

Higher Education Marketing: 8S Marketing Mix for Private Universities in Bangladesh

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Abstract—*In higher educational landscape, many private universities are facing competition for having talented students; since quality in higher education is expected widely. Along with pedagogical activities, how higher education is being developed, from where it is executed and to what extent our graduating students are performing at their profession that are also significant issues. In this context, universities can emphasize on integrated marketing mix as mnemonic 8S. It is enormously needed for attracting one's who help to retain the institution with fund generation and others who have a stake in the outcomes of private universities. 8S provides opportunities to communicate quality services in higher education for the overall success of university values. This study depicts the priority of different elements of 8S and finds correlation among different groups of respondents for conducting marketing activities of private universities in Bangladesh.*

Keywords and Phrases: Integrated marketing mix, 8S, higher education marketing, private university.

JEL Classification: M31; M37.

1. INTRODUCTION

The scene of private universities in Bangladesh has become much more competitive with the increasing demand of quality in higher education. Quality rather than quantity is paramount concern of private universities. Observation suggests that more than 70% private universities in Bangladesh are facing the challenge of altering their orientation not only in quality but also in quantity.

As the higher education market become competitive in Bangladesh; the newer universities are trying to catching up with comparatively established ones' and they are now more aggressive in their marketing effort. Kotler predicted in 80's

that the next decades would witness the acceptance of marketing as a major function in the non-profit sector. Private universities in Bangladesh are showing an excellent example of this trend.

In the global context, the views of experts also support this trend. "The marketing of higher education has received a tremendous amount of emphasis and attention. Because increased competition for scarce resources; marketing has become an important activity for many nonprofit organizations" (Hayes 1991). He further noted that acceptance might be limited at first to a tolerance of functions like promotion and advertising.

Defining the quality in higher education is not the purpose of this paper as it is an issue of debate. However, no one can argue that quality in education must be ensured for sustainability of a university. Private universities in Bangladesh are also not an exception. For creating the values and quality, in one hand, private universities need to attract a minimal number of students that can assure university development. At the same time, they need to pay attention for developing fruitful association with corporate houses those can create employment opportunity for the students. It is possible only when private universities are committed to expose themselves by using promotional and marketing effort. Therefore, in this study, Marketing Mix for private universities is developed and reorganized to prioritize the mnemonic 8S. Also, the study tried to find the correlations among different groups (students and professionals) exist or not.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Almost before five decade, in 1960 McCarthy first articulated the mnemonic "Four P's"- Product, Price, Promotion, and Place-as the basic constituents of the "marketing mix" (Yudelsohn 1999). It becomes the most widely recognized concept in any basic marketing course. Over the years, number of writers have sought to enhance the four P's by adding other items that they believed were critical in marketing management activity and even assigned it the alternative nomenclature of "Probing" (Borden and Marshall 1959; Traynor 1985). In 1986, Magrath suggested that the list be expanded to include personnel, physical facilities, and process management. "Kotler (1972), Bruner (1989), and Lauterborn (1990) were more concerned with adjusting the labels to the newer emerging conceptualization of marketing and the growing concerns about the validity of the original four P's" (Bruner 1988; Van Waterschoot and Van den Bulte 1992). Other elements suggested for inclusion into the marketing mix by few researchers. These are Packaging (Patty 1997) and people (Baker 1997).

From a customer's point of view, each marketing tool is designed to deliver a customer benefit. Lauterborn suggested that the sellers' four Ps (included Product, Price, Place, Promotion) correspond to the customers' four Cs included (Customer solution, Customer cost, Convenience and Communication respectively) (Kotler and Keller 2006).

With the shift in service orientation, the service marketing mix becomes an extension of the 4-Ps. The essential elements of Product, Price, Place and Promotion remain but three additional variables: people, physical evidence and process are added to make 7P mix for services. The 7Ps comprise the modern

marketing mix that is particularly relevant in service industry, but is also relevant to any form of business where meeting the needs of customers is given priority. Developments of 4P and its extension have summarized in the following Table 1.

Table 1. Chronological Conceptualization and Expansion of Marketing Mix

McCarthy (1960)	Kotler (1972)	Magrath (1986)	Robert Lauterborn (1990)	Patty (1997)	Baker (1997)	Jonathan Ivy (2008) Focused on Higher Education Marketing	Global Promotion Project of EU (2008) Focused on Higher Education Marketing
Product	Configuration		Customer Solution			Program	Product
Price	Valuation		Customer Cost			Price	Price
Place	Facilitation		Convenience			Premium	Place
Promotion	Symbolization		Communication			Promotion	Promotion
		Personnel			People	People	People
		Physical evidence				Prospectus	Presentation
		Process					
				Packaging			
						Prominence	Positioning

As education is considered as a service; logically higher education becomes product or service of a University. Services of higher education should have special kind of understanding and marketing efforts.

The pedagogical implications of the new four P's are - Performance, Penalty, Perception, and Process (Yudelsohn 1999). Performance is the sum total of all the customer services. Penalty which is the sum total of all that the customer has to give up. Perception is all the information that effects the perception of either the buyers or sellers. Finally, Process is all activities that add value between the point of origin and the point of final utilization. These four P's can be translated into marketing mix for private universities.

Marketing in the higher education sector is not new. Many authors have recognized the increasingly important role that marketing is playing in student recruitment (Cubillo, Sanchez and Cervino 2006; Ivy 2001; Maringe and Foskett 2003; Fisk and Allen 1993; Carlson 1992; Wonders and Gyure 1991; Murphy and McGarritty 1978). "As the number of degree choices grows and prospective students have a wider variety of universities from which to choose, the need for universities to differentiate themselves from the competition is self evident, resulting in the role of marketing in student recruitment increasing in importance" (Taylor and Darling 1991; Nicholls et al. 1995; Coates 1998; Canterbury 1999).

When university starts offering services that satisfy student needs, distribute the tuition using desired structure of student expectations, provide the data on which they can make decisions about qualification choices and price of those programs then, in fact basic elements of the marketing mix (product, price, place, and promotion) are used by institutions to increase not only enquiries regarding programs, but also admission applications and enrolment which are presently disguised among mentioned various activities.

Offering services for quality in higher education contains the elements of the tangible and intangible product. Tangible products have traditionally used a 4Ps model; the service on the other hand uses a 7P approach in order to satisfy the needs of the service provider's customers: product, price, place, promotion, people, physical facilities and processes. Jonathan ivy used customized 7P factors for MBA Marketing that includes Premium, Prominence, Promotion, Price, Programme, Prospectus, and People. In addition, Global Promotion Project of EU (2008) developed 7P on Higher Education Marketing that are Product, Price, Place, Promotion, People, Presentation and Positioning. This study tried to develop integrated 8S marketing mix for private universities focus on Bangladesh scenario, which ensures communication with both inputs and stakeholders.

3. OBJECTIVES

The purpose of this paper is to develop 8S for creating values of private universities that helps to communicate with talented incumbents about private university and to strengthen alliance with corporate houses.

Specific Objectives:

- To attract two types of stakeholders by 8S Marketing Mix for Private Universities in Bangladesh. One group includes those who are to be informed regarding university by existing students. The second group consists of those who are directly benefited from university's services and outcomes, e.g. students, faculty, administrators, employers, the local community, individuals or organizations etc.
- Making a priority among different elements of integrated marketing mix as mnemonic 8S that will help to make decision for the purpose of university marketing.

4. METHODOLOGY

4.1 Sampling Technique

An empirical study of 240 samples (existing students and professionals) is collected by judgment or purposive sampling technique in order to measure their attitudes and the importance of different marketing variables. Samples are taken from different Private Universities and also from professionals of different corporate houses. Self-completion questionnaires are distributed among above respondents.

4.2 Data Collection Procedure

A structured 5-point Likert scaled questionnaire has been developed for factor analysis to measure attitudes towards 26 different marketing tools (variables). Cronbach's alpha is used to determine the extent to which the Likert scale employed that produced consistent results if measures are taken repeatedly. Correlation coefficient over 0.7 is considered acceptable, with coefficient greater than 0.8 considered good (Malhotra and Birks 2006). The 26 marketing items measured in this survey has a Cronbach's alpha of 0.824. In this study, all items have a significant correlation, indicating high levels of internal consistency.

5. ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

A factor analysis (Table 2) of the 26 variables suggests that eight factors are chosen in terms of eigenvalue of larger than 1.0 eigenvalues (or the latent root) are widely used to determine the number of factors that should be created. The eigenvalue is the amount of variance accounted for by the factor. In factor analysis, a standard cut-off requires an eigenvalue of 1.0. Effectively, only factors having an eigenvalue greater than 1.0 are considered significant. According to Hair et al. (1998), using eigenvalues to determine the number of factors is most reliable when there are over 20 variables, as is the case in this study. For this reason, the eigenvalue method is employed, resulting in an 8 factor solution which accounted for 61.10% of the variance. The statistics of Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) and Bartlett's test of sphericity is used to clarify the appropriateness of factor analysis. High values of KMO (between 0.5 and 1.0) indicate factor analysis is appropriate (Malhotra 2003). The KMO measure of sampling adequacy has a value of 0.794 which means factor analysis is appropriate too. At the same time the Bartlett's test of sphericity is highly significant indicating high correlation between variables.

As a data reduction technique factor analysis is used to reduce a large number of variables, many of which might be highly correlated to each other, into a fewer number of factors which would be more manageable for analysis. In this study, factor analysis is used to determine the underlying relationships that have been indicated by interviewing students and professionals.

Principal components of factor analysis grouped those variables that are positively correlated into the same independent factor. This grouping of similar variables creates a new but reduced number of variables that are used in the development of integrated marketing mix for private universities. Using principal components for extraction of the factors, with Varimax rotation, the factors derived as shown in Table 3. It is named as 8S University marketing mix. The variables that constitute each element of the mix are illustrated in Figure 1.

Finally, a rank order has been made for every group (student and professional) by using the factor-mean values of different variables. Rank correlation method is used for getting the relationship between groups response and found highly positive correlation (0.83). Correlations between groups are given in following Table 2.

Table 2. Correlation Matrix Among Three Groups

Spearman's Correlation Coefficient	Total (Students and professionals both)	Student	Professional
Total (Students and professionals both)	1.000	0.833(*)	1.000(**)
Students	0.833(*)	1.000	0.833(*)
Professionals	1.000(**)	0.833(*)	1.000

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

As the positive relation is found among students and professionals' response, the necessity of 8S University marketing mix priority factors identified by both the groups are recognized.

6. 8S UNIVERSITY MARKETING MIX

The names for the 8 factors have been developed on the basis of appropriateness of the label in representing the variables that are included in specific factor. The variables with higher loadings in that factor are considered more important and have greater influence in the selection of factors name. We can use it for evaluation and reevaluation of our activities. The 8S are: Surface, System, Stimulation, Student Cost, Symbolization, Student Solution, Specialization, and Specification. Before applying 8S Marketing Mix, it is suggested that one should consider the following prerequisites to ensure performance. The requisites are

- Strategic commitment is needed to explore university brand name.
- Student oriented support should be ensured by skilled and experienced administrative staff.
- As physical evidence is the tangible component of the service offering, universities should provide usable and well decorated campus for the students and faculty members so that 8S can be functioned properly.
- Academic freedom of every faculty members should be ensured for their development.

For choosing private universities, students' and employers' preference changes rapidly. Therefore, one may continually revise these 8S to ensure the right track and achieving the maximum results possible out of it. Analysis from Table 3 derives 8 factors described here consecutively. 6 variables shown in factor 1 which are named as surface (S1), 4 variables for system (S2), 2 variables for stimulation (S3), 3 variables for student cost (S4), 4 variables for symbolization (S5), 3 variables for student solution (S6), 2 variables for specialization (S7), and other 2 variables for the factor of specification (S8). The 8S are described in the following:

6.1 Surface

Surface generally means the outside of material bodies. In our study, surface can be defined as the window dressing of university, which students try to know before admission or at the time of admission, such as library, laboratory, computer facilities, academic scholarship, reputation of faculty members, and research institute. By informing these variables, private universities can get first impression and interest from both students and corporate professionals. By addressing the following questions we can better clarify this factor. How do students think and talk about private universities? What positioning do private universities have in their market? What are the terms of the specific words people use when they describe institutions? In reference to these questions, private universities may develop the habit of thinking about how they could improve their positioning. What is the best way for creating the ideal impression in the minds of their potential students? What changes do they need to make in the process to interact with the students? Some variables can make the solutions that

are identified by respondents can be included in surface factor. This factor is made up of 'Library facilities' (loading = 0.838), the 'Computer facilities' (loading = 0.776), 'Laboratory facilities' (loading = 0.812), 'Reputation of faculty members' (loading = 0.628), the 'Academic scholarship' (loading = 0.543), and the 'Research institute' (loading = 0.461).

Table 3. Factors of 8S Marketing Mix

Factors	Variables	Factor Loading by Components							
		S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6	S7	S8
Surface (S1)	Library facilities	.838	.106	.011	.101	.124	.086	.062	.020
	Laboratory facilities	.812	-.016	.113	.059	-.077	.092	.165	.030
	Computer facilities	.776	.010	.048	.026	.061	.176	.000	-.160
	Reputation of faculty members	.628	.179	-.055	.032	.036	.024	.025	.144
	Academic scholarship	.543	.330	.114	.102	.229	.079	.084	.188
	Research institute	.461	.256	.162	-.309	.120	.108	.226	.023
System (S2)	Member of International Accreditation Bodies	.176	.737	.034	.125	-.009	.037	.036	.100
	Evaluation Process of students' Learning Performance	.127	.684	.020	-.069	.036	.073	.084	-.022
	Collaboration with Foreign Universities	.005	.578	.002	-.003	.301	.208	.061	.058
	Corporate Alliances	.166	.477	.221	.206	-.022	-.268	.281	.095
Stimulation (S3)	Participation in Different Cultural Programs	-.012	-.013	.837	.073	.055	.082	.219	.039
	Sports & Club Activities	.143	.094	.774	.121	.047	.103	.132	.146
Student Cost (S4)	Tuition Fees	.130	.113	.009	.780	.015	.139	-.147	-.096
	Flexible Tuition Approaches	-.030	.006	.141	.725	.043	.137	.085	-.002
	Tuition Waiver	.161	.009	-.016	.549	.416	.074	.151	.253
Symbolization (S5)	Print Advertisement	.001	.258	.081	.201	.650	-.068	.053	.111
	Television Advertisement	-.003	-.112	-.046	-.045	.592	.096	-.002	.394
	University Website	.308	.070	.085	.117	.559	-.012	.225	-.292
	Convocation	.240	.157	.427	-.127	.488	.164	.012	-.045
Student Solution (S6)	Number of Credits of Different Programs	.223	-.003	.154	.067	.071	.776	.106	-.011
	Program Duration	.075	.182	.289	.197	-.125	.673	-.090	-.021
	Different Degrees under Different Programs	.246	.150	-.289	.260	.211	.613	.077	.138
Specialization (S7)	Academic Publications	.067	.152	.081	.006	.080	.065	.822	-.008
	Arranging Seminar & Workshop	.211	.094	.232	-.017	.088	.000	.755	.125
Specification (S8)	Stationary with Printed University Name & Logo	.123	.109	.057	.072	.032	.030	.191	.773
	University Transportation	-.035	.144	.372	-.130	.253	-.047	-.171	.555
Eigen Values		5.524	2.148	1.932	1.605	1.346	1.265	1.066	1.002
Percent of variance		21.246	8.261	7.431	6.174	5.176	4.865	4.099	3.855
Cumulative percent of variance		21.246	29.506	36.937	43.111	48.287	53.152	57.251	61.106

* Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization. * 8 Components are extracted.* Included to factor naming as communality is more than 45%.

6.2 System

System is a group of interdependent items that interact regularly to perform a task. In other words, system is a set of interacting or interdependent entities, real or abstract, forming an integrated whole. System is generally considered, same as process is the series of stages in operations. Quality is best viewed as an outcome of a good process. It is also best defined through an assessment of the processes that are functioning to meet the ever-changing expectations of the stakeholders. Quality in higher education of private universities achieves after implementing system for both academic and administrative activities. Thus, private universities need effective mechanisms to ensure quality for the continual improvement of programs. Continuous improvements of university processes, policies, infrastructure, administrative and support systems resulted in high quality outcomes for students, staffs to improve and to enhance of university resources and facilities. This factor is made up of 'Evaluation of student's learning performance' (loading = 0.684), the 'Membership of international accreditation bodies' (loading = 0.737), 'Collaboration with foreign universities' (loading = 0.578), 'Corporate Alliance' (loading = 0.477).

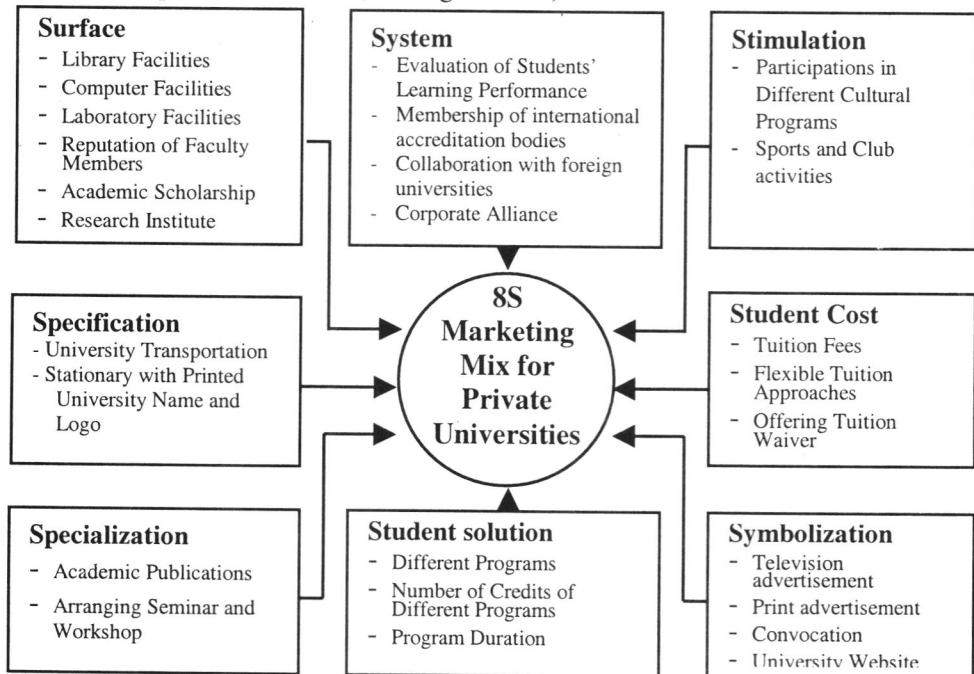


Figure 1. Suggested nomenclatures for the elements of 8S University marketing mix

6.3 Stimulation

Cultural programs, sports and club activities are variables of stimulation factor that can make a student refresh their mind and can help for being attentive in study. These activities create some positioning and values of private universities. By participating in these programs, students get opportunity to develop association with each other. This factor is made up of 'Participations in different cultural programs' (loading = 0.837), and 'Sports and club activities' (loading = 0.774).

6.4 Student Cost

The fourth S in 8S is Student Cost (Price). The Student Cost element of the 8s marketing mix is dominated by what is being charged for the degree or tuition fees that are required to enroll at the university. In marketing higher education, a tremendous weight has been placed on student enrollment. If no emergency threatening enrollment problem exists, or the problem is not causing panic, or a potential problem is masked by lack of research or analysis, many senior administrators and faculties see no reason to engage in marketing activities, and more importantly, in strategic planning activities. Even in the presence of an obvious need for enrollment planning and marketing, there will be senior administrator and faculty who are unaware of, disinterested in, or resistant to, such activity. The pricing element not only affects the revenues that a private university derives from its enrollment, but also affects student perceptions of the quality. If private universities charge fees to students, they develop the habit of continually examining and re-examining their prices to make sure students are still appropriate to the realities of the current market. In the case of higher education, tuition fees are very competitive issues, because students' decision towards admission is heavily dependent on tuition fees although we think tuition fees should not be considered for getting quality education. We agree that quality education might not be affordable financially for all the time. In our study, we have observed that different tuition fee of different programs, flexible tuition approaches and tuition waiver mixes together and form the factor Student cost. Before choosing private university, students' are informed regarding fees, tuition waiver and flexible tuition approaches to calculate affordability. Hence, student cost factor, as pricing element is critical to daily operation of many universities. This factor is made up of 'Tuition fees' (loading = 0.780), the 'Flexible tuition approaches' (loading = 0.725), 'and Offering tuition waiver' (loading = 0.549).

6.5 Symbolization

Simply being good at what private universities do is not enough to guarantee success for tomorrow. They need to be recognized and known for being at what they do. Thus, university should go for promotional activity. It includes what we tell audience about our services and how we market and sell it to them. In 1972, Philip kotler used the word 'Symbolization' with the replacement of 'Promotion'. It covers all the variables that university can use to provide the market with information. Television advertisement, print advertisement, convocation, and university webpage can make quick understanding among students and corporate professionals'. Print and television advertisement represent the information of university and create good impressions. With it bringing periodical changes is necessary. Even small changes in advertisement observed immediate better results. Another Symbolization variable is convocation, which is the most praiseworthy program for graduates. Society can be informed regarding students' degree of academic performance from it. This program sometimes produces positive image in the minds of students and professionals. Also university website can connect students from all over the world. It is a mirror of university and students can get all the information regarding universities on an ongoing basis. In addition, higher education exhibitions, conventions, and direct mail can

also employ to inform, remind and persuade prospective students to select their university. Symbolization factor is made up of 'Television advertisement' (loading = 0.592), the 'Print Advertisement' (loading = 0.650), 'Convocation' (loading = 0.488), 'University website' (loading = 0.559).

6.6 Student Solution

What are the products of universities? Some argues different programs are products that are offered by universities. Some other argues graduate students are the product or brand ambassadors of their university. We strongly opine that programs are not like manufacturing products but programs are services and can be treated as product of private universities. Because students pay tuitions to achieve degrees but being a representative they have no physical contribution towards university. In this study, different programs, number of credits of programs and program duration are taken together seems to be the product mix for private universities. So elements of product mix for this factor are named the "student solution". This factor is made up of 'Different programs' (loading = 0.613), 'Number of credits of different programs' (loading = 0.776), 'Program duration' (loading = 0.673).

6.7 Specialization

Specialization means devote oneself to an area of interest, skill etc. Variables of this factor can make some specialty of private universities. Therefore, student and professional show their interest from the sight of individual perspective. Academic publications, seminar and workshop are the best reflection of research output and included in the factor of specialization. On the basis of these output, corporate relationships are often maintained. Frequency and degree of these variables can make strong brand equity in society while corporate feels free to sponsor to the university. This factor is made up of 'Academic publications' (loading = 0.822), the 'Arranging seminar and workshop', (loading = 0.755).

6.8 Specification

According to mean value (3.5875), last element in the university marketing mix is 'Presentation' which can be called 'Specification' that means the specified standard of workmanship or materials. Looking at every visual elements in the packaging of university services are critical prospects through the eyes of students. Even small improvements in the presentation or external appearance of university services can often lead to completely different reactions from their potential students. The factor specification is a combination of university transportation and university stationary with printed name and logo. University stationary could get more attraction in the minds of students by which universities brand can be explored. Also, university transportation facility is very much demandable to all and it can help to memorize the brand name of university to the society. Transit advertisement and printed stationary are big opportunity of university marketing within short period of time. This factor is made up of 'Stationary with printed university name' (loading = 0.555), the 'University Transportation' (loading = 0.773).

7. IMPORTANCE OF 8S ELEMENTS

The underlying structure of university marketing needs to be linked to how important each of the factors are in the eyes of students who have recently gone through the process of selecting a private university and the professionals who are recruiting fresh graduates. All the elements of the university marketing mix has a score greater than the mid-point on a 5 point Likert scale; Surface (mean = 4.6556), System (mean = 4.4167), Specialization (mean = 4.2896), Student solution (mean = 4.1528), student cost (mean = 4.1069), Symbolization (mean = 4.0833), Stimulation (mean = 4.0000), Specification (mean = 3.5875). In the following figure, mean values of every factor are denoted in the 'Y' axis and eight factors are denoted in the 'X' axis chronologically which figure shows that mean values greater than or equals to 4 of almost every factor except specification. Also we see the highest mean value is 4.6556 of surface factor.

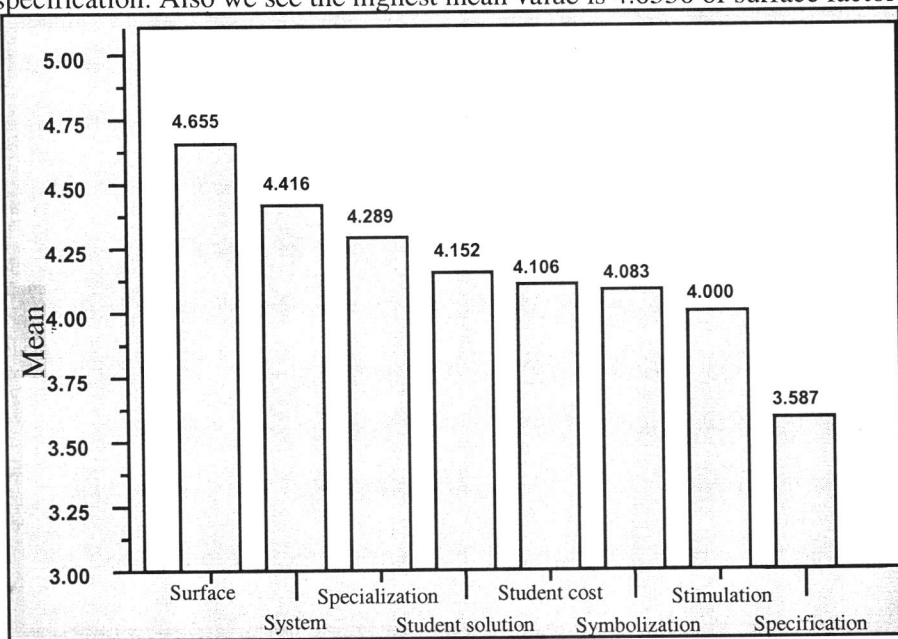


Figure 2. Mean scores of 8S

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

From the above discussion it has already been established that 8s marketing mix for private universities in Bangladesh are essential for sustainability but for 8S marketing mix to be functional at its desired level application approach should be appropriate. This approach can create a positive image and can be helpful for the decision makers. The approach should be supported by two issues mainly as follows:

- 8S Marketing Mix need to be applied in an integrated way; and
- It can be applied on the basis of its factors priority order.

These two considerable factors can be treated as recommendations to the decision makers in case of practical application of 8S Marketing Mix.

9. CONCLUSION

Higher education is not a manufactured product rather it is a complex bundle of benefits. Quality in higher education is a must and it depends on the degree of commitment of everyone; including financial decision makers, faculty members, administrative staff, and students. This paper focuses on developing marketing mix for the universities and for those who are responsible and committed to the society for providing and maintaining quality in higher education in order to produce qualified human resources. Although it has been a debating issue that whether it is necessary to develop marketing effort for private universities or not; our study exposes the variables and group these factors with appropriate analytical framework forging all issues behind. Implementation of this 8S marketing mix creates values of private universities. It certainly is necessary for sustainability of private universities in Bangladesh. In future competitive situations this necessity will be acutely visible. The contribution of this study will be proven successful if universities realize the fact and practice this marketing mix for their quality improvement.

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