

CRM techniques in higher education

Rekha Arvind Katheeth

Assistant Professor, SVKM's Narsee Monjee College of Commerce and Economics, Mumbai, Maharashtra, India

Abstract

Higher Education Institutes are experiencing tremendous changes post XII th Five Year Plan (2012-2017). They are facing challenges with the requirement of the NAAC related statistical information and its documentation.

The educational institutions especially at under graduate level need to work out a lot in the way their institution operate and interact with their stakeholders i.e. students, their parents, alumni, employees, staff members etc. In comparison to foreign universities and colleges we are long way behind in identifying the requirements of our learners. The use of CRM Software have empowered the foreign universities and colleges with learners recruitment, learners engagement in class and their advancement needs. CRM System are software applications are used to automate and manage communication with prospective and current stakeholders esp. learners. In order to cover the gap created due to rising cost and falling revenues more educational institutes in India need to adopt CRM software solutions often regarded as Customer Relationship Management, however for educational circles CRM is known as Constituent Relationship Management which focus on Relationship Management with the stakeholders and will certainly help institutes trim expenses and paper work.

With the advent of the autonomy status the dire need for CRM Systems will increase as these software tends to provide real time numbers, data and graphs that may be strategically used in decision making. However the road ahead for implication of such software seems to be challenging the reason being lack of knowledge and budget with the Indian Educational institutes.

The paper attempts to study the changing pattern of education sector in India and the need for technology dependence for the administration of the colleges and universities. The paper also focuses on using the CRM software's for prospective students, current students and alumni.

Keywords: CRM techniques, higher education

Introduction

Higher Education sector has witnessed a tremendous increase in the number of Universities/University level Institutions & Colleges since Independence. The number of Universities has increased 34 times from 20 in 1950 to 677 in 2014. The sector boasts of 45 Central Universities of which 40 are under the purview of Ministry of Human Resource Development, 318 State Universities, 185 State Private universities, 129 Deemed to be Universities, 51 Institutions of National Importance (established under Acts of Parliament) under MHRD (IITs - 16, NITs - 30 and IISERs - 5) and four Institutions (established under various State legislations). The number of colleges has also registered manifold increase of 74 times with just 500 in 1950 growing to 37,204, as on 31st March, 2013. The challenge also persist in delivering the valuable services to the stakeholders i.e. Students, Parents, Teaching Staff, Employees, Alumni, Recruiters etc.

Type	1950	2014	
No. of Universities	20	677	45 Central 318 State 185 State Private 129 Deemed to be
No. of Colleges	500	37204	

CRM has succeeded in bringing revolutionary changes in the services sector across all the industry may be it Banking, Insurance, Consultancy etc. However Education sector is still to experience the major benefits from the CRM tools and

software's. In the era of Relationship marketing in which service industry today focuses in enhancing life time relationship with the customer, keeping in view that Education is also one of the service industry and Business have been completely dependent on supply of qualified employable individual on it, the scope of Relationship marketing widens even in Educational Institutes with reference to application received by UGC for autonomous status. Educational Institutions has always adopted mass marketing to communicate their messages with the learners which has moved it away from personal relationship that exist today and very much demanded by stakeholders.

CRM systems are software applications used to automate and manage communications with prospective and current students, employees, alumni, donors - everyone in your institution's community. Customer information, such as lead's/customer's name, gender, educational background, telephone, email, marketing materials, social media and any other relevant information across different channels is compiled into a single database enabling easier information access, allowing to personalize and customize messages and the channels used to deliver the message to the student in a timely manner. Every interaction with the "customer" is tracked by the CRM, all in one place.

Using the principles of shared governance of CRM, faculty, students, alumni, employers and community leaders must re-evaluate and re-design programs to address the society's pressing needs such as ethical management, energy, social entrepreneurship, poverty, climate change and the living

conditions of children and women around the world. Students must learn to become compassionate, courageous and responsible individuals who advocate for shareholders, customers, employees and the global citizens. To deny that higher education is a product and students are customers is to ignore the reality of the current situation and to duck the tough questions we should be asking.

Objective of the study

The research was conducted to identify the approach of the service providers (Teaching Community) towards the use of the CRM Software’s at the Higher Educational Level.

Research Methodology

Primary data collection methodology (Perceptual Survey Model) was adopted. The data sheet focused on the following information Conceptual understanding of CRM and Higher Education Industry, CRM Software’s availability at Institutional level, Application of CRM Software’s, Willingness to change and Future Potentials of CRM Software’s.

Limitation of the Study

The study was conducted on the sample below 30 due to time constraint.

The focus was on the Service providers (Teaching Community) and the Service gainers (Learners) were not included in the survey.

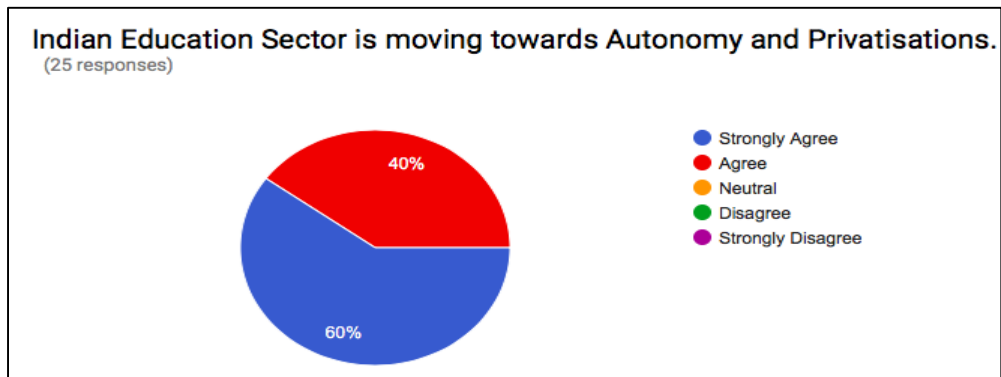
Review of Literature

Dr. Wendy Kilgore, director of research and managing consultant for AACRAO, conducted a session on *CRM Ownership: Use and Impact on Practice, Policy, and Staffing* at AACRAO’s 24th Annual Strategic Enrollment Management Conference. The survey, was supported by Hobsons. Colleges and universities increasingly recognize that this environment requires them to begin a dialog with prospective students early in the search process. However, many institutions lack the adequate infrastructure to reach and engage with prospective students, especially non-traditional students. Establishing a communication plan that incorporates a CRM is an important step institutions can take to initiate and maintain relationships with students during the early stages of the search process.

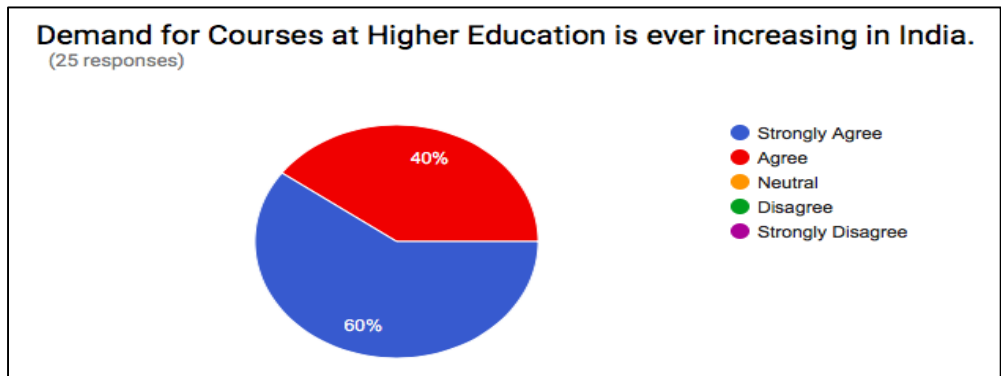
Elaine D. Seeman, Margaret O’Hara published a paper exploring customer relationship management (CRM) in a higher education setting. The benefits of implementing CRM in a college setting include a student-centric focus, improved customer data and process management, increased student loyalty, retention and satisfaction with the college’s programs and services.

Info graphics and Interpretation of data

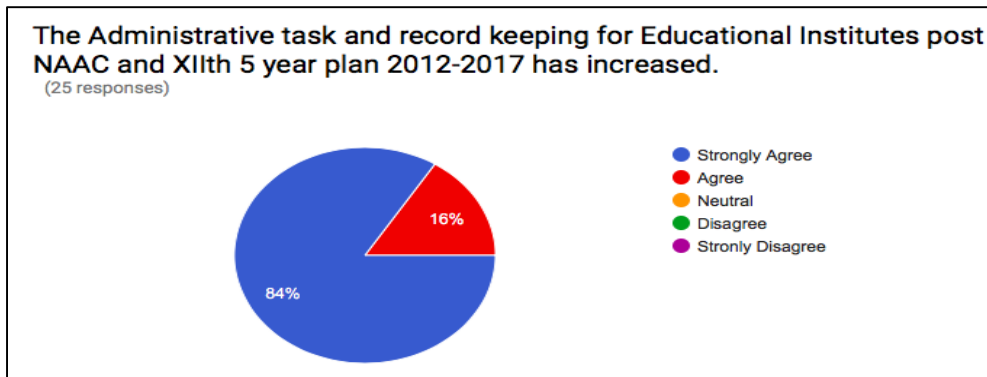
1. Conceptual understanding of CRM and Higher Education Industry



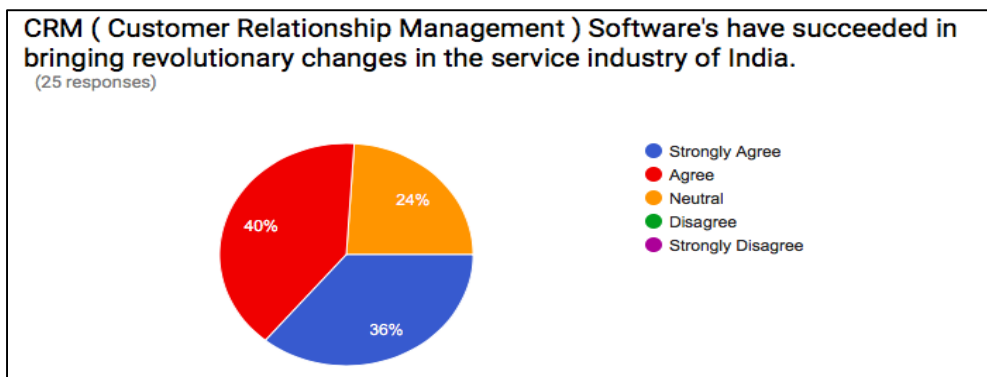
The trend of autonomy and privatization of Indian Education Sector is known fact in the Teaching Community.



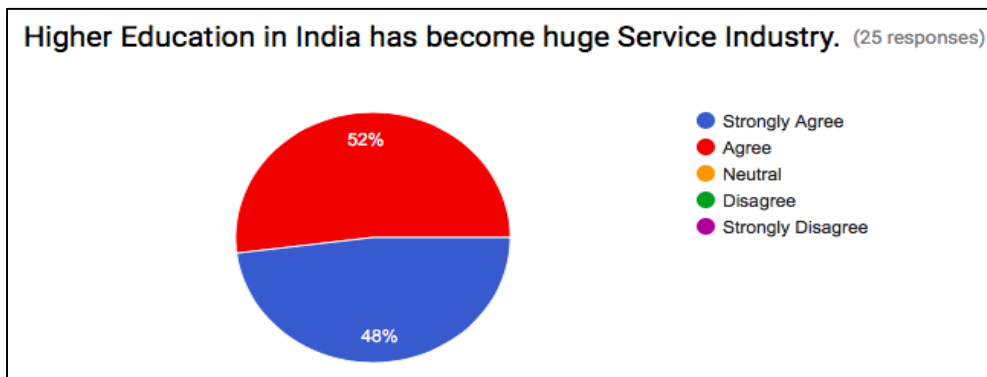
The Indian Higher Education Sector will further see the growth in the enrollment process due to its ever increasing major demand.



The demand for data and information from higher authorities are at rise and performance of the institutes will be judged based on the retrival of those valuable data.

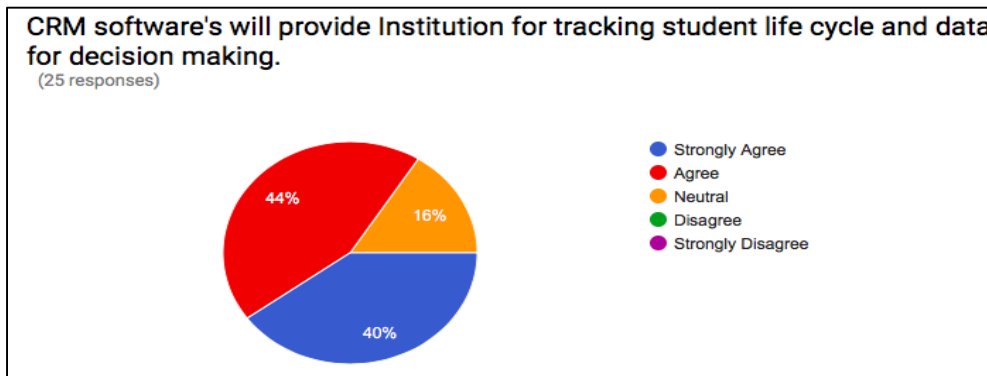


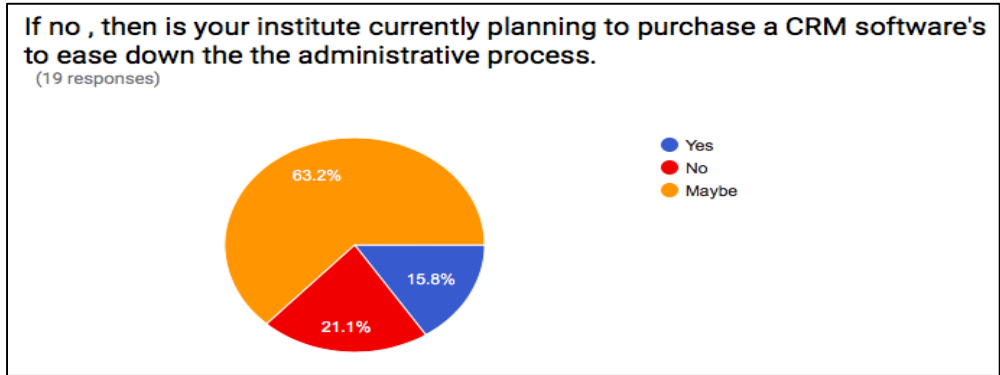
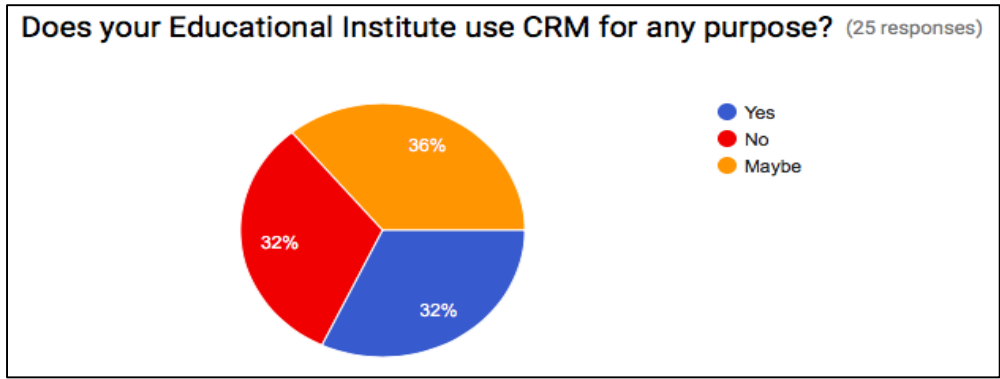
The respondents agree to the softwares of CRM bringing revolutionary changes in Indian service sector



The respondents even agree to Higher Education Sector becoming a huge Service Industry. Thus CRM Software’s can even to used to bring revolutionary changes in the Higher Education Sector.

2. CRM Software’s availability at Institutional level

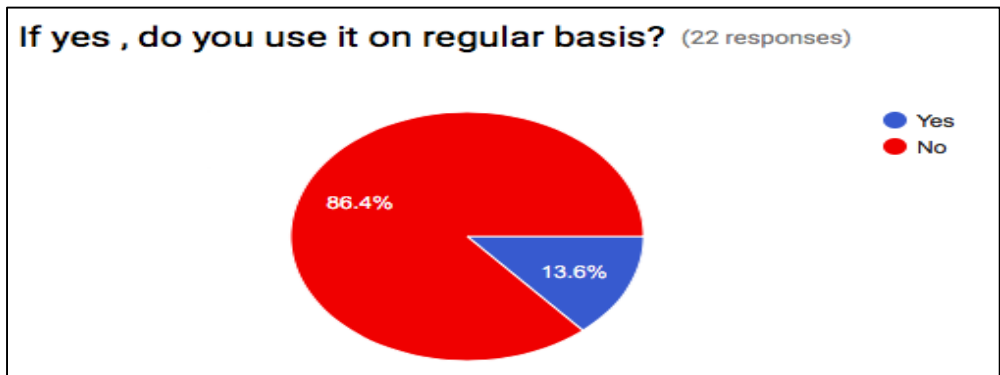
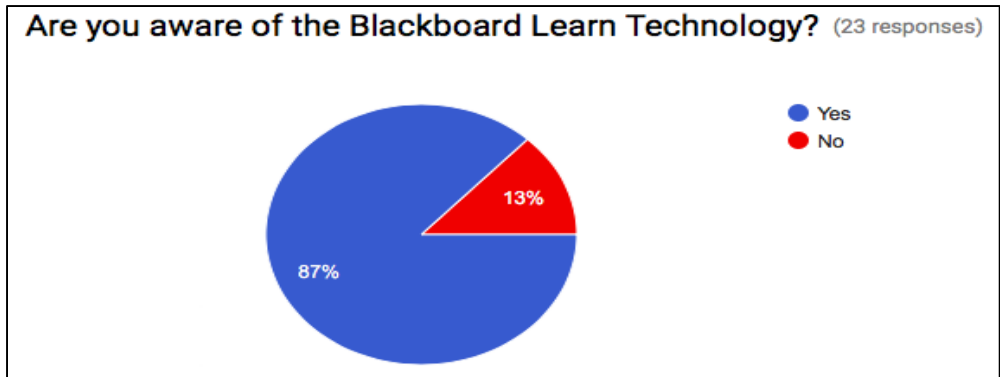




In spite of being aware of CRM Software help in data generation and tracking down student progress, the respondents are unaware about the use of CRM at their institution level and whether any such purchase of the

softwares are streamlined in the Institution. Also the commitment of the management for its purchase is weak as 32% of respondents agreed that their Institution doesn't have any such software's for use.

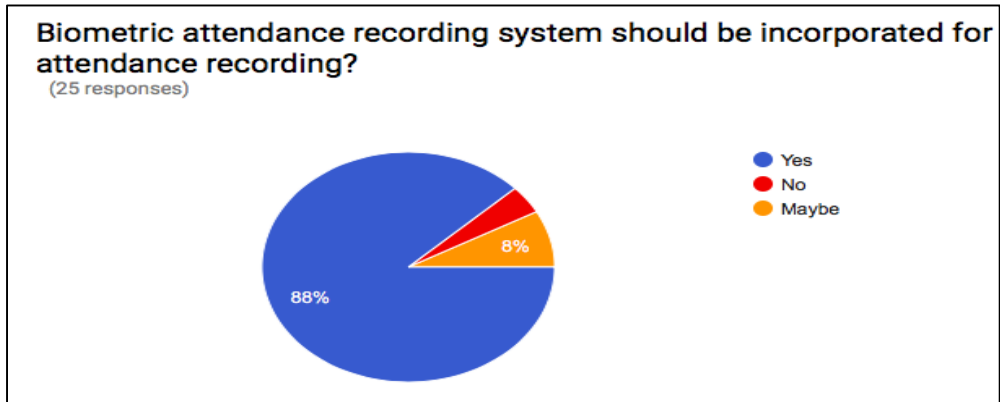
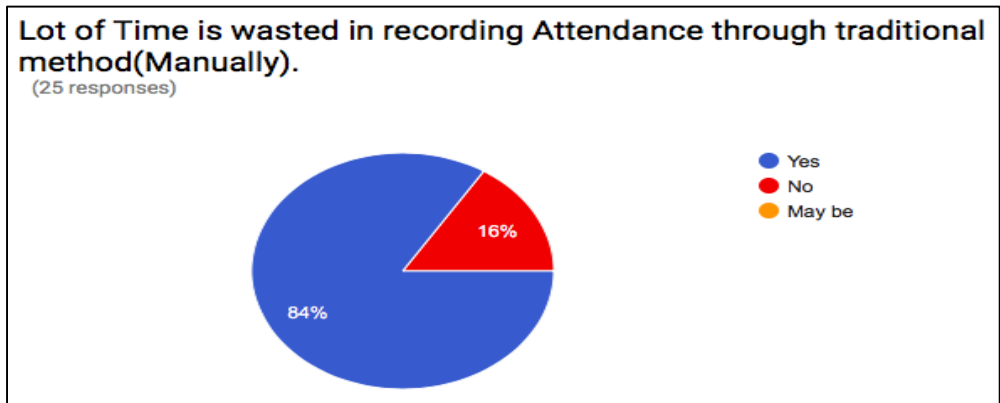
3. Application of CRM Softwares



The respondents are aware of the latest development in the learning management system however the use in the regular teaching learning practise has a long way to be institutionalised.

It can be due to lack of support of management to buy such software's and training to the respondents at the institutional level for incorporating the same in the day to day teaching learning practice.

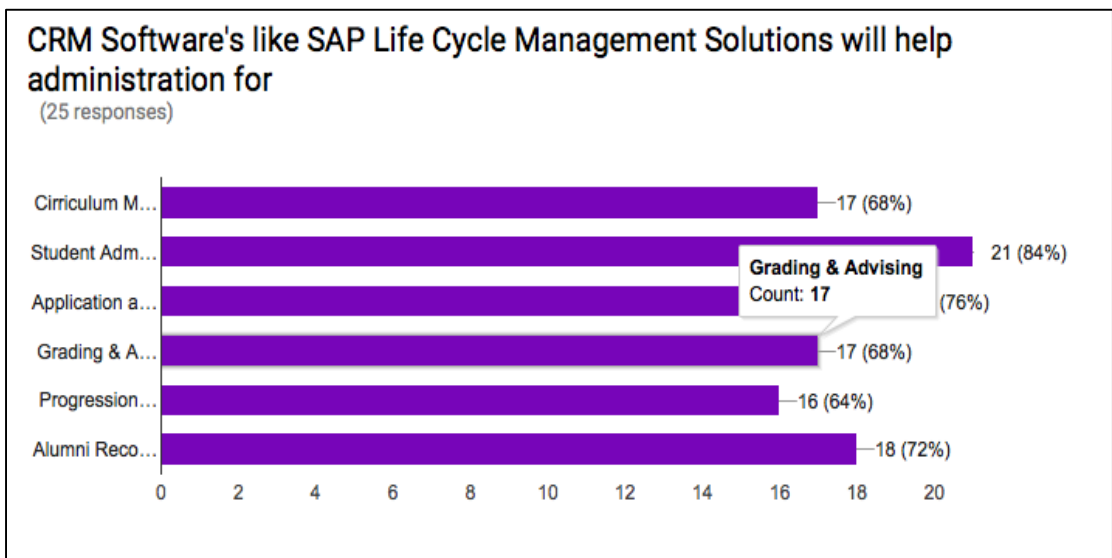
4. Willingness to change

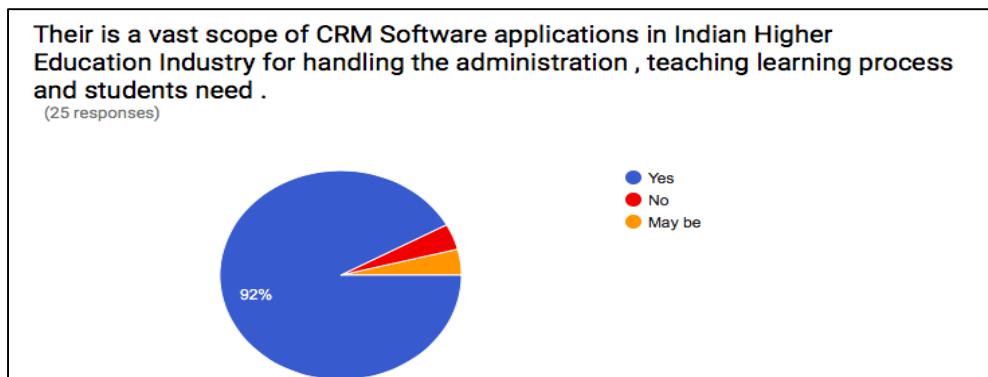


Majority of respondents agree that the use of traditional method for attendance recording is time consuming and the use of technology for tracking student's physical presence should be incorporated. This even showcase the need based dynamic

attitude of the respondents and the will for the participation if the technology implementation will justify its purpose in the teaching learning process.

5. Future Potentials of CRM Software's





92 % of the respondents are sure about the use of CRM Software’s for the benefit of the service provider and service gainer. They see a vast potential for the software development and use in the higher education industry especially for the students administration (84%) followed by application and recruitment (76%), Alumni Record keeping (72%), Curriculum Management (68%), Grading and advising (68%) and Progressing Management (64%)

Scope of the Study

- 1) The Research concentrate towards customizing the need of the Student and Empowering the service providers for developing the teaching learning process as per the expectation of the student.
- 2) Growing realization that private Educational institutions will have to compete with one another far more than they have in the past to recruit and retain students(as Alumni).
- 3) The Learners will be empowered to be treated as Customer and will generate greater responsibility among the Service providers to explore the potentials of every individual with the Institution.
- 4) Increasing interaction formats is the face of modern education:The modern education is now defined more by number of interaction formats for its learners and stakeholders,through which the various queries may be answered in real time.Inspite of technological support and the web based applications the students still look forward for interaction with the faculties if not 24/7 then at least on fixed hours on the fixed days.
- 5) NAAC based evaluation parameter: The NAAC has given due weightage to the Learner’s Support systems maintained by institutions to foster a culture of convergence in education, wherein the learner not just remains the receiving party but also the interactive participant for various student related queries.
- 6) Need for customized approach for education:The education in its present format needs a customized base through which not just interaction becomes easy with different stakeholder but also justify the cost and the staff constraints of private educational institutions.

Importance of CRM Software’s in Higher Education

- Using a CRM system drives faster service.
- Communication channels through emails may be automated in order to speed up response time.
- It will help in understanding trends which becomes feedback foradmissions and managing relationship with the learners and alumni.

- CRM Software’s will help institutes (autonomous) to streamline and automate much of the enrollment paper work thereby tracking applications,admission and communication process once the student enrolls leading to reduced cycle time, student efficiency and cost saving.
- CRM will provide self service capability for students in dealing with administration related work as they can get information they need online and handle routine jobs unassisted.

CRM Software’s for Higher Education

a) Blackboard : Learn

Blackboard Learning System is a learning management system that provides a learning system for course delivery and management for institutions : a community and portal system for communication ; a content management system for centralised control over course content and a system to record and analyse student assessment results. Narsee Monjee College of Commerce and Economics had been using this technology for creating a continuous communication channel with the learners.

b) Biometric attendance

Most of the institutes face challenges in controlling the learners attendance, proxy attendance, time spent on processing the defaulters list etc. The solution being the use of Biometric attendance machine inside the classroom registering the attendance of the students present during the lecture serving as a proof for the students and colleges respectively. The data collected will help institutes to identify the defaulters and communicate and motivate them to attend accordingly.

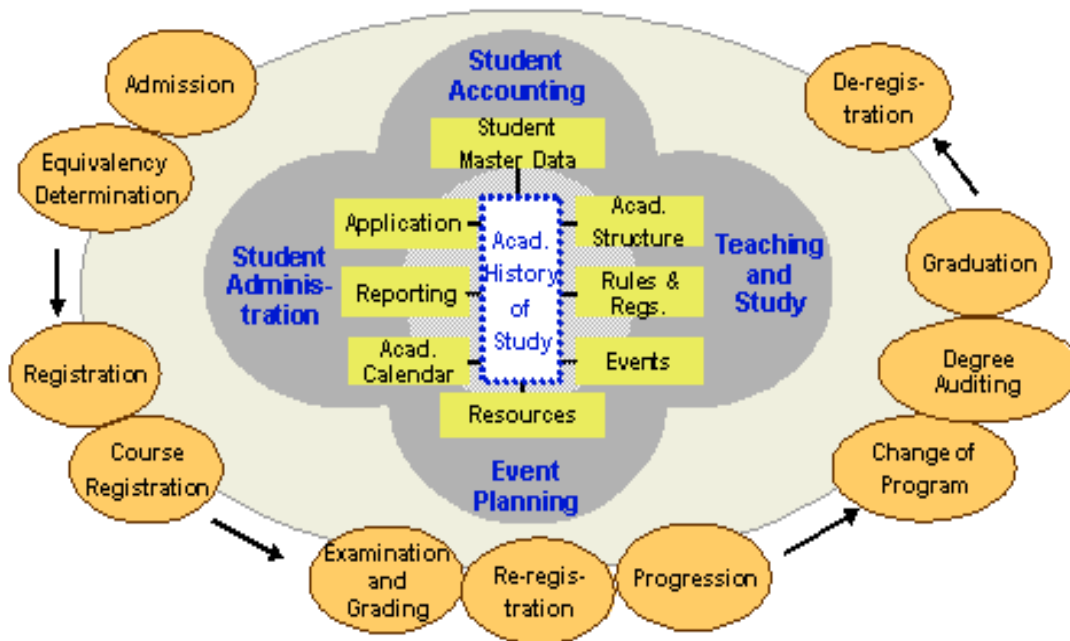
c) SAP for Higher Education

With increasing competition and shrinking budgets, colleges see themselves forced to manage their internal processes more efficiently with fewer resources yet still provide high-quality teaching and study.The Campus Management component of the SAP Higher Education & Research solution enables cost-effective management of higher education by providing functions that cover the following core processes of universities and colleges.

Softwares like SAP – Student Life Cycle Management will help administration in curriculum management, student administration, application and admission, grading and advising, progression and graduation and alumni communication and record keeping. In the Academic Structure (Curriculum) and Teaching and Examination sections, you plan and manage the academic offerings and business events.

Campus Management enables you to take full account of your university's resources. One can also enter the academic work

that students have completed, and determine their academic progress.



Challenges of CRM Applications in Higher Education

- Higher Education of all sorts public and private are under financial pressure in today's economy whereas CRM systems are quite costly.
- It is a time-consuming process as development, installation and institutionalization of the same is a long-run process.
- Lack of knowledge about the system and software's among the institutes.
- Lack of CRM vendors at the India level ready to help colleges and universities.
- Resistance from Academicians to consider Students as Customers although the Business Strategies implications are all high in colleges and university administration (Private)

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