<u>Research Topic</u>: To evaluate the extent of trust, authenticity, and credibility attributed to the brand by students, especially in light of concerns about fees, placements, and institutional transparency.

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<u>QUESTIONNAIRE:</u>

DESIGN:

I have prepared a Google form for the questionnaire so that we can get a better idea of how my mind works with respect to making any kind of questionnaire.
Link to the form: https://forms.gle/cMz9XriKEn7UVQKu5

I have made the Google form's questions not required so that we can easily scroll and review the questions.
Regarding anonymity, I would suggest letting it be the user's choice if they wish to type their email ID. However, to maintain authenticity, we will make the form accessible only to BITS email addresses.

CONTENT:

The research was guided by the general research question: to gauge the students' attitudes towards brand trust, authenticity, and credibility, specifically focusing on fees, placements, and transparency.

The survey is deliberately designed to follow the respondents' general feelings and to identify very specific problem areas. This “funneling” avoids early questions contaminating late, more specific ones.

The questionnaire is divided into four sections.

1) **Demographic Information:** This segmentation is important for revealing subtle insights that a broad overview might overlook. For example, placement credibility perceptions may greatly vary from a first-year student to a final-year student.
2) **Brand Trust and Credibility**: This section serves as a quantitative baseline for the study's central theme. By using a 5-point Likert scale, we can measure the intensity of trust. These questions aim to uncover whether students perceive the institution's values as genuinely held or as mere marketing rhetoric.
3) **Specific Areas of Concern (Fees, Placements, & Transparency):** This section is the diagnostic core of the questionnaire. A mixed-methods approach was deliberately chosen here, i., a few questions are open-ended, allowing us to yield rich, actionable insights and Likert scales, like the last sections, to identify the magnitude of the problem in each area.
4) **Overall Sentiment and Suggestions:** This final section serves two purposes: to capture a holistic measure of loyalty and to source constructive feedback.

METHODOLOGY:

A) **Data Collection:**

i) *Identification of target population*: All currently enrolled students at the institution.

ii) *Stratified Sampling Strategy:* Divide the student population into subgroups (strata) based on year of study and major/department. Then, a random sample from each subgroup, proportional to its size, will be drawn from the overall student population. Now we will calculate the sample size (95% confidence level and 5% error) in order to know the minimum number of responses needed for the results to be statistically significant.
iv) *Pilot Test of Questionnaire*: We must administer the questionnaire to a small and diverse group of students in order to identify any confusing questions or any technical glitches.

v) *Other Data Collection tools:* We have used Google Forms to get the answers to the questionnaire. To get more diverse opinions, we need to webscrape some best used websites where students write fearlessly, for example. Reddit, Quora, Facebook pages, etc.

vi) *Distribution of Survey:* We can use multiple portals for the distribution, such as Official Email, WhatsApp groups, or social media(preferably LinkedIn). We can set deadlines and give polite reminders to non-respondents to increase our response rate.

B) **Data Analysis:**

i) Quantitative Data: For starters, the Google Form has a functionality for the editor to see the graphs/charts of the responses, but it has limited functionalities. We can export the data into Excel/Power BI and remove any incomplete/nonsensical data. We can then use Excel tools to get the frequencies and percentages, as well as the central tendency. In Excel, we can also use inferential statistics options such as T-tests or ANOVA to compare the average scores between two different groups. We can also use correlation analysis to see if relationships exist between variables. For example: "Is there a positive correlation between perceived placement transparency and the overall likelihood to recommend the institution. We can also use machine learning language-coded tools to do quantitative analysis.

ii) Qualitative Data: First of all, we need to read through open-ended questions to get a general sense of the responses. Now we can start with the thematic analysis, where we can assign a label that summarizes the core idea. For example, comments like "I had to pay extra for lab materials I didn't know about" and "The placement fee was a surprise " could both be coded as "unexpected costs." Now this assigned label can be categorized into a larger group, maybe " Lack of Financial Transparency ". Finally, we can see all the themes and identify the most prevalent issues.

C) Interpretation:

i) *Synthesize the Findings:* Combine your quantitative and qualitative results. The numbers tell you *what* students think, and the comments tell you *why*. For Example, the quantitative data shows a low average score of 2.5/5 for placement credibility. The thematic analysis of open-ended comments reveals that this is largely driven by a widespread belief that advertised salary packages are inflated and do not reflect the typical graduate's earnings.

ii) *Draw Conclusions:* What is the overall extent of trust, authenticity, and credibility? What are the strongest and weakest areas?

iii)*Recommendations:* Provide specific, tangible recommendations that the institution can take to address the concerns found. *Example:* To improve financial transparency, we encourage the administration to publish an enhanced *Cost of Attendance* report detailing all fees that may be charged for each program.

iv) *Final Report:* Organize your findings into a professional, clear report that should contain an executive summary, methodology, key findings (with graphs and charts), a discussion on the implications, and final recommendations.

CONCLUSION:

Once we float the questionnaire or collect the data from anywhere, we can come to a definitive conclusion and form

1) Executive Summary
2) Key Findings
3) Insights and Interpretations
4) Recommendations