



## International Journal of Research Publication and Reviews

Journal homepage: [www.ijrpr.com](http://www.ijrpr.com) ISSN 2582-7421

# Location and Access as Determinants of University Marketing Effectiveness and Institutional Success: A Review

**Rahul Chandra\*, Dr. Ashish Kumar\*\***

\* Assistant Professor, Sushant University, Gurugram

\*\*Assistant Professor, Sushant University, Gurugram

### ABSTRACT:

Technology's rapid growth has brought about huge changes in the marketing landscape. With the advent of digital age, digital marketing became possible through a plethora of new and unique marketing channels. Digital marketing utilizes the power of the digital technologies to create marketing channels that are more interactive and prompt responses with the right target group for achieving the organizational goals with propensity mapping and aligning customer perceptions together so that the message is matched out with the customer's taste and need. It generally differs from traditional marketing in that it means using channels and methods that enable an organization to analyse marketing campaigns and understand what is working and what isn't – typically in real time.

Digital Marketing is broader at times in the scope of Internet Marketing (or e-Marketing) also Higher Educational marketing, traditionally considers the placement which segues into the distribution method used to deliver the teaching. However, this is no longer just limited to where the bricks and walls institution stands, but has broadened to include the various ways in which teaching payments can be delivered. Although there is still an onus on the location and that does have its own impact on perception Determines student choice in the case where nearness is considered as a crucial factor for students and this is sometimes due to the desire to cut back on accommodation and living expenditure when students live at home. This emphasis of location is again validated in recent higher education fee reforms which have seen students wanting to travel lesser distances to universities as a way of compensating spatially for increased costs of tuition. Also, a number of access issues such as availability of on-campus accommodation (which is part of link Premiums to marketing quad), easy accessibility via transportation and close by amenities factors has been seen as part of the prominent exterior marketing efforts of students. At the institutional level, location and access are significant to organizational status and hence strategic positioning. Geographical centrality is associated with a university's access to both 'material' resources such as infrastructure – for example the University has physical building and lecture venues on campus – and 'symbolic' resources such as reputation (or 'brand'). Besides the structural features including how buildings look, how that looks inside including lecture venue and clean space with chair-or-table in the arrangement would be under physical evidence which is an imperative internal marketing pillar as this fabricates the key quality in service marketing and student satisfaction. Marketing strategies need to integrate location and access and both must be run in the ethos of marketing in order to optimize the external marketing productions thereby raising the institutional branding to the competitive higher education market.

**Keywords:** Higher Education Marketing, Marketing Mix, Physical Evidence, Geographical Proximity, Student Recruitment, Institutional Success, Distribution Method

### Introduction

Higher education institutes are pushed to develop sensible tactics to attain a competitive edge, function more like a business, and sell their offerings successfully, considering education as a marketable service. A vital element for building a successful marketing strategy is the marketing mix model. In order to account for the features of the service industry, the model was enlarged to seven P's by adding People, Processes, and Physical Evidence/Facilities. Four components were used in traditional models: Place, Price, Promotion, and Product.

This review's primary focus is on the "Place" dimension, which looks at location and accessibility as important variables that impact university marketing effectiveness and institutional success. "Place" often refers to the tuition distribution strategy adopted by the university. However, this concept has evolved over time to encompass accessibility through remote learning opportunities made possible by technologies like email, video conferencing, virtual learning materials, and information and communications technologies (ICT), which enable the provision of remote services. Because of its dual nature, marketing activities must properly manage both virtual reach and physical intimacy. Empirically, location and access considerations exert tremendous impact over prospective students' decision-making processes, directly affecting external marketing outcomes. Geographical proximity is a major consideration when choosing a university, according to numerous researches.

This emphasis is frequently motivated by financial concerns, as students aim to stay near to home in order to reduce overall costs, including living expenses and tuition. Research on financing reforms, which shows that distance is a significant factor in university choice and enrolment, lends more credence to the significance of location. The campus location's accessibility by public transportation and proximity to public facilities are two specific

"Place" variables that have a favourable impact on external marketing initiatives. Furthermore, access variables like the availability of on-campus accommodation are considered crucial components (under the "Premiums" element in certain models) that influence student choice, particularly for undergraduates and international students. From an institutional perspective, organizational status and strategic competence are directly correlated with location and access. Institutional success depends on the capacity to place the institution in attractive resource niches within the competitive higher education system. In this context, location correlates with the concept of organizational centrality, which covers geographical, political, economic, and social elements. A university in a central location has better access to both tangible resources (such infrastructure, a diverse student body, and a workforce) and intangible resources (like status and reputation). The goal of this review is to compile the vast body of research demonstrating that, in the cutthroat world of higher education, the location and access components of the marketing mix are potent, essential factors that influence both marketing efficacy (attracting and enrolling students) and overall institutional success (strategic positioning and resource acquisition).

---

## Literature Review

Higher education has witnessed substantial changes illustrated by major overseas competition, shifting demand trends, and the burden of reducing government backing. This environment has prompted institutions to change from operating in protected, regulated markets to aggressively seeking competitive advantage and functioning more like companies. Consequently, the role of strategic marketing has become crucial, driving efforts to attract high-quality students, ensure enrollment success, distinguish services, and sustain institutional existence. This analysis focuses on how location and access, which are frequently included in the "Place" component of the marketing mix, play a crucial part in determining the performance of an institution as a whole as well as the efficacy of external marketing.

### *I. Conceptualizing Location and Access in the Higher Education Marketing Mix*

The theoretical foundation for university marketing often rests upon the marketing mix model. While the traditional model comprises the four Ps (Product, Price, Place, Promotion), the service sector, including higher education, typically utilizes an expanded seven Ps model, adding People, Processes, and Physical Evidence/Facilities. Location and access are primarily addressed by the "Place" component, but their influence also extends to the auxiliary elements of the services mix, specifically "Physical Evidence" and "Premiums."

The conventional definition of Place is the distribution method a university adopts to provide tuition in a manner that meets student expectations. Crucially, this concept has evolved significantly beyond the physical campus location. Modern access includes alternative delivery modes, such as distance learning opportunities facilitated by contemporary technologies, including virtual learning media, email, video conferencing, and Information and Communications Technologies (ICT). These advancements enable remote service delivery, satisfying evolving student needs for flexibility.

Beyond the non-traditional distribution methods, the physical environment and tangible aspects related to location fall under the concept of Physical Evidence or "Place" indicators. The tangible elements of the service offering, such as the caliber of instructional materials and the aesthetics of the buildings and lecture halls, are referred to as physical evidence. The significance of this component for internal marketing is confirmed by empirical research, which mention certain indications including the availability of adequate learning facilities, easily accessible laboratories, and hygienic and comfortable classrooms.

A study focusing on the MBA market in South Africa highlighted alternative marketing factors, including Premiums. This factor is made up of elements that add special value or act as an incentive. Within the premiums category, the "Availability of on-campus accommodation" was included. While housing might be less important for older, experienced MBA students, research indicates that accommodation is a very important aspect influencing choice for undergraduate and international students.

### *II. Location and Access as Key Determinants of Student Choice (External Marketing)*

Location and access elements are highly significant in influencing the pre-purchase information search and decision-making processes of prospective students. In a model distinguishing between external and internal marketing, the traditional factors of Place, Product, Price, and Promotion were found appropriate for driving external marketing activities focused on attracting potential student interest.

A recurring theme in the literature is the overwhelming importance of geographical proximity as a choice factor. In one survey conducted at a Portuguese university, nearly half of the respondents deemed geographical proximity the highest significant consideration when picking a higher education school, with 75% of the whole sample naming it among their three most important characteristics. Furthermore, specific location indicators are empirically proven to determine the success of external marketing efforts. A study examining marketing mix dimensions in Indonesian private universities found that the Place variable had a positive and significant effect on external marketing activities. The measurable indicators of this Place variable included the accessibility of the campus location by public vehicles, its closeness to public facilities, and ensuring the campus location is clean and neat. The importance of location and geographical distance is so pronounced that studies measuring higher education outcomes frequently track the geographical distance between a student's home and the university attended.

### ***III. Institutional Success and Strategic Positioning: The Role of Centrality***

Beyond impacting student recruitment, location and access factors are crucial determinants of a university's organizational status and its long-term strategic positioning. Institutional positioning refers to how higher education institutions locate themselves in advantageous resource niches within the competitive higher education system.

The concept of Organizational Centrality helps operationalize the strategic importance of location. Centrality, that takes into consideration social, political, economic, and geographic factors, gauges a university's position on a continuum between the center and the periphery of the organizational field.

Geographical centrality explicitly relates to the physical location—whether the university is situated in a major city or the countryside, or in densely or hardly populated areas. Central positions are connected with enhanced access to both tangible resources (e.g., infrastructure, financing) and symbolic resources (e.g., prestige and reputation). Resources linked to geographic centrality include a robust labor force, access to large and diversified student populations, and infrastructures (including public transit and communication channels). Therefore, a university located in a capital city is usually more likely to have access to a greater range of vital resources than a peripheral institution.

The organizational dimension, including of centrality, operates as an intervening variable in the strategic framework. It acts as a filter against external environmental pressures and shapes the rationality and capacity of management to pursue strategic action. Therefore, institutional performance and the possibility to build a unique, competitive position are intimately related to controlling these multi-dimensional elements of location and access. According to the core theory, an institution's access to material and symbolic resources increases with its geographic, political, economic, and social centrality, which is correlated with more effective strategic positioning.

---

## **Findings and Discussion**

The influence of location and access factors on university performance is profound, affecting both operational marketing activities directed at prospective students (external marketing effectiveness) and the institution's long-term strategic positioning (institutional success). This discussion synthesizes the role of location and access, traditionally categorized under the "Place" component of the marketing mix, detailing their evolution as determinants of higher education success.

### ***Location and Access in the Evolving Marketing Mix***

The concept of "Place" in the service marketing mix (7Ps) traditionally refers to the distribution method adopted by a university to provide tuition to its market. For service industries like higher education, the traditional 7Ps added elements like Physical Evidence and Processes. Location and access are intertwined with multiple dimensions of this expanded mix.

Evolution of Place and Distribution: While historically defined by the physical campus, "Place" has broadened significantly to encompass alternative distribution methods that improve access. Modern access involves distance learning opportunities delivered via technologies such as virtual learning media, email, video conferencing, and Information and Communications Technologies (ICT), which enable remote service delivery. Institutions are also using offshore teaching programs and branch campuses as distribution channels. The ability to offer these flexible modes is crucial for satisfying student expectations.

Physical Evidence and Premiums: Beyond distribution, the physical aspects of location are integral to marketing. The tangible components of the service offering—referred to as Physical Evidence—include the appearance of buildings and lecture facilities. Specific indicators of physical evidence that enhance service quality and student satisfaction include the availability of sufficient learning facilities, accessible laboratories, and clean and comfortable classrooms. Furthermore, specific access features, such as the availability of on-campus accommodation, are grouped under the "Premiums" factor in alternative marketing mix models developed for graduate education. Although accommodation was found to be of little importance to older MBA students in one study, research indicates it is a very important aspect influencing choice for undergraduate and international students.

### ***Location as a Primary Determinant of Student Enrolment (External Marketing Effectiveness)***

Location and access factors are critical drivers in the pre-purchase information search and decision-making process of prospective students, having a positive and significant effect on external marketing activities.

The Power of Geographical Proximity: Empirical evidence consistently highlights geographical proximity as a key choice factor. In one survey of enrolling university students, nearly half (45.5%) considered geographical proximity the utmost important factor in selecting an institution, with approximately three-quarters (74.9%) listing it among their three most important choice factors.

Cost Compensation and Economic Considerations: Economic factors play a major role in this significant preference for nearby areas. Students typically opt to study near to home as a plan to cut down on expenses, including tuition and living costs. The relationship between cost and distance is supported by research on funding enhancements for higher education in England. Following the introduction and notable increase in tuition, students demonstrated a reduction in the distance they travelled to university, suggesting that they were compensating for the higher costs by reducing location-related expenses such as living and travel. A multifaceted effect on geographic mobility across wealth groups was shown by the finding that students from less wealthy

homes were more likely to pursue a degree farther away from home. However, people from better socioeconomic origins were more likely to experience this reduction in trip distance. **Specific Location Indicators:** In addition to general closeness, specific location indicators have a favourable impact on the efficacy of external marketing. In a study of private higher education, measurable indicators of the "Place" variable included the accessibility of the campus location by public vehicles and its closeness to public facilities, alongside maintaining a clean and neat campus location.

### ***Location as a Driver of Institutional Success (Organizational Centrality)***

Beyond the immediate results of student recruitment, a university's competitive advantage and organizational performance depend heavily on its strategic location and accessibility. **Strategic Positioning and Resource Niches:** Institutional success hinges on the ability of the university to effectively position itself in advantageous resource niches within the competitive higher education system. Location, in this context, defines the university's Organizational Centrality—a meso-level intervening variable that affects management's ability to respond to external pressures and shape strategic action. The university's position on a continuum between the centre and the perimeter of the organizational field is measured by centrality. **Resource Acquisition and Geographic Centrality:** Organizational centrality is multidimensional, incorporating geographical, political, economic, and social dimensions. Geographical centrality specifically applies to the university's location (e.g., in a large city vs a peripheral place) and is strongly tied to resource accessibility. Institutions in central positions enjoy enhanced access to both material resources and symbolic resources. Material resources tied to centrality include infrastructures (like public transport and means of communication), access to a robust workforce, and large, diverse student bodies. Symbolic resources include status and reputation. The fundamental proposition in organizational theory related to centrality is that the more geographically, politically, economically and socially central the university is, the more access it enjoys over material and symbolic resources, accordingly the more effective its strategic positioning.

In conclusion, access and location determine the institution's ability to compete, obtain resources, and accomplish long-term strategic goals through organizational centrality, as well as whether a prospective student enrolls (owing to perceived economic and convenience benefits). Therefore, in order to preserve a sustained competitive edge, effective university leadership must manage location and access holistically, embracing both the physical environment and flexible service delivery options.

---

## **Conclusions**

In the highly competitive field of higher education, the review affirms that location and access are important variables influencing university marketing success and institutional success. The core influence of the "Place" dimension, which connects student enrollment decisions and institutional strategic capabilities, is still crucial even as the traditional marketing mix continues to develop, including specialized dimensions like the factor "Premiums," which often includes the availability of on-campus accommodation.

For prospective students, geographical closeness is regularly acknowledged as a major choosing consideration. This inclination is typically driven by economic factors, as students try to reduce escalating education expenditures, such as tuition, by lowering the distance traveled and associated living expenses. Access indicators, including campus location accessibility by public vehicles and proximity to public facilities, are noted indicators of the "Place" element that positively influence external marketing outcomes. Critically, the concept of "Place" has broadened beyond the physical campus to include alternative distribution methods such as distance learning opportunities facilitated by virtual learning media and Information and Communications Technologies (ICT), enabling remote service delivery and satisfying evolving student expectations.

Institutionally, the location and its associated access factors contribute directly to organizational centrality, which the sources conceptualize as a powerful intervening variable shaping the institution's strategic positioning. This research gives institutions with greater access to both symbolic and tangible resources, such as infrastructure. As a result, effective university marketing necessitates a comprehensive management of location and access, integrating physical elements such as facilities (Physical Evidence) with adaptable, modern distribution strategies, thereby optimizing external recruitment efforts and ensuring a sustainable competitive advantage in the dynamic higher education marketplace.

---

## **References**

1. A new higher education marketing mix: the 7Ps for MBA marketing. Jonathan Ivy (2008) International Journal of Educational Management Vol. 22 No. 4, 2008 pp. 288-299 DOI 10.1108/09513540810875635
2. Critical Success Factors in the Marketing of an Educational Institution: A Comparison of Institutional and Student Perspectives. Mazzarol et.al (2000) Journal of Marketing for Higher Education, Vol. 10(2) 2000
3. Dominant factors for the marketing of private higher education. Pardiyo et.al (2021)
4. Higher Education Funding Reforms: A Comprehensive Analysis of Educational and Labor Market Outcomes in England. Ghazala Azmat & Stefania Simion (2017)
5. Higher Education Marketing: A Study on the Impact of Social Media on Study Selection and University Choice. Marc C. Zinck Stagno (2012)
6. Leveraging Brand Value for Sustainable Competitive Advantage. Ritesh Dalwadi (2006)

- 
7. Marketing the Institution to Prospective Students – A Review of Brand (Reputation) Management in Higher Education. J.H. Beneke (2011) ISSN 1833-3850 E-ISSN 1833-8119
  8. Recruiting Higher Education Students: Information Sources and Choice Factors. Ana Maria Soares and Cláudia Simões (2009)
  9. Reengineering marketing strategies for higher education in Somaliland. Mohamed Aden Abdirahman & Dr. Samina khan (2024) <https://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.4985520>
  10. Social media for job recruitment: A review study. Ayando Lesenyego & Joshua Ebere Chukwuere. (2023)
  11. Strengthening Strategic Enrolment Management Integration Through Effective Organizational Change Management. Scott & Asavisanu (2021)
  12. The determinants of university strategic positioning: a reappraisal of the organisation. Fumasoli et.al (2019) <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-019-00481-6>