is a build-up to the open day.

SUN: Preparation for the exhibition at schools will be beneficial. One day is not sufficient, but more days cost time and money. The open day is not the main influencing factor: parents, friends and the reputation of the institution play important roles. The ideal would be for each faculty to have their own open day and for the unit to market the event.

UWC: Faculties market themselves individually. Guidance teachers are prepared through school visits and many of them look forward to the event. Besides the career exhibition, faculties arrange their own open days, which takes place on Saturdays.

CAPETECH: Building partnerships is important. It is the duty of the institution to invite students from rural areas. Pre-open day activities require resources. Through partnerships the institution can embark on the preparation of learners. This can be imported into the normal school day to integrate secondary and tertiary education. The Technikon is rendering a service to the community and they need to find ways of presenting this service at the doorstep of the beneficiaries.

PENTECH: Target schools who offer the required subjects.

6.3 Phase II: - Results of structured questionnaires completed by first-year students

This section deals with the analysis and interpretation of the data obtained from the questionnaires that were completed by first-year students from Peninsula Technikon, Cape Technikon, The University of Stellenbosch, The University of Cape Town and The University of the Western Cape. (Refer to Appendix B for a copy of the questionnaire)

Each section will be discussed by providing a heading, supported by a table and comments on major trends and their significance.

6.3.1 Frequency distribution

Table 6.1: Institution

Institution where you are currently studying			
		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	University of Cape Town	174	20.47
	University of Stellenbosch	211	24.82
	University of the Western Cape	168	19.76
	Cape Technikon	116	13.65
	Peninsula Technikon	181	21.29
	Total	850	100
Missing	System	2	
Total		852	

Comment:

First-year students at the five institutions completed a total of 852 questionnaires. 181 students completed the questionnaires at Peninsula Technikon, 116 at Cape Technikon, 168 at The University of the Western Cape, 174 at The University of Cape Town and 211 at The University of Stellenbosch. Availability sampling was used and the response was dependent on the attendance and willingness of the students to complete the questionnaire. Stellenbosch had the highest return due to large class sizes and Cape Technikon the lowest because the interviews were conducted before the mid-term exams when lecturers were very busy revising papers.

Table 6.2: Department

Department			
		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Chemistry	314	36.85
	Mathematics & Statistical Sciences	31	3.64
	Civil Engineering	173	20.31
	Management	334	39.20
	Total	852	100.00

Comment:

The sample included the subjects Chemistry, Civil Engineering and Commerce. Mathematical and Statistical Sciences were included to compensate for Civil Engineering which is not offered at The University of the Western Cape, hence the 3,6% response.

6.3.1.1 SECTION A: PERSONAL DETAILS

Table 6.3: Gender

Gender

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	382	44.8	45.6	45.6
	Female	455	53.4	54.4	100.0
	Total	837	98.2	100.0	
Missing	System	15	1.8		
Total		852	100.0		

Comment:

A significant number of respondents (54,4%) were female and 45,6 % were male. Although this may not truly reflect the gender composition of students at higher education institutions in the Western Cape, it could be a result of higher education institutions increasing female enrolments in an attempt to achieve gender equity in higher education institutions.

Table 6.4: Age category

Age category		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	16-20 years	672	78.97
	21-24 years	164	19.27
	25-28 years	10	1.18
	28-32 years	2	0.24
	>32	3	0.35
	Total	851	100
Missing	System	1	
Total		852	

Comment:

The large percentage of students between the age of 16-20 years validates the sample of first year students. 79% of the respondents are between the ages of 16-20 years old.

Table 6.5: Region

Region		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Western cape	479	57.30
	Eastern Cape	171	20.45
	Northern Cape	19	2.27
	Northern Province	16	1.91
	Mpumalanga	8	0.96
	Gauteng	40	4.78
	North West	12	1.44
	Kwazulu Natal	37	4.43
	Free State	16	1.91
	Other	38	4.55
	Total	836	100.00
Missing	System	16	
Total		852	

Comment:

The study was limited to the Cape Peninsula, hence the high percentage of 57,3% of students from the Western Cape. 20,55 of the students were from the Eastern Cape region, which means that the Eastern Cape is also a source of recruitment for the Cape Peninsula higher education institutions.

Table 6.6: Urban and rural composition

Urban or Rural		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Urban	629	74.53
	Rural	215	25.47
	Total	844	100
Missing	System	8	
Total		852	

Comment:

It is significant to note that 74,5% students come from urban areas. This could be a result of increased urbanisation.

Table 6.7: First language

First language			
		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Afrikaans	253	29.69
	English	286	33.57
	IsiNdebele	4	0.47
	Sepedi	8	0.94
	Sesotho	23	2.70
	SiSwati	2	0.23
	Xitsonga	5	0.59
	Setswana	14	1.64
	Tshivenda	5	0.59
	IsiXhosa	203	23.83
	IsiZulu	26	3.05
	Other	23	2.70
	Total	852	100

Comments:

The main first languages are English (33,6%), followed by Afrikaans (29,7%) and IsiXhosa (23,8%). This is significant because although most students (53,5%) have English as their second language, the medium of instruction in most higher education institutions is English. Although Afrikaans was rated high, it is really only at The University of Stellenbosch that it is used as a medium of instruction.

Table 6.8: Type of secondary school attended

Type of Secondary School			
		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Private	131	15.50
	Public	498	58.93
	Model- C	216	25.56
	Total	845	100
Missing	System	7	
Total		852	

Comment:

It is evident from the results that the majority of respondents come from public schools, followed by Model-C schools and private schools. This could mean that learners from public schools attend public institutions, while learners from model-C and private schools opt for private and international institutions.

Table 6.9: Matric aggregate

Matric Aggregate		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	A	188	23.56
	B	176	22.06
	C	199	24.94
	D	184	23.06
	E	47	5.89
	F	1	0.13
	G	3	0.38
	Total	798	100
Missing	System	54	
Total		852	

Comment:

The admission requirement for most universities and Technikon is a matric exemption and at least a D-aggregate, hence the higher percentage of respondents with A-D-aggregates.

Table 6.11: Course/field of study

Current course / field of study		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Business/Commerce/Economic and Management	315	37.37
	Engineering	209	24.79
	Science/ Health science	300	35.59
	Education	1	0.12
	Law	1	0.12
	Arts	14	1.66
	Theology	3	0.36
	Total	843	100
Missing	System	9	
Total		852	

Comment:

The survey was limited to courses in Business, Engineering and Science. The respondents from Education, Law, Arts and Theology could be studying these subjects to gain credits.

Table 6.12: Level of study

Level of study		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	1st year/Semester	815	96.56
	2nd year/Semester	27	3.20
	3rd year/Semester	2	0.24
	Total	844	100
Missing	System	8	
Total		852	

Comment:

The sample was first-year students, hence the high percentage of first-year students. Second- and third-year students were probably repeating the subject or were at 2nd and 3rd year level, studying first-level subjects to gain credits.

6.3.1.2 SECTION B: INFORMATION SOURCES THAT HAD AN IMPACT ON THE STUDENTS' DECISION TO STUDY AT THEIR CURRENT INSTITUTION.

Table 6.13: Information sources that influenced your decision to study at your current institution: Material distributed by your teacher

Information sources that influenced your decision to study at your current institution: 1. Material distributed by your teacher			
		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Yes	289	37.98
	No	472	62.02
	Total	761	100
Missing	System	91	
Total		852	

Comment:

It is significant to note that 62% of the respondents were not influenced by material distributed by teachers as opposed to only 38% of students who were. Most schools do not have a designated guidance teacher, which could result in material not being distributed to learners at schools.

Table 6.14: Information sources that influenced your decision to study at your current institution: Open day

Information sources which influenced your decision to study at your current institution: 2. Open day			
		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Yes	307	39.82
	No	464	60.18
	Total	771	100
Missing	System	81	
Total		852	

Comment:

It is significant to note that only 39,8% of students were influenced by open days. 60,2% were not influenced by open days to study at their current institution.

Table 6.15: Information sources that influenced your decision to study at your current institution: Career exhibition

Information sources which influenced your decision to study at your current institution: 3. Career exhibition			
		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Yes	365	46.56
	No	419	53.44
	Total	784	100
Missing	System	68	
Total		852	

Comment:

From the results it is evident that fewer students were influenced by career exhibitions (53,4%). Although those that were influenced by career exhibitions is fairly close

(46,6%), career exhibitions do not play the role that it should play in influencing the student's decision to study at a particular institution considering the time, effort and finance that is allocated to the event.

Table 6.16: Information sources that influenced your decision to study at your current institution: Institution website

Information sources which influenced your decision to study at your current institution: 4. Institution website			
		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Yes	161	21.21
	No	598	78.79
	Total	759	100
Missing	System	93	
Total		852	

Comment:

Although all five institutions have a web site which is used to disseminate information and which is used as an advertising medium, it does not have a major influence on students' decision to study at their particular institution. This could also be a result of students not having access to the Internet. 78,8% of the respondents were not influenced by the institution's website.

Table 6.17: Information sources that influenced your decision to study at your current institution: Newspaper advertisements

Information sources which influenced your decision to study at your current institution: 5. Newspaper advertisements			
		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Yes	176	23.28
	No	580	76.72
	Total	756	100
Missing	System	96	
Total		852	

Comment:

Although the five institutions spent approximately R3 683 254 on print advertising for the period March 2001- February 2002, it does not seem to have had a major influence on

the students' decision to study at a particular institution. Only 23.3% of students were influenced by newspaper advertising and 76,7% were not influenced by newspaper advertising. This could be due to the low readership (11,2%) of daily newspapers by readers between the ages of 16-24 years (AMPS: July2001-Jun 2002).

Table 6.18: Information sources that influenced your decision to study at your current institution: Radio advertisement

Information sources which influenced your decision to study at your current institution: 6. Radio advertisement			
		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Yes	83	11.13
	No	663	88.87
	Total	746	100
Missing	System	106	
Total		852	

Comment:

From March 2001-February 2002 the five institutions collectively spent R 368 691 on radio advertising. This did not seem to impact on the students' decision to study at a particular institution because only 11,1% of the respondents were influenced by radio advertising and 88,9% of the respondents were not influenced by radio advertising.

Table 6.19: Information sources that influenced your decision to study at your current institution: TV advertisement

Information sources which influenced your decision to study at your current institution: 7. TV advertisement			
		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Yes	80	10.81
	No	660	89.19
	Total	740	100
Missing	System	112	
Total		852	

Comment:

Because television advertising is very expensive, institutions rarely spend advertising expenditure on this medium, hence the high percentage of students who are not influenced by television advertising.

Table 6.20: Information sources that influenced your decision to study at your current institution: Billboard

Information sources which influenced your decision to study at your current institution: 8. Billboard			
		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Yes	95	12.80
	No	647	87.20
	Total	742	100
Missing	System	110	
Total		852	

Comment:

Only 12,8% of students were influenced by billboards. None of the five institutions spent money on billboard advertising for the period March 2001-February 2002.

Table 6.21: Information sources that influenced your decision to study at your current institution: Posters

Information sources which influenced your decision to study at your current institution: 9. Posters			
		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Yes	180	24.10
	No	567	75.90
	Total	747	100
Missing	System	105	
Total		852	

Comment:

The results show that posters had no influence on 75% of the respondents. Posters may only have been used to advertise an open day or career exhibition, hence the low influence of posters.

Table 6.22: Information sources that influenced your decision to study at your current institution: Education fair

Information sources which influenced your decision to study at your current institution: 10. Education fair			
		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Yes	212	28.30
	No	537	71.70
	Total	749	100
Missing	System	103	
Total		852	

Comment:

Most education fairs have an entrance fee, and as a result of this many students may not have attended one, hence the low influence.

Table 6.23: Information sources that influenced your decision to study at your current institution: Friends

Information sources which influenced your decision to study at your current institution: 11. Friends			
		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Yes	517	65.03
	No	278	34.97
	Total	795	100
Missing	System	57	

Comment:

Friends have a major influence, with 65% of the respondents responding positively to this variable. This is contrary to the study by Cosser and du Toit (2000:6) where friends were ranked sixth out of a choice of ten factors affecting learners' choice with regards to institution, and last out of fifteen factors affecting learners' choice with regards to entry into higher education.

Table 6.24: Information sources that influenced your decision to study at your current institution: Family

Information sources which influenced your decision to study at your current institution:			
12. Family			
		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Yes	600	75.66
	No	193	24.34
	Total	793	100
Missing	System	59	
Total		852	

Comment:

Family has an even greater influence on students' decision to study at a particular institution than friends. 75,7% of the respondents indicated that family had an influence on their decision to study at a particular institution. This could be a result of parents having to pay for the children's studies and therefore deciding which institution the child should attend. This result also confirms the study by Cosser and du Toit (2000:2-3) that family influences the learner's entry into higher education. Family was ranked sixth out of fifteen factors affecting learner's choice with regards to entry into higher education.

Table 6.25: Importance of material distributed by your teacher in assisting with the decision to study at your current institution

Importance of information sources: Material distributed by you teacher			
		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Very important	170	22.05
	Important	197	25.55
	Of little importance	178	23.09
	Not at all important	226	29.31
	Total	771	100
Missing	System	81	
Total		852	

Table 6.26: Importance of an open day in assisting with the decision to study at your current institution

Importance of information sources: Open day			
		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Very important	163	21.03
	Important	190	24.52
	Of little importance	153	19.74
	Not at all important	269	34.71
	Total	775	100
Missing	System	77	
Total		852	

Table 6.27: Importance of career exhibitions in assisting with the decision to study at your current institution

Importance of information sources: Career exhibition			
		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Very important	246	31.50
	Important	200	25.61
	Of little importance	118	15.11
	No at all important	217	27.78
	Total	781	100
Missing	System	71	

Table 6.28: Importance of the institutions web-site in assisting with the decision to study at your current institution

Importance of information sources: Institution web-site			
		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Very important	70	9.07
	Important	132	17.10
	Of little importance	196	25.39
	Not at all important	374	48.45
	Total	772	100
Missing	System	80	
Total		852	

Table 6.29: Importance of newspaper articles in assisting with the decision to study at your current institution

Importance of information sources: Newspaper article			
		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Very important	82	10.70
	Important	111	14.49
	Of little importance	208	27.15
	Not at all important	365	47.65
	Total	766	100
Missing	System	86	
Total		852	

Table 6.30: Importance of radio advertising in assisting with the decision to study at your current institution

Importance of information sources: Radio advertising			
		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Very important	40	5.29
	Important	80	10.58
	Of little importance	193	25.53
	Not at all important	443	58.60
	Total	756	100
Missing	System	96	
Total		852	

Table 6.31: Importance of TV advertising in assisting with the decision to study at your current institution

Importance of information sources: TV Advertising			
		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Very important	50	6.61
	Important	89	11.76
	Of little importance	177	23.38
	Not at all important	441	58.26
	Total	757	100
Missing	System	95	
Total		852	

Table 6.32: Importance of billboards in assisting with the decision to study at your current institution

Importance of information sources: Billboards			
		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Very important	41	5.44
	Important	68	9.02
	Of little importance	198	26.26
	No at all important	447	59.28
	Total	754	100
Missing	System	98	
Total		852	

Table 6.33: Importance of posters in assisting with the decision to study at your current institution

Importance of information sources: Posters			
		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Very important	67	8.92
	Important	136	18.11
	of little importance	186	24.77
	Not at all important	362	48.20
	Total	751	100
Missing	System	101	
Total		852	

Table 6.34: Importance of an education fair in assisting with the decision to study at your current institution

Importance of information sources: Education fair			
		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Very important	130	17.15
	Important	159	20.98
	Of little importance	152	20.05
	Not at all important	317	41.82
	Total	758	100
Missing	System	94	
Total		852	

Table 6.35: Importance of friends in assisting with the decision to study at your current institution

Importance of information sources: Friends			
		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Very important	247	31.15
	Important	252	31.78
	Of little importance	164	20.68
	Not at all important	130	16.39
	Total	793	100
Missing	System	59	
Total		852	

Table 6.36: Importance of family in assisting with the decision to study at your current institution

Importance of information sources: Family			
		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Very important	398	50.32
	Important	200	25.28
	Of little importance	115	14.54
	Not at all important	78	9.86
	Total	791	100
Missing	System	61	
Total		852	

The above information resulted in the ranking of information sources in the following order of importance:

Table 6.37: Ranking of Information sources affecting the decision to study at your current institution

Ranking	Information source
1	Family
2	Career exhibition
3	Friends
4	Material distributed by your teacher
5	Open day
6	Education fair
7	Newspaper articles

8	Web-site
9	Posters
10	TV Advertising
11	Billboards
12	Radio advertising

Comments:

- Family ranks the highest as an important information source
- Career exhibitions rank as the second most important source of information
- Friends are viewed as an important source of information
- Material distributed by teachers did not have a major influence on the student's decision to study at a particular institution, but respondents rated it as an important information source
- Although respondents were not influenced by open days, it was ranked fifth as an important source of information
- Education fairs ranked sixth as an important source of information
- Newspaper articles ranked seventh, followed by websites, posters, TV advertising, billboards and radio advertising. It is significant to note that all these factors are marketing tools directed at the masses
- Marketing tools that are more direct and personal seem to be more important to students.

6.3.1.3 SECTION C: THE EFFECTIVENESS OF OPEN DAYS AND CAREER EXHIBITIONS

Table 6.38: Student attendance at an open day hosted by their current institution before registering

Did you attend open day hosted by your current institution before registering?			
		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Yes	351	43.28
	No	460	56.72
	Total	811	100
Missing	System	41	
Total		852	

Comment:

The number of respondents who attended an open day at their current institution before registering was 43,3%, while 56,7% did not attend an open day. This could be a result of students not viewing open days as an influencing factor.

Table 6.39: Student attendance at a career exhibition hosted by their current institution registering

Did you attend a career exhibition hosted by your current institution before registering?			
		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Yes	314	39.30
	No	485	60.70
	Total	799	100
Missing	System	53	
Total		852	

Comment:

60,7 % of the respondents did not attend a career exhibition hosted by their current institution before registering. This could be a result of students not viewing career exhibitions as an influencing factor.

Table 6.40: Student attendance at an open day or career exhibition hosted by the University of Cape Town

Did you attend open day or career exhibition of University of Cape town?			
		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Yes	165	24.19
	No	517	75.81
	Total	682	100
Missing	System	170	
Total		852	

Table 6.41: Student attendance at an open day or career exhibition hosted by the University of Stellenbosch

Did you attend open day or career exhibition of University of Stellenbosch?			
		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Yes	145	23.02
	No	485	76.98
	Total	630	100
Missing	System	222	
Total		852	

Table 6.42: Student attendance at an open day or career exhibition hosted by the University of the Western Cape

Did you attend open day or career exhibition of University of Western Cape?			
		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Yes	159	24.16
	No	499	75.84
	Total	658	100
Missing	System	194	
Total		852	

Table 6.43: Student attendance at an open day or career exhibition hosted by Cape Technikon

Did you attend open day or career exhibition of Cape Technikon?			
		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Yes	178	26.06
	No	505	73.94
	Total	683	100
Missing	System	169	
Total		852	

Table 6.44: Student attendance at an open day or career exhibition hosted by Peninsula Technikon

Did you attend open day or career exhibition of Peninsula Technikon?			
		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Yes	151	24.92
	No	455	75.08
	Total	606	100
Missing	System	246	
Total		852	

Comment:

- An overwhelming number of respondents did not attend a careers exhibition or open day hosted by the five institutions.

This result confirms the previous results that open days and career exhibitions have very little impact on students' decision to study at a particular institution.

Table 6.45: Non-attendance of open day or career exhibition: Different decision

If you did not attend any open day/career exhibition do think your decision would been any different?			
		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Yes	119	28.13
	No	304	71.87
	Total	423	100
Missing	System	429	
Total		852	

Comment:

This result also verifies the finding that open days and career exhibitions do not play an important role in students' decision-making. 71,9% of the respondents indicated that their decision would not have been any different had they attended a career exhibition. 28,1% indicated that their decision would have been different had they attend a careers exhibition.

Table 6.46: Influence rating of career exhibition or open day on your decision to study at your current institution

Rate the influence of career exhibition/ open day on your decision to study at your current institution			
		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	1	40	9.20
	2	49	11.26
	3	125	28.74
	4	118	27.13
	5	103	23.68
	Total	435	100
Missing	System	417	
Total		852	

Comment:

The results show that those students who attended a career exhibition or open day were influenced by the event. Students rated it on a scale from three to five as having an influence on their decision.

Table 6.47: Encouragement to attend an open day or career exhibition

Who encouraged you to attend an open day/career exhibition?			
		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Parent	209	35.07
	School teacher	213	35.74
	Friends	26	4.36
	Your own initiative	131	21.98
	Other family member	17	2.85
	Total	596	100
Missing	System	256	
Total		852	

Comment:

Parents and teachers encourage students to attend career exhibitions and open days. 35,1 % of students were encouraged by their parents to attend, which explains the high influence of parents on the choice of institution. 35,7% of respondents were influenced by their teachers, because the institutions send invitations to schools inviting learners to open days and career exhibitions. 22% of the students used their own initiative.

Table 6.47: Benefit from attending a career exhibition or open day

Do you think you benefited from attending an open day/ career exhibition?			
		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Yes	410	66.45
	No	72	11.67
	Unsure	135	21.88
	Total	617	100
Missing	System	235	
Total		852	

Table 6.48: The benefit of providing course information at career exhibitions and open days

If yes: How did the open day/career exhibition benefit you?: 1. Providing info on courses			
		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Yes	399	53.92
	No	341	46.08
	Total	740	100
Missing	System	112	
Total		852	

Table 6.49: The benefit of providing career guidance at career exhibitions and open days

If yes: How did the open day/career exhibition benefit you?: 2. Providing career guidance			
		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Yes	287	39.32
	No	443	60.68
	Total	730	100
Missing	System	122	
Total		852	

Table 6.50: The benefit of introducing the student to the environment of the institution at career exhibitions and open days

If yes: How did the open day/career exhibition benefit you?: 3. Introducing you to the environment of the institution			
		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Yes	270	37.71
	No	446	62.29
	Total	716	100
Missing	System	136	
Total		852	

Table 6.51: The benefit of building a relationship with the institution at career exhibitions and open days

If yes: How did the open day/career exhibition benefit you?: 4. Building a relationship with the institution			
		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Yes	147	20.45
	No	572	79.55
	Total	719	100
Missing	System	133	
Total		852	

Table 6.52: The benefit of providing brochures with further information at career exhibitions and open days

If yes: How did the open day/career exhibition benefit you?: 5. Providing brochures for further information			
		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Yes	323	44.43
	No	404	55.57
	Total	727	100
Missing	System	125	
Total		852	

Table 6.53: Other benefits of career exhibition and open day

If yes: How did the open day/career exhibition benefit you?: 6. Other benefits			
		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Yes	62	8.82
	No	641	91.18
	Total	703	100
Missing	System	149	
Total		852	

Comment:

Although career exhibitions and open days do not have a major influence on students' decision to study at a particular institution, 66,5% of the respondent indicated that they had benefited from attending a careers exhibition or open day. 53,9% of the students indicated that open days and career exhibition provided them with information on courses, while 46,1% of the respondents indicated that this did not happen. 60,7% indicated that career exhibitions and open days did not provide career guidance, while 39,3 % said it did. 62,3% of the respondents indicated that career exhibitions and open days did not introduce them to the institution's environment, as opposed to 37,7% of the respondents who said that these events performed this function. Only 20,4% of the respondents viewed the events as a vehicle to build relationships with the institution. 44.4% of the respondents indicated that career exhibitions and open days provided brochures for further information, while 55,6% disagreed.

If NO, please state why you did not benefit from attending an open day or career exhibition.

11,7% of the respondent indicated that they did not benefit and 21,9% were unsure.

Very few respondents completed question 6.2. The following reasons were given for not benefiting from attending a career exhibition or open day:

- After the careers exhibition, the students were still undecided
- The information given at the careers exhibition was not sufficient to make a final choice, and

- Students manning the stalls did not provide sufficient information

6.3.1.4 SECTION D: FACTORS THAT PLAYED A ROLE IN STUDENTS' FINAL DECISION

Table 6.54: Students who applied to The University of Cape Town

Which institutions did you apply to?: UCT			
		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Yes	261	31.60
	No	565	68.40
	Total	826	100
Missing	System	26	
Total		852	

Table 6.55: Students who applied to The University of Stellenbosch

Which institutions did you apply to?: Stellenbosch University			
		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Yes	289	35.33
	No	529	64.67
	Total	818	100
Missing	System	34	
Total		852	

Table 6.56: Students who applied to The University of the Western Cape

Which institutions did you apply to?: UWC			
		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Yes	203	24.61
	No	622	75.39
	Total	825	100
Missing	System	27	
Total		852	

Table 6.57: Students who applied to Cape Technikon

Which institutions did you apply to?: Capetech			
		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Yes	210	25.49
	No	614	74.51
	Total	824	100
Missing	System	28	
Total		852	

Table 6.58: Respondents who applied to Peninsula Technikon

Which institutions did you apply to?: Pentech			
		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Yes	231	28.03
	No	593	71.97
	Total	824	100
Missing	System	28	
Total		852	

Table 6.59: Students who applied to other institutions

Which institutions did you apply to?: Other			
		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Yes	155	19.33
	No	647	80.67
	Total	802	100
Missing	System	50	
Total		852	

Comment:

From the results it is evident that students apply to more than one institution because the number of respondents from the different institutions do not correspond with the institution they applied to. Students were therefore rejected at certain institutions or they chose one above the other.

Table 6.60: Financial aid/ Bursaries as a reason for your choice of current institution

Reasons for the choice of your current institution: Financial Aid/Bursary			
		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Most important	122	44.20
	Second most important	67	24.28
	Third most important	87	31.52
	Total	276	100
Missing	System	576	
Total		852	

Table 6.61: Travelling as a reason for your choice of current institution

Reasons for the choice of your current institution: Travelling			
		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Most important	65	25.69
	Second most important	99	39.13
	Third most important	89	35.18
	Total	253	100
Missing	System	599	
Total		852	

Table 6.62: Academic requirements as a reason for your choice of current institution

Reasons for the choice of your current institution: Academic requirements			
		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Most important	88	38.43
	Second most important	90	39.30
	Third most important	51	22.27
	Total	229	100
Missing	System	623	
Total		852	

Table 6.63: Fees as a reason for your choice of current institution

Reasons for the choice of your current institution: Fees			
		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Most important	78	34.98
	Second most important	76	34.08
	Third most important	69	30.94
	Total	223	100
Missing	System	629	
Total		852	

Table 6.64: Previous students as a reason for your choice of current institution

Reasons for the choice of your current institution: Previous students			
		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Most important	54	33.96
	Second most important	46	28.93
	Third most important	59	37.11
	Total	159	100
Missing	System	693	
Total		852	

Table 6.65: Course as a reason for your choice of current institution

Reasons for the choice of your current institution: Course			
		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Most important	166	48.26
	Second most important	94	27.33
	Third most important	84	24.42
	Total	344	100
Missing	System	508	
Total		852	

Table 6.66: Sport as a reason for your choice of current institution

Reasons for the choice of your current institution: Sport			
		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Most important	38	30.16
	Second most important	38	30.16
	Third most important	50	39.68
	Total	126	100
Missing	System	726	
Total		852	

Table 6.67: Parental influence as a reason for your choice of current institution

Reasons for the choice of your current institution: Your parents' influence			
		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Most important	63	35.59
	Second most important	52	29.38
	Third most important	62	35.03
	Total	177	100
Missing	System	675	
Total		852	

Table 6.68: Pass-rate history of the institution as a reason for your choice of current institution

Reasons for the choice of your current institution: Pass rate			
		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Most important	57	37.01
	Second most important	54	35.06
	Third most important	43	27.92
	Total	154	100
Missing	System	698	
Total		852	

Table 6.69: Reputation of the institution as a reason for your choice of current institution

Reasons for the choice of your current institution: Reputation			
		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Most important	101	39.61
	Second most important	96	37.65
	Third most important	58	22.75
	Total	255	100
Missing	System	597	
Total		852	

Table 6.70: Status of the institution as a reason for your choice of current institution

Reasons for the choice of your current institution: Status of the institution			
		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Most important	103	36.65
	Second most important	86	30.60
	Third most important	92	32.74
	Total	281	100
Missing	System	571	
Total		852	

Table 6.71: Friends as a reason for your choice of current institution

Reasons for the choice of your current institution: Friends			
		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Most important	47	28.83
	Second most important	46	28.22
	Third most important	70	42.94
	Total	163	100
Missing	System	689	
Total		852	

Table 6.72: In-service training as a reason for your choice of current institution

Reasons for the choice of your current institution: In-service training			
		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Most important	64	37.21
	Second most important	55	31.98
	Third most important	53	30.81
	Total	172	100
Missing	System	680	
Total		852	

Table 6.73: Rejected by other institutions as a reason for your choice of current institution

Reasons for the choice of your current institution: Not accepted at other institution			
		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Most important	42	32.06
	Second most important	23	17.56
	Third most important	66	50.38
	Total	131	100
Missing	System	721	
Total		852	

Table 6.74: Family member currently studying at the institution as a reason for your choice of current institution

Reasons for the choice of your current institution: Member of the family studies there			
		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Most important	34	24.29
	Second most important	40	28.57
	Third most important	66	47.14
	Total	140	100
Missing	System	712	
Total		852	

Table 6.75: Language as a reason for your choice of current institution

Reasons for the choice of your current institution: Language of the institution			
		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Most important	79	38.73
	Second most important	44	21.57
	Third most important	81	39.71
	Total	204	100
Missing	System	648	
Total		852	

Comments:

The following reasons for students' choice of their current institution are ranked in order of importance:

Table 6.76:

Rank	Reason for choice of your current institution
1	Course
2	Bursaries/Financial aid
3	Status of the institution
4	Reputation of the institution
5	Academic requirements
6	Language
7	Fees
8	Travelling
9	In-service training
10	Parents
11	Pass-rate
12	Previous students
13	Friends
14	Not accepted for another course or at other institutions
15	Sports
16	Member of the family study at the institution

6.3.1.5 SECTION E: GENERAL

Suggest ways, other than career exhibitions and open days, through which institutions can attract students.

The following suggestions were made:

- Offer bursaries
- Lower fees
- Send marketing officers to schools to mark the institution
- Set up tours of the institution
- Visit schools to give motivational talks
- Increase financial aid
- Have exhibitions at schools

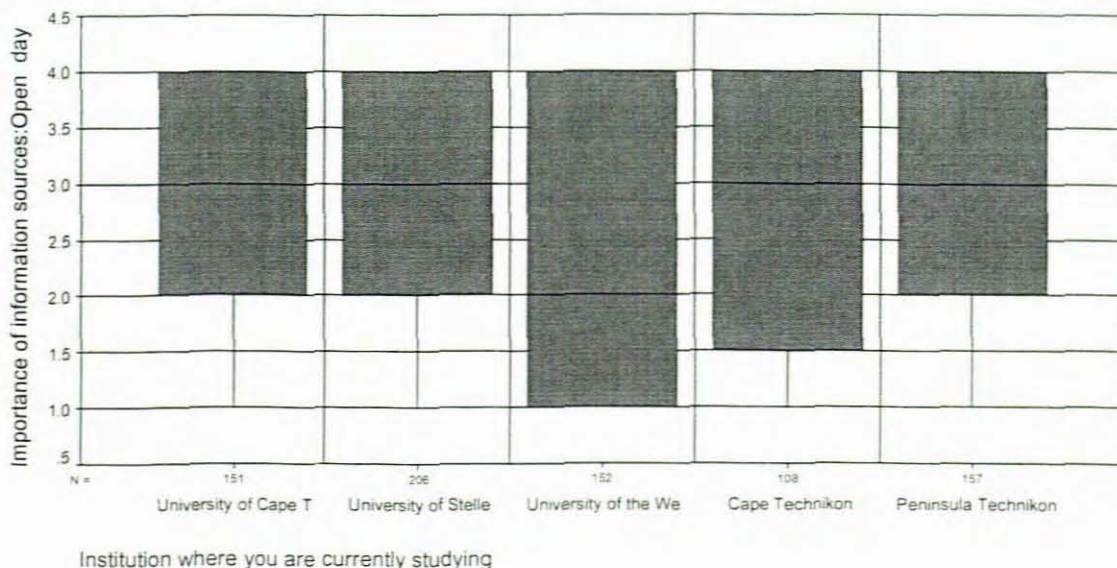
- Have open day festivals
- Host parties and bashes near or at schools
- Keep Stellenbosch Afrikaans
- Send welcome letters
- Use the media, to make the institution more attractive to students
- Use alumni to market the institution
- Provide information to teachers so that they can prepare the learners academically and
- Establish introductory courses

6.4 Mean scores of selected items

The mean scores to the question “How important was career exhibitions and open days as an information source in assisting the student in deciding to study at the current institution?” was determined. The options regarding the answers to the question ranged from 1 = very important, to 4 = not at all important.

6.4.1 Institution where student is currently studying

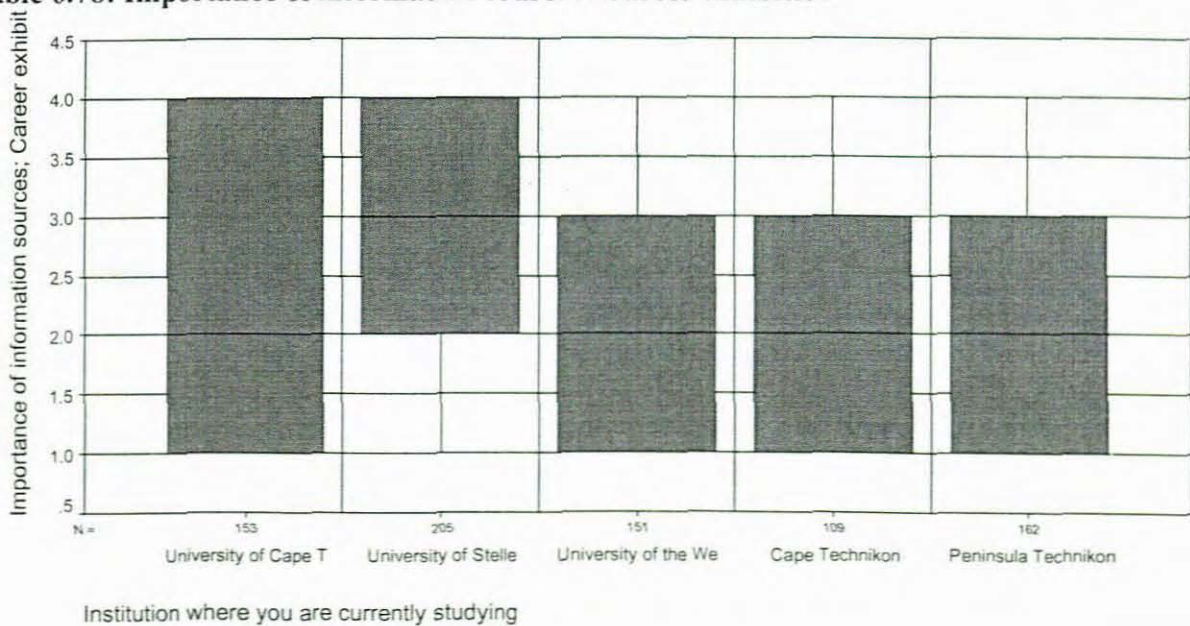
Table 6.77: Importance of information sources: Open day



Comments:

The responses from the University of Cape Town, University of Stellenbosch and Peninsula Technikon were between 2-4, with a mean score of 3. This indicates that on average students from those institutions view open days as being of little importance in assisting with the decision to study at the current institution. The responses from the University of the Western Cape were between 1-4 with a mean score of 2, indicating that students regard open days as being important in assisting with the decision to study at the current institution. At Cape Technikon, students answered the question between 1.5-4 with a mean score of 3, indicating that open days were of little importance.

Table 6.78: Importance of information sources: Career exhibition



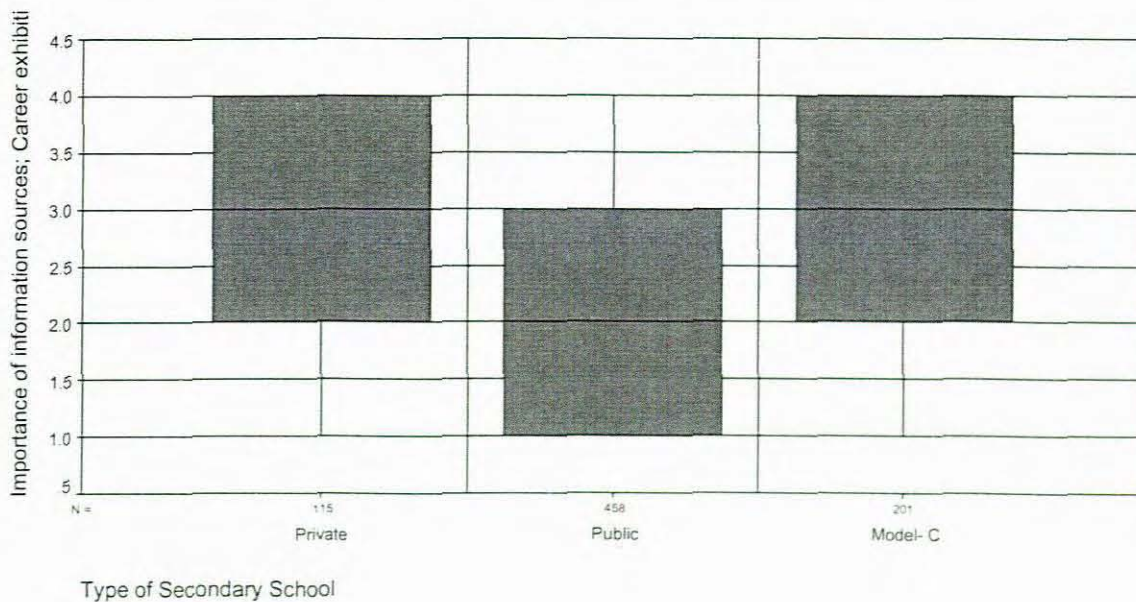
Comments:

The responses to the question by students from the University of Cape Town was between 1-4 with a mean score of 2, meaning that more students viewed career exhibitions as important information sources. Students from the University of Stellenbosch answered between 2-4 with a mean score of 3, indicating that students viewed career exhibitions as being of little importance. Students from the University of

the Western Cape, Cape Technikon and Peninsula Technikon answered the question between 1-3 with a mean score of 2, indicating that those students regarded career exhibitions as important sources of information.

6.4.2 Type of Secondary School

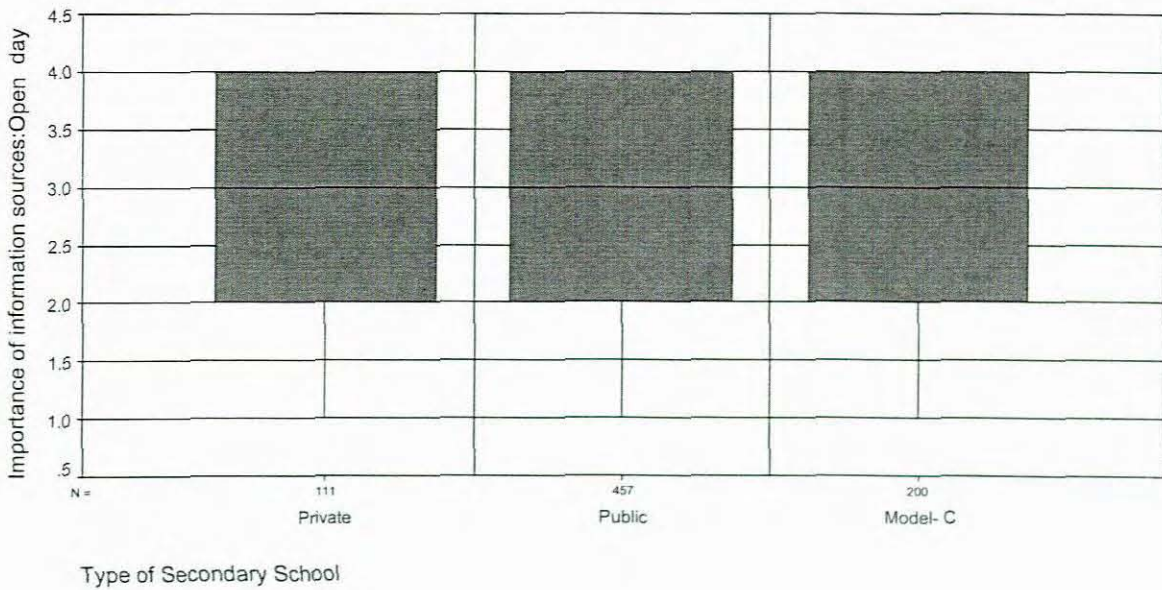
Table 6.79: Importance of information sources: Career exhibition



Comments:

The students from private schools answered the question between 2-4 with a mean score of 3, indicating that students from private schools viewed career exhibitions as being of little importance. Students from public schools answered the question between 1-3 with a mean score of 2, meaning that on average students viewed career exhibitions as important. Students from model-C schools answered between a range of 2-4 with the mean score of 3, indicating that students from model-C schools regarded career exhibitions as having little importance.

Table 6.80: Importance of information sources: Open day

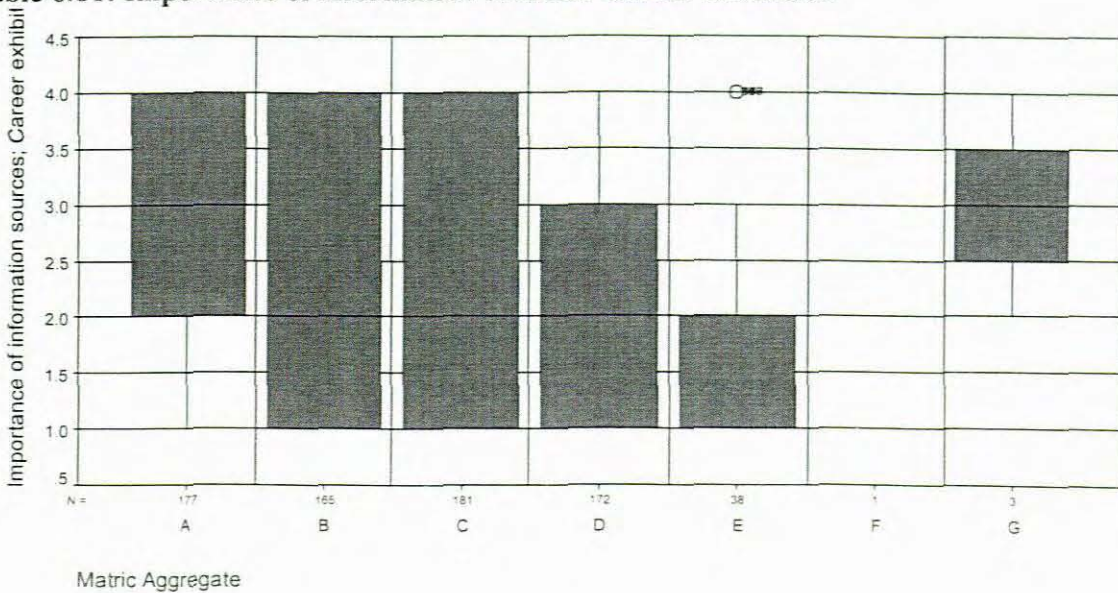


Comments:

Students from private, public and model-C schools answered the question between 2-4 with a mean score of 3, indicating that open days are of little importance to the students' decision to study at the current institution.

6.4.3 Matric Aggregate

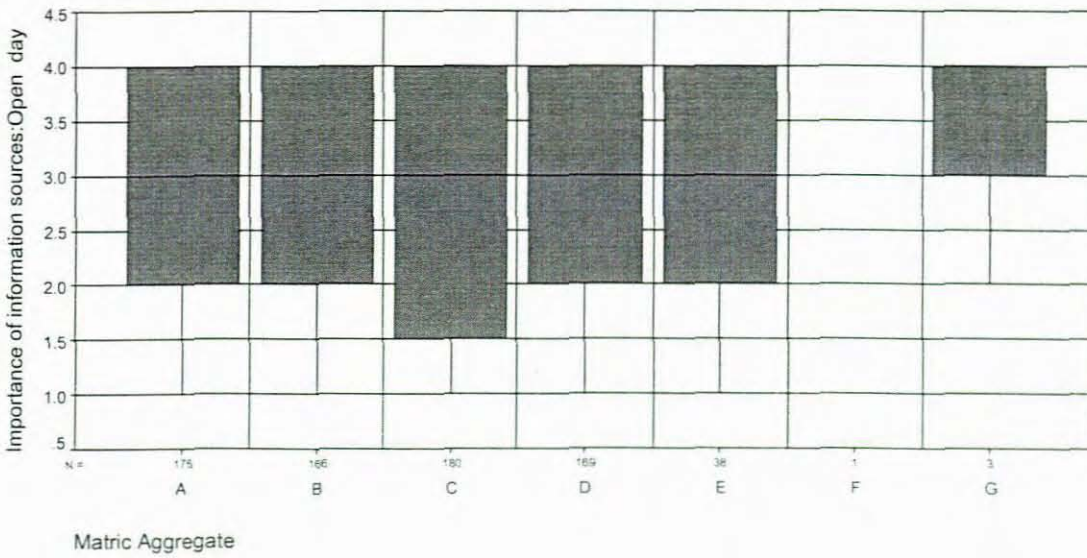
Table 6.81: Importance of information sources: Career exhibition



Comments:

Students with an A-aggregate responded between the range of 2-4 with a mean score of 3, indicating that these student did not view career exhibitions as an important source of information. The students with B and C-aggregates responded between the range of 1-4 with a mean score of 2, meaning the students viewed career exhibitions as important sources of information. Students with D-aggregates responded between 1-3 with a mean score of 2, meaning that students view it as important.

Table 6.82: Importance of information sources: Open day

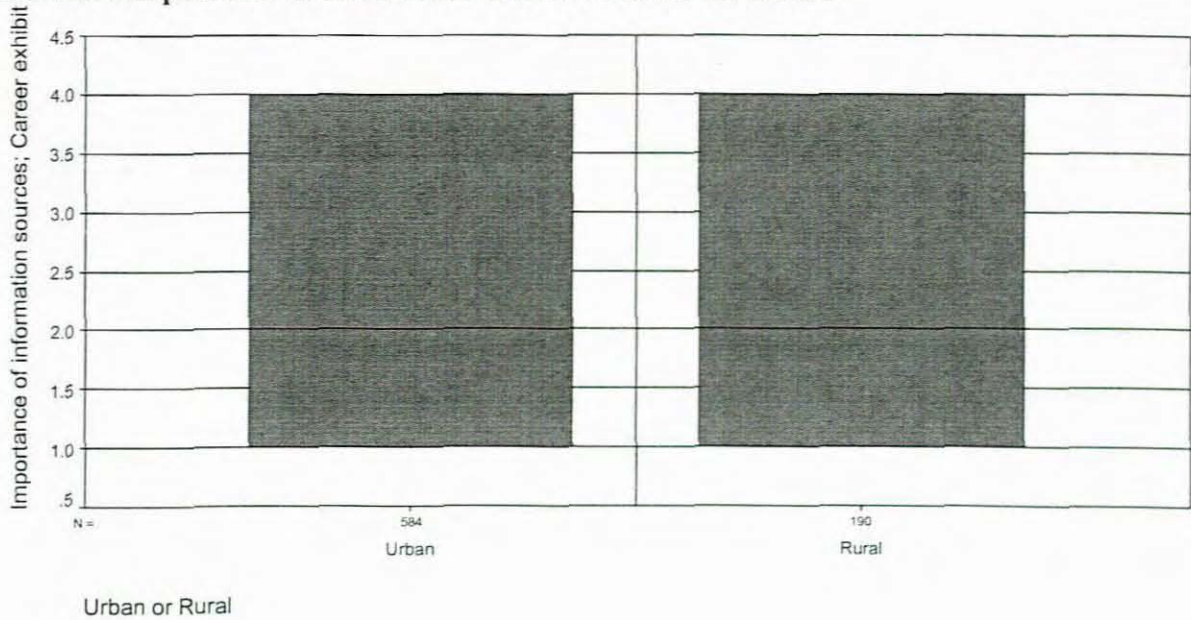


Comments:

Students with A, B, D and E-aggregates responded between the range of 2-4 with a mean score of 3, indicating that open days were of little importance in assisting with the decision to study at the current institution. C-aggregate students responded between 1.5-4 with a mean score of 3, meaning that open days are of little importance .

6.4.4 Urban or Rural

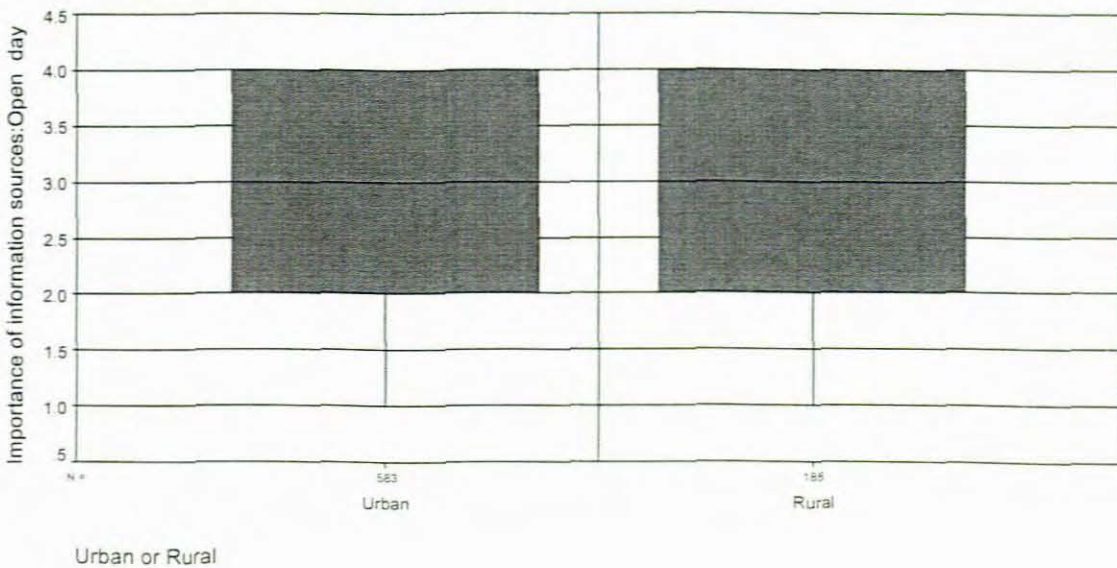
Table 6.83: Importance of information sources: Career exhibition



Comments:

It is significant to note that students from urban and rural areas answered the question between 1-4, with a mean score of 2 each, indicating the career exhibitions are viewed as an important information source in assisting with the decision to study at the current institution.

Table 6.84: Importance of information sources: Open day



Comments:

Students from rural and urban areas answered the question between 2-4 with a mean score of 3, meaning that students from rural areas regarded open days as being of little importance.

6.5 SUMMARY

This chapter analyses and interprets the findings of Phase I by providing insight into the purpose of marketing tools employed by five institutions. It also provides an understanding of the planning required to host a career exhibition and open day. The results of Phase II contributes to the information on factors that influence students' decision-making with regards to the choice of higher education institution. An important revelation of this phase is the influence of traditional marketing tools such as career exhibitions and open days on student decision-making.

CHAPTER 7

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

*“Not everything that can be counted counts, and not everything that counts
can be counted.”*

Albert Einstein

7.1 Introduction

The research contributes to the information of factors that influence students' decision-making with regards to the choice of higher education institution. Education marketers should consider such information much more than in the past, because of the diminishing pool of learners, increased competition and decreased funds. It is important to understand how students are influenced so that institutions can employ the appropriate marketing tools. Regarding the appropriateness of marketing tools, an important revelation of this study is the influence of traditional marketing tools such as career exhibitions and open days on student decision-making. The study provides an understanding of the attributes that are most likely to create a positive preference for the institution and provides insight into the promotional tools that can be used to attract students.

This chapter will provide a summary of the previous chapters for clarification of the study. Concluding remarks will be made verifying the hypotheses of the study and recommendation will be suggested to address the problems identified in Chapter One.

7.2 Summary of chapters

The primary objective of this research was to determine the effectiveness of marketing communication strategies employed by universities and technikons in the Cape Peninsula, with specific reference to career exhibitions and open days in attracting first-year students. The secondary objectives were:

- To identify whether universities and technikons in the Cape Peninsula are employing appropriate marketing communication strategies aimed at attracting first-year students, and
- To determine the impact of marketing communication strategies on the students decision-making process.

For clarification purposes a brief summary of each chapter will follow.

Chapter 1

In this chapter the background to the study is given. The problems, objectives and hypotheses are stated and a review of the related literature is given. The significance of the research is given, the research methodology is outlined and the structure of the research is presented.

Chapter 2

The literature review in this chapter implies that marketing principles and practices are applicable to higher education. It is clear that higher education institutions need to become more customer-oriented by identifying customer needs. This means that instead of students competing for selection, institutions should actively market it, making students more aware of how institution can satisfy their needs.

Chapter 3

In this chapter, marketing communication strategies for higher education institutions are explored. The communication processes for higher education institutions are outlined. The concept of integrated marketing communication is explained and how it relates to higher education. The steps higher education institutions should take to plan marketing communication strategies are outlined. The marketing communication mix tools that higher education institutions can use are identified and the role it plays in higher education is explored.

Chapter 4

This chapter identifies the decision-making process students follow when deciding on which higher education institution to attend. Students have to progress through six stages namely:

- Problem recognition,
- search for information,
- alternative evaluation,

- applicant choice,
- enrolment and
- outcomes.

The decision-making process does not take place in isolation. It is influenced by the psychological, social and situational factors. Higher education institutions can assist the prospective student through the use of marketing communication tools to make the decision-making process less tedious and to assist them in making an informed choice and ultimately choosing the institution. Higher education institutions have to realise that the use of relevant communication tools and good customer service used during the recruitment process brings them closer to becoming the prospective students' first choice.

Chapter 5

This chapter provided a comprehensive description of the empirical study conducted at the universities and technikons in the Cape Peninsula. The research objectives, one primary objective and two secondary objectives are stated. The project was divided into two phases. Phase one consisted of personal interviews conducted with marketing officers at the five institutions. The research process followed in phase one is explained. Phase two consisted of a questionnaire distributed to first year students at the five institutions. The sampling method used to define the sample of students to whom the questionnaire was distributed is explained.

Chapter 6

This chapter analyses and interprets the findings of Phase I by providing insights into the purpose of marketing tools employed by the five institutions. It also provides an understanding of the planning required to host a career exhibition and open day. The results of Phase II contributed to the information of factors that influence the student's decision-making with regards to the choice of higher education institution. An important revelation of this phase is the influence of traditional marketing tools such as career exhibitions and open days on student decision-making.

7.3 Limitations

The lack of formal research regarding the effectiveness of career exhibitions and open days probably explains the eagerness of institutions to participate in both Phase I, the personal interviews conducted with marketing officers and Phase II, the first-year student survey. The timing of the interviews conducted with the marketing officers was problematic because the preparation of the career exhibitions and open days were taking place at the same time, hence the unavailability of the marketing officers at UWC and Pentech. The response rate for Phase II, the personal interviews with first-year students, could have been higher because the survey was conducted before the end of the second semester. Class attendance during this period is normally low because students are studying for exams and many of the lecturers are busy with revision classes. As a result of this, Management Studies students at Stellenbosch, and Chemistry Department students at Cape Technikon completed the questionnaire during the second semester, which delayed the analysis of the findings.

7.4 Conclusions

The following conclusions verify the hypotheses identified in chapter one.

7.4.1 Hypothesis one

Marketing communication strategies with specific reference to exhibitions and open days, create awareness of the institution but does not directly influence student enrolments.

The following findings verify the hypothesis:

7.4.1.1 The five institutions identified the purpose of career exhibitions and open days as creating awareness of the courses, the institutional environment and the support services. The institutions also identified these events as opportunities to change the perceptions of learners and they saw the events as opportunities to build relationships with prospective students who would hopefully enroll at the institution.

- 7.4.1.2 The institutions have no evidence that career exhibitions and open days are effective marketing communication tools in achieving the objectives or in attracting first-year students, because no scientific research has previously been conducted to measure the impact of such marketing communication tools on student applications.
- 7.4.1.3 The results of the student survey found that only 39,8% of the students surveyed were influenced by open days and only 46,6% were influenced by career exhibitions. Although career exhibitions and open days were not rated as influencing factors, students viewed them as important sources of information.
- 7.4.1.4 Career exhibitions ranked second and open days ranked fifth out of twelve variables as important sources of information. Of the 435 students who attended a career exhibition or open day at their current institution, 50,81% rated career exhibitions and open days as having influenced them. The results provide evidence that the institutions are not achieving the objectives of career exhibitions and open days as a marketing communication tool. The institutions indicated that the purpose of career exhibitions and open days are used to create awareness of the institutions and its environment, to provide information on courses, to change perceptions students have of the institution and to build relationships with prospective students. 62,29 % of the students felt that career exhibitions and open days did not introduce them to the environment of the institution and 79,55% indicated that they did not assist them in building a relationship with the institution. Students, however, felt that they benefited from attending career exhibitions and open days because such events provided them with information on courses.

The conclusion can therefore be reached that career exhibitions and open days are viewed as a source of information that does not influence the student's decision to study at a particular institution.

7.4.2 Hypothesis two

Tertiary institutions employ a marketing communication tool based on the availability of funds. This communication tool is not market specific.

The following findings verify the hypothesis:

7.4.2.1 Table 3.1 provides evidence of the amount spent on various marketing communication tools. The results show that these tools had very little or no influence on the students' decision to study at a particular institution. The five institutions spent approximately R3 683 254 on print advertising for the period March 2001- February 2002. Only 23.3% of students were influenced by newspaper advertising, while 76,7% were not influenced. From March 2001-February 2002 the five institutions collectively spent R 368 691 on radio advertising. Only 11,1% of the respondents were influenced by radio advertising , while 88,9% of the respondents were not influenced.

7.4.2.2 Career exhibitions and open days are annual events that require the support of the entire institution. The planning and the effort is not reflected in the influence on student decision-making.

7.4.2.3 The evidence in the results indicate that career exhibitions and open days are not integrated with the other marketing tools employed to promote the image of the institution, because career exhibitions and open days and other marketing tools employed are not managed by the same department.

7.4.2.4 The fact that the Education Department is not giving attention to the event by requesting that it be hosted outside of school hours is evidence that the tool is viewed as a waste of time and that it is not market driven. Institutions should therefore be looking at more effective alternative ways of creating an awareness of the institution and attracting first-year students. As previously mentioned in 7.4.1.4, the career exhibitions and open days are achieving the objective of providing information on courses. Institutions can find ways of providing information on courses that require less effort, are less costly and more effective.

7.4.2.5 The fact that all the schools in the region are invited to these events is an indication that the institution is not practising target marketing which is a

principle of marketing. This could be because institutions have not segmented the market and therefore opt for mass marketing as opposed to target marketing.

7.4.2.6 Institutions also have to question whether it is ethical to accept applications from informed learners together with applications from those who lack the information. This is another indication that institutions are not customer focused.

7.4.2.7 The fact that institutions have done very little research and that institutions have not built the capacity for marketing within the institution indicates that marketing is regarded as an add-on function and that institutions have not integrated the marketing function. It is clear that institutions do not realise the importance of marketing in achieving their strategic objectives.

7.4.3 Hypothesis three

Exposure to a marketing communication tool does not influence the student's decision to study at a particular tertiary institution.

This is evident from the following results:

7.4.3.1 An important revelation of this study is the influence of traditional marketing communication tools on students' decision-making. This result suggests that the traditional elements such as advertising in newspapers, brochures, material distributed by teachers, television, posters and career exhibitions and open days have little influence on students' decision-making.

7.4.3.2 Family and friends were identified by students as the two factors having the greatest influence on their decision to study at a particular tertiary institution. 75,7% of the respondents indicated that family had an influence on their decision to study at a particular institution. This could be the result of parents having to pay for their children's studies and therefore choosing which institution the children should attend. Friends have a major influence, with 65% of the respondents indicating that friends had an influence on their choice of institution.

7.4.3.3 Students identified the course, bursaries and financial aid, status of the institution, reputation of the institution and academic requirements as the five main reasons for choosing the current institution.

7.4.3.4 The majority of students who currently attend Peninsula Technikon are from the Eastern Cape, yet those attending the Technikon's career exhibition are all from the Western Cape. This gives further weight to the above hypothesis. Peninsula Technikon should therefore find out why students from the Western Cape are attending other institutions while students from the Eastern Cape are opting for Peninsula Technikon.

7.5 Recommendations

The following recommendations could be considered to improve the effectiveness of marketing communication tools employed by universities and technikons in the Cape Peninsula:

7.5.1 Although career exhibitions and open days do influence student decision-making, they are regarded as important sources of information, and higher education institutions should therefore continue using these marketing communication tool.

The following suggestions may help to improve the response to these events:

7.5.1.1. Following the example of UCT, institutions should include parents in the target market for career exhibitions and open days. This means hosting the event on a day convenient for parents, friends and learners to attend the event together, which could be over a weekend or on a weekday evening. The influence of parents and teachers should be recognised in encouraging learners to attend the event. Institutions should continue to send invitations to schools, but should also send personalised invitations to parents of grade-12 learners because the results show that direct marketing tools are more effective than mass marketing tools. This could be used as an alternative to, or in conjunction with, radio and

newspaper advertising directed at parents, depending on the availability of funds.

- 7.5.1.2. The information disseminated at the open day will therefore be more specific in addressing the needs of grade-12 learners and their parents. Academics and students need to recognise their roles as sales people and can be trained to answer expected queries and to project the image that will produce a favourable reaction.
 - 7.5.1.3. Peer marketing should be engaged in by using present students and alumni to visit their former high schools to promote and create awareness of the institution to grade 10-12 learners. This activity could be used in conjunction with school visits to encourage learners to attend the career exhibition and open day with their parents and to encourage teachers to market the event to parents. This can also be used as an alternative to inviting grade 10 and 11 learners to a career exhibition or open day. Learners may be gathering too much useless information at such events that may not be appropriate for that stage in their decision-making processes.
 - 7.5.1.4. Faculties should host open days or conduct school visits to provide students with more course specific information. By specialising rather than providing general information at a career exhibition or open day, the institution can use the appropriate tools to lead students into making a choice and finally applying.
- 7.5.2 Higher education institutions should exploit the reasons why students attend such institutions in their communication with prospective students. They need to emphasise the courses that are offered, especially how these courses differ from those offered by other institutions. They also need to inform students of bursaries and financial aid available and use the institution's strategic position, status and reputation as a competitive advantage. Institutions should emphasise academic requirements, which will prevent the student from applying to more than one institution. This will enable the student to make a more informed decision.
- 7.5.3 Institutions should make an effort to evaluate the impact of the communication tools employed. Advertising expenditure should have an effect on applications.

but in the case of higher education institutions, it has no influence on the student's decision to study at a particular institution. Institution can redirect those funds to direct marketing activities that provide information to learners and parents. More career guidance should be offered to students so that they can make more informed decisions. Institutions should engage in direct marketing activities to assist with building relationships, rather than engaging in ineffective promotion that is directed at the masses.

7.5.4 Institutions should realise the importance of the entire organisation embracing the concept of marketing. In this way the entire organisation, staff, students and academics will be sensitised as to how their behaviour constitutes a marketing communication tool. The funding required for promotion and the need for activities such as career exhibitions and open days, will therefore become less important.

7.5.5 Students should be educated on the processes that should be followed from becoming aware of the need to further their studies to the point of enrolment. This can be achieved by developing a central recruiting department within the institution that can employ the appropriate marketing tools to guide the learner from query to enrolment. Institutions should use application information to establish the importance of career guidance in schools.

7.6 Future research

This research represents the first stage in a possible large-scale qualitative and quantitative study on the effectiveness of marketing tools employed by universities and technikons in the Cape Peninsula. To ensure that universities and technikons employ marketing communication tools that are effective, qualitative research needs to be conducted to determine students' perceptions of the five institutions in the Cape Peninsula. What is missing from current research is the perceptions students have of the career exhibitions and open days at the five institutions. A study conducted to determine the latter will provide the institutions with useful information that can be used to make

the events more effective. Information has to be gathered on the processes students follow when applying to various institutions to establish how students make choices regarding which institution to apply to and which course to study. This should be related to what the institution does to assist the student, so that the institution can determine which recruiting strategies work and which do not. Since parents have such a great influence on which institutions their children should attend, it would be interesting to determine how parents decide on these higher education institutions and what criteria they use to evaluate these institutions.

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ADDENDUM A

Interview guide for marketing officers

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR MARKETING OFFICERS

SECTION A: Personal information

Name and Surname

Job title

Main areas of responsibility

Number of staff members in the department

SECTION B: Marketing tools used

1. What marketing tools do you use to market the institution to prospective students?
2. Do you target prospective students outside of the Western Cape?
3. Which marketing tools have proved to be the most successful in attracting students?
4. Do you think institutions need to allocate more funding towards marketing? Why?
5. Does your institution make use of a professional marketing organization?

SECTION C: Effectiveness of open days or career exhibitions

1. What is the purpose of open days and career exhibitions?
2. How important are open days and career exhibitions in attracting students to the institution?
3. How much energy and time is spent in preparation for an open day or careers exhibition?
4. Who takes responsibility for addressing prospective student queries at the careers exhibition or open day?
5. Are you aware of the impact the open days and career exhibitions have on applications?
6. How many attendees do you normally have at an open day or career exhibition?
7. Who is your main target market for an exhibition or open day?
8. In your opinion, do exhibitions and open days enjoy the support from staff?
9. What is the basis for this opinion?

ADDENDUM B

Letter requesting an appointment to conduct an interview with marketing officers at the five higher education institutions

Re: Research Study: Masters Thesis

I am currently undertaking a research study for my M.Tech. in Marketing at Peninsula Technikon.

The title of the research study is: “The effectiveness of exhibitions and open days employed by universities and technikons in the Cape Peninsula to attract first-year students.”

Universities and technikons have to compete for funds from both public and private sectors and they also compete for potential students. In the Cape Peninsula, this task is however more challenging because there are five public higher education institutions.

The successful implementation of the National Plan for Higher Education will also require tertiary institutions to develop marketing communication strategies to attract the desired profile of students. In a restrictive financial environment, tertiary institutions will have to assess and reassess their marketing communication strategies aimed at attracting first-year students. A proper assessment will enable them to allocate funds more efficiently and effectively.

Universities and Technikons in the Cape Peninsula have been using career exhibitions and open day’s as marketing communication tools to communicate with potential first-year students. This research study aims to determine how effective exhibitions and open days employed by universities and technikons in the Cape Peninsula are at attracting first-year students. The results might benefit your institution in that it will enable you to make more informed decisions regarding marketing communication strategies.

In light of the above, your assistance as marketing officer will be greatly appreciated to ensure that the correct and relevant information is obtained to assist me in making the correct conclusions and recommendations.

A research instrument will be distributed at a later stage and I will also be contacting you to arrange an interview at your convenience.

Yours sincerely

.....

Mandy Jones

Lecturer: Marketing Department

Business Faculty

Peninsula Technikon

e.mail: jonesm@mail.pentech.ac.za

Tel: 959 6289/691-2395

Cell: 073 1589 747

ADDENDUM C

Letter sent to relevant lecturers requesting time for students to complete the questionnaire

Re: Research Study: Masters Thesis

I am currently undertaking a research study for my M.Tech in Marketing Management at Peninsula Technikon.

The title of the research study is: "The effectiveness of exhibitions and open days employed by universities and technikons in the Cape Peninsula to attract first-year students."

I have conducted personal interviews with your schools liaison unit/recruitment office. I have now progressed to the point that it is necessary for me to conduct a survey with first year students. My sample includes first year full-time students studying towards a qualification in Chemistry, Civil Engineering and Management.

I would appreciate it if you are able to allow me 20 minutes so that your first year students can complete a questionnaire that will ensure that the correct and relevant information is obtained to assist me in making the correct conclusions and recommendations.

It would be much appreciated if we can set a date and time at your earliest convenience possible.

Yours sincerely

Mandy Jones

Lecturer: Marketing Department

Business Faculty

Peninsula Technikon

e.mail: jonesm@mail.pentech.ac.za

Tel: (w)959 6289/ (h)691-2395

ADDENDUM D

QUESTIONNAIRE ON STUDENT DECISION-MAKING: CHOICE OF ACADEMIC INSTITUTION

**QUESTIONNAIRE ON STUDENT DECISION-MAKING:
CHOICE OF ACADEMIC INSTITUTION**

Questionnaire no.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Your answers to the questions in this questionnaire will be regarded as strictly confidential and will be used for research purposes only. Please answer the questions as objectively as possible
2. Please read the questions carefully and make sure you answer all the questions
3. Answer the questions by making a cross (x) in the appropriate block, unless other instructions are given.

SECTION A: PERSONAL DETAILS

1. Gender:

Male	Female
------	--------

2. Into which age category in years do you fall?

16-20	
21-24	
25-28	
28-32	
> 32	

3. Which Region do you come from?

Western Cape	
Eastern Cape	
Northern Cape	
Northern Province	
Mpumalanga	
Gauteng	
North West	
KwaZulu Natal	
Free State	

4. Do you come from an urban (town, city) or rural area?

Urban	
Rural	

5. What is your first language?

Afrikaans	
English	
IsiNdebele	
Sepedi	
Sesotho	
SiSwati	
Xitsonga	
Setswana	
Tshivenda	
IsiXhosa	
IsiZulu	
Other: Please specify:	

6. What type of secondary school did you attend?

Private	
Public	
Model-C	

7. What was your matric aggregate?

A	
B	
C	
D	
E	
F	
G	

8. Which Institution are you currently studying at?

University of Cape Town	
University of Stellenbosch	
University of the Western Cape	
Cape Technikon	
Peninsula Technikon	

9. Which Course/ Field of Study are you currently in?

Business/ Commerce/ Economic and Management		Law	
Engineering		Dentistry	
Science/ Health sciences		Arts	
Education		Theology	

10. Which level of study are you in?

1st	2 nd	3rd	4 th
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SECTION B: INFORMATION SOURCES THAT HAD AN IMPACT ON YOUR DECISION TO STUDY AT YOUR CURRENT INSTITUTION.

1. Did the following information sources influence your decision to study at your current institution? NB (Answer all the options)

	Yes	No
Material distributed by your teacher		
Open day		
Career exhibition		
Institution Web-site		
Newspaper article		
Radio advertisement		
TV Advertising		
Billboards		
Posters		
Education Fair		
Friends		
Family		

2. How important were the following information sources in assisting you with your decision to study at your current institution? NB (Answer all the options)

	Very important	Important	Of little importance	Not at all important
Material distributed by your teacher				
Open day				
Career exhibition				
Institution Web-site				
Newspaper article				
Radio advertisement				
TV Advertising				
Billboards				
Posters				
Education Fair				
Friends				
Family				

SECTION C: THE EFFECTIVENESS OF OPEN DAYS AND CAREER EXHIBITIONS

1. Have you attended an open day or career exhibition hosted by your current institution before registering?

	Yes	No
Open day		
Career exhibition		

2. Have you attended an open day or career exhibition hosted by any of the following institutions? NB (Do not tick your current institution)

	Yes	No
University of Cape Town		
University of Stellenbosch		
University of the Western Cape		
Cape Technikon		
Peninsula Technikon		

If your answer is NO in both 1 and 2 of Section C, answer question 3.

3. If you did not attend a career exhibition or open day, do you think your decision would have been any different?

Yes	No
-----	----

4. If, your answer is YES in 1 and 2 of section C, rate the influence the career exhibition/open day had on your decision to study at your current institution.

No influence 1	2	3	4	Great influence 5
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5. Who encouraged you to attend an open day or career exhibition?

Parent	
School teacher	
Friend	
Your own initiative	
Other family member	

6. Do you think you benefited from attending an open day or career exhibition?

Yes	No	Not sure
-----	----	----------

6.1. If YES how did the open day or career exhibition benefit you?

NB (Tick all that apply):

Providing information on different courses	
Providing career guidance	
Introducing you to the environment at the institution	
Building a relationship with the institution	
Providing brochures for further information	
Other: Please specify	

6.2. If NO, please state why you did not benefit from attending an open day or career exhibition.

.....
.....

SECTION D: FACTORS THAT PLAYED A ROLE IN YOUR FINAL DECISION

1. Which of the following institutions did you apply to? (You may cross more than one)

University of Cape Town	
University of Stellenbosch	
University of the Western Cape	
Cape Technikon	
Peninsula Technikon	
Other	

2. From the list, select THREE reasons for the choice of your current institution in order of importance by writing the appropriate number in the column. (Rank 1=most important, rank 2=second most important and rank 3=third most important)

Financial aid/Bursary	
Travelling	
Academic requirements	
Fees	
Previous students	
Course	
Sports	
Your parents influence	
Pass Rate	
Reputation	
Status of the institution	
Friends	
In-service training	
Not accepted at any other institution	
Member of the family studied there	
Language of the institution	

SECTION E: GENERAL

Suggest ways, other than career exhibitions and open days, by which institutions can attract students.

.....

.....

.....

.....

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION