

## Promotional Strategy for Higher Education in Abroad

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### ABSTRACT

A well-built marketing strategy enables Yes Study India to establish and sustain its competitive advantage, as well as to compete in fierce competition among other overseas educational consultants in India. This article aims to analyze the external environment and the internal environment of the business. SWOT analysis was then used to summarize the internal and external analysis and define the company's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. The quantitative research method was conducted with the 163 questionnaire respondents to be analyzed to understand the point of view of potential customers toward studying abroad and the use of overseas educational agencies. Meanwhile, in-depth interviews with the management, staff, past students, and parents were conducted as a qualitative research methodology. There are several external and internal factors that can impact how Yes Study India can plan a suitable marketing strategy. Starting with the external factors, government support in exposing more opportunities for Indian students to study abroad and the trend of distance learning due to the pandemic have presented themselves as opportunities for Yes Study India. Meanwhile, the easiness of legal requirements and economic downturn possess as challenges for the company.

### INTRODUCTION

Studying abroad is a dream of most people in India (Maruf et al., 2022; Zabrzewska et al., 2021). This has been proven by the increasing number of Indian students who went abroad to study over the past few years. According to the most recent report by the UNESCO Institute of Statistics (UIS), there are a total of 53,604 Indian students abroad, namely those pursuing higher education (tertiary-level)(Global Flow of Tertiary-Level Students, 2022). Australia, Malaysia, and the United States of America are still considered the top destinations for Indian students (Ahmad & Buchanan, 2016).

India is the fourth most populous country in the world, with about 270 million people and 50 percent of the population are under the age of 30, which illustrates a huge youth demographic (Study Finds That Young Indians Are Highly Motivated to Study Abroad, 2017). Based on the survey by AFS Intercultural Programs in 2017 that gathered more than 5,500 responses from Indian aged 13 to 18 years old (Generation Z), 81 percent of the respondents had considered studying abroad. The majority of respondents stated that they were interested in studying abroad because they would like to pursue a high-quality education overseas and at a reputable institution. They wish to boost their academic profile with a study experience abroad that eventually would lead them to better career opportunities (Study Finds That Young Indians Are Highly Motivated to Study Abroad, 2017).

The Indian middle class is the largest in Southeast Asia and is growing rapidly, which is another important element driving the trend of Indian students becoming more interested in – and capable of – studying abroad (Jamshidi et al., 2012). According to the US Commercial

Service, India is the nineteenth leading place of origin for foreign students in the USA. Over 96 percent of study visa applicants got approved and 95 percent of Indian students in the USA are self-funded (India - Education and Training, 2019).

Another factor that impacts the trend of increasing desire to study abroad in India is the lack of quality higher education institutions (Soon, 2012). There are more than 5,000 universities in India, which is almost double the number of universities in China. However, only the University of India made it to the Top 200 Times Higher Education Rankings for Asia in 2021 (Asia University Rankings 2021, 2021).

Despite the trend of increasing demand for pursuing higher education overseas among young Indians, there are two main concerns that are most impacting their decisions. The first concern is how affordable the tuition fee and living costs are in the destination country since Indians are price sensitive and motivated by the possibility of a scholarship (Study Finds That Young Indians Are Highly Motivated to Study Abroad, 2017). While the middle class is expanding, many families remain cautious out of habit or necessity, and financial experts criticize "subdued family spending" for India's GDP not increasing as quickly as some predicted in recent years. Referring back to the AFS survey in 2017, 45 percent of the respondents would consider studying abroad only if a full scholarship was available (Study Finds That Young Indians Are Highly Motivated to Study Abroad, 2017). Moreover, 22 percent of the respondents said that they would choose a destination country with the lowest tuition fees (Indian Outbound Continues to Grow with Emphasis on Regional Destinations, 2019). Another concern for Indian students in choosing a destination country is the distance between that country and India. The AFS survey found that 46 percent of young Indians stated that the fear of homesickness was a leading concern for them to study abroad. From the parents' side, security and safety are also crucial factors to be considered when deciding to send their children abroad (Indian Outbound Continues to Grow with Emphasis on Regional Destinations, 2019).

The use of educational agents has been rising over the past decade, complementing the rise of the trend of studying abroad, namely in India (Rumbley et al., 2012). The US Commercial Service noted that "Educational consultants are very popular with prospective students and their parents as they serve as a "one-stop-shop" for applying to schools.". This finding is supported by previous student surveys, which discovered that "67 percent [of post-graduate candidates] and 91 percent [of undergraduate applicants] report they employ agents at some time throughout the orientation/application process." (Indian Outbound Continues to Grow with Emphasis on Regional Destinations, 2019).

Agents are anticipated to play an even larger role following the pandemic, given institutions' desire to reestablish foreign enrollments and the ongoing restrictions on institutions' representative travel overseas (Riddell & Niño-Zarazúa, 2016). Both students and institutions will require more assistance than ever before as they manage to change travel restrictions, public health concerns, testing services, and visa processes.

Due to the severe pandemic, students are already depending more on agents (Iyer et al., 2020; Martin, 2020). According to a November 2020 QS survey, students are more influenced by agents' suggestions, and schools that understand how to integrate agents into their marketing campaigns will gain a competitive edge. According to the QS survey data, agents play an important role in guiding students – who are still dealing with the uncertainties and problems of the pandemic – toward enrollment (Education Agents Poised to Play a Greater Role in International Student Recruitment, 2021).

## RESEARCH METHODS

The research will be conducted using a combination of primary and secondary data. Primary data are data freshly collected for a specific purpose or project, while secondary data are information that was gathered for another purpose and already exists somewhere (Kotler & Keller, 2016, p. 125). For this project, the author uses qualitative and quantitative research methodology to obtain the primary data, while secondary data is acquired from publicly available information.

The qualitative analysis will be based on observation and direct interviews with the Yes Study team in India and other countries. Qualitative analysis conducted through three stages, reduce data, reorganize data and conclude (Roulston, 2014). Meanwhile, the quantitative analysis will be based on data acquired through survey questionnaires. Multiple surveys, open questions, and Likert scale questionnaires will be utilized to measure and support the thesis of this research, which will be relevant to Yes Study India sales as well as the use and importance of Yes Study India services in enhancing the service marketing mix strategy. The quantitative data obtained through survey on all high school and university students are potential markets for overseas educational agencies like Yes Study India. The sample calculated through Slovin Formula. According to Wulandari & Kurniasih (2019), Slovin's Formula calculates the number of samples required when the population is too large to directly sample every member. Slovin's formula works for simple random sampling. Based on the calculation, the number of respondents required is 99.99 or approximately 100 people.

For external analysis, marketing strategy theories such as PESTEL, Porter's Five Forces, Competitor Analysis, and Customer Analysis will be conducted to evaluate qualitative and quantitative data. For the internal analysis, STP, Service Marketing Mix, Resource-Based View, and VRIO Framework will be employed. Secondary data is gathered to assist the study from the company's internal data, journals, papers, publications, social media, and websites.

Following the objective of this paper which is to help Yes Study India to increase sales, a suitable competitive strategy is needed. According to Porter (2012), a competitive strategy combines the purposes (goals) for which the firm strives and the means (policies) by which it seeks to achieve them. To develop a realistic and implementable set of goals and policies, a company needs to consider internal and external factors of the company (Porter, 2012). Internal elements include the company's strengths and weaknesses, such as financial resources and brand identity, as well as personal values of the firm, such as key implementers' motivations and needs. External elements, on the other hand, are determined by their industry and larger surroundings, such as government policies, and social and economic issues. These external factors may have an influence on the organization as a threat or an opportunity (Porter, 2012).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Strategy Formulation

Formulating a suitable strategy is needed to increase revenues for Yes Study India being translated mainly into the number of student enrollments abroad. These strategy recommendations are based on the analysis of the internal and external environment in the previous chapter that will be summarized in the SWOT Analysis, then assessed further with SWOT Matrix and the Ansoff Matrix as a guidance for the brand to grow.

## SWOT Analysis

Furthering the analysis, the overall evaluation of a company's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats identified based on the external and internal marketing environment analysis is then summarized in SWOT analysis (Kotler & Keller, 2016, p. 71). This helps the author to formulate alternative strategies for Yes Study India to enhance its internal strengths and take advantage of external opportunities while mitigating threats and lowering its weaknesses. Below is the SWOT analysis of Yes Study India:

**Table 1 SWOT Analysis of Yes Study India**

<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>
Global Agreement with institutions abroad. International brand with branch office presence in various countries. Team of experienced consultants, tutors, and international alumni as director. Customer-centric approach with the highlight of "Never Ending Care" services. Honest, sincere, open organization culture.	Lack of products/services differentiation. Still a small organization with limited fund capital. Small sales team and lack of training. Low brand equity compared to competitors. Lack of consistent and concrete digital marketing plan and execution.
<b>Opportunities</b>	<b>Threats</b>
Government support to drive demand for Indian students to experience studying abroad. High penetration of Internet users. The trend of digitalization in the education industry. Studying abroad is seen as an ambition or a goal to achieve for many Indians. Even	Uncertain economic situations due to pandemic. High bargaining power of partnered institutions abroad. High bargaining power of customers (they can easily switch to other agencies or even using substitutes and are price sensitive). Very intense competition in the market.

for those who had experienced it, if given another chance, they would want to take it again. The rise of people's preference using YouTube and TikTok (video content-based platforms).	Customers prefer agencies with branch offices near their locations.
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## Root Cause Analysis

After summarizing the company's internal strengths and weaknesses, as well as, external opportunities and threats, a root cause analysis is essential in the initial step of strategy formulation to find the best solution for Yes Study India to answer the problem. The author would like to find a suitable strategy to increase the number of student enrollments abroad for Yes Study India since the company has a lower number of enrollments compared to other overseas educational consultants. The company is targeting to get 50 student applications starting 2023 academic year intake. Yes Study India has actually sufficient products and services like the other competitors to help students to study abroad. The

company has also various destination countries and competent employees. Nevertheless, there are always areas of improvements and by analyzing each Service Marketing Mix or “7Ps” element and compare it to the external analysis like Competitor and Customer Analysis, those improvements needed can be found, including ways to do it. However, after analyzing from the external and internal sides of the company, it is found that actually the weakest element for Yes Study India is in its Promotion element. The company is lacking brand awareness since the promotion strategy is not as concrete as the competitors. While the other direct competitors and leading players in the industry are very active and engaging with their contents and promotional activities, both online and offline, to gain leads of students, Yes Study India is left way behind. Therefore, the following SWOT Matrix would be used to find ways to utilize Yes Study India’s internal strengths and external opportunities to diminish its internal weaknesses and external threats. Furthermore, the Ansoff Matrix would also be used to guide the company to grow in correct direction because in order to achieve such target of students and increase sales, growing as a business to compete with the leading players is also indispensable.

### **SWOT Matrix**

SWOT Matrix can be used to illustrate the plans and be a foundation for formulating strategies for Yes Study India from its business and corporate cores. SWOT Matrix is suitable for developing strategic alternatives for the firm using a four-step process as follows (Hafidzi, 2016; Yap, 2012):

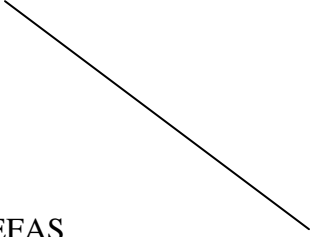
- a. Strengths-Opportunities (Offensive Strategy): Utilize internal strengths to maximize external opportunities.
- b. Weaknesses-Threats (Defensive Strategy): Utilize internal strengths to minimize external threats.
- c. Strengths-Threats: Minimize internal weaknesses and avoid external threats.
- d. Weaknesses-Opportunities: Minimize internal weaknesses by taking advantage of external opportunities.

Below are the highlighted Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats of Yes Study India:

**Table 2 SWOT Matrix of Yes Study India – Strengths & Weaknesses VS. Opportunities**

<p>IFAS (Internal Factor Analysis Summary)</p> <p>EFAS (External Factor Analysis Summary)</p>	<p><b>Strengths (S)</b></p>	<p><b>Weaknesses (W)</b></p>
	<p>S1: Global Agreement with institutions abroad. S2: International brand with branch office presence in various countries. S3: Team of experienced consultants, tutors, and international alumni as director. S4: Customer-centric approach with the highlight of “Never Ending Care” services. S5: Honest, sincere, open organization culture.</p>	<p>W1: Lack of products/services differentiation. W2: Still a small organization with limited financial capital. W3: Small sales team and lack of training. W4: Low brand equity compared to competitors. W5: Lack of consistent and concrete digital marketing plan and execution.</p>
<p><b>Opportunities (O)</b></p>	<p><b>SO-Strategy</b></p>	<p><b>WO-Strategy</b></p>
<p>O1: Government support to drive demand for Indian students to experience studying abroad. O2: High penetration of Internet users. O3: The trend of digitalization in the education industry. O4: Studying abroad is seen as an ambition or a goal to achieve for many Indians. Even for those who had experienced it, if given another chance, they would want to take it again. O5: The rise of people’s preference using YouTube and TikTok (video content-based platforms).</p>	<p>(S1-O1): <b>Collaborate with partnered institutions abroad</b> to build a program specified to enhance the government programs (eg. Kampus Merdeka/IISMA).  (S2, S3, S4, S5-O2&amp;O5): <b>Promote these values heavily through digital marketing, especially through video contents.</b>  (S4-O4): Develop a loyalty program that offers extension services for Yes Study’s students that has many benefits for them if they choose to study abroad again with Yes Study.</p>	<p>(W1-O1&amp;O4): Establish programs that specified to help Indian students to prepare to get into the government programs (eg. IISMA or the student exchange program). This can be IELTS preparation class specifically for IISMA programs.  (W2, W3, W4, W5-O2&amp;O5): <b>Develop an effective and efficient digital marketing plan and execution to promote Yes Study India’s programs and services.</b></p>

**Table 3 SWOT Matrix of Yes Study India – Strengths & Weaknesses VS. Threats**

<p style="text-align: center;">IFAS (Internal Factor Analysis Summary)</p>  <p style="text-align: center;">EFAS (External Factor Analysis Summary)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Strengths (S)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Weaknesses (W)</p>
	<p>S1: Global Agreement with institutions abroad.</p> <p>S2: International brand with branch office presence in various countries.</p> <p>S3: Team of experienced consultants, tutors, and international alumni as director.</p> <p>S4: Customer-centric approach with the highlight of “Never Ending Care” services.</p> <p>S5: Honest, sincere, open organization culture.</p>	<p>W1: Lack of products/services differentiation.</p> <p>W2: Still a small organization with limited financial capital.</p> <p>W3: Small sales team and lack of training.</p> <p>W4: Low brand equity compared to competitors.</p> <p>W5: Lack of consistent and concrete digital marketing plan and execution.</p>

Threats (T)	ST-Strategy	WT-Strategy
<p>T1: Uncertain economic situations due to pandemic. T2: High bargaining power of partnered institutions abroad. T3: High bargaining power of customers (they can easily switch to other agencies or even using substitute). T4: Very intense competition in the market. T5: Customers prefer agencies with branch offices near their locations.</p>	<p>(S1&amp;S2-T2&amp;T4): Work towards negotiating o having exclusive agreements with the partnered institutions abroad so Yes Study India is the only agency to help with their recruitment in India. Thus, lowering the customers’ options. Yes Study head office can negotiate by promising a certain number of students for the school in turn for an exclusive agreement.</p> <p><b>(S1&amp;S3-T3&amp;T4): Collaborate with partnered schools abroad to develop new programs that have never been offered in the market.</b></p> <p><b>(S3, S4, S5-T5): Emphasize these strengths via digital platforms to ensure to customers that they will be taken care of very well despite having to receive services online.</b></p>	<p><b>(W1-T3&amp;T4): Collaborate with other companies/organizations/partnered schools abroad to offer webinars/programs that are never been offered before in the market.</b></p> <p>(W2-T1): Plan a long-term financial and risk management.</p> <p>(W2-T5): Rent virtual offices or coworking spaces, or hold seasonal events to other cities to be closer with potential markets.</p> <p><b>(W3-T3&amp;T4): Provide sales training to enhance sales skills.</b></p> <p><b>(W4&amp;W5-T2, T3, T4, T5): Enhance brand awareness to build better reputation with a concrete and consistent digital marketing execution.</b></p>

Based on the SWOT Matrix, the proposed marketing strategy would focus on the highlighted items that would be further explained in the following sections, especially in detail in the Service Marketing Mix (7Ps). Enhanced marketing mix would be beneficial for Yes Study India to improve the overall bottom line for the long run. Focusing on customers would be put forward to adjust the advancement of the 7Ps since Yes study India is operating in the service industry.



## The Ansoff Matrix

The Ansoff Matrix helps to guide the company in the direction for growth that aligned with the strategy formulation (Hussain et al., 2013; Loredana, 2017). Yes Study India can apply the Market Penetration and Product Development strategies to help them achieve the set business objectives. Detail of each marketing initiatives involved in each strategy that being pulled from the SWOT Matrix would be discussed in the STP and Service Marketing Mix (7Ps) as stated in the parentheses.

## Market Penetration

Given the objective of Yes Study India is to increase sales, thus the company entails to focus on selling the existing products into the existing markets. Based on the SWOT Matrix, below are the elaboration of proposed initiatives that Yes Study India can take in order to penetrate the market:

- Enhance digital marketing engagement and activity (**Promotion**)
- Provide sales training (**People**)
- Reinforce more collaboration (**Promotion, People, and Process**)
  - Encourage more offline presence (**Place and Physical Environment**)

## Product Development

Product development, also known as product expansion, is a growth strategy that encourages a firm to broaden its product variety to existing markets. Based on the SWOT Matrix, product innovation is highly encouraged for Yes Study India to use its competitive advantage to improve its brand equity by differentiating itself from competitors. Here are the approaches to pursue Product Development strategy for Yes Study India:

- Introduce new program(s) for people who have experienced studying abroad (**STP**)
- Develop a variety of online learning programs (**Product and Price**)
  - Have a concrete promotional strategy to market the new product (**Promotion**)

## Proposed Segmentation, Targeting, and Positioning Enhancement

Continuing from the Ansoff Matrix, on top of focusing in selling to the current target market, which is the Segment A who consists of students with high financial resources but low academic preparedness, Yes Study India is actually exposed to a new opportunity based on the survey results. It delineates that people who have experienced studying abroad are still open for another chance to go to another country to continue their studies. Even better, based on the survey results, 67 percent of 18 respondents with studying abroad experiences and said that they are still interested to study overseas again in the future are open to use a different educational consultant. Thus, Yes Study India needs to take this into account. First of all, Yes Study India should develop a marketing strategy to retain its students by extending the services for them. Also, product development is highly important when targeting those international alumni who are looking for opportunities for continuing education abroad.

Yes Study India's adapted positioning statement would be:

“For international alumni, those who have experienced studying abroad and still want to pursue continuing education overseas, Yes Study is the best one-stop solution overseas educational agency that can provide better professional services than other agencies because only Yes Study always puts forward clients' wants and needs with their “Never Ending Care” services that are catered by caring, honest, and sincere teams to ensure customer satisfaction. Also, only Yes Study that offers a comprehensive post-graduate preparation package which to make certain that their-not-first-time studying abroad process is at ease”.

### **Services Marketing Mix Analysis (7Ps)**

To align with the growth and strategic initiatives discussed in the SWOT and Ansoff Matrix frameworks, improved Service Marketing Mix or “7Ps” elements are needed for Yes Study India as it would help the company to achieve its aim to have increased number of student enrollments. Even though the 7Ps less general used by scholars than the 4Ps elements, some still discusses “7 Ps”, to include physical evidence and process (Khan, 2014).

#### **Product**

Yes Study India currently offers the required services and programs needed to help students with their study abroad processes, thus the company has to maintain and keep improving the quality of these programs and services.

Besides maintaining the quality of existing programs and services, to add more options for potential students who are potentially to be international alumni, new programs can be planned and developed. These are some ideas for the new programs that Yes Study India can offer:

- a. Collaboration program with a partnered institution. For example, with a MBA school in Canada or the USA to offer Online Pre-MBA Mini College that helps to bridge graduate students with non-business degrees who want to pursue for MBA degree abroad. The program can be held for one month. When they have done this, no GMAT is required if they want to continue applying to the partnered school overseas.
- b. Scholarship assistance package can also be promoted since even students from wealthy families would want to be appreciated for their great academic results with a scholarship. Thus, a mentor would be matched with the student. This mentor will help the student from school applications, visas, accommodation, airport pickup, as well as preparation classes like IELTS, motivation letter proofreading, and interview preparation.
- c. Post-graduate preparation classes such as GMAT, GRE, academic writing for journals and research papers.

#### **Price**

Based on the survey results, it can be concluded that Yes Study India’s programs and services are priced well reasonably. It competes with the competitors as well as meeting the preferences of customers. There would not be many changes in terms of pricing schemes, however, more promotions that involve discounts on prices can also be boosted. Next, it is wise for the company to also set the price for a bundling package for students who are choosing to apply to schools that do not have partnerships with the company.

#### **Place**

To satisfy those customers who prefer offline consultations or to receive other services from the company, other than maintaining the branch offices in Gading Serpong and Bekasi, Yes Study can also improve its offline presence by renting out coworking space in a few locations (in big cities like Surabaya and Denpasar). Yes Study can hold regular events in this space so they can get more connected with the customers in a more broader settings. Yes Study India should also shape the Bekasi branch office to be ready for walk in customers since the city is shows a great potential for the business.

Nevertheless, Yes Study India needs to keep the good standard of service delivery virtually since it is also display as an effective and efficient way to provide consultations, classes, webinars, and other activities to interact with customers.

## Promotion

Other than focusing with Instagram contents and ads, Yes Study India needs to activate its YouTube and TikTok accounts as well. Having a marketing campaign titled “Yes 2023 Pasti Berangkat” (“Yes 2023 Study Abroad”) can be a way to promote Yes Study India’s services and programs to encourage student enrollments for the 2023/2024 academic year intakes.

Below are some of the content ideas that the company can emphasize on:

- a. Student and parent testimonials.
- b. Short video of partnered school representatives explaining about the highlights of their schools.
- c. Creative TikTok videos using viral music and challenge for promoting preparation classes.
- d. Fun facts videos.
- e. Alumni sharing sessions.
- f. Enhancing the continuous benefits of joining Yes Study India.

Event marketing is also essential for generating leads, such as education expo and info sessions, online and offline. Online sessions can be done monthly, while offline sessions can be held once every three months or per quarter. Road show event is also encouraged for Yes Study India to get to other potential cities and customers.

## People

The people working in the company are assets that the company must value and appreciate.

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growth and success of the company would be dependent on the excellence of teams that make it happen. Therefore, in case of Yes Study India, the company should employ training by inviting professionals and experts in the area to improve skills and boost motivation of its employees. These trainings would be focus in upgrading the performance of frontliners.

For admins and education counsellors, customer service training should be scheduled, while sales team should get sales training, every quarter. High level of customer satisfaction and be reminded of the company’s culture of being honest and sincere must be maintained. Then, to boost the more collaboration, partnerships, and leads, sales team’s skills should be improved.

However, it is also important to note that all people in the company have their share of contribution to the company’s success and each other’s work performance, therefore maintaining a solid team is crucial. Then, to emphasize this, townhall meeting can be scheduled monthly for encouraging coordination, motivation, and appreciation.

## Process

Creating and delivering product elements requires design and implementation of effective processes. Badly designed service processes lead to slow, bureaucratic, and ineffective service delivery, wasted time, and a disappointing experience for customers. Poor service process design also makes it difficult for frontline employees to do their jobs well, resulting in low productivity and employee dissatisfaction (Wirtz and Lovelock, 2016: 32).

Therefore, here are the details continuing from the proposed actions mentioned in the

framework for Yes Study India to smoothen the process of service delivery:

- a. List all partnered institutions in a booklet and website to provide easier access for customers to gain product knowledge of Yes Study India.
- b. Make a comprehensive booklet about study abroad preparation guide that consists of:
  - 1) Step-by-step process to study abroad from any academic level (e.g., the process and requirements from high school students to university would be different from graduate students who are applying for the post-graduate programs).
  - 2) List of required documents for admission.
  - 3) List of required documents for student visa application.
  - 4) List of average tuition fees in different countries and universities.
  - 5) List of living cost comparison between major cities abroad.
  - 6) Tips and tricks for a successful application.
  - 7) List of popular scholarship opportunities.
  - 8) Packing list.
  - 9) Student testimonials.
  - 10) List of programs offered by Yes Study India.
- c. Set up an appointment booking on the website so customers can book an online/offline consultation by themselves.
- d. Having a pre-departure briefing for students and parents is actually important because they can meet other students who are going to the same destination country, and probably the same school.

### **Physical Environment**

Service companies need to manage the physical environment carefully since it can have a profound impact on customer satisfaction and service productivity (Wirtz and Lovelock, 2016: 33). Thus, it is essential for Yes Study India to understand customers' preferences to maintain customer satisfaction level, while at the same time, meeting requirements of employees to run daily business operations.

Adding from the proposed initiate that has been explained in the "3.6.3 Place" section to rent coworking space and shape Bekasi office for welcoming walk-in customers, it is also important to take into account for the atmosphere that they want to create. This working atmosphere can be built by considering the choice for furniture, the setup of employees' work spaces, and the floor plan to show the flow in the office when there are customers.

Other tangible materials that the company can start to have is employees' uniform and lanyards to improve the brand association that includes in the brand equity that may impact positively to employees' sense of belonging and the brand's reputation

### **CONCLUSION**

There are several external and internal factors that can impact how Yes Study India can plan a suitable marketing strategy. Starting with the external factors, government support in exposing more opportunities for Indian students to study abroad and the trend of distance learning due to the pandemic have presented themselves as opportunities for Yes Study India. Meanwhile, the easiness of legal requirements and economic downturn possess as challenges for the company. However, Yes Study India has a few competitive advantages that enable the company to mitigate the challenges. The competent team and reputation of being an

international brand have actually helped Yes Study India to survive this far although some of its service marketing mix elements such as promotion, place, and physical environment are still lacking quite far from its main competitors.

Thus, the management of Yes Study India needs to take action to increase the performance of the company in order to meet the targeted number of students per year. There are three areas of improvement that Yes Study India management needs to focus on, which are for them to:

1. Grow the digital marketing to reach more audience, increase brand awareness, and enhance the brand's reputation.
2. Develop new programs to differentiate itself from competitors and attract broader markets.
3. Reinforce sales and partnership team to initiate and manage more collaborations with various potential institutions.

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- ↳ From J. L. Heskett, T. O. Jones, G. W. Loveman, W. E. Sasser Jr., and L. A. Schlesinger, "Putting the Service-Profit Chain to Work," Harvard Business School, 1994.