

Current status of service marketing activities of Educa Corporation Education Joint Stock Company

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Abstract: *Educa Corporation Education Joint Stock Company (Educa Corp) is a prominent player in the education sector, offering a range of services including educational programs, digital learning solutions, and consulting services. This paper explores the current status of Educa Corp's service marketing activities, analyzing its strategies, market positioning, challenges, and opportunities. By examining Educa Corp's marketing practices and their impact on its brand and market presence, this paper aims to provide insights into effective service marketing in the education sector.*

Keywords: Digital Marketing, Personalization, Online Education, Customer Retention, Service Quality

1. INTRODUCTION

Educa Corporation Education Joint Stock Company (Educa Corp) has emerged as a significant entity in the rapidly evolving education sector, positioning itself as a key player in delivering diverse educational services. Established with the vision of enhancing educational outcomes and experiences, Educa Corp offers a wide range of services, including digital learning solutions, tutoring, and educational consulting. As the education landscape becomes increasingly competitive and dynamic, effective service marketing has become essential for sustaining growth and maintaining a competitive edge. Service marketing, particularly in the context of education, involves promoting and managing services in a way that meets the needs and expectations of students, parents, and educational institutions. For Educa Corp, this means not only highlighting the quality and innovation of its educational offerings but also effectively communicating its brand values and differentiators to a broad audience. The company's service marketing strategies are designed to address the unique challenges and opportunities within the education sector, aiming to enhance its market presence and attract a diverse clientele. In recent years, Educa Corp has implemented various marketing strategies to bolster its position in the market. These strategies include leveraging digital marketing channels, segmenting its target market, and focusing on customer relationship management. By adopting these approaches, Educa Corp seeks to build strong relationships with its customers, enhance brand loyalty, and drive sustainable growth. However, navigating the complexities of service marketing in education is not without its challenges. The sector is characterized by intense competition, rapidly changing consumer preferences, and the need for continuous innovation. Educa Corp must remain agile and responsive to these challenges to effectively position itself and meet the evolving needs of its market.

This paper aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of Educa Corp's current service marketing activities, evaluating its strategies, market positioning, and overall effectiveness. By

examining the company's approach to service marketing and its impact on its brand and market presence, the paper seeks to offer valuable insights into effective marketing practices within the education sector. Understanding these dynamics will help Educa Corp refine its strategies, address existing challenges, and capitalize on growth opportunities, ultimately contributing to its long-term success and sustainability in the competitive education market.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Service marketing differs fundamentally from product marketing due to the unique characteristics of services, which include intangibility, inseparability, perishability, and variability. Unlike physical products, services cannot be seen, touched, or stored, making them intangible. This intangibility creates challenges in communicating service benefits and quality to customers [1]. Inseparability refers to the simultaneous production and consumption of services, meaning that services are created and consumed in real time during interactions between the service provider and the customer [2]. This characteristic emphasizes the importance of managing both the service delivery process and customer interactions effectively. Perishability highlights that services cannot be stored or inventoried. Unsold service capacity cannot be saved for future use, requiring service providers to manage demand and supply dynamically [3]. This necessitates effective strategies for balancing service capacity with customer demand. Variability indicates that service quality can vary depending on who provides the service, when, and where it is delivered. This variability can affect the consistency of service experiences and underscores the need for standardized processes and employee training to maintain service quality [4]. The Service-Dominant Logic (SDL) introduced by Vargo and Lusch (2004) further refines the conceptual framework by positioning service as the core of economic exchange. SDL emphasizes the co-creation of value between service providers and customers, highlighting the role of customer participation in shaping service outcomes. The framework also incorporates

the expanded marketing mix for services, often referred to as the 7 Ps: Product, Price, Place, Promotion, People, Process, and Physical Evidence. Each of these elements plays a crucial role in the delivery and perception of service quality. Understanding these components helps organizations effectively design and manage their service offerings to meet customer needs and expectations.

In the realm of service marketing, the traditional 4 Ps—Product, Price, Place, and Promotion—are expanded to include three additional elements, creating the 7 Ps framework. This comprehensive model is essential for understanding and managing the complexities of service delivery and customer satisfaction.

Product: In services, the 'product' refers to the core service or the value offered to customers. Unlike tangible goods, services are intangible, so the focus is on designing service offerings that meet customer needs and expectations. The service product includes not just the service itself but also any supplementary services or features that enhance the customer experience [5].

Price: Pricing in service marketing involves determining the value of the service provided. Service pricing strategies can vary widely, including hourly rates, subscription models, or value-based pricing. Setting the right price is crucial as it affects customer perceptions of value and the overall competitiveness of the service [6].

Place: The 'place' in service marketing refers to the location or channels through which the service is delivered. It includes the physical or digital environment where interactions take place, such as service centers, online platforms, or mobile apps. Ensuring convenient and accessible service delivery channels is vital for customer satisfaction [7].

Promotion: Promotion encompasses all the strategies and tactics used to communicate the service offering to potential customers. This includes advertising, public relations, sales promotions, and digital marketing. Effective promotion raises awareness, attracts customers, and highlights the benefits of the service (Shimp, 2010).

People: In the context of services, 'people' refers to both the employees who deliver the service and the customers who receive it. Employee behavior, appearance, and attitude directly impact the service experience. Training and managing staff to provide excellent service and fostering positive customer interactions are essential components of this P [8].

Process: The process involves the procedures, mechanisms, and flow of activities by which the service is delivered. This includes the steps customers go through when receiving the service, from initial contact to completion. Streamlining processes to enhance efficiency and ensure a smooth service experience is crucial for customer satisfaction [9].

Physical Evidence: Physical evidence refers to the tangible aspects of the service environment that customers use to

evaluate the quality of the service. This includes the physical facilities, equipment, and materials used during service delivery. Elements like the cleanliness of a facility, the design of a website, or the appearance of staff contribute to the customer's perception of service quality.

Customer Relationship Management (CRM)[10] is a strategic approach to managing interactions with current and potential customers. It involves the use of data analysis to understand customer needs and preferences, which helps in personalizing service offerings and enhancing customer satisfaction. CRM systems allow businesses to build stronger relationships with customers by providing tailored services and responding to individual needs more effectively.

Service quality is a critical determinant of customer satisfaction and loyalty. The SERVQUAL model, developed by Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry (1988), identifies five dimensions of service quality: Tangibles, Reliability, Responsiveness, Assurance, and Empathy. Each dimension plays a role in shaping customers' perceptions of service quality. High service quality is linked to increased customer satisfaction, which in turn drives repeat business and positive word-of-mouth [11].

Effective service marketing strategies are essential for building and maintaining a competitive edge. Strategies include:

Segmentation and Targeting: Identifying and targeting specific market segments allows for more focused and effective marketing efforts (Kotler, 2003). Segmenting the market based on demographics, psychographics, and behavioral factors helps tailor services to meet the needs of different customer groups.

Branding: Establishing a strong brand identity is crucial for differentiating services in a competitive market. Branding efforts should communicate the unique value proposition of the service and build a positive reputation (Keller, 1993).

Digital Marketing: The rise of digital platforms has transformed service marketing. Utilizing social media, search engine optimization (SEO), and content marketing helps reach a broader audience and engage customers effectively (Chaffey, 2015).

Challenges in Service Marketing

Service marketing presents unique challenges that differentiate it from product marketing, primarily due to the intangible and experiential nature of services. One significant challenge is the intangibility of services, which makes it difficult for customers to evaluate the service before it is consumed. Unlike tangible products, services cannot be seen, touched, or tested in advance, which complicates the marketing and selling process (Zeithaml, Parasuraman, & Berry, 1985). Another challenge is the inseparability of service production and consumption; services are often produced and consumed simultaneously, which means that the quality of service delivery is highly dependent on real-time interactions

between customers and service providers. This immediate and interactive nature requires that service employees are well-trained and capable of managing customer expectations effectively (Bitner & Zeithaml, 1985). Perishability also poses a challenge, as services cannot be stored or inventoried. Unused service capacity represents lost revenue, making it crucial for service providers to manage demand and supply effectively, often through strategies such as reservation systems or dynamic pricing (Gronroos, 1990). Additionally, variability in service quality is a significant concern, as the quality of service can vary depending on who delivers it, when, and where. Ensuring consistency in service delivery requires robust training programs and standard operating procedures (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1988). Furthermore, managing customer expectations and perceptions is complex because service experiences are subjective and can be influenced by a variety of factors, including personal expectations and past experiences. Effective service marketing must address these challenges by implementing strategies that enhance service quality, improve customer satisfaction, and build strong, trust-based relationships with customers (Heskett, Sasser, & Schlesinger, 1997). Addressing these issues requires a deep understanding of the service environment, continuous improvement in service processes, and a customer-centric approach to ensure that service marketing efforts are successful and aligned with customer needs (Kotler & Keller, 2016).

3. FINDINGS

3.1. PRODUCT STATUS OF EDUCA CORPORATION

The company provides a system of online courses with programs from basic to advanced, suitable for each need and goal of each subject. Students participating in the course only need to purchase a specific course, then will be provided with a password and specific instructions to exploit class information such as: Listening to teachers' lectures, doing practice exercises... Depending on each different course, there will be a suitable curriculum arrangement according to each set of textbooks, according to each participating student.

Kindergarten and Primary Level

At the forefront of educational innovation for young learners, Babilala stands out as a premier English learning application tailored specifically for children aged 3 to 6. This cutting-edge tool is designed to lay a solid foundation in English, sparking early enthusiasm and a lifelong passion for the language. For primary school students, Edupia Primary offers a comprehensive English learning journey that covers all essential skills—listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Leveraging advanced 4.0 technology, Edupia Primary simulates an international classroom experience and boasts an impressive library of over 1,200 lessons, exercises, and tests.

In the realm of mathematics, Edupia Extra Math employs the Realistic Math Education (RME) approach, enabling students to seamlessly translate mathematical concepts into practical applications. Complementing this is Edupia Extra

Vietnamese, a platform dedicated to enhancing students' proficiency in reading, writing, speaking, and listening in Vietnamese. For a more holistic educational experience, the Edupia Learning Pack provides a rich assortment of engaging resources, including games, comics, and printed books. This comprehensive package is designed to inspire students from grades 1 through 5, fostering a love for learning and eliminating any apprehension about English.

Middle School Level

Edupia Middle School is a dynamic program designed specifically for middle school students, aligning closely with their textbook curriculum. This innovative program supports students in mastering classroom content and applying vocabulary and grammar effectively in various communication contexts. It introduces students to an international standard curriculum, enhancing their pronunciation and offering practical speaking practice with natural intonation.

For those aiming for excellence in English proficiency, Edupia IELTS (Junior) offers a tailored learning experience. The program begins with an assessment of each student's English skills through an entrance test, paving the way for a personalized learning path. Focusing on perfecting listening, speaking, reading, and writing abilities, the course provides a wealth of learning materials. From vocabulary and grammar lessons to exercises and simulation tests, students are thoroughly prepared for the IELTS test, becoming familiar with its structure and mastering the time management required for each section.

Business level

Edupia Business English is designed to equip students with essential skills for effective communication in both everyday work environments and specific business contexts. This comprehensive course covers a broad spectrum of business-related content, including writing professional emails, drafting detailed reports, and honing presentation skills. It also delves into critical areas such as negotiation and participation in business meetings conducted in English. By exposing students to specialized vocabulary and industry-specific terminology, Edupia Business English enhances their ability to communicate confidently and proficiently within a professional setting.

Tutoring Course

Edupia Tutor offers a cutting-edge online English tutoring solution, utilizing the EPAS teaching method, which adheres to international standards. This personalized program pairs students with experienced teachers who provide tailored guidance and detailed feedback to enhance language skills. The flexibility of Edupia Tutor allows learners to schedule lessons according to their individual needs, making it possible to attend sessions anytime and anywhere. This innovative approach ensures that students receive comprehensive support

and instruction, helping them advance their English proficiency conveniently and effectively.

3.2. MARKETING STRATEGIES OF EDUCA CORPORATION

Price situation

In the past, Educa Corporation strategically focused on catering to customers with low and middle incomes, who make up nearly 90% of the population. This approach allowed the company to leverage its scale advantages, positioning its products at a competitively low average price point. By doing so, Educa created a significant edge over competitors, offering customers products that deliver exceptional value relative to their cost.

Educa's pricing policy is anchored in two main principles. First, it is guided by perceived value, setting prices according to what customers are willing to pay, thus fostering customer loyalty and affection. When introducing a new product, the company considers the pricing of existing products, the quality of the new offering, and the prices set by competitors within the same segment to determine both retail and promotional prices.

Second, Educa adopts a flexible pricing strategy, adjusting prices based on the product's complexity, associated costs, market conditions, and discount levels for agents and partners. This adaptability ensures that both customers and collaborators benefit, reinforcing Educa's commitment to delivering value while maintaining strong relationships with its stakeholders.

Product distribution (place)

The Company serves a diverse clientele, ranging from individual consumers to corporate entities, through a dual-channel distribution strategy encompassing both B2C (Business to Customer) and B2B (Business to Business) models. In its B2C operations, the Company leverages a comprehensive online presence. Its website showcases detailed product information, including features, pricing, and additional details, enabling customers to make informed purchasing decisions. Through the website, customers can register and pay for courses directly, with any complimentary materials shipped to their specified address.

In addition to the website, the Company engages with customers via dedicated fan pages and Facebook groups tailored to each product. These social media platforms foster interaction and provide a space for customers to connect and share experiences.

On the B2B front, the Company has established a robust network of distributors and collaborators. This strategic focus on expanding the dealer network has resulted in a strong presence across the country, from the North to the South, ensuring widespread access to its products and services.

Mixed promotion

Intending to increase the recognition of the Company's brands to customers to stimulate the ability to make decisions to use the product, the Company uses the following mixed promotion activities.

Advertising activities: With the advantage of financial resources sponsored by prestigious investment funds and owning a large customer base, the Company carries out a series of diverse and rich advertising activities. The Company has promoted its brand to consumers and potential customers through major mass media channels such as the online newspaper Education and Times Online, the online newspaper VnExpress... At the end of each advertising article, there is the Edupia brand logo attached with the website address so that customers can access and find information about the courses. In addition, Educa proactively proposed cooperation with famous individuals in many different fields, including singer Dan Truong, actor Manh Truong, Quynh Tran JP... to associate the Edupia brand image with the purpose of product communication. In addition, the Company also advertises on stations with large interactions such as Vietnam Television, Vinh Long Radio and Television from 7:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. However, the main advertising activities are still mainly carried out on online channels such as Website; SEO, SEM activities; social media marketing including Facebook, Zalo, Tiktok; Email marketing; and video marketing with Youtube. With the limitations of the article, the author focuses on two main channels: website and Facebook. In addition to the Company's main website and Facebook fanpage, Educa builds separate websites and Facebook fanpages for each product with the aim of maximizing sales opportunities and customer classification. The following is an illustrative example through Table 3.2 to provide evidence of some typical products of the company.

Sales activities: Sales activities play an important role in Educa's business activities. The company develops policies and training programs, recruits a team of young employees, who are eager to contribute, have qualifications and capacity, are fully equipped with professional knowledge about the types of products and services the company provides, and can perform consulting and sales activities to generate revenue. In addition to the direct staff, the company establishes a team of distributors and collaborators to carry out business market expansion activities.

Advertising activities

Leveraging substantial financial backing from prestigious investment funds and a broad customer base, Educa Corporation executes a multifaceted and dynamic advertising strategy. The company has made significant strides in promoting its brand across major mass media platforms, including online newspapers such as Education Times Online and VnExpress. Each advertisement features the Edupia brand logo along with the website address, facilitating easy access for potential customers seeking detailed information about the company's courses. Beyond traditional media, Educa has strategically partnered with renowned figures across various

fields—such as singer Dan Truong, actor Manh Truong, and influencer Quynh Tran JP—to enhance brand visibility and product communication. The company also utilizes high-engagement stations like Vietnam Television and Vinh Long Radio and Television for advertising slots during peak hours, from 7:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. Nevertheless, the primary focus of Educa's advertising efforts remains on digital channels. These include a robust presence on its own website, alongside targeted SEO and SEM campaigns. Social media platforms such as Facebook, Zalo, and TikTok, as well as email and video marketing through YouTube, are integral to the company's strategy. Given the scope of the article, the focus narrows to the website and Facebook as key channels. In addition to its main website and Facebook fanpage, Educa creates dedicated websites and fanpages for each product, aiming to optimize sales opportunities and facilitate precise customer segmentation.

4. CONCLUSION AND SOME RECOMMENDATION

Educa Corporation Education Joint Stock Company has made significant progress in service marketing within the education sector. Despite facing challenges such as intense competition and changing consumer preferences, the company's strategic focus on service differentiation, digital marketing, and customer relationship management has positioned it as a leading player in the industry. By addressing current challenges and leveraging growth opportunities, Educa Corp can continue to enhance its market presence and achieve long-term success in the education sector.

Educa Corporation has adeptly harnessed the power of digital channels to broaden its reach, particularly through social media advertising, Google Ads, and strategic collaborations with media partners. This approach has significantly enhanced the company's visibility and attracted a growing customer base, especially in light of the surge in online education demand triggered by the Covid-19 pandemic.

A key strength of Educa's marketing strategy lies in its personalization efforts. By leveraging Big Data and artificial intelligence (AI), the company tailors learning experiences to the individual needs of each student, which not only boosts service quality but also fosters greater student loyalty. The focus on high-quality content and skilled educators further reinforces Educa's commitment to excellence. The company aligns its learning materials with both national and international education standards and places a strong emphasis on recruiting and retaining top-notch teachers, building trust and credibility with its learners. Educa also excels in providing prompt customer support. The deployment of online tools like chatbots, call centers, and email support ensures that customer inquiries are handled swiftly, enhancing the company's professional and approachable image. Despite these successes, Educa has valuable lessons to consider for further improvement. Enhancing the interaction between students and teachers through advanced online tools could enrich the learning experience and boost customer satisfaction. Expanding service offerings—such as personal learning

consultations, soft skills development courses, and short-term technology or career skills programs—could diversify Educa's portfolio and address a wider range of learner needs. Strengthening customer retention strategies is another area for growth. Implementing loyalty programs with incentives like discounts or exclusive course access could increase revenue while nurturing a loyal customer base. Additionally, proactively gathering and analyzing customer feedback through surveys or interviews will help refine the platform and educational programs.

In summary, while Educa has made significant strides in service marketing, continuous adaptation and development in response to online education trends are crucial. By addressing these areas, Educa can enhance its competitive edge and sustain its success in the evolving education landscape.

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