Chapter-6
Findings and Discussion

This chapter presents major findings and discussion. After making a detailed discussion on analysis, it would have been a worthwhile exercise to bring out major outcomes of the analysis. Also, based on these outcomes, status of various hypotheses has been made clear in this chapter. Wherever possible, an empirical relationship of findings has also been made.

6.1 Findings and Discussion

With the spread of education and globalization, the number of institutes particularly in private sector has increased manifold. This is the reason why institutes are focusing on marketing their education in form of a service. In similar studies viz. Umashankar Venkatesh (2001)99 and Nguyen & Le Blanc (2001)100 focused on the image and reputation of the institution and referred to the crucial role these factors played in the development of market positioning. They drew on the well-established concepts and theories in business sector marketing for their study. Thus, it is clear that marketing of higher education is a worldwide phenomenon now. Also, Brown and Oplatka (2006)101 found that the potential benefits of applying marketing theories and concepts which have been effective in the business world are gradually being recognised by researchers in the field of Higher Education marketing.

Major findings have been divided in parts. First part covers media access by respondents, advertisement viewing/reading/listening by respondents. Second part focuses on reliability and usefulness of various types of information which is generally disclosed in advertisements in newspapers by higher education institutes. Third part has discussed the results of content


analysis of various advertisements and edit contents published in four selected newspapers during the period of June, 2014 to August, 2014. Last part compares the perceived reliability and usefulness of various types of information with the actual disclosures made by higher education institutes in newspapers.

6.2 Media Access and Advertisements

Various media which are now used to collect information are mainly television, radio, newspapers, and websites. However, each media has its own advantages and limitations. Televisions can provide information in form of advertisements but also need time and the advertisements are not shown as per the requirements of the different viewers. Internet access is a faster medium but needs internet access and equipment like computer, mobile phone or laptop etc. A brief discussion on the major findings in this context is as below.

In case of television, about 35% of the respondents always or frequently watch television and almost 45% of the respondents sometimes watch television. Non-watchers of television are more in case of students and faculty members than parents and institute heads. In case of Radio, about 30% of the total respondents always or mostly access radio. About 39% of the respondents sometimes use radio as media. The usage of radio is most common among parents, faculty members and institute heads. However, students are slightly low on using radio. About 80% of respondents read newspapers. More than 35% of respondents are such who always or mostly read newspapers. Hence, access of newspaper is quite good across all the groups of respondents. However, it is much more in case of institute heads.

More than 60% of institute heads approximately always or mostly access and read newspapers. Finally for internet access, almost 45% of the respondents sometimes access internet. About 29% of the respondents always or frequently access internet. Further, across three categories viz. students, parents and faculty, internet access as media is largely similar. In case of institute heads, a vast majority is towards access internet. Briefly, results have indicated that television, newspapers and internet have been widely used media. The access of television has been found to be maximum followed closely by newspapers. The access of internet and radio has been found to be rather low comparatively.
Similar to these results have also been arrived at earlier in studies conducted at different parts of the world. Messah and Namulia (2011)\textsuperscript{102} aimed to identify the effect of selected marketing communication tools in terms of enhancing student enrolment in private universities in Kenya. The results revealed that print media; newspapers, brochures and alumni networks were rated highly as the most effective marketing communication tools to provide information to prospective students. The study found out that advertising plays a critical role in enhancing student enrolment in private universities. The study also found out that most universities have not embraced the use of social networks to use as student recruitment tools.

All these media discussed above show advertisements which may be related to various products or services. In contemporary times, with the spread of higher education and higher number of students taking admission in higher education institutes, the competition among such institutes has also increased. Hence, even higher education institutes have started promoting themselves on all these media through advertisements. Respondents were asked to show their frequency of advertisement viewing in these media.

Results have indicated that about 30\% of the total respondents always or mostly view advertisements in television. About 28\% of the respondents always or frequently listen advertisements in radio. Around 30\% of respondents are such who always or mostly read advertisements in newspapers. About 31\% of the respondents always or frequently view advertisements through internet. However, in all these cases, cross-tabulation has shown that advertisement viewing has been higher in case of institute heads than students, parents or faculty members. Thus, as far as advertisement reading, viewing or listening is concerned, respondents view advertisements in televisions, read these in newspapers and also view these advertisements at websites. Not many of the respondents feel comfortable in listening to advertisements in radio.

However, contrary to Indian scenario, worldwide more focus is being laid upon using social media for marketing of higher education institutes. For example, Gomes and Murphy (2003)\textsuperscript{103} investigated that prospective overseas students do indeed use the internet and thus institutions should immediately establish procedures for answering e-mail and review changing their websites to appeal to overseas students. Similarly, Barnes and Mattson (2009)\textsuperscript{104}, Stagno (2010)\textsuperscript{105}, Merrill (2010)\textsuperscript{106}, de Jager et al. (2010)\textsuperscript{107} have found that internet websites and in specific social media websites are being extensively used by education institutes abroad.

Specific to newspapers, most of the respondents read The Tribune newspaper in English language and Dainik Bhaskar newspaper in Hindi segment. Comparatively Times of India and Amar Ujala newspaper have been read less. Same has also been the case of subscription to the newspapers. For reading frequency of the newspaper Times of India, about 34% respondents study this newspaper in routine. About 44% of the respondents read The Tribune newspaper in routine. About 33% respondents study this Amar Ujala newspaper in routine. Finally, about 43% of the respondents read Dainik Bhaskar newspaper in routine. Besides, advertisement reading in newspapers has been average among respondents. It has been found that institute heads take much interest in viewing advertisement and reading about advertisements in newspapers. Faculty members have been average in reading newspaper advertisements. Students and parents do not show much interest in reading advertisements in newspapers. Understandably, students and parents read advertisements only when they need to search about


\textsuperscript{105} Stagno, M. C. Z. (2010). Potential of the social media as instruments of higher education marketing: Guidelines for a social media marketing strategy for the University of Twente. (Unpublished thesis). University of Twente, Enschede, the Netherlands.


various institutes. However, institute heads read these more as they need to keep themselves updated in this era of competition.

Various null hypotheses framed have been tested in case of respondent groups in relation to above said aspects. It has been found that institute heads have been mostly on higher side as compared to students, parents and faculty members for their access of various media and also their reading frequencies of various advertisements published in newspapers. Hence null hypotheses of these aspects have been broadly rejected. However, in case of reading and subscribing of various newspapers have been same across all the respondent groups. Thus for no significant association existing, null hypotheses in context of these aspects have been accepted. Worldwide studies like Bamfo and Atara (2013)\textsuperscript{108} investigated the role of marketing communications in attracting students to enroll in private universities in Ghana. These studies largely concluded that, for effective positioning and/or sustainable competitive advantage, private universities in Ghana will be better off if they invest more in advertising. Thus, it is clear that advertising now is playing a bigger role in marketing of higher education institutes.

6.3 Reliability and Usefulness of Various Disclosures

Disclosures are generally made by higher education institutes to attract potential students to choose their institute. The type of disclosures may include faculty details, placement information, fee details, infrastructure and students’ achievements etc. Basic ethics that must be followed by these educational institutes is that the information disclosed should be reliable and useful for potential students. Advertisements must be truthful, not deceptive and not unfair. Advertisers must also have evidence available to back up claims they make. Following this theme, perceptions of various respondents’ viz. students, parents, faculty members, institute heads and journalists have been discussed and compared as below.

At first, the level of disclosure of various types of information has been assessed as perceived by respondents. In case of Management related information, about 75% of the respondents believe that such information is always or frequently disclosed by higher education institutes in newspapers. Fee details are disclosed less. Only about 36% of respondents believe that such information is mostly disclosed by higher education institutes in newspaper advertisements. For placement related information, about 70% of the respondents believe that such information is always or mostly disclosed in newspaper advertisements. In case of information related to affiliation, about 72% of the respondents feel this type of information is generally disclosed. Faculty related information is believed to be disclosed less. About 43% of the respondents believe that such information is always or frequently disclosed by higher education institutes in newspapers.

Physical facilities are better disclosed. About 64% of the respondents presume that such information is mostly disclosed by higher education institutes in newspaper advertisements. For campus pictures, about 56% of the respondents believe that such information is always or mostly disclosed in newspaper advertisements. Students’ achievements are disclosed more. About 55% of the respondents feel this type of information is always or mostly disclosed. Finally, alumni information is fairly disclosed by educational institutes. About 67% of the respondents believe that such information is always or mostly disclosed in newspaper advertisements. Briefly, it can be claimed that the level of disclosure related to fee details, faculty related information, campus pictures and students’ achievements is largely low.

After assessing the perceived level of disclosure in advertisements by higher education institutes, it would have been important to see if the students, parents, teachers etc. believe in what is being shown in such advertisements. Hence, the level of reliability of these advertisements has been assessed too. Management related information has been the first information tested. About 72% of the respondents believe that such information is totally or very much reliable. Thereafter, fee details have been assessed. More than half of the respondents presume that such information is totally or very much reliable as disclosed by higher education institutes in newspaper advertisements. Placement related information is next to be asked. Only about 37% of the respondents believe that such information is totally or very
much reliable as disclosed in newspaper advertisements. Then information related to affiliation has been asked. About 47% of the respondents feel this type of information is not reliable or somewhat reliable.

Similarly, faculty related information has been examined. About 62% of the respondents believe that such information is somewhat or not reliable as disclosed by higher education institutes in newspapers. Reliability of physical facilities as advertised has been examined next. About 55% of the respondents presume that such information is somewhat or not reliable. Reliability of campus pictures is also not very good. About 63% of the respondents believe that such information is somewhat reliable or not reliable at all in newspaper advertisements. However, a positive response has been towards information on students’ achievements. About 53% of the respondents feel this type of information is totally or very much reliable. Finally in case of alumni information, about 61% of the respondents believe that such information is not reliable or only somewhat reliable.

In brief, most of the respondents do not rely upon what is being shown in higher education advertisements. Mainly respondents believe that information disclosed in newspaper advertisements like placements at the institutes, faculty profiles, campus pictures and alumni information is not much reliable. It raises an alarm definitely. It indicates that respondents or students and parents do not rely upon what is being disclosed in the newspaper advertisements. However, they do feel that affiliation related information, management related information and fee details is relatively more reliable in newspaper advertisements.

Apart from reliability, usefulness of information disclosed is also very important. It indicates that some items are perceived to be useful and so should be disclosed by higher education respondents. Such information is absolutely useful for various decisions; primary being the admission. Management related information has been the first item here. About 52% of the respondents believe that such information is totally or very much useful. Usefulness of fee details has been examined next for respondents. About 73% of the respondents presume that such information is totally or very much useful as disclosed by higher education institutes in newspaper advertisements. About usefulness of placement related information, 31% of the
respondents believe that such information is somewhat useful or not useful at all. Related to affiliation, about 30% of the respondents feel this type of information is not useful or somewhat useful.

Usefulness of faculty related information is also perceived to be high. About 33% of the respondents believe that such information is somewhat or not useful as disclosed by higher education institutes in newspapers. At next, usefulness of physical facilities by higher education institutes in newspapers is set. About 25% of the respondents presume that such information is somewhat or not useful. Further, usefulness of campus pictures has been examined. About 49% of the respondents believe that such information is somewhat useful or not useful at all in newspaper advertisements. Related to students’ achievements, about 66% of the respondents feel this type of information is totally or very much useful. Finally about usefulness of alumni information, 43% of the respondents believe that such information is not useful or only somewhat useful.

It briefly can be discussed that respondents generally perceive that information like genuine placement record of the organization or alumni information are very useful for potential students. Apart from it, students’ achievements in recent years is also assumed to be useful by various respondents like students and parents. However, at the same time, respondents also do not rely on the information being disclosed in newspapers. It definitely creates a gap as respondents are not getting what they perceive to be useful. Moreover, whatever is being shown in advertisements is not reliable as per many respondents.

Similar scenario has also been there in case of institutes in other countries too. For example, Adriana Zait (2007)\textsuperscript{109} intended to identify the main stakeholders’ perceptions towards Romanian higher education and to estimate their degree of trust in Romanian universities. He found that trust was quite low as shown by students and their parents towards literature published by university in newspapers. This can really hurt the reputation of any institute.

\textsuperscript{109}Zait, Adriana, Higher Education Marketing: Stakeholders' Perceptions, Degree of Trust and Desired Student Abilities - Case of Romania (Preliminary Raw Results) (2006). Available at http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.982306
Oscar Guerra et al. (2009)\textsuperscript{110} opined that the cultural and learning environment of an institution stimulate the possible transition of students to undergraduate study in a preferred institution. They found that opinion of parents and reputation of the college along with its recent results play a vital role in selection of an institute by students. Thus, it becomes clear that institutes should focus on providing true and fair information so that their reputation is improved.

### 6.4 Survey of Advertisements and Edit Contents

A survey of 814 advertisement and 927 edit contents was carried out to estimate the level of disclosures made by higher education institutes in newspapers. Newspaper advertisements contained full disclosure of course related information. In management related information, about 95\% of the selected advertisements did not contain such information. For fee details, only 16\% of the advertisements contained information regarding fee details. In case of placement related information, about 97\% of the selected advertisements did not contain such information. Then for level of disclosure of affiliation, 45\% of the advertisements contained information regarding affiliation of the institute.

In relation to faculty related information, about 97\% of the selected advertisements did not contain such information. Thereafter in case of level of disclosure of physical facilities, only 2.7\% of the advertisements contained information regarding physical facilities available in institute. In campus pictures, about 92\% of the selected advertisements did not contain such information. In students’ achievements, only 5.2\% of the advertisements contained information regarding students’ achievements. For disclosure of alumni information, none of the selected 814 advertisements have included alumni related information in the advertisements. For disclosure of hostel facility information, none of the selected 814 advertisements have included hostel facility related information in the advertisements. Lastly for contact information, about 95\% of the selected advertisements contain such information.

\textsuperscript{110} Guerra, Oscar and Rajagopal, Dr., Factors Influencing Choice of Educational Institutions during Post-Schooling Transitions (December 29, 2009). Available at SSRN: http://ssrn.com/abstract=1529520
Briefly, it has been found that many items which have been disclosed less by educational institutes are Placement Information, Faculty Information, Facilities Information, Campus Pictures, and Alumni Information. Hence, it is clear that reliability of these items is perceived to be quite low by respondents like students, parents, faculty members and media persons etc. However in case of Management Information, Fee Details, Affiliation Information, and Students’ Achievements, reliability values are better. Hence, it can be ascertained that these disclosures are considered relatively more reliable. Similar has been the result of edit contents. Chi square test results have been found significant at many places. The level of disclosure in general has been more in case of private universities and private colleges than government colleges. It has also been found that government colleges have been disclosing more information about academics and other news in edit contents. However, private colleges and private universities also disclose edit contents for functions and seminars.

6.5 Actual Level of Disclosures vs. Perceived Reliability and Usefulness

A comparison made has shown that there are many items which are considered to be useful by students, parents, and faculty members and media persons. However, their relative perceived reliability is very low. Thus it indicates that respondents feel many types of information useful but they also are not relying on what is being disclosed to them.

In particular, information related to placements, alumni and faculty members has been considered to be extremely useful by various respondents. However, this type of information has a very low disclosure score. Hence, institutes avoid making disclosures in this reference. Further, the reliability values of such information has also been found to be very low. Thus, it is clear that respondents are not relying upon what is being shown in newspaper advertisements in this regard.