



CAMPUS PROMOTION STRATEGY TO INCREASE NEW STUDENT ENROLLMENT THROUGH A RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING SYSTEM

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Abstract

This research explores the potential integration of the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) system in campus promotion strategies to increase the number of new student applicants. A descriptive qualitative approach was used through interviews with prospective students, Lancang Kuning University representatives, and RPL experts. Findings show prospective students' positive perceptions of RPL which is perceived to help accelerate studies and reduce tuition fees for individuals with prior learning experience. Despite challenges such as lack of resources and the need for curriculum adjustments, the integration of RPL in promotional strategies has a great opportunity to attract prospective students by offering the added value of learning flexibility. Practical recommendations are proposed, including market analysis, development of a standardized RPL system, training of marketing staff, promotional campaigns emphasizing the added value of RPL, cooperation with alumni/companies, and periodic evaluation. Effective implementation of promotional strategies with RPL can increase the attractiveness of Lancang Kuning University, create differentiation, and increase the number of new student applicants.

Keywords: Recognition of Past Learning, Promotion Strategy, Higher Education Marketing

1. PRELIMINARY

1.1. Background

Higher education marketing has become an increasingly important area of research in recent decades. According to Hemsley-Brown and Oplatka (2006) [1], global competition has driven higher education institutions to develop marketing strategies that are effective in attracting prospective students. Their research provides a systematic review of the higher education marketing literature, highlighting the importance of understanding the needs and preferences of the target market and tailoring offerings to those needs.

One important aspect of higher education marketing is the promotion strategy. Maringe (2006) [3] emphasized that an effective promotion strategy is key to attracting new prospective students and improving institutional competitiveness. His research explored the implications of college and study program selection on promotion strategy, positioning, and student recruitment.

In the increasingly competitive world of higher education, effective promotional strategies have become very important for universities to attract new prospective students [1]. Global competition has encouraged educational institutions to develop marketing approaches that are innovative and relevant to the needs and preferences of the target market [2], [3]. One promising strategy is to integrate the concept of Recognition of Prior Learning into campus promotion efforts.

RPL is a process that allows individuals to gain recognition for skills and knowledge acquired through previous learning experiences, both formal and non-formal [4], [5]. By offering RPL, universities can provide attractive added value to prospective students, especially for those with previous work or education experience [6], [7]. RPL can help speed up the study process and reduce tuition fees, as well as provide flexibility in the learning process [8], [9].

Research by Garnett and Cavaye (2015) [6] explored the challenges faced by academics in dealing with RPL, which they referred to as the 'knowledge chunk'. The research highlighted the importance of building a deep understanding of RPL among academic staff and adjusting curricula and academic processes to properly accommodate RPL.

Dirkx (2019) [9] conducted research on educators' practices and perceptions of RPL in South Africa. The findings of this study show that although RPL is considered important in promoting access and equity in higher education, there are various challenges to its implementation, such as lack of resources, cultural resistance, and lack of understanding of the concept of RPL.

Understanding prospective students' preferences and behaviors in choosing higher education is an important aspect of designing effective promotional strategies. Research by Vrontis et al. (2007) [7] proposed a College Selection Model that includes factors such as institutional reputation, study programs, tuition fees, campus facilities, location, and career prospects of graduates.

Binsardi and Ekwulugo (2003) [14] conducted research on marketing UK higher education in the international market. They explored the factors that influence prospective students' decisions in choosing higher education in the UK, including academic reputation, cost of living, career prospects, and the influence of family or friends.

Some studies have identified challenges in the implementation of RPL in higher education. Rhoads (2021) [10] highlighted the challenges from a higher education policy perspective, including the need to ensure consistent quality standards, adequate funding, and a legal framework that supports the implementation of RPL.

On the other hand, Gibbs and Khademian (2021) [15] explored the opportunities and benefits of RPL in the context of higher education. They highlight that RPL can improve access and equity in higher education, as well as provide flexibility for individuals with prior learning experience.

This topic is particularly relevant in the context of higher education marketing management. An effective promotion strategy is key to attracting new students and increasing the competitiveness of the institution [1], [10]. By incorporating RPL in the promotion strategy, higher education institutions can create a unique and attractive value proposition for specific market segments [11], [12]. This is in line with marketing principles that emphasize the importance of understanding customer needs and preferences and tailoring product or service offerings to those needs [3], [13].

Previous research has explored various aspects of higher education marketing, such as marketing strategies [14], [15], consumer behavior in college selection [7], [11], as well as challenges in implementing RPL [6], [9]. However, not many studies have specifically examined the potential integration of RPL into campus promotion strategies to increase the number of new student applicants.

Therefore, this study aims to explore the potential of the RPL system as part of the campus promotion strategy to increase the number of new student applicants. Specifically, the objectives of this research are:

1. Analyzing prospective students' perceptions and preferences towards the concept of RPL in the context of college selection.
2. Identifying factors that influence the effectiveness of RPL integration in campus promotion strategies.
3. Develop a model or framework that can be used by higher education institutions to design and implement promotional strategies that optimally utilize RPL.
4. Evaluate the impact of implementing promotional strategies that integrate RPL on the number of new student applicants.

By exploring this topic, the research is expected to provide valuable insights for practitioners and stakeholders in higher education in designing promotional strategies that are effective and attractive to prospective students.

Promotion Strategy in Higher Education Marketing Promotion strategy is an important element in higher education marketing to attract new prospective students and increase the competitiveness of the institution [1], [10]. The concept of the marketing mix consisting of product, price, place, promotion, people, physical evidence, and process can be used as a framework for designing promotional strategies [5]. Colleges can utilize various communication channels such as advertisements, brochures, educational exhibitions, social media, and public relations activities [3]. However, the promotion strategy should be tailored to the needs and preferences of the target market, as well as considering the institution's differentiation and value proposition [5], [11].

The Recognition of Past Learning (RPL) system is a process that allows individuals to gain recognition for skills and knowledge gained through previous learning experiences, both formal and non-formal [4], [6]. RPL can help prospective students accelerate the study process and reduce

education costs by recognizing previously held competencies [8]. In the context of higher education marketing, RPL can be an attractive value proposition for certain market segments, such as professional workers or individuals with prior work or education experience [6], [7].

Theory of Consumer Behavior in College Selection to design effective promotional strategies, it is important to understand the factors that influence consumer behavior in choosing a college. The College Selection Model by Vrontis et al. (2007) [7] includes factors such as institutional reputation, study programs, tuition fees, campus facilities, location, and career prospects of graduates. In addition, some theories consider the influence of social factors, such as family support, friends, and teachers in the decision-making process [3], [11].

Challenges of RPL Implementation Previous research identified several challenges in implementing RPL in higher education, such as the lack of resources and expertise to manage the RPL process, potential internal resistance, and the need to adjust curriculum and academic processes [6], [9], [15]. Colleges need to prepare strategies to overcome these barriers to effectively integrate RPL into the promotion strategy.

Opportunities for Promotional Strategies with RPL Despite the challenges, research shows that there are great opportunities in integrating RPL into promotional strategies to attract new students [12], [13]. By combining RPL promotion with direct marketing approaches, social media, and other promotional activities, universities can increase the awareness and interest of prospective students in the added value offered [14]. This is in line with the marketing concept that emphasizes the importance of identifying customer needs and tailoring offers to those needs [3], [13].

These studies provide a theoretical and empirical foundation that supports this research in exploring the potential integration of RPL into campus promotion strategies to increase the number of new student applicants. By understanding theories related to promotional strategies, educational marketing, and consumer behavior, as well as challenges and opportunities in the implementation of RPL, this research is expected to provide valuable insights for practitioners and stakeholders in higher education.

1.2. Supporting Theory

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is a process that enables individuals to gain recognition for skills and knowledge acquired through previous learning experiences, both formal and non-formal [4]. RPL is based on the principle that learning can occur in a variety of contexts, not only in traditional academic environments.

Every individual has the potential to develop skills and knowledge through life experiences, work, training, or other activities [8]. RPL provides an opportunity for individuals to gain recognition for pre-existing competencies, thus accelerating the learning process and reducing education costs.

In the context of higher education, RPL can help prospective students obtain credits or exemptions from some courses or study programs based on relevant prior learning experiences [6]. This can provide flexibility and efficiency in the learning process, especially for individuals who have had previous work or education experience.

RPL also emphasizes the importance of developing a valid and reliable assessment system to evaluate skills and knowledge acquired through non-formal learning experiences [9]. This can involve assessment methods such as portfolios, interviews, or performance assessments [10].

The implementation of RPL in higher education requires commitment and support from management, as well as adjustments to policies and curricula to accommodate the RPL process [15]. In addition, training is needed for academic staff and relevant officials to have an adequate understanding of the concept and practice of RPL.

The concept of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is based on the idea that information about RPL should be actively disseminated and easily accessible to potential participants. The execution of RPL must be transparent, accountable, and prepared for auditing. The quality of RPL implementation must match that of regular education, necessitating a quality assurance process that encompasses inputs, processes, and outputs. RPL has the potential to acknowledge anticipated learning outcomes or competencies, which can equate to credits in a formal education program, either in full or in part (some courses) [16].

Recognition of Past Learning is divided into two categories, as per the Decree of the Director General of Higher Education, Research, and Technology, Number 162/E/KPT/2022 concerning

Technical Guidelines for Recognition of Past Learning in Universities offering academic education: RPL Type A is a partial credit recognition for furthering education based on individual initiative, culminating in a diploma, while RPL Type B is a recognition of parity with certain KKNI qualifications based on the initiative of the university and community, with the Equalization Decree as the final output [16].

Lancang Kuning University currently employs RPL Type A by partially acknowledging learning outcomes, specifically by recognizing learning outcomes obtained from (1) Prior university study programs; (2) Non-formal or informal education; and/or (3) Work experience post-secondary school graduation or other equivalent forms [16].

The recognition of assessment results is manifested in the acquisition of credits from various courses based on the assessment results (for recognition of Learning Outcomes from non-formal, informal education, or work experience to formal education) and/or credit transfer (for recognition of Learning Outcomes from prior formal education pursued at the Higher Education level). The number of courses and credits recognized is a combination of the outcomes of credit transfer assessment and credit acquisition [16].

Promotion strategy is an important element in higher education marketing to attract new prospective students and improve institutional competitiveness [1]. The theory of promotional strategy in higher education marketing is based on the concept of marketing mix consisting of 7Ps: product, price, place, promotion, people, physical evidence, and process [5].

The promotional strategy emphasizes the importance of developing an effective promotional strategy by considering aspects such as courses offered, tuition fees, campus location, communication channels, staff, facilities, and academic/administrative services [3]. An effective promotional strategy should be tailored to the needs and preferences of the target market, as well as considering the differentiation and value proposition that the institution has [5].

Promotional strategies in higher education marketing also explore various approaches and communication channels that can be used, such as advertisements, brochures, educational exhibitions, social media, and public relations activities [13]. The selection of appropriate communication channels is crucial to effectively reach the desired target market.

In addition, this theory emphasizes the importance of understanding the preferences and behavior of prospective students in choosing a college [7]. By understanding the factors that influence prospective students' decisions, such as institutional reputation, study programs, tuition fees, career prospects, and location, universities can design promotional strategies that suit the needs and preferences of the target market.

Higher education marketing focuses on the application of marketing principles in the context of higher education institutions, such as universities and colleges. The theory is based on the concept that colleges operate in a competitive environment, where they must attract prospective students, create unique value, and build strong relationships with stakeholders [14].

Higher education marketing emphasizes the importance of understanding the needs and preferences of the target market, which in this case are prospective students and their parents [12]. By understanding prospective students' preferences, such as academic reputation, study programs, tuition fees, career prospects, and location, universities can design marketing strategies that suit their needs.

Higher education marketing also emphasizes the importance of creating unique and attractive value propositions for prospective students. This can be done through product (study program) differentiation, quality services, adequate facilities, and interesting learning experiences [1]. A unique value proposition can help universities to stand out among competitors and attract prospective students.

In addition, higher education marketing emphasizes the importance of building strong relationships with internal and external stakeholders, such as staff, students, alumni, companies, and the community [14]. Strong relationships with stakeholders can help universities understand market needs, improve reputation, and promote study programs and the added value they offer.

In the context of this research, higher education marketing theory provides a foundation for understanding the importance of effective promotion strategies, prospective students' preferences, as well as the potential integration of RPL systems as added value in the college's marketing strategy. By incorporating the RPL concept into the promotion strategy, universities can create differentiation and

attract specific market segments, such as working professionals or individuals with prior learning experience.

2. RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses a qualitative descriptive approach to explore the potential integration of the Recognition of Past Learning (RPL) system into campus promotion strategies that are implemented to increase the number of new student applicants at Lancang Kuning University. The qualitative approach was chosen to gain an in-depth understanding of the perceptions, preferences, and factors that influence the effectiveness of RPL integration in promotional strategies from the perspectives of various stakeholders [6], [9], [15].

Data Collection Primary data will be collected through semi-structured interviews with respondents consisting of:

1. Potential student candidates
 - a. Selection criteria: Individuals who plan to study at Lancang Kuning University soon or have previous work/education experience [7], [11].
 - b. Interview questions: Perceptions of the concept of OPL, preferences in choosing a university, factors that influence decisions, and responses to promotional strategies that integrate OPL [3], [6], [13].
2. Representative of Lancang Kuning University
 - a. Selection criteria: Staff or officials involved in marketing, promotion, and admission of new students [1], [10].
 - b. Interview questions: Current promotion practices, challenges in attracting prospective students, understanding of RPL, potential integration of RPL in promotion strategies, and possible barriers [5], [12], [14].
3. RPL experts or practitioners
 - a. Selection criteria: Individuals who have in-depth knowledge of RPL implementation in higher education institutions [4], [8], [15].
 - b. Interview questions: Benefits of RPL, factors affecting successful implementation, challenges faced, and recommendations for integrating RPL in promotion strategies [6], [9].

Interviews will be conducted face-to-face or via video conference, with a duration of approximately 45-60 minutes per session. Interview questions will be tailored to the respondents' backgrounds and roles, while still focusing on the main topics of the study.

Data Analysis Qualitative data obtained from interviews will be analyzed using thematic analysis techniques [2]. The analysis process includes:

1. Transcribing the interview recordings verbatim.
2. Reading and understanding the transcripts thoroughly.
3. Coding the data by identifying emerging themes and patterns [6], [9].
4. Categorizing the themes into broader categories [7], [11].
5. Interpreting the data and relating it to relevant theoretical frameworks [1], [3], [5].
6. Conclude and provide recommendations for future research [12], [13], [14].

This study will comply with the principles of research ethics, such as obtaining consent from respondents, maintaining data confidentiality, and not causing harm or loss to respondents [15].

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Based on the analysis of data obtained from interviews with potential students, university representatives, and RPL (Recognition of Past Learning) experts, several key findings were found related to the promotion strategy through the RPL system to increase the number of new students:

1. Positive Perception of the RPL Concept The majority of potential prospective students showed a positive response to the RPL concept, in line with previous research [6], [7], [13]. They perceive RPL as an attractive added value, especially for individuals with previous work or education experience. RPL is considered to help speed up the study process and reduce tuition fees [4], [8].
2. Preferences of Prospective Students in Choosing Lancang Kuning University. This finding is in line with the College Selection Model [7] and previous studies [3], [11]. The main factors include academic reputation, study programs, tuition fees, career prospects, campus location, and

supporting facilities. The flexibility of the learning process is also an important consideration for some prospective students.

3. **Integration of RPL in Promotion Strategy** In line with the concept of marketing mix [5] and previous research [12], [14], university representatives and RPL experts agree that integrating RPL in promotion strategy can attract certain market segments. However, a strong promotional effort is needed to raise public awareness about RPL.
4. **Challenges in RPL Implementation** These findings are consistent with previous studies [6], [9], [15] that identified challenges such as lack of resources, potential internal resistance, and the need for curriculum adjustments in RPL implementation.
5. **Opportunities for Promotional Strategies with RPL** Despite the challenges, respondents recognized the great potential of promotion strategies with RPL to attract new prospective students, especially for study programs that are relevant to previous work/education experience [12], [13], [14]. RPL promotion can be combined with other approaches.

These findings provide valuable insights for developing effective promotion strategies by integrating RPL systems, as well as identifying factors that need to be considered in their implementation, in line with the objectives of this study.

The findings of this study provide valuable insights into the potential integration of the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) system in promotional strategies to increase the number of new student applicants at Lancang Kuning University. The following is an in-depth analysis and interpretation of the findings, along with implications in the context of marketing management and its application in higher education marketing.

Positive Perception of RPL The positive perception of prospective students towards the concept of RPL [6], [7], [13] reflects the need for flexibility and efficiency in the learning process, in line with the theory of consumer behavior in college selection [3], [11]. By offering RPL, universities can enhance their value proposition by providing solutions for prospective students who have prior learning experience [4], [8].

Prospective Students' Preferences Findings related to prospective students' preferences [3], [7], [11] guide colleges in designing marketing strategies that suit the needs of the target market. Although factors such as reputation, study programs, tuition fees, and career prospects remain the main considerations, the flexibility of the learning process is also a preference that needs to be considered. The integration of RPL in the promotion strategy can be an attractive added value for certain segments of prospective students.

Integration of RPL in Promotion Strategy This finding is in line with the concept of marketing mix in higher education marketing [5], [12], [14], where promotion is an important element to create differentiation and attract specific market segments. By communicating RPL as an added value in promotion, Lancang Kuning University can increase its appeal to prospective students who have a prior learning experience.

Challenges in RPL Implementation The identified challenges, such as lack of resources, internal resistance, and the need for curriculum adjustment [6], [9], [15], are important aspects that need to be considered in implementing RPL effectively. Colleges need to make thorough preparations, including staff training, policy adjustments, and allocation of adequate resources to overcome these challenges.

Opportunities for Promotional Strategies with RPL Despite the challenges, findings indicate that there are great opportunities in integrating RPL into promotional strategies to attract new students [12], [13], [14]. By combining RPL promotion with direct marketing approaches, social media, and other promotional activities, Lancang Kuning University can increase the awareness and interest of prospective students in the added value offered. This is in line with the marketing concept that emphasizes the importance of identifying customer needs and tailoring offers to those needs [3], [13].

Implications in Marketing Management The findings of this study have important implications for higher education marketing management. First, Lancang Kuning University needs to consider the preferences and needs of prospective students in designing its marketing strategy. By understanding the desire for flexibility and efficiency in the learning process, universities can offer solutions such as RPL as an attractive value proposition [4], [8].

Second, Lancang Kuning University needs to utilize the marketing mix effectively, especially in terms of promotion [5], [12]. The integration of RPL in the promotion strategy can be a means to

create differentiation and attract specific market segments, such as working professionals or individuals with prior learning experience [6], [7].

Third, the implementation of RPL in promotion strategies requires careful preparation, including the provision of adequate resources, staff training, policy adjustments, and curriculum modifications [9], [15]. Lancang Kuning University needs to consider these challenges and develop strategies to overcome these obstacles.

Implementation in Lancang Kuning University Marketing To effectively implement a promotional strategy that integrates RPL, universities can follow these steps:

1. Conduct a market analysis to identify the segment of prospective students who have previous learning experience and want flexibility in the learning process [7], [11].
2. Develop a systematic and standardized RPL system, involving experts and practitioners to ensure the quality and credibility of the assessment process [4], [8], [15].
3. Train marketing and promotion staff to understand the concept of RPL and be able to communicate it effectively to prospective students [1], [10].
4. Design promotional campaigns that emphasize the added value of RPL, using appropriate communication channels such as social media, advertising, and other promotional activities [3], [12], [14].
5. Cooperate with alumni or companies to promote RPL and its benefits for working professionals who want to continue their education [6], [13].
6. Periodically evaluate the effectiveness of the promotion strategy with RPL and make adjustments if needed [1], [10], [14].

By effectively implementing promotional strategies that integrate RPL, colleges can increase their appeal to prospective students, create differentiation, and ultimately increase the number of new student enrolments [5], [12], [13].

4. CONCLUSION

This research explores the potential integration of the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) system in Lancang Kuning University's campus promotion strategy to increase the number of new student applicants. Based on the findings and discussion, it can be concluded that RPL has great potential as an added value in university promotion strategy.

Prospective students' positive perception of the RPL concept indicates the need for flexibility and efficiency in the learning process. RPL is perceived to help accelerate studies and reduce tuition fees for individuals with prior learning experience. Prospective students' main preferences include reputation, study program, cost, career prospects, and location, but flexibility is also an important consideration.

Lancang Kuning University representatives and RPL experts see positive potential in integrating RPL into promotional strategies to attract specific market segments. Despite challenges such as lack of resources, internal resistance, and curriculum adjustments, promotional strategies with RPL have a great opportunity to attract new prospective students, especially for study programs that are relevant to previous work/education experience.

Based on the findings and discussion, the following are practical suggestions for the development of effective promotion strategies with RPL:

1. Conduct a market analysis to identify segments of prospective students with prior learning experience and a desire for flexibility.
2. Develop a standardized RPL system by involving experts to ensure quality and credibility.
3. Train marketing and promotion staff to understand and communicate RPL effectively.
4. Design promotional campaigns that emphasize the added value of RPL through channels such as social media, advertisements, and promotional activities.
5. Collaborate with alumni or companies to promote RPL for working professionals.
6. Periodically evaluate the effectiveness of the RPL promotion strategy and make adjustments if necessary.

By effectively implementing a promotional strategy that integrates RPL, Lancang Kuning University can increase its appeal to prospective students, create differentiation, and ultimately increase the number of new student applicants.

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