

Factors that motivate students to study at an Afrikaans private higher education institution

Competition in South African higher education (HE) requires marketing that places the focus on the student as the consumer of a service and on the factors that are important to students, when choosing a higher education institution (HEI). Other factors that affect the HE system include the need for wider accessibility for more students, changes to government funding, and the language debate regarding Afrikaans as the language of HE teaching and learning. This has created space for private HEIs like Akademia, an Afrikaans private HEI, to satisfy the needs of niche markets.

This study aims to understand the decision-making process of students from Akademia using Kotler's five-phase decision-making model. I collected data through an electronic survey of 132 first-year students at Akademia; followed by telephonic interviews with seven participants to gain insight into their decision-making processes.

The results show that the target market for an Afrikaans HEI is diverse, with differences occurring between gender, age, province, work, and class. Some of the most important factors that emerged were quality of education, safety, information sources (e.g., the webpage), open days, student advisors, brochures, part-time study, learning in Afrikaans, and the *Facebook* page.

The study contributes to the current body of knowledge regarding student choice by indicating the choice factors and information sources of two niche markets – working students in a hybrid HE environment, and the students of an Afrikaans private HEI.

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