



Criminology on the Rise: Proposed Marketing Strategies

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Abstract

One of the issues that small private colleges face is how to market available courses. Enrollees prefer bigger higher education institutions because they already have the necessary establishments to cater needs. Thus, small private colleges lag behind bigger higher education institutions.

St. Francis Xavier College is a good example. Its development in the past years makes it one of the most ideal schools for studying BS Criminology in Agusan Del Sur. Though good, it tends to lag behind other more established schools in Caraga. Thus, a fundamental question arises; how can SFXC market the Criminology Program?

Using data from respondents who are studying at SFXC, this research aims to find the best marketing strategies based from the suggestions of the respondents using a qualitative- quantitative descriptive research design. In connection, a researcher's made instrument was utilized to gather the necessary data that will answer the issue on this study.

Respondents of this study mostly belong on the age bracket of 19-21 years old. Also, majority of them are male. Most of the respondents said that they themselves are the one who make the decision to take B.S. Criminology program at SFXC. Their recommendations as to the marketing strategies that may be adopted by the school includes the utilization of school visitation, improving the quality of instruction and advertisement.

Keywords: Marketing strategies; Criminology; Philippines

1. Introduction

Saint Francis Xavier College is one of the fast-growing schools in the Caraga Region. Presently, it offers baccalaureate degree programs such as B.S. in Criminology, B.S. in Elementary and Secondary Education, B.S. in Accountancy, B.S. in Office Administration, B. S. in Business Administration, B.S. in Accounting Technology, B.S. in Information Technology and B.S. in Applied Industrial Sciences.

As to the B.S. Criminology program, last 2018, SFXC managed to get a 100% passing rate for first time Criminology Board Exam takers with a national passing rate of 33.37%. SFXC managed to realize this achievement once again the following year. In 2019, first time Criminology Board Exam takers nabbed a passing rate of 90.63% that goes toe to toe with the leading tertiary institutions in the Caraga region that offer the same program

SFXC's excellence in the field of Criminology might be due to its effective teaching methods. An example is the retention policy which pushes students to achieve the standards set by the school if they wish to remain on the Criminology program. Furthermore, this is paired with strict disciplinary practices and up to date coaching or lecture materials.

However, a significant point is that enrollees for the Criminology Program in SFXC are quite few compared to the other schools in the region. Available data shows that enrolment for Criminology does not have a dramatic increase. This goes to show that SFXC needs to market the Criminology Program in San Francisco, Agusan del Sur and to its nearby municipalities and cities in order to attract more students.

1.1. Definition of terms

Marketing Strategies. Refers to the programs, activities, or any medium that is used to invite and influence students to enroll in SFXC's B.S. Criminology program.

Neighbors. Refers to those persons who live at the same Barangay of the respondents.

Parents. Refers to the respondent's mother or father without taking into account the issue on legitimacy.

Peers. Refers to the respondent's friends including those persons whom the respondents go along with most of the time.

Relatives. Refers to those persons who are biologically related to the respondent other than their parents.

Self. Refers to the instance wherein it is the respondent himself/ herself who choose to enroll at SFXC and that, he/ she was not influence by someone else but it is his/her own choice that led him/her to enroll at SFXC.

SFXC. Refers to Saint Francis Xavier College. A higher Educational Institution situated at San Francisco, Agusan del Sur that offered collegiate courses including B.S. Criminology.

Sponsors. Refers to those persons who financially supported the respondent's education other than their parents and relatives.

1.2. Scope and Limitations

This study focuses on the B.S. Criminology program of SFXC. Respondents are limited only to incoming 2nd year students for school year 2019-2020. Questions are limited only to the problem being investigated in this study.

2. Materials and Methods

This study utilized a qualitative- quantitative- descriptive research design. Its purpose is to determine the idea or insights of the respondents and to know how many people think, act or feel in one concrete way. It includes qualifying the collection of the analysis of data. It is descriptive in the sense that the study focuses on investigating present situation from the point of view of the respondents.

Furthermore, voluntary response sampling was utilized by the researchers in this study. All incoming 2nd year students were given a copy of the research instrument online and those who voluntarily responded were taken as part of the respondents of this study.

This research study was conducted at Saint Francis Xavier College (SFXC) San Francisco, Agusan del Sur. The Criminology program of the said institution was the primary focus of this study.

The respondents of this study were the incoming second year Criminology students of SFXC for school year 2020- 2021. A total of 100 students participated on the survey. Their responses form part on the results provided in this study.

A researcher's made instrument was the main tool utilized to gather the necessary data for this study. It is composed of two parts. The first part is all about the profile of the respondents which answers the first problem of this study. The second part is intended to answer the second and third problem of the study.

Through the department's Facebook page, the researchers identified who are their qualified respondents. Then, they sent a personal message to those whom they identified as their qualified respondents. The message is intended to asked consent from them to participate in the online survey making the data be part of the researchers' research study. There was a total of 100 of them who responded positively out of 158 that were being contacted.

Then, a copy of the instrument was provided to their electronic mail with the necessary instructions being sent to their messenger account. After all of the respondents re sent the accomplished instrument, the researchers tallied their responses and subjected it to analysis which form part.

3. Results and Discussion

Problem Number 1.

What is the Profile of the Respondents?

Respondent's Profile		Frequency	Percent
Age:	16-18	2	2%
	19-21	91	91%
	22-24	6	6%
	25-26	1	1%
	Total	100	100%
Gender:	Female	38	38%
	Male	62	62%
	Total	100	100%

The table above shows that most of the respondents are 19 and 21 years old respectively. This goes to show that majority of the incoming second year criminology students of SFXC are young adults. As to the gender, majority are male. This was already expected because most of the students in the Criminology department are male.

Problem Number 2.

Who Influence the Respondents to Enroll in the B.S. Criminology Program at SFXC?

Influencer	Frequency	Percent
Relatives	9	9%
Parents	26	26%
Sponsors	2	2%
Peers	11	11%
Neighbors	15	15%
Self	37	37%
Total	100	100%

As shown on the table above, majority of the respondents was the one who influenced themselves to take BS Criminology at SFXC. This goes to show that majority of them decided to study criminology without being pressured by others. Second in the row is the respondents' parents. This implies that parents still play an integral role in influencing students to take a particular course.

In connection to this, Butterbaugh (2012) said that parents still hold significant role regarding students' decision in enrolling to a particular program/course. His research showed students are more likely to get influence by their parents to choose a particular course if they are going to enroll on the same school where their parents enrolled also. Parents as the primary factor for students' preference in choosing a degree are falling out of trend right now. However, the result of our research proves that there are existing students in SFXC that experiences this.

On the contrary, research authored by Martin (2010) showed that parents do not necessarily influence the students' decision to take a particular course. This is true in cases where the parents are somewhat authoritative wherein, they are the one who decide in behalf of their children. Also, there are children who are just relying from the decision of their parents especially on matters pertaining to their education and if it is their parents who shouldered the financial aspect their studies instill.

Coming next to parents are the respondents' neighbors. The study conducted by Fernandez- Vara (2019) he mentioned that neighbors have significant impact on a student's enrollment to a particular university and its program. This is the concept of word of mouth. There are instances that when neighbors knew something good, they disseminate it to their neighbors. According to Michael, et.al (2003), products or services must be appealing and desirable for word-of-mouth marketing to be effective. This means that the services offered by private secondary schools should be one that is worth telling. Kotler, et.al. (2021) states three noteworthy

characteristics of word of mouth as a means of awareness or marketing a business: the first being that it is credible because people trust others they know and respect, secondly word of mouth may be a very intimate dialogue that reflect personal facts, opinion and experiences and it occurs when people want it to and when they are most interested, and it often follows noteworthy or meaningful events or experiences of customers.

Additionally, there are 11 respondents who said that it is their peers who influenced them. Stated in the study of Fizer (2013) family and friends have a significant impact in the preference of students when choosing a degree. Moreover, in other related research, friends are recurring factors that affect student preference. Also, 9 of the respondents were influenced by their relatives and 2 by their sponsors.

Problem Number 3.

What marketing strategies can be recommended by the respondents?

Generally, the recommended marketing strategies of the respondents includes school visitation, improving the quality of instruction, and advertisement.

School Visitation

There are respondents who suggested this as a way of marketing the school. This marketing strategy can be classified as traditional. However, most schools in the country had adopted this strategy of inviting students and targeting those who are already in their last year in High school. Other may termed this as a Career Guidance wherein the school will be making a close coordination with the schools in the secondary level to accommodate them and to get in touch with their senior high school students. After the so-called career guidance, a survey questionnaire will be given to the attendees which is intended to gather information on the possibilities of having students from the subject school.

Improving the Quality of Instruction

Infrastructural development is one of the keys on improving the quality of instruction. Theoretical knowledge will be actualized through the facilities/ equipment that can be used by the students during their laboratory activities. If the school has with it a complete laboratory apparatus, the faculty will be able to enhance students learning thereby improving the quality of instruction. Kotler and Fox (1995) mentioned that private secondary schools must explore a variety of strategies as a way of communicating and convincing old and prospective customers (parents, students and stakeholders) that their school is the right choice. One of the best ways to realize increase school enrolment is to run such an excellent operation, that parents and students will be very satisfied with the academic programs and the impact will be seen in students' high academic achievement. In other words, it is operating the school business at a higher level than the regular school organization norms and effectively communicating the improvement to customers (Oplatka, 2007).

The more marketing can work to empower teachers to empower learners, the better the outcomes will be. The better the success of learners, the more they will speak favourably about the school. Because if one thing is alive in the digital age, it's word of mouth. Word of mouth moves faster now than ever, and the more marketing can help to 'wow' students into talking positively about their experiences, the more word will spread. And that will be your best guarantee of hitting higher enrolment targets in the future (Strauss, 2014).

Advertisement

Majority of the respondents mentioned this suggestion. This includes radio, billboard and social media advertisement. It could be that respondents mentioned radio advertisement since there are areas in the region wherein radio is the only accessible means of gaining news. Makewa et al. (2013) undertake a study to determine marketing strategies that attract and increase student enrollment in private universities in Kenya. The findings indicated that advertising using an institution web site, advertising using the various media stations, use of social networks such as face-book, encouraging word-of-mouth, career fair involvement, open day on campus and alumni support are marketing strategies that can offer opportunity to attract and increase enrollment of students.

On the aspect of advertisement, social media was commonly mentioned by the respondents. This may be because we are now on the digital era wherein the almost everyone possesses a mobile phone that can connect to social media. One notable suggestion mentioned by one of the respondents is the hiring of a social media influencer to advertise the school. Kennedy (2014) noted that the target parents of today belongs to a generation that is active in the use of social media. Take note that on the previous findings of this study, parents are one of those persons who influence the respondents to enroll in SFXC. Social media as argued by Kennedy (2013) is easily shared. When it is well done consistently can strengthen value in the mind of the target audience and will improve enrolment. Some of the most suitable social media that could be adopted by educational institutions as a marketing means include Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, Twitter, You Tube and Messengers. The relevance of marketing strategy application cannot be overlooked if educational institutions must create impression that they are the best, which will facilitate customer attraction for them. Broadcast of important programmes, quality of programmes, beautified school environ, sufficient modern teaching equipment, social networking and school website will serve the purpose of attracting vast audience and prospects to facilitate number of enrolments.

In relation to this, Omboi and Mutali (2011) states that a well-executed direct advertising campaign can offer a positive return on investment through increased student enrolment. They maintained that direct advertising communicates the product offers, service, or event; and explains how to get the offered product, service, or event. This tool utilizes email, mail, catalogues, encourage direct responses to radio and TV, in order to reach targeted audiences to increase sales and test new products and alternate marketing tactics. Television is generally acknowledged as the most powerful advertising medium and reaches a broad spectrum of consumer, however needs to be adopted by educational institutions in reaching their target prospects and enrollees. Advertising has two particularly important strengths; first it can be an effective means of vividly demonstrating product attributes such as; school facilities, buildings, computer laboratory, science laboratories, libraries, sports equipment, school uniform, etc. Secondly, it can dramatically portray user and usage imagery, brand

personalities and other intangibles Kotler and Keller (2021). Advertising can be carried out through the media like newspaper, internet, and direct mails. Private school can use these mediums to reach prospective customers. Other outdoor advertising such as billboards and road shows can also be effectively utilized.

Additionally, on the study conducted by Uchendu, C., Nwafor, I., Nwaneri, M., 2015, they recommended marketing strategies such as school website/social media, quality school programmes, infrastructural development, media adverts should be used to boost enrolment since it is a modern means of awareness creation and communicating values of the institution to the prospects. This will serve to increase enrolment rate, thereby increasing literate populace in the country for social and economic well-being.

In addition, Rayport and Jaworski (2001) emphasized that companies must design websites that embody or express their purpose, product and vision. They argued that often, the first move of someone who doesn't know about an organization will be to visit its website. This is reason why private secondary schools should maintain a web site and actively involved in social media interaction at all times. Scot (1999) opined that an effective educational marketing website needs to capture critical customer information such as the products and services offered by a school.

SUGGESTED MARKETING STRATEGIES

School to school visitation.

During this visitation, an exhibit featuring all programs the school had offered may be taken in order to give the audience an overview on the different programs and in order to help them in deciding on the specific program that they will take in college basing on their interest as may be influenced by the exhibits presented. The exhibits may be facilitated by one faculty form the program and by students in complete uniform. This may provide additional attraction to high school students who are still undecided as to what course to take in college.

Advertisement.

The presence of local radio network is a good avenue to market the school. Billboards and roadshows containing information regarding the school and the programs it offers will also inform the public on the existence of the school. These billboards may be posted along the roadway that will provide visibility to the road users. City proper, nearby and far Barangays in Caraga Region may be subject on the installation of these billboards or tarpaulins as the case may be. Although this is considered as a traditional means of advertisement, studies prove its accessibility to the public and its effectiveness on the aspect of awareness and information dissemination.

- Different media platforms should be maintained by the school's marketing department. Facebook page for example should be kept updated with the information promoting the school and its programs. Video clips and promotional videos as starred by the faculty members and their students such as when they are having their laboratory activities will help a lot in the school's promotional aspect. This will also somewhat inform the viewers on the availability of the complete laboratory facilities the school is having. Same thing to be uploaded on the official YouTube channel of the school.

4. Conclusion

From the findings of the study, the researchers concluded that for the school to improve the number of its enrollees, marketing strategies are very essential. There are respondents who have cited that it is their choice to take the course B.S. Criminology at SFXC but the information as to the existence of B.S. Criminology in SFXC was made known to them through the other people having prior knowledge regarding SFXC. It is also concluded that advertisement plays a very vital role in making the public be aware on the services rendered by a certain company and in particular, on matters pertaining to an educational institution as suggested by most of the respondents.

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