

A study on the Role of Consultancy in Overseas Education

Vineet. R. Kamble¹Dr. Priyanka Bobade²

- (1. MBA in International Business & Marketing – Dr. D.Y. Patil Vidyapeeth - Global Business School & Research Centre Tathawade, Pune, India.)
- (2. Professor- Dr DY Patil Vidyapeeth - Global Business School and Research Centre Tathawade, Pune, India.)

Abstract: Overseas education consultancy are experts or counsellors who assist, guide and direct students in planning their higher education abroad. The rise of overseas education can be seen in India and the number of students going abroad have increased ever since. The education sector has seen a growth of new agents that is the overseas consultancy. Therefore, the aim of this study was to see whether overseas education consultancy played an important role for students going overseas for education. The most important part of this study was to find the prevalence of students going to consultants for overseas education and to study the benefits gained after joining a consultancy. By these findings I have able to put forth the suggestions and recommendations to the management. The study was carried out at Kopol College and CATKing Educare – Mumbai, India. Primary data was collected through questionnaire survey amongst the students who attended the seminars conducted by CATKing Educare and the students who enrolled in CATKing Educare for guidance. 100 students responded to the questionnaire survey. Secondary data was collected through previously studied research articles and company's website. The study results showed that 66.7% students visited consultancy for guidance in overseas education process. While 73.5% of students prefer to study abroad. 88.5% students have been benefitted by joining an education consultancy. And services such as Profiling, Documentation, Counselling and Standardized test are the ones which have benefitted the students the most.

Date of Submission: 23-03-2020

Date of Acceptance: 11-04-2020

I. Introduction

Overseas education consultancy are experts or counsellors who assist, guide and direct students in planning their higher education abroad.

The rise of overseas education can be seen in India and the number of students going abroad have increased ever since. The education sector has seen a growth of new agents i.e. the overseas consultancy.

Acting as the mediator between the students and the overseas education process, the overseas education consultancy has made their presence known in India. According to the GMAC (Graduate management admission council), the number of students from India are second highest to pursue overseas education after China. According to an article published by Open Doors say, that the total number of Indian students currently pursuing higher education in USA is at about 186,000. In another report says that the number of Chinese students is somewhere around 220,000.

There are number of factors that have made overseas education consultancy of a prime importance:

1. Foreign degree has been of a high importance in the business world
2. Migration is another major factor
3. Permanent residency in other countries
4. Financial and professional growth that a foreign degree brings is unmatched

These overseas education consultancies have a wide network and the product/services offered by them are in line with the higher education process. The majority of students select Master in Science and MBA as their future goal.

But the process to achieve these goals is very tedious. Students are confused in selecting the right education destination and the right course, the other factors that the students worry about is the cost, accommodation is another factor, the visa process and the documentation is the one that takes the longer process because every country have their own visa requirements and every college/institution abroad has their own sets of documentation procedure. All in all, the entire process, from beginning till the end takes about a year to complete.

This is where the overseas education consultancy steps in. They have all the resources and these resources include knowledge, information and technical. They help in smooth transition of the entire process which includes counselling, profiling, documentation, visa process.

According to GMAC, USA has been the number one destination for higher education followed by Canada, UK and Australia. The reason being, a foreign degree has value, international students are welcomed by these countries, the opportunities are such as studying with students from different cultures, nations, countries, job opportunities and work – life balance is very attractive to the Indian students.

Countries such as New Zealand, Germany, Ireland, Spain, France are gaining momentum due to their ease of acquiring a permanent visa, procedures are less tedious for student looking to migrate to these countries and the cost of the education is low.

With the Advent of smartphones and seamless connection & network, universities abroad are providing online education which offers the same benefits and services as benefitted on on-campus, overseas education consultancy are betting big on this aspect of education. The overseas consultancy is tapping into experienced candidates as well as the ones who cannot afford higher education, such online education from foreign universities can be done at a fraction of the cost.

Some of the most prominent overseas education consultancy in India are

- The Chopras
- Jamboree
- CATKing Educare
- Geebee Education
- Imperial overseas education consultant
- Study metro – overseas education consultants
- Edwise international

These consultancies have pan India presence while some have only selected India presence. The footfalls generated by these overseas education consultancies at their centres includes holding seminars, workshops, webinars, these are the most common strategies to generate footfalls.

There is fierce competition amongst the various overseas education consultancy to attract the best and the brightest students and are offering various services such as full scholarships, scholarships based on the range of percentage, accommodation facilities, pre and post departure services, helping the students in achieving a second degree at a fraction of the cost.

Another new trend that has started, where in the rise of one-year MBA is gaining momentum. College's/universities mostly in Europe are offering one-year MBA. In USA it is yet to catch up with one-year MBA.

The reason for students giving more importance to this trend is:

1. One-year MBA tends to focus more on working professionals.
2. It can be completed in one year at a fraction of the two-year MBA cost.
3. Universities that offer one-year MBA are slowly and steadily giving admission to new graduate pass out.
4. One-year MBA focuses only on the specialization courses than two-year MBA which asks students to study generalized subjects in first year and then specialization courses in second year.
5. Even companies encourage their top management/employees to pursue one-year MBA partly or completely sponsored by the company itself.
6. The salary has been slowly increasing for one-year MBA graduates and the highest salary are offered to students of INSEAD, London Business school and Kellogg University.
7. Job opportunities have started increasing for one-year MBA students

ISB, India is the only college that offers one-year MBA in India.

Since the trends in overseas education is constantly changing, the overseas consultancy should keep themselves abreast of all changes, transformation and thoughts in higher/overseas education. As such, the consultants will be able to fine tune their services and knowledge and help and guide students in the right direction.

1.1 Introduction to Topic

“A study on the role of consultancy in overseas education” was the research topic. This topic was chosen to see whether overseas education consultancy played an important role for students going overseas for education.

The topic covered the most important part of the study that was to find the prevalence of students going to consultants for overseas education and to study the benefits gained after joining a consultancy.

From scoping research, the researcher found many facets of overseas education consultant:

1. A large number of students as well as experienced working-class candidate's approached education consultancy.
2. From the scoping research, the researcher found that 66.7 students (especially final year college students) approached overseas education consultancy.

3. Students were mostly worried about the Visa process and the list of document procedures required to be submitted.
4. Students are curious to know about opportunities in terms of migration and permanent residency.
5. Students were always selecting and targeting only top 20-30 universities/colleges.
6. For students at up to for more than 50% selected USA as their preferred destination followed by Canada, Australia, UK, New Zealand and Germany.
7. It has been seen that a majority of students at up to more than 60% prefer to study Masters i.e. Master of Science, MS
8. Students are mostly inclined towards one-year MBA

The same studies have also highlighted on the negative aspects of overseas education consultancy:

1. There was a need for credible and genuine overseas education consultancy in India.
2. The dominance of education rating agencies
3. Students are studying abroad not only for the purpose of achieving a foreign degree but are looking for long term investment such as migration and permanent residency
4. There are many overseas education consultancies in India that have tie up with foreign institution which are unranked or rank outside top 50 and some may not even be accredited thus jeopardizing students' career and future aspirations.
5. Higher consultancy fees, hidden fees

But at the end, the positive aspect of education consultants overshadows the negative points.

There are various articles that speak about the statistics that shows that engineering students are the majority in pursuing higher studies followed by students from commerce and arts background. Scholarships are one of the major factors for pursuing overseas education. It said that there are only 10-15% of colleges in the world who offer full scholarships but even then, it only covers the tuition cost and no other miscellaneous cost which includes add on courses, study materials and the resident cost.

GMAC which conducts GMAT (Graduate management admission test) says that only 5% of students get a perfect score of 800, while the next 35% of students are able to ach a score between 650-780, while the next 60% of students score less than 650.

Consultancy usually target those students who can achieve a score between 650-780, while there's a challenge in acquiring, targeting the top 5% as there are a dearth of consultancy eyeing such students.

The students who pursue higher education are generally aged between 22 to 30. Most students prefer to pursue higher/overseas education right after completing their graduation while other set of students prefer having a work experience and then pursue a foreign education.

Students mostly look for a career in consulting companies, followed by banking & financial industry. The e-commerce sector as well as internet giant companies have been an interest to students who show an upward trend in working for these companies.

What motivates a student to select a university?

- Rankings
- Return on investment
- Placements
- Salary

Overseas education consultancy has tie up with foreign college abroad which give a certain percentage of the fee amount to the consultancy for each student admitted to the university/college. Many articles and research have criticized such association as some of these Institutes/universities are not accredited and merely look at students as customers.

On the other hand, there are overseas consultancy which have association with genuine and accredited universities/colleges abroad. They act as a mediator between the students and the foreign university.

The organization in which the researcher completed summer internship that is CATKing Educare mainly focused on students who wanted to study in India. Their Indian education business is flourishing and in recent years they are providing guidance for overseas education.

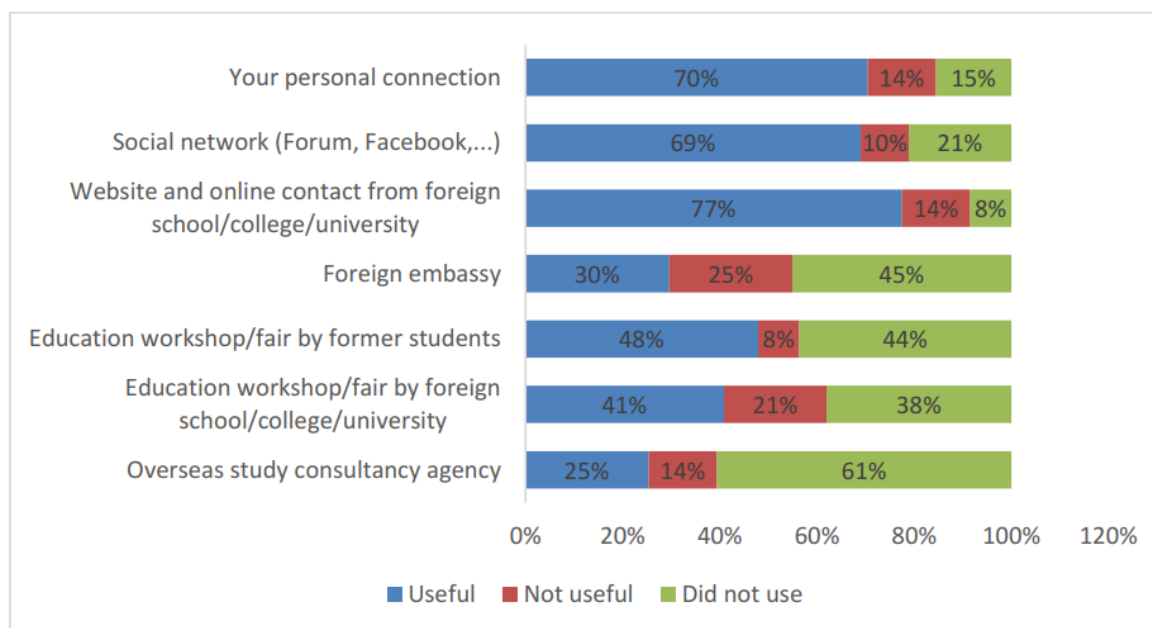
Their marketing strategies is very limited to conducting seminars colleges. CATKing Educare needs to use new range of strategies to promote and market itself. The various strategies that CATKing Educare can use is by having their own Android and iOS apps, tie up with online rating agencies, print door hangers to distribute to targeted neighbourhood, sponsoring college events and festivals and tying up with other coaching institutes asking them to pay them (CATKing Educare) certain amount and can have their stalls at the education fair.

The researcher focus was on how many students approach consultancy for guidance on overseas education and whether students have benefitted by joining a consultancy or not. Though these findings the researcher can put forth the suggestions and recommendations to the management.

1.2 Survey on Similar Topic in India and Abroad

A) The following study was carried out by Pham Lam Hanh Trang on “VIETNAMESE STUDENT MOBILITY AND PREPARATION FOR OVERSEAS EDUCATION”

Figure No. 1.1
Use of resources to gain information on higher education



The above statistics throws light on the use of resources to gain information on higher education

- 75% of Vietnamese students have actually availed consultancy services and found useful.
- 71% of the respondents have found it useful to seek help from workshops/seminars organised by former students of an overseas education consultant and education workshops by foreign institution in association with overseas consultancy.

Table No. 1.1
Important support in terms of rankings according to students

Mean values	According support	Ranking
2.85	Study topic and program orientation	1 st
3.19	Language studies	2 nd
3.45	Placement application	3 rd
3.66	VISA application	4 th
3.81	Accommodation arrangement	5 th
4.02	Cross-cultural training or support	6 th

The above table interprets the most important support in terms of rankings

- Students need guidance on study topics and the entire program orientation once they are accepted a foreign university.
- Followed by various language study opportunities.
- Once selection process is done from the universities end students need support from education consultants for Visa application and post arrival arrangements.

B) The following study is carried out by Linda Serra Hagedorn “Leaf” Yi Zhang on “The Use of Agents in Recruiting Chinese Undergraduates”

Chinese students from China are the largest in terms of applying for a foreign education. They mostly prefer USA as their higher education destination. The reason being that there is a need for skilled people and Chinese people are skilful in various industries such as technology, engineering, logistics/supply chain, software development. The American dream is what compels many Chinese students to pursue higher education in USA.

The above study focuses on Chinese students hiring education consultants, a common practice in China in finding an international university fitting their academic goals. The education consultants in China cater the Chinese students with excellent services.

This study finds the rationale of using or not using an agent through applying various qualitative and quantitative methods/data. It also finds what are expectations of Chinese students when they scout for an agent.

The author also gauges the factors that defines or separates the two groups when the question arises of using or not using an agent. Last but not the least the author wants to find major problems related to the application process for foreign universities.

It has been said that many foreign universities have been benefitted by a number of Chinese students enrolling at their universities, mainly USA has been benefitted the most.

Most Chinese students see higher education as an escape route to settle, migrate permanently abroad the reason being China is a crowded market which means opportunities are less, standard of living is low and rules and regulations of Chinese government is rigid.

C) The following study is carried by Moira Hulme, Alex Thompson, Rob Hulme and Guy Doughty on “Trading places: The role of agents in international student recruitment from Africa”.

Africa is seeing a rising trend in their students approaching agents for higher education. It has been seen from this report that a number of universities from UK have strategic associations and tie up with many education consultancies in Africa. And it has become of a strategic importance for these UK universities to recruit African students on a large scale.

The second important point of this report is that the associations between the education consultancy in Africa and between the UK universities as a commercialization and commodification of higher education

This study tries to find solutions to the following questions?

- a) How do agents’ value themselves?
- b) Why are agents employed by universities?
- c) How do students perceive the value of agents?

This report studies the role of principal agent (universities) and also the role of brokers/agents in the higher education market. In this study the educational agents/consultants were viewed as profit making centre or class due to weak policies in Africa.

This report also encouraged the need for a check in the growth of education consultants in the developing markets because of the danger that lies hiring African students just to complete their (UK universities) recruitment targets, to meet financial goals or to have African students as a part of national diversity through the education agents without investing in the future of these African students.

The associations between the foreign universities and the education consultants are known as Edu-business. Each view as independent of their roles and the education consultants are giving commissions or incentives for each student that enrolls at these universities.

D) This research was carried out by Jie Tian on “The Role of Education Consulting in the Internationalization of Higher Education”

This study focuses on the role of education consultants in recruitment of Chinese students to the American universities. This report studies and examines the experiences students gained during their visit to the consultancy this includes post enrolment experience in U.S. higher education.

This report also interviews education agents, consultants and foreign universities to collect insights on the services offered to the Chinese students. The study states that there are two types of education consultants First, are individual agents or independent consultancy who are hired by a foreign university with the primary focus being recruitment of International students. Such agents/agency/consultancy/consultants are bound to receive commission or incentives from that university.

Second, are education consulting company (ECC). These consultants charge a nominal fee to students and their parents for providing services, these charges are mainly consultancy charges. They represent the foreign institution for a commission and also engages in recruitment for these institutions.

The ECC are the dominant in China offering services such as document editing and translation, mock test preparation, Visa application and admission counselling. The age group that approach these consultancies are

from 14 to 24. These students mostly categorized in to two groups a) undergraduates and b) masters/post graduates.

The destination countries Chinese students prefer is US, Canada, the UK, and Australia. A common trait of all ECC's, they divide their business into two groups, First, destination country and second, is divided by academic interest.

1.3 Objective, Scope, Purpose of Study

A. Objective of the Study:

- I. To find prevalence of students going to consultants for overseas education.
- II. To study benefits gained after joining consultancy.

B. Scope of the study:

The scope of the study is to gather data and statistics on students approaching education consultants for higher education. Since USA, UK and Australia have tighten their borders for both prospect and current Indian students specifically, the need was to find whether students are motivated to study at these destinations and whether they still desire to settle in these countries through means of higher education.

The next scope will be to identify which services actually benefitted the students and what more services can be added to the existing portfolio. This will help the management to cater students with different needs and thought process.

C. Purpose of study (future perspective):

From the perspective of CATking Educare, their aim is to find

1. Service offerings as compared to their competitors
2. To set up more centres at different locations
3. To set up dedicated functional units within the organization
4. To expand its network to other countries as well
5. To make use of more digital assessment of students' aspirations through dedicated mobile application

II. Literature Review

2.1 Research Papers and Reports Helped

A) The recruitment agent in internationalised higher education: Commercial broker and cultural mediator Dr. Anna Magyar and Professor Anna Robinson

This study was carried out in UK with purpose of understanding the relationship between universities and education consultancy/agents. This study was carried out in March 2018 by Dr. Anna Magyar and Professor Anna Robinson-Pant

This report throws light on the important role that education consultants play in communicating, hiring and identifying the right students to the right college and to the right course. Since students are from different cultures, academic admission officer of a university has to read and interpret their applicants carefully in terms of how comfortable can their applicants can speak English because of their applicants are from developing countries where English is not the first language, second, how comfortable are applicants from different culture comfortable with the culture of UK.

Another question that this report raises questions as to how can the universities in UK identify the quality of applicants applying to their admission process and how can a third-party agents/consultancy can take in to account in the question of ethics. Since, in UK universities don't require interview for admission for most undergraduate & master's degree courses there will be no question of developing a rigorous admission process to filter out low quality students.

This report speaks highly of academic counsellors to analyse and asses the performance of education agents to the number of applicants enrolled. Since the location of the education consultancy and universities are different receiving a feedback from students on the education agents/consultancy is not possible this may lead to students' unrealistic expectations of students from courses or required skills.

B) Managing International Student Recruitment Agents

Approaches, Benefits and Challenges

By Vincenzo Raimo, Christine Humfrey, and Lona Yuelu Huang

This report speaks about education agents playing an important role in recruitment of International students to UK universities. The author throws light on the need for a transparent relationship between education agents and universities in UK and what steps the universities can approach in order to maintain the standard and quality of the education agents/consultancy that will help in quality applicants.

Since the education agents are not regulated under any legislation, the UK government is planning on regulating the education agents.

The recommendations or the approach that UK universities can take to follow transparency between them and the education agents as follows:

1. To train education agents through use of technology
2. To ensure that the education agents/consultancy are aware about the legal aspects of agency relationship
3. Universities and education agents should work hand in hand and formulate strategies based on the return of investment the consultancy provides
4. To establish various effective tools for communication

Since UK universities are most sought-after USA and Canada, education agents in India may misinterpret the requirements of the universities and the requirements of Indian students. The universities in UK may be unaware of the practices followed by education agents in India such as the fees charged, whether information is communicated and the use of marketing tools.

To maintain transparency the UK government is making sure that all the process between universities in UK and education consultancy fall under the governments Data Protection and Bribery Act.

C) “VIETNAMESE STUDENT MOBILITY AND PREPARATION FOR OVERSEAS EDUCATION”

Pham Lam Hanh Trang

The researcher considers overseas consultancy agencies of high standards. The report goes on throw light on comprehensive services offered by the education agents. These education agents have provided robust services to the Vietnamese students from counselling to Visa process to travelling and living abroad as a superior value of their foreign network.

Even though the overseas education consultancy used traditional marketing strategy such as visiting colleges and schools, it has been noticed that word of mouth was one of the major factor students used consultancy services.

Even though information can be received through various resources it was found out that Vietnamese students used the websites of education consultancy or have visited the consultancy as a source of information.

Financial aid and scholarships are of great importance for Vietnamese students and through the help and network of overseas education consultancy they are able to receive either full or partial scholarships.

Prospect Vietnamese students also refer to current students of the consultancy as well as those students who have achieved foreign education through a consultancy as a source of information.

When students arrive to their education studying destination, Vietnamese students take assistance from those Vietnamese students who have already been studying in the same destination through the same/common consultancy.

D) The Use of Agents in Recruiting Chinese Undergraduates

Presented by Linda Serra Hagedorn, Ph. D. Yi Zhang

Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies

College of Human Sciences Iowa State University

Education agents are very popular in China and amongst Chinese students looking to pursue higher education. Educational agents are known to be experts and parents & students approach these consultancies because these agents/consultancies are resourceful and have immense knowledge about higher education institutes. They also possess knowledge on application process, Visa process and cost of education.

The most common services that students needed as identified by the researcher are:

- a. Choice or selection of universities
- b. Drafting and compiling college application materials
- c. They are the point of contact between the students' program director/officer
- d. Training on TOEFL, IELTS or ACT
- e. Majority of the education agents/consultancy focus on application process for USA, as it is the choice of study destination for Chinese students

The most surprising fact of the study is that students and parents select education consultancy on basis of two factors:

1. Word of mouth
2. Someone who has had a positive experience with a particular consultancy

The study reminds of a strong influence on education consultancy in China and also explores the student and consultancy relationship.

E) “Trading places: The role of agents in international student recruitment from Africa.
Moira Hulme, Alex Thompson, Rob Hulme and Guy Doughty

Education agents in Africa are valued due to the way they have positioned themselves with edu-business market. The researcher is of the view that education consultancy is seen as brokers and a symptom of commercialization in overseas education.

The education agents/consultancy and many UK foreign universities have made education a business or have commercialized sector leaving out the essence on which the education sector was founded.

The report identifies a trend where in students are given admission on the basis on paying capacity and not the basis of the quality of the students. UK universities have mostly targeted developing or third world countries. Agents are seen as a tradable source and a channel to trade students from developing countries to UK universities.

The researcher views universities are slowly moving towards a tag of International Business and are seen exploiting the students from developing countries for profit purpose. UK universities are introducing those programs which has low to no value in the market, such programmes are considered by the researcher as income generating programmes. The tactics used by these universities are brain drain techniques.

Education agents are viewed as commercial agents operating in developing countries as profit driven partners. There are dearth of education consultancy operating in Africa but there are very few consultancies which are credible.

F) “The Role of Education Consulting in the Internationalization of Higher Education”
Jie Tian

Education consultancy in China have the potential role to establish in their long-term interaction with the Chinese students. There are certain recommendations and factors that education consultancy should follow in order to achieve maximum output in minimum amount of time.

The concept of hand holding interaction should be converted to long term interactions. What matters to students is their academic performance, cultural transition and pre and post enrolment experience. Keeping these points in mind the education consultancy should encourage students to start with their application process and prepare for college admissions at least from one year.

Class setting which includes one on one consulting along with workshops for students will encourage them to take initiative. Large space or buildings can be rented to provide students with world class lectures and organize discussion groups. Such efforts can also be used converting such rented space for classrooms or flexible consulting rooms.

Feedback is necessary for education consultancy to take into account. Feedbacks from students, parents and associated universities can help the education consultancy to develop better standards, gauge students need & requirements and provide customized services to the students which in turn help the consultancy to assess their performance.

III. Company Profile



3.1 Company Background:

CATKing is a Focused Ed – Tech Startup established in 2008. Located in Financial Capital of India Mumbai is a one-stop destination for each MBA/MS aspirant which focuses on strategic, engaging and high-quality education.

We at CATKing believe that Education with a blend of strategy can change the way Education is perceived globally. At **CATKing**, our purpose is to improve the quality of education, PAN India by devoting ourselves to one vision i.e. Empowering with knowledge.

The Team comprises of **IIMs, SP Jain, NMIMS, JBIMS and NIT** alumni and students. We are committed to putting all our expertise and research resources to bring innovative products to the consumers in terms of quality, efficacy, and simplicity.

MLP (Management Leadership Program) is conducted every year, where we hire some of the best minds of the country from the top B-Schools & train them on leadership; the MLP initiative was first started in 2016.

Services Offered:

- I. Counselling
- II. Standardized test: GMAT, GRE, TOEFL, IELTS, SAT
- III. Profiling & Documentation
- IV. Application review/Country/University/Course selection
- V. Other services: Profile plus, GK for MBA, GE/GDPI, Books & Mocks, Group Discussion
- VI. National competitive exams: CAT, CET, SNAP, XAT, CMAT, NMAT, MICA, TISSNET
- VII. Free resources: Free CAT workshop, free study material, Mentor on call, Exam analysis, Solution Station, Sprint workshop, GK and Current Affairs, Study Plan, Reading Speed Tool (RST), Previous year papers, GD PI Tips and Tricks, Free Mocks, The Hindu News Article + Word Meaning, Know your specialization, and Top B-Schools in India

3.2 Industry Background:

Overseas education refers to a dynamic concept that involves a journey or movement of people, minds, or ideas across political and cultural frontiers. It is facilitated by the globalization phenomenon, which increasingly erases the constraints of geography on economic, social and cultural arrangements. The concept involves a broad range of learning, covering, for instance, formal education and informal learning (e.g. training, exchange programs, cross-cultural communication). It could also involve a reorientation of academic outlook such as the pursuit of “world mindedness” as a goal so that a school or its academic focus is considered international. For example, the National Association of State Universities prescribes the adoption of "proper education" that reflects the full range of international, social, political, cultural, and economic dialogue.

Background:

The emergence of international education as a discipline may be attributed to the international and intercontinental initiatives of the past, which aimed to achieve education, learning, and intellectual exchange. This is demonstrated in the formalized academic relations between countries in the form of bilateral and scientific agreements. Here, international education is considered a mechanism of international cooperation and, in some cases, it stems from the recognition that different cultures offer different outlooks and styles of learning and teaching in addition to the transfer of knowledge.

There are scholars who associate the development of international education with comparative education, which is concerned with the evaluation and scrutiny of different educational systems in various countries for the purpose of developing an education and educational structures that are global in scope and application. This concept is considered ancient, having been used in classical Greece, while the actual term was first used by William Russell in 1826. International education diverged from it as it assumed the form of more organized programs that bring together learners and teachers from different countries to learn from each other.

3.3 Competitors of CATKing Educare:

Table No. 3.1

Company Name	Location
The Chopras	Mumbai
Edwise International	Mumbai
Imperial Overseas Education Consultant	Mumbai
Geebee Education (Study Abroad Consultants)	Mumbai
IDP Education (International Education Specialist)	Mumbai
Global Opportunities (Foreign Education Visa Consultants)	Mumbai
Study Metro Pvt. Ltd. (Overseas Education Consultant)	Mumbai
FACT	Pune
Aliff Overseas Consultant	Mumbai

IV. Research Methodology

4.1 Data Type:

Introduction:

This part of the study focuses on the research methodology, which is an integral aspect of the report. Research is a process of systematic study or search for any particular subject or area of investigation backed by collection, compilation presentation and interpretation. Methodology involves a series of steps which says path of study. That is understanding the way of doing research systematically.

1. Objectives:

- a) To find prevalence of students going to consultants for overseas education.
- b) To study benefits gained after joining consultancy.

2. Study design: This study uses descriptive research design. Descriptive research involves gathering data that describes events and then organizes, tabulates, depicts, and describes the data collection.

It often uses visual aids such as graphs and charts to aid the reader in understanding the data distribution and therefore offered a better clarification. Descriptive research can be either quantitative or qualitative. It can involve collections of quantitative information that can be tabulated along a continuum in numerical form, such as scores on a test or the number of times a person chooses to use a-certain feature of a multimedia program, or it can describe categories of information such as gender or patterns of interaction when using technology in a group situation.

3. Sampling size: The sampling size measured was 100. The total strength of attendees was roughly about 170 to 220. The reason for such decent sample size collected was based on two factors.

- a) The college management (Kapol college) was hesitant in letting CATKing Educare collect information about students in the form of feedback forms.
- b) We at CATKing Educare were mindful of not forcing or stressing students of Kapol college to fill the feedback form.

4. Sampling method: Probability sampling (Random Sampling Method) method was used to gather and collate the data and findings.

Random Sampling Method: Random sampling is a part of the sampling technique in which each sample has an equal probability of being chosen. A sample chosen randomly is meant to be an unbiased representation of the total population. If for some reasons, the sample does not represent the population, the variation is called a sampling error. Random sampling is one of the simplest forms of collecting data from the total population. Under random sampling, each member of the subset carries an equal opportunity of being chosen as a part of the sampling process.

5. Data collection: Primary & Secondary

a) Primary Data: **Primary data** is information that you collect specifically for the purpose of your research project. An advantage of **primary data** is that it is specifically tailored to your research needs. In other words, Data observed or collected directly from first-hand experience.

- Primary data has been collected by distributing questionnaire survey to students who attended seminar at Kapol college.
- Out of the 200 odd students only 100 students responded to the questionnaire

b) Secondary Data: Secondary data is research data that has previously been gathered and can be accessed by researchers.

- Secondary data was collected from company's website and research articles

6. Research instrument: Questionnaire - a set of printed or written questions with a choice of answers, devised for the purposes of a survey or statistical study.

- The questionnaire was a structured questionnaire
- The type of questions in this questionnaire is open ended question

7. Procedure:

- i. Permission from CATKing & Kapol college was taken from the authorities.
- ii. Study purpose was explained to the students.
- iii. Forms were distributed amongst the study and few forms were mailed.
- iv. Information was given to the subjects that data will be used for research purpose only.
- v. Data was entered in excel sheet and data was analysed

4.2 Limitations:

- i. This study is limited only to the to the students of Kapol college and CATKing Educare
- ii. The study is geographically limited to Mumbai and only to one college

- iii. The sample size of the study was limited to 100
- iv. It was very difficult to get responses/feedback from the students as college has strict rules of not collecting any student details nor to distribute any feedback form
- v. The duration of the study is limited to only 1 month
- vi. Certain information required for the project was not provided by CATKing Educare as it is considered as policy breach

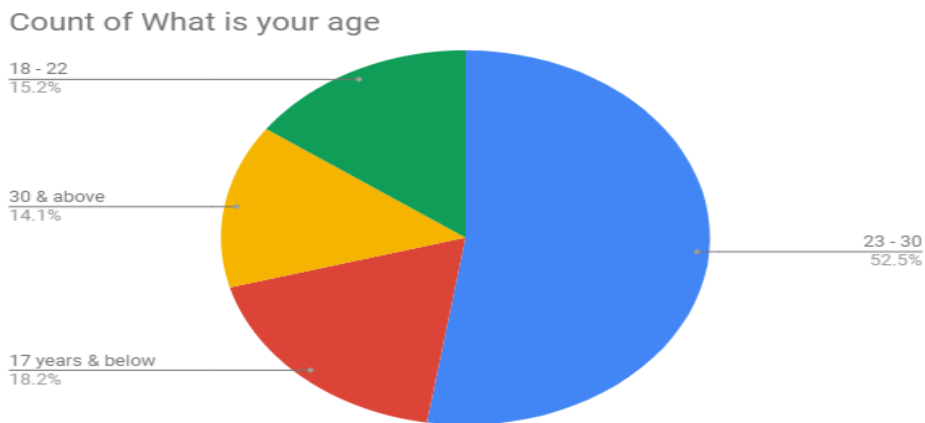
V. Data Analysis & Interpretation
Pie Charts

Q1. What is your Age?

Table No. 5.1

17 years and below	18.2%
18-22	15.2%
23-30	52.5%
30 & above	14.1%

Figure No. 5.1



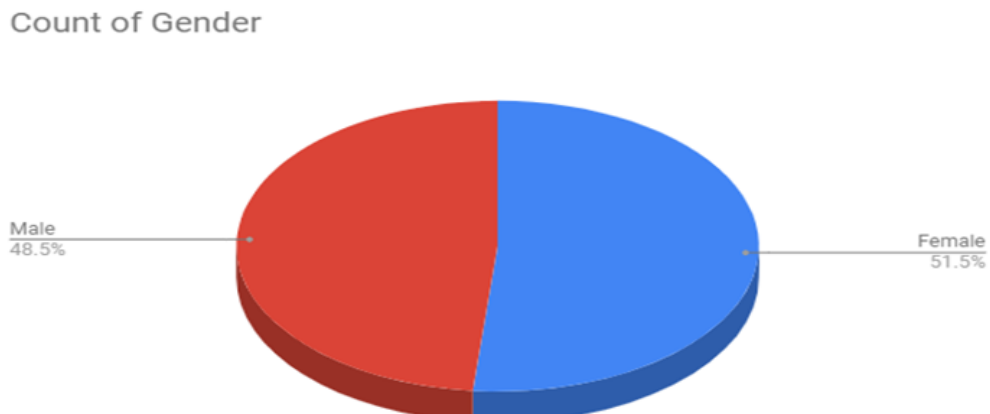
From the above pie chart, we can interpret the age group or the age range is between 17 to 30. The minimum age being 17 years & below and the maximum age being 30 years and above. It is seen that the age range between 23-30 comprises a majority with 52.5% followed by students with the age range of 17 & above with 18.2%. Students 30 & above comprises of 14.1% of the total attendance while the lowest being age groups between 18-22 with 15.2%.

Q2. Please select the appropriate gender?

Table No. 5.2

Male	48.5%
Female	51.5%

Figure No. 5.2



From the 100 responses, from the above pie chart we can see that the majority of the participants/respondents are female which comprises of 51.5% which just marginally overshadows the male respondents which stand at about 48.5%. The reason for this growth can be contributed to initiatives taken by the government of India, IIM (Indian Institute of Management) and Policy makers, Admission counsellor and Program directors of foreign universities.

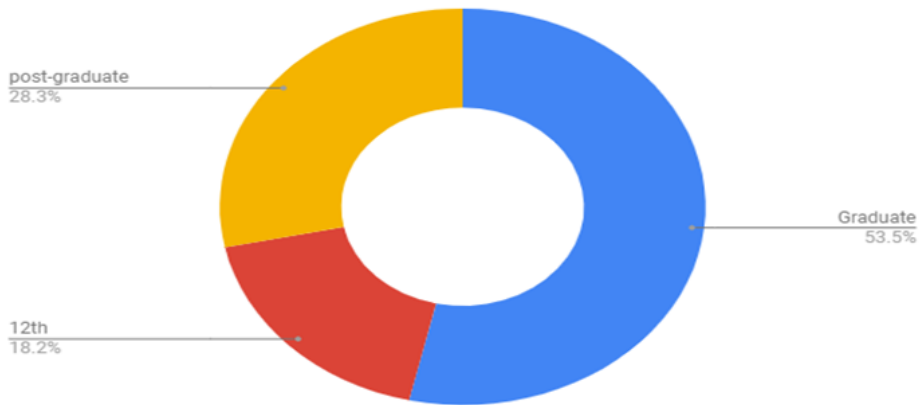
Q3. Please select your education qualification?

Table No. 5.3

12 th	18.2%
Graduate	53.5%
Post-graduate	28.3

Figure No. 5.3

Count of Education Qualification



The pie chart tells us about the students’ education qualifications. As seen above students who attended the seminar at Kapol college are graduates with the majority of 53.5%. The reason being that most graduates look for a foreign degree at a foreign location with the maximum number of student desiring to pursue MBA and MS programmes.

The second group of students are the post graduate. They dominate the pie chart with 28.3%. They focus on mainly pursuing PhD programmes at overseas.

The last group of students who attended the seminar are the undergraduates with a percentage of 18.2%. These are the students who aim at pursuing a graduate degree at an overseas education.

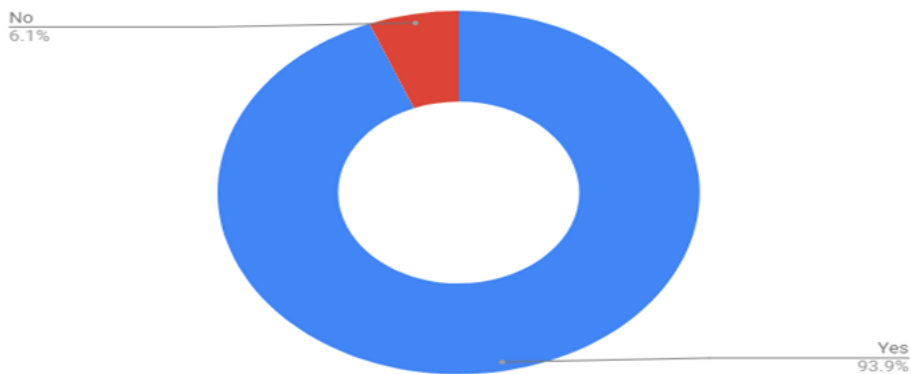
Q4. Are you willing to study further?

Table No. 5.4

Yes	93.9%
No	6.1%

Figure No. 5.4

Count of Are you willing to study further



The students were asked about their willingness to study abroad. Maximum number of students in attendance selected the option “Yes” with 93.9%, as seen in the above pie diagram.

As well, there were 6.1% of students who expressed an answer “No”.

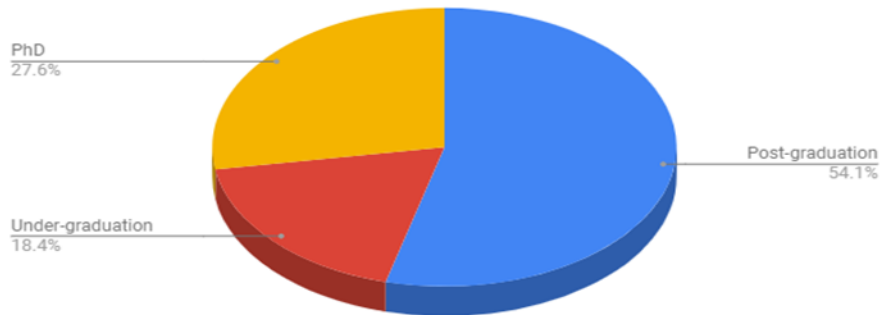
Q5. What are you willing to study further?

Table No. 5.5

Under-graduation	18.4%
Post-graduation	54.1%
PhD	27.6

Figure No. 5.5

Count of What are you willing to study further



In the above chart, we can see that 54.1% of students are willing to study Post graduate. The postgraduate programmes that students desire to study is Masters of Business Administration and Masters of Science. The second group as we can see are the students wanting to pursue PhD programmes. They constitute at about 27.6% of the total response.

While the last group consist of the students who are willing to study undergraduates and graduate courses. They stand at about 18.4%.

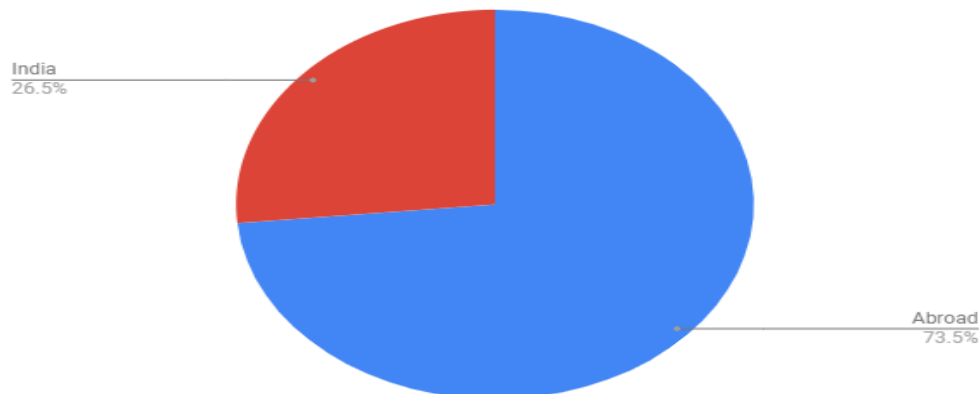
Q6. Where do you want to study?

Table No. 5.6

India	26.5%
Abroad	73.5%

Figure No. 5.6

Count of where do you want to study



The students attending the education seminar were asked to select their choice of study destination. As per the chart above it is clear that 73.5% of students are willing to study abroad and at their choice of study destination. While 26.5% of students chose to select India as their choice of study destination.

Q7. Which country are you planning to study?

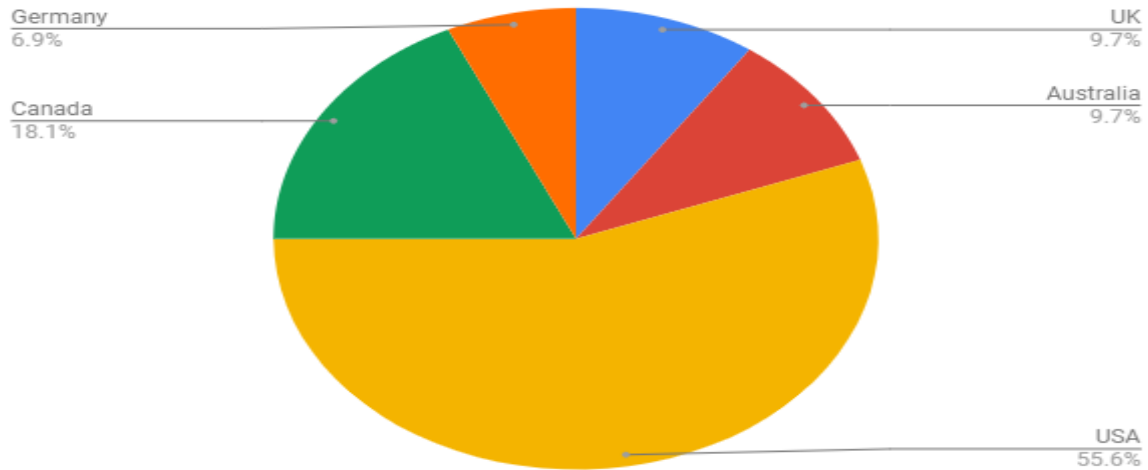
Table No. 5.7

Germany	6.9%
Canada	18.1%
UK	9.7%
Australia	9.7%
USA	55.6%

Figure No. 5.7

Choice of study destination matters and there are many factors that lead students to select the country of their

Count of Which country are you planning to study



choice for pursuing higher education. These factors include return on investment, placements, job opportunities, migration opportunities, permanent residency and financial & professional growth.

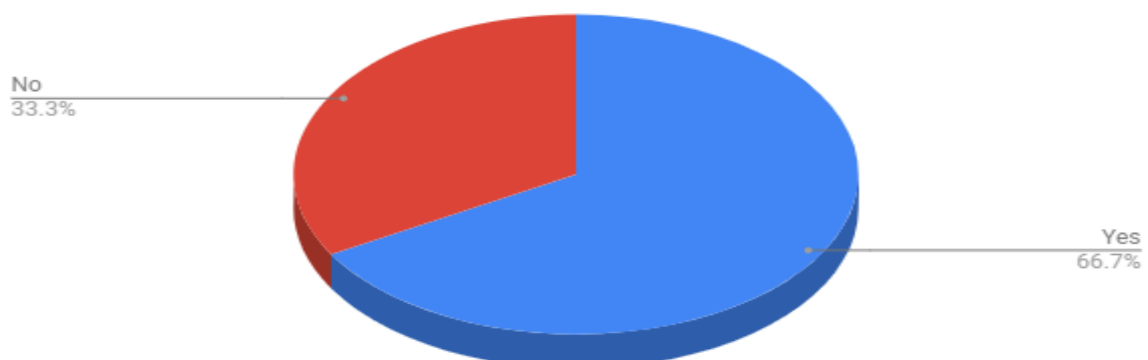
Q8. Did you visit any consultancy regarding overseas education?

Table No. 5.8

No	33.3%
Yes	66.7%

Figure No. 5.8

Count of Did you visit any consultancy regarding overseas education



Since pursuing overseas education is no easy task and education consultants are viewed as resourceful mediums, students were asked to select options “Yes” or “No”. As seen, the above pie chart illustrates that majority of students at about 66.7% responded “Yes” which helps to identify that students do visit or have visited overseas education consultancies concerning higher education. While 33.3% of students said “No” as to never having visited an education consultancy before.

This question is asked, keeping in mind the very first objective of carrying out this study. The first objective was to find the prevalence of students going to consultants for overseas education. The question and the response to this question serves as a finding to the objective.

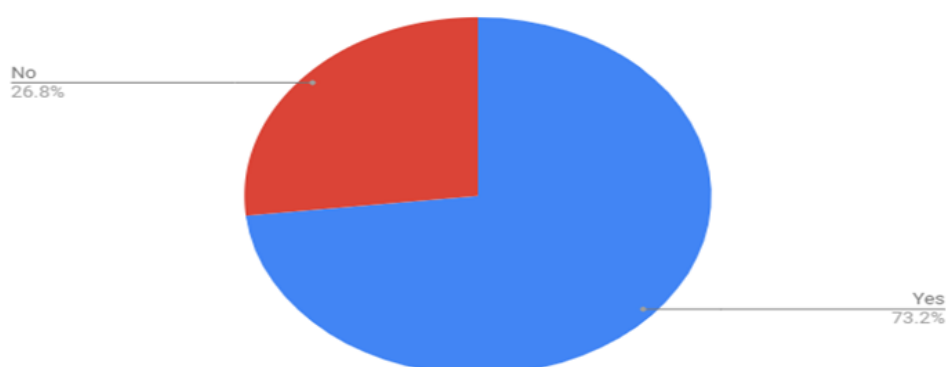
Q9. Are you willing to join CATKing Educare for overseas education?

Table No. 5.9

No	26.8%
Yes	73.2%

Figure No. 5.9

Count of Are you willing to join CATKing Educare for overseas education



The above pie chart shows that 73.2% of students responded as “Yes” (willing to join CATKing), while 26.8% of students said “No”.

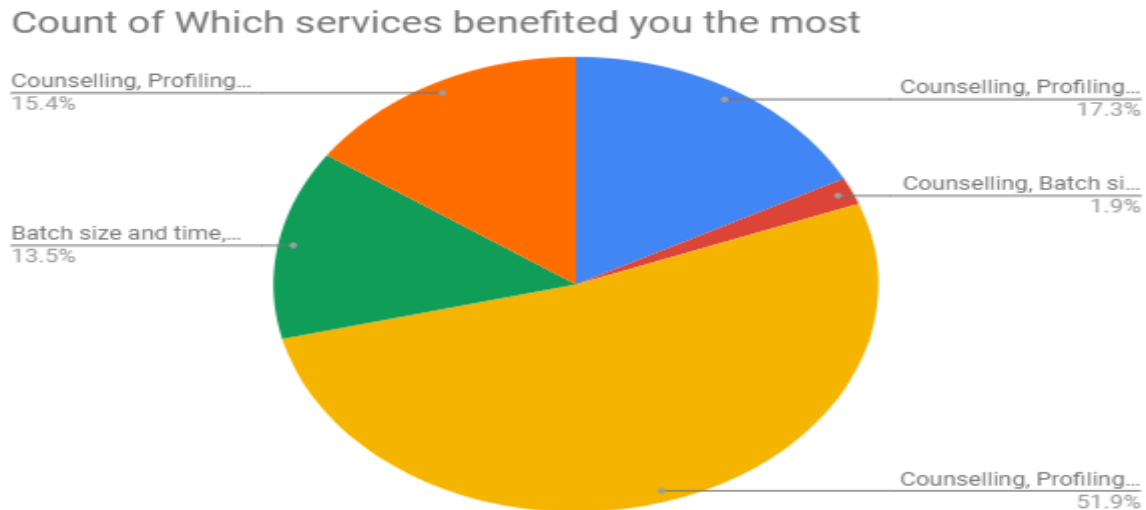
To generate footfalls at CATKing Educare centres and to convert these students for admission at CATKing. A seminar was organized in association with Kapol college. The responses were recorded based on the various marketing and advertisement tools used by CATKing Educare such as, presentation, mock test, GK test, GDPI and one to one session for students.

Q10. Which services benefitted you the most?

Table No. 5.10

Counselling, Profiling & Documentation, Country/University/Course Selection, and Standardized test (GMAT, GRE, TOEFL, IELTS, SAT)	51.9%
Counselling, Profiling & Documentation, Country/University/Course Selection,	17.3%
Counselling, Profiling and Documentation	15.4%
Batch Size and Time, Application review and Interview preparation	13.5%
Counselling, Batch Size and Time, Profile and Documentation, Country/University/Course Selection, Standardized Test (GMAT, GRE, TOEFL, IELTS, SAT)	1.9%

Figure No. 5.10



Selected students and interested students were given an opportunity to avail CATKing Educare services for a period of two weeks. The list of services offered by CATKing Educare were

- Counselling
- Batch size and Time
- Profiling and Documentation
- Country/University/Course Selection
- Standardized test (GMAT, TOEFL, IELTS, SAT)
- Application review and Interview preparation

The students were given freedom in selecting multiple options and the results are interpreted as from above chart:

- More than 50% (to be precise 51.9%) were majorly satisfied with the combination of services such as Counselling, Profiling & Documentation, Country/University/Course Selection, and Standardized test (GMAT, GRE, TOEFL, IELTS, SAT)
- A combination of services such as Counselling, Profiling & Documentation, Country/University/Course Selection, Standardized test (GMAT, GRE, TOEFL, IELTS, SAT), along with Application review and Interview preparation stood at 17.3%
- Counselling, Profiling and Documentation is another set of combined services availed by students which stood at 15.4%
- Batch Size and Time, Application review and Interview preparation combination of services availed by students is at 13.5%
- 1.9% of students were satisfied by services such a mixture of Counselling, Batch Size and Time, Profile and Documentation, Country/University/Course Selection, Standardized Test (GMAT, GRE, TOEFL, IELTS, SAT)

This question is asked, keeping in mind the second objective of carrying out this study. The second objective is to find the benefits gained after joining a consultancy. The question and the response to this question serves as a finding to the objective.

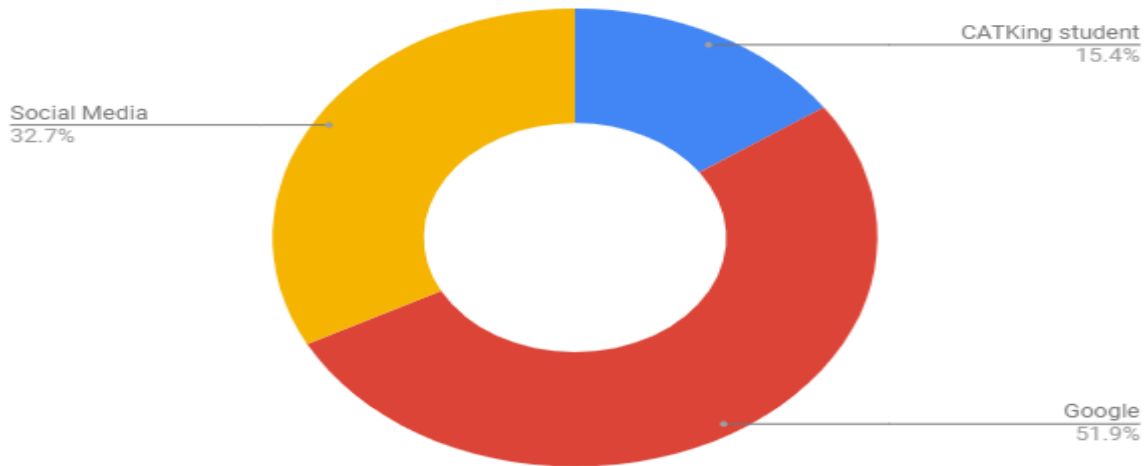
Q11. How did you come to know about CATKing?

Table No. 5.11

Social media	32.7%
CATKing current/pass out students	15.4%
Google	51.9%

Figure No. 5.11

Count of How did you come to know about CATKing



The above pie chart illustrates the advertising techniques that CATKing used which includes

- Google – consisting of CATKing website and advertisements on various education platforms. It is seen that 51.9% of students have visited or refer to CATKing Educare's website.
- Social media, consisting of advertisements through Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Instagram. It is clear from the above pie chart that social media commands a 32.7% in terms of exposure.
- Prospect students refer to current students as well as pass out of CATKing Educare for career guidance and advise. This consist of word of mouth marketing and the use of portraying positive experiences of CATKing students.

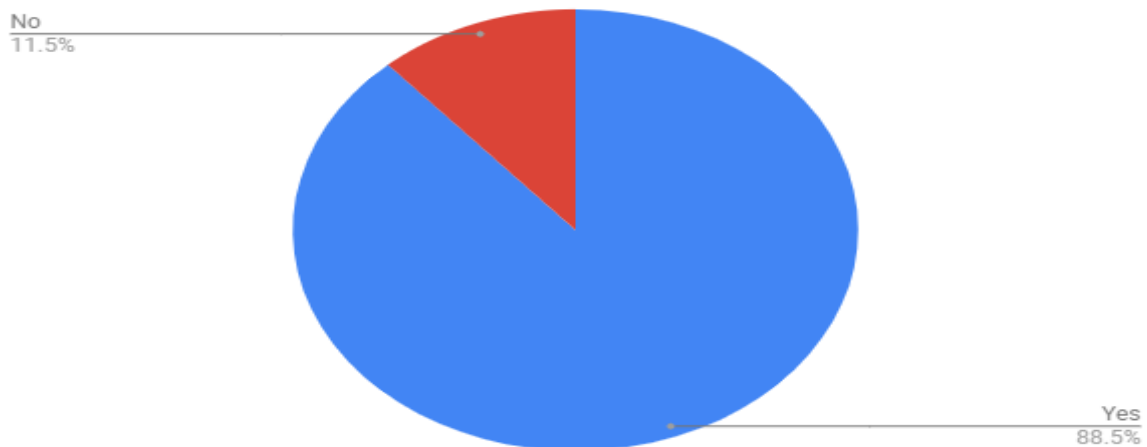
Q12. Did joining a consultancy help you in your overseas education process?

Table No. 5.12

Yes	88.5%
No	11.5%

Figure No. 5.12

Count of Did joining a consultancy help you in your overseas education process



88.5% of students said “Yes” when asked whether joining a consultancy helped in their overseas education process, as depicted from the above pie chart.

While, 11.5% of students said “No”. This question is asked keeping in mind the second objective and the responses does illustrate that students indeed benefitted from joining an overseas education consultancy.

VI. Findings, Suggestion and Conclusion

6.1 Findings:

Objective 1: To find prevalence of students going to consultants for overseas education.

Findings: The above study shows that 66.7% students visit or visited consultancy for guidance in overseas education process. While 73.5% of students prefer to study abroad, there is a majority of students at about 55.6% students preferring USA as their study education destination.

Objective 2: To study benefits gained after joining consultancy.

Findings: The study shows that 88.5% students have been benefitted by joining an education consultancy. And services such as Profiling, Documentation, Counselling and Standardized test are the ones which have benefitted the students the most.

The breakdown of services in terms of benefits availed by students includes:

- a) More than 50% (to be precise 51.9%) were majorly satisfied with the combination of services such as Counselling, Profiling & Documentation, Country/University/Course Selection, and Standardized test (GMAT, GRE, TOEFL, IELTS, SAT)
- b) A combination of services such as Counselling, Profiling & Documentation, Country/University/Course Selection, Standardized test (GMAT, GRE, TOEFL, IELTS, SAT), along with Application review and Interview preparation stood at 17.3%
- c) Counselling, Profiling and Documentation is another set of combined services availed by students which stood at 15.4%
- d) Batch Size and Time, Application review and Interview preparation combination of services availed by students is at 13.5%
- e) 1.9% of students were satisfied by services such a mixture of Counselling, Batch Size and Time, Profile and Documentation, Country/University/Course Selection, Standardized Test (GMAT, GRE, TOEFL, IELTS, SAT)

6.2 Suggestions:

- a) CATKing Educare should ensure on hiring full-time and experienced professors.
- b) Investments in infrastructure and location are one main aspect that CATKing Educare should look into.
- c) They should set up a dedicated Business Development team and Digital marketing teams in terms of reaching maximum students.
- d) CATKing Educare should plan long-term strategic sole partnership tie-up with various schools, colleges and education institutions both in India and Abroad.
- e) Conducting monthly seminars, webinars and inviting representatives of the foreign institutions for a one to one or group sessions.
- f) CATKing Educare should ensure that their website is user friendly and intuitive. They should continuously maintain and update blog and help prospective students, current students on understanding and keeping them in loop about various trends in education.

6.3 Conclusion:

- a) The study shows a strong presence and influence of consultancy in overseas education.
- b) The services provided by the education consultancy are on par with the overseas education requirements.
- c) Students are more inclined in studying abroad and focus on getting a foreign degree.
- d) Since overseas education is rising at a faster rate, overseas education consultancy has invested in long term of students' interest.

References

- [1]. Dr. Magyar A and Professor Pant A.R, (2018), The Recruitment Agent in Internationalised Higher Education: Commercial Broker and Cultural Mediator, Journal Title: Journal of Studies in International education, year published 2018, issue number 3, volume number: 22, pages:225-241, Retrieved from <https://www.srhe.ac.uk/conference2014/abstracts/0192.pdf>.
- [2]. English F.W, (1984). Education Consulting, Educational Technology Publications Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey 07632, Title: LB2799.E53 1984 371.2'07 83-20536.
- [3]. Hagedorn, L.S., & Zhang, Y. (2011). The use of agents in recruiting Chinese undergraduates. Journal of Studies of International Education, 15(2), 186-202. DOI: 10.1177/102831531038546087778-189-3, Retrieved from <https://us.corwin.com/en-us/nam/author/fenwick-w-english>
- [4]. Hulme, M., Thomson, A., Hulme, R., & Doughty, G. (2014). Trading places: The role of agents in international student recruitment from Africa. Journal of Further and Higher Education, 38(5), 674-689. Doi: 14 Vol. 38, No. 5, 674-689. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/0309877X.2013.778965>.

- [5]. Lam P, Trang H (2015), Vietnamese Student Mobility and Preparation for Overseas Education, Publisher: Creative Commons Attribution, Finland, retrieved from https://www.theseus.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/96748/Student_PhamLamHanhTrang.pdf;sequence=1.
- [6]. Lloyd M.P, and Packer Steve, (1994). Educational Consultancy in Small States: A Source Book, Commonwealth Secretariat, (1994), London, England, 80 pages, Retrieved from <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED389491.pdf>.
- [7]. Mills. C, and Gunter. H, (2017). Consultants and Consultancy: The Case of Education. Springer International Publishing, (2017), Volume (4) of Educational Governance Research, 160 pages, Retrieved from <https://www.springer.com/gp/book/9783319488776>.
- [8]. Tian J (2017), The Role of Education Consulting in the Internationalization of Higher Education. Vancouver: university of British Columbia, 65 pages, <https://open.library.ubc.ca/cIRcle/collections/graduateresearch/42591/items/1.0355747>.
- [9]. Raimo, V., Humfrey, C. and I. Huang (2014) Managing international student recruitment agents: Approaches, benefits and challenges, Publisher: Taylor and Francis, Volume (41), Issue (8), Retrieved from <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2014.968543>.

Websites Referred

1. <https://www.linkedin.com/in/sumitgandhi>
2. <https://catking.in>
3. <https://collegedunia.com/news/e-242-cat-coaching-centres-in-mumbai>
4. <https://www.shiksha.com/business-management-studies/articles/micat-i-2017-analysis-by-mba-expert-rahul-singh-blogId-13438>
5. <https://www.thehighereducationreview.com/magazine/business-management-catking-BEZX894699708.html>

Author's Profile



Vineet Rajan Kamble has completed Master in Business Administration in International Business & Marketing from Dr. D.Y. Patil Vidyapeeth, Global Business School & Research CentreTathawade, Pune, India in the year 2019. Currently, he is working with Y- Axis as Sales Consultant - Recruitment & Immigration.