

A Study on the Comparative Effectiveness of Marketing Communication Tools & Media of the Universities in Bangladesh

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Abstract

The study has explored the different communication media and tools. It has also identified the most effective communication media and tools to communicate prospective students. Secondary data are collected from the different sources like books, articles, and different authentic sources of internet to explore the different communication media and tools to communicate prospective students. A survey questionnaire was prepared to know the comparative effectiveness of marketing communication tools and media for marketing communication of the universities in Bangladesh. The survey has been conducted on 121 undergraduate students of 5 Bangladeshi universities. The universities are North South University, Shanto-Mariam University of Creative Technology, United International University, Daffodil University, and Uttara University. The surveyors were instructed to conduct the survey specially on the students of 1st and 2nd semester so that their recent experiences can be reflected freshly through the survey; like, how they have been communicated, how they have chosen the university, and the programs etc. After completion of the analysis of the survey data, the graph represents the most effective communication media is Facebook to reach the prospective students and the advice of the friends and families has a greater impact on the decision of choosing university, and program. Though the respondents have suggested Facebook as the most effective media to communicate prospective students but they like to see the advertising of their university in television newspaper and in their university website.

Keywords: Marketing communication of university, integrated marketing communication for university, advertising media, supporting tools for marketing communication of university, promotional mix for marketing communication of university, Facebook as university marketing communication tools, internet and interactive media as marketing communication tools of university.

1. Introduction

There are many marketing communication tools and media for marketing communication. All the tools and media are not equally effective for different marketing communication program. It may vary according to the types of product and types of customer. The marketing communication tools and media are effective for consumer products which may not be equally effective for industry products. The marketing communication tools and media are effective upper social class which may not be equally effective for lower social class. This variation is more intense in the countries where the differences among social classes are high in terms of culture, education, income etc. The products of Universities have some unique characteristics than any other service providing organizations in term of its target customers, their age, their choice, their habits, communication media, influences of family and friends in buying decision, their social class, and their place etc. Therefore, exploring the different communication tools and media, and identifying the comparatively effective tools and media for marketing communication of the universities in Bangladesh would help in more effective communication with present and potential students.

2. Literature Review

The traditional marketing communication tools are also known as promotional tools. The collectively or combine use of promotional or marketing communication tools are called Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) or the promotional Mix. It is called mix as the different mix used in the cooking recipes. The different ingredients and spices (like, sugar, salt, chilly, milk etc.) are not used in equal amount for every cooking recipes. It varies from cooking dish to dish and accordingly recipes to recipes. In the promotional mix, all the tools of promotion mix (Advertising, Sales Promotion, Direct Marketing, Publicity and Public Relation, Internet Marketing, etc.) are not used with equal emphasis. For consumer products Advertising and Sales Promotion is more effective and economical than Personal selling and Direct Marketing. On the other hand, for business product Personal selling and Direct Marketing is more effective and economical than Advertising and Sales Promotion. But use of only a single communication tool may not work well. For example, Advertising helps in accenting Personal Selling or Direct Marketing.

2.1 Marketing Communication Tools and Media:

Advertising is defined as any paid form of non personal communication about an organization, product, service,

or idea by an identified sponsor (George E. Belch & Michael A. Belch, 2003). There are many media of advertising. The 12 principal classes of advertising media according to Dirksen Charles J., Kroegen Arthur, and Nicosia Franco M. (1983) are:

1. Newspaper: Newspaper advertising is the most popular media for university advertising to communicate prospective students and their guardians.
2. Magazine: The media is rarely used to communicate as the popularity and the numbers of readers are reducing day by day.
3. Television: Though it is the most popular media of Bangladesh, it is given 2nd preference for university advertising most probably for conventional attitude to university marketing and for its expensiveness. There are many kinds of university advertising found in Bangladesh the regular advertising with visuals and sounds, and text advertising in the scroll in national television and cable TV advertising.
4. Radio: it is rarely found that university advertising is listening in radio most probably due its reach to its prospective students; but the FM radio is being popular to young generation in metropolitan city area.
5. Direct Mail: Letter, Catalogue, Booklets, Postcards, Portfolios, paper inserts, direct mail, etc. it is not popular media for university advertising in Bangladesh.
6. Outdoor Advertising: it is found that some universities have used billboard as a media of their advertising.
7. Transit advertising
 - Car cards (advertising placed inside car, buses, train etc.): car cards are used in metropolitan city bus services for very small and poor organizations. University advertisings are not found most probably due to people's perceptions of poor and small organization's advertising usually found inside bus car train etc.
 - Traveling displays (Larger signs posted or painted on outside the buses, cars & cabs): it is also found that many medium and large organizations are using the media for their advertising but university advertising is not observed except universities own vehicle. Many universities provides bus and micro-bus service for their students and faculty members in Bangladesh.
 - Station Posters (Poster & Displays of varied size placed insides bus, subway, & railway stations and airport terminals): university advertising is rarely observed.
8. Motion Pictures (It is shown in regular movie houses as advertising program): university advertising is rarely observed.
9. Point of Purchase (POP) Displays: Display shelf, motion pieces, standup rack with banner, poster, etc. in or around retail store (Dirksen Charles J., Kroegen Arthur, and Nicosia Franco M. 1983). The use of POP as a marketing communication tool or media of university is not usually observed in Bangladesh.
10. Specialty advertising: An advertising specialty is a useful product with an advertising message imprinted on it. It is usually distributed to customers and prospects by businessmen to promote goodwill (Dirksen Charles J., Kroegen Arthur, and Nicosia Franco M. 1983). Calendar is commonly observed to be distributed among students. Besides, many universities and its departments distributes novelties like key ring, batch, diary, mug, pen etc.
11. Containers or packages, labels and inserts (within packages): Many universities have their own folders and bags to give students their prospectus, brochure, and other promotionals etc.
12. Miscellaneous: Directories, timetables, annuals, menu cards, registers etc. are also can be used medium as advertising. University advertising are not usually found in those media.

Beside those above, there are many other promotional media and tools mentioned by different contemporary researchers and experts mentioned in the following.

Internet and interactive media:

The media is emerging as one of most effective and economical media for communication. Internet is not only an interactive advertising media but also it works as a promotional media of other promotional tools. Many universities in Bangladesh are observed to communicate its stakeholders through internets especially through Facebook.

13. Facebook: Researchers from the University of Massachusetts at Dartmouth asked a representative sample of U.S. schools whether they use some social media, 100% of them said they did. Four years ago, just 61% of them said the same (Kessler Sarah, 2011). "Prospective students, parents, current students, alumni — one common area in which they are all present in one way or another is on Facebook," says Kevin Morrow, the executive director of public affairs at Syracuse University (Kessler Sarah, 2011). Kessler Sarah has mentioned 7 ways of using Facebook as a marketing tool for university are discussed below:

13.1 Virtual Tours: In addition to university website students can be able to see 360 degree virtual panoramic movie of the class rooms, labs, and campuses of the university without spending time and money of travelling to

the campus in Facebook.

13.2 School Pride: A Facebook page of the university or the department is an economical effective media to communicate students about the different events and happening of the university. An imaginary character associated with the university or the department may own the Facebook account and communicate students as a representative of the university or the department.

Butler's particularly photogenic mascot, Blue II, has his own Facebook Page. Facebook has helped students bond with Blue II — he takes rides on four-wheelers and inspects their empty campus pool — but he also drums up school spirit at athletic events (Kessler Sarah, 2011).

13.3 School Swag: The University of Kansas Facebook Page links to some of its more creative school pride digital and print-out memorabilia. Whether a jack-o-lantern stencil or screensaver is more of your style, there are plenty of options. Texas A & M does something similar with a section dedicated to gear, digital goods like wallpaper and its iTunes U store (Kessler Sarah, 2011).

13.4 Alumni Groups: Facebook is the most useful and economical way to be connected anytime always with its alumni of the university or the department. It helps to involve alumni with the activities or events of the department or the university. Different clubs may be opened within the Facebook page. Alumni may advocate for their university or the department to their friends, families and colleagues. Alumni not only serve to bring students but also helps passing students to get job.

13.5 Sharing Department Content: University also has separate pages for different geographic regions (Kessler Sarah, 2011). "What's nice is that each can have its own specialized content, but there's also a strong sharing component between the Facebook Pages — a nice sharing of content with one another, so they can kind of do some cross-pollination with different audiences," Morrow says (Kessler Sarah, 2011).

13.6 Reaching Out to Prospective Students: Just like university websites, university Facebook pages often cater to prospective students. The Texas A&M page, for instance, has a "howdy" portal that gives easy access to university information. It's also not unusual for schools to create Facebook groups for admitted students. In fact, there's an app for that. Inigral's Schools App creates a closed community of students within Facebook (Kessler Sarah, 2011).

13.7 Facebook Places Advertising: Facebook is one of the most useful and economical way to communicate its prospective. "We're encouraging students to check in, so when they do, it'll show up in their news feed and maybe their friends still in high school will see it over and over again," the school's marketing director Kelley Bozeman told Ad Age at the time (Kessler Sarah, 2011).

14. Sales promotion:

Bangladesh is a developing country. As a result peoples of Bangladesh are price sensitive. Therefore, sales promotions are popular promotional tool in Bangladesh. Many private universities in Bangladesh gives discount on tuition fees or admission fees in time of different occasions and events or they gives discount as a scholarship according to the previous results. The dark side of sales promotion is if it offers for long time its appeals may diminishes. But in case of scholarship the appeal may not be diminishes as it offers according result of prospective students and as the practice is present in many other renowned universities.

15. Publicity and Public Relation:

Publicity refers to nonpersonal communications regarding an organization, product, service, or idea not directly paid for or run under identified sponsorship. It usually comes in the form of a news story, editorial, or announcement about an organization and/or its products and services (George E. Belch & Michael A. Belch, 2003). Journalists may be inspired by maintaining liaison through inviting in different events of the university, and by presenting gifts in different occasions to write article mentioning university's different departments and its different programs, specialities, and its career opportunities (Ahmmed Sk. Shahabuddin, Vol.9, No.6, 2017). On the other hand the task of Public Relation involves... Materials for prospective students (magazines, bulletins, etc.), University experts appearing in the media, Annual reports, Conferences attended by the public, Research papers and other articles in the media...(Schüller David, Rašticová Martina, 2011).

16. Personal selling/personal communication:

16.1 Arranging awareness building seminar on the utility of the different programs of the university for prospective students of higher secondary level, parents and college teachers in different colleges throughout the

country. At the time of the seminar leaflet and written page on career opportunities of the program of the university can be distributed. Specialty or novelties, like wall clock, calendar, pen, diary etc. may be given to them or for their offices and class rooms in which university's web address and major programs' name can be written in visible font and size. A wall clock or calendar hanging on a wall of class rooms, college offices, in home or the use of diary, pen, desk calendar etc. may help prospective to recognise and recall the university name and its different special programs for the long time they use those small gifts or it last in the mind of prospective. The more durable and fashionable is the gift, the more long lasting effect in the prospective memory (Ahmmed Sk. Shahabuddin, Vol.9, No.6, 2017).

16.2 Competitions may be arranged for the students of higher secondary level. This includes knowledge contest, design contest, project dealing etc. Students may join individually, or with a team. Participation may be encouraged by awarding different prizes (Ahmmed Sk. Shahabuddin, Vol.9, No.6, 2017).

16.3 Open Days – prospective students may visit the faculty premises where they would like to study to meet their future teachers, see the lecture rooms, labs, and learn about other factors influencing the quality of study at a given higher-education institution (Schüller David and Rašticová Martina, 2011).

16.4 Exhibition of students' work may be arranged in the popular places throughout the country (Ahmmed Sk. Shahabuddin, Vol.9, No.6, 2017).

16.5 Roadshows – this involves building long-term relations with secondary schools as partner schools. Representatives from a university visit secondary schools try to provide them with best information possible on their university and faculty making the secondary students interested in studying at a higher-education institution familiar with all the study benefits (Schüller David and Rašticová Martina, 2011).

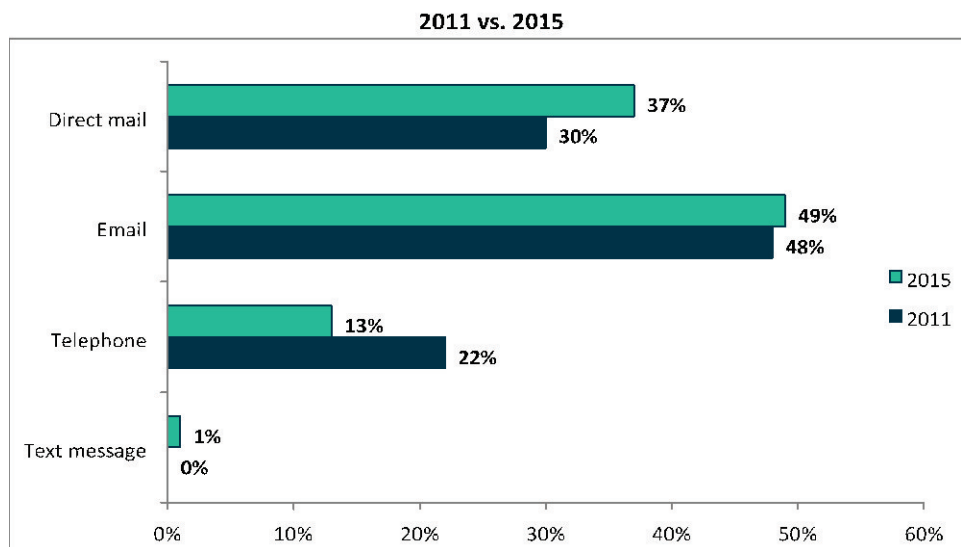
16.6 Stall can be taken in different educational fair, a Kiosk may install around the stall so that prospective students may get detail information about different departments of the university (Ahmmed Sk. Shahabuddin, Vol.9, No.6, 2017).

17. Direct Marketing:

Direct mail, E-mail, Telemarketing, Mobile SMS are the popular Direct Marketing tools. A 2015 poll conducted by Ruffalo Noel Levitz examined high school students' preferences for communication with colleges, shedding light on effective recruitment strategies 2011 (Hanover Research, November 2015).

In the following Figure shows students' preferred first contact communication channels in 2011 and in 2015. The data indicate that students are interested in a variety of communication channels, though students typically prefer email and direct mail over telephone or text message. Furthermore, it is interesting to note that today's students prefer direct mail significantly more than students in 2011 (Hanover Research, November 2015).

Ruffalo Noel Levitz recommends that institutions of higher education “set a scene and evoke emotion with direct mail, and then maintain that engagement online” (Ruffalo Noel Levitz, 2015):



Source: Ruffalo Noel Levitz

A survey has been conducted on the 121 undergraduate students of 5 different universities to know the comparative effectiveness of different media to communicate prospective students. The respondents were given a questionnaire of multiple choice questions to tick on options, and also asked to put value for the different media and tools according to the comparative effectiveness to communicate prospective students. The data have been analysed in Microsoft Excel. The results of the survey are being represented graphically in the following according to different questions:

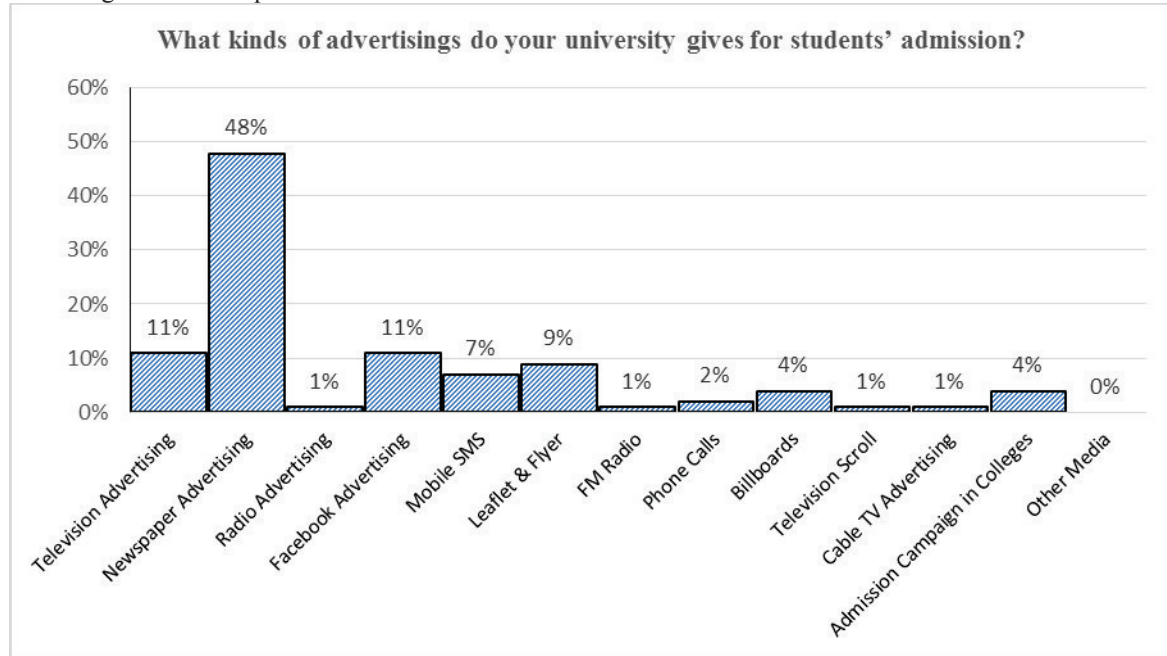


Figure 18. 1: The kinds of media advertising the respondent students sees of their own university.

After completion of the data analysis of the survey, the Figure 18.1 depicts that the marketer of Bangladeshi universities give the most emphasis on Newspaper Advertising to communicate its prospective students. It has got 48% tick. They gives second priority to Facebook and Television Advertising, both the media has got 11% tick. The difference between first and second priority of media is too high. Leaflet and Flyer has got 9% tick.

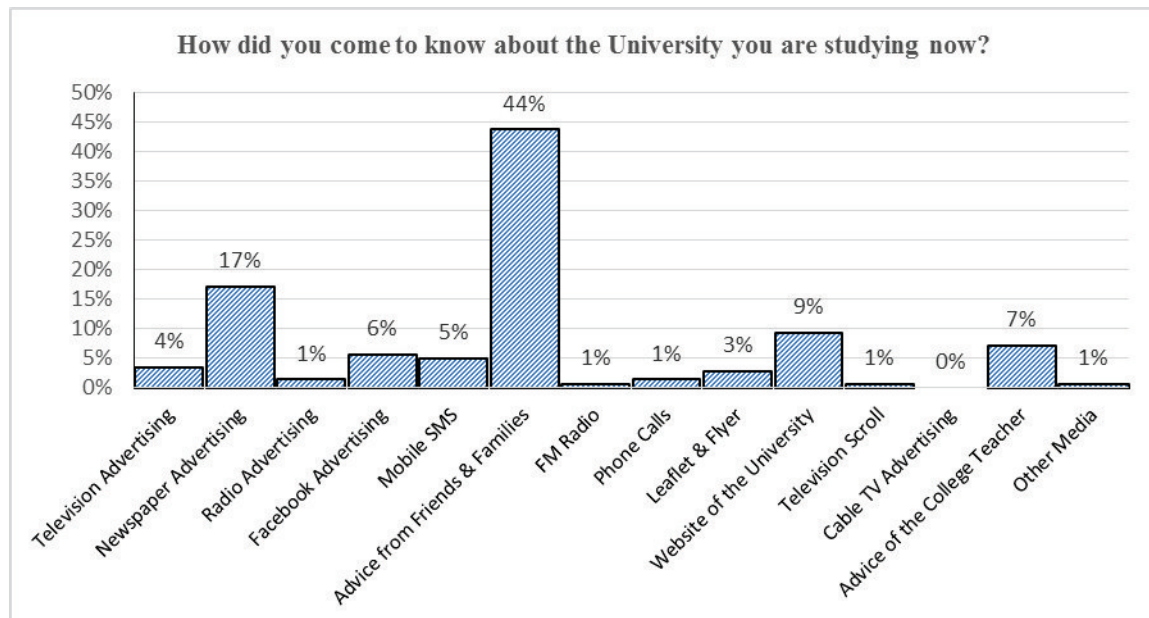


Figure 18.2: The kinds of media advertising and communication tools through which the respondent students are being communicated.

The Figure 18.2 illustrate that the most of the students have been communicated and influenced to choose university to study by the advice of Friends and Families. It has got 44% tick. After the advice from Friends and Families they have been communicated by Newspaper Advertising, University Website, and advice of the own

College Teacher which has got accordingly 17%, 9%, and 7% tick.

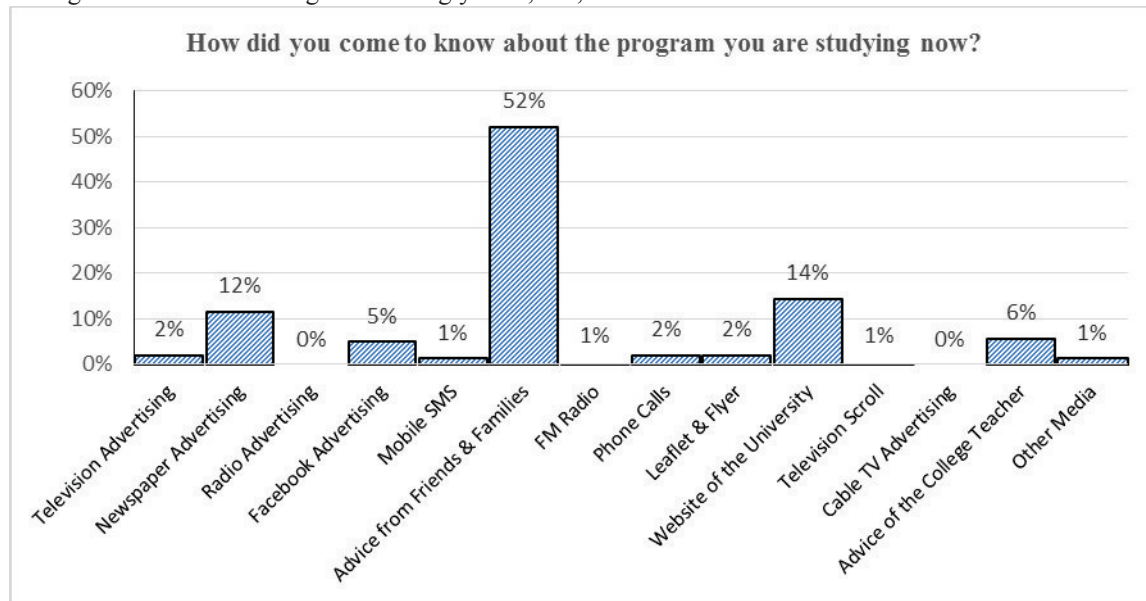


Figure 18.3: The kinds of media advertising and communication tools through which the respondent students know about the program of the university.

In the Figure 18.3, it is also reflects that students chooses their program to study mostly influenced by the advice of their Friends and Families which has got 52% tick. They have also been informed through University Website and Newspaper Advertising. Both got 14% and 12% tick accordingly.

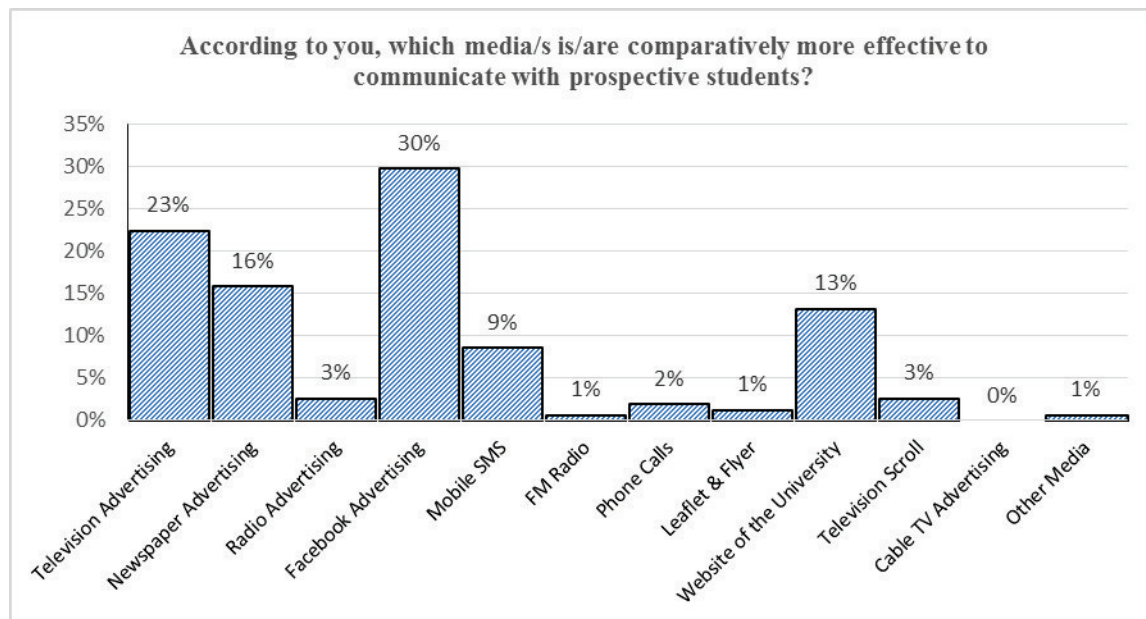


Figure 18.4: Students' opinion on comparatively effective media to communicate prospective students

According to the survey, the respondents of the Bangladeshi students have given opinion on the comparatively effective media to reach prospective students is Facebook Advertising. It has got 30% tick. Then they have given priority to the Television, Newspaper Advertising, and University Website which has got 23%, 16% and 13% tick accordingly. Mobile SMS also have got 9% tick.

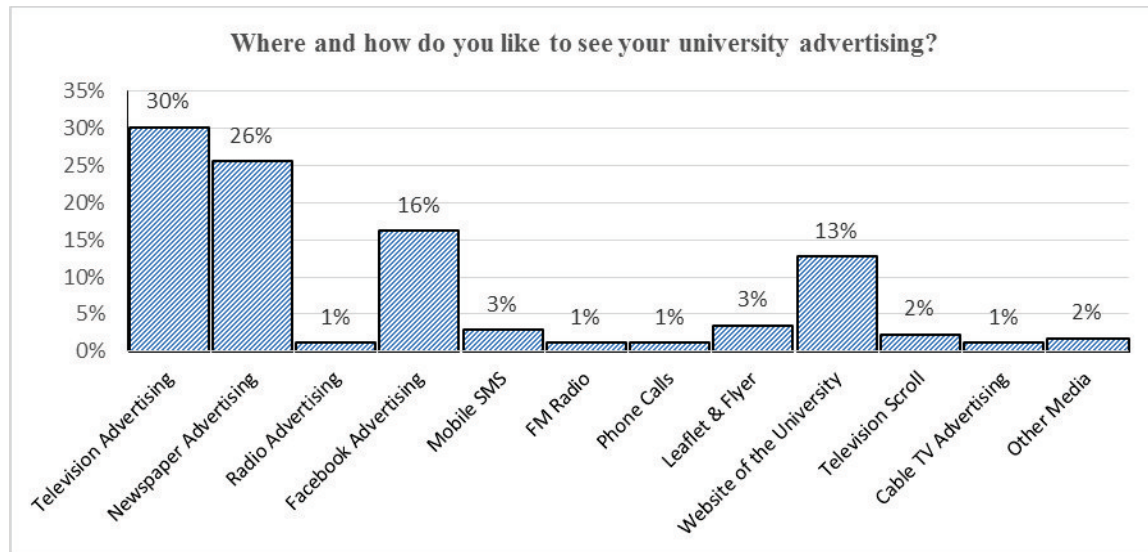


Figure 18.5: Students' preference of media where they would like to see their university advertising

The respondent students of different universities would like to see their university advertising in Television mostly which has got 30% tick. They also like to see their advertising in Newspaper (has got 26% tick) and Facebook (has got 16% tick). They have also given priority to their University Website which has got 13% tick.

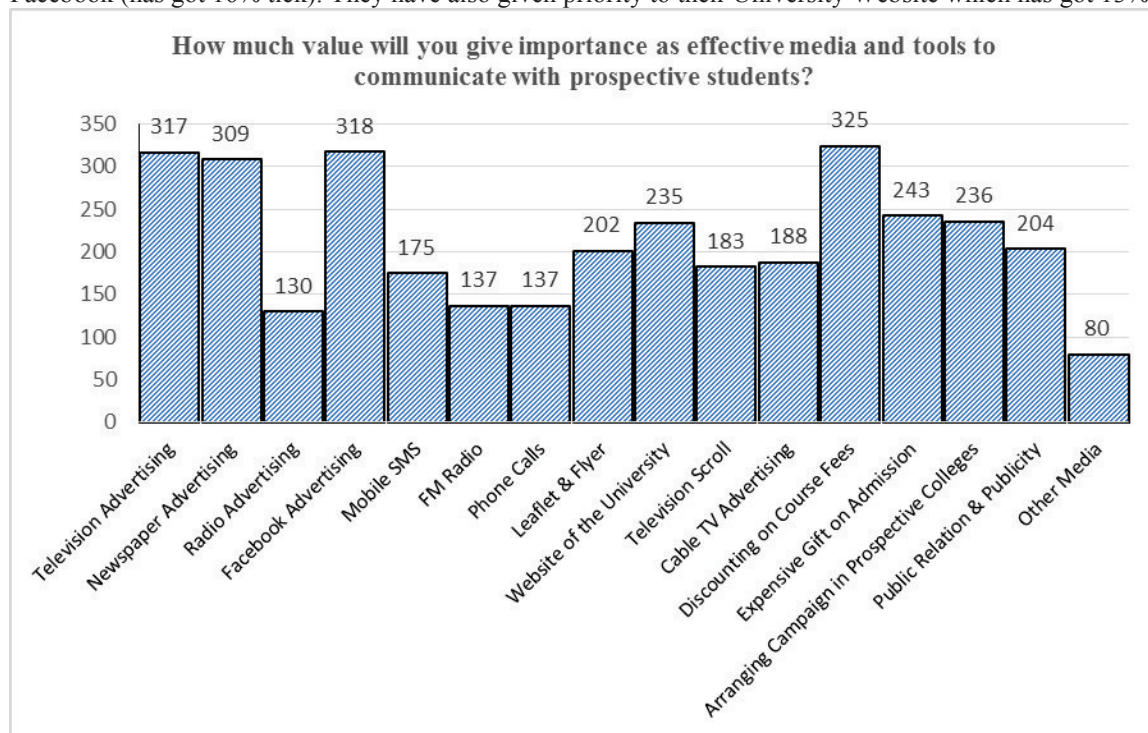


Figure 18.6: Respondent students valued the comparatively effective media and tools to communicate with prospective students. The total value was 3419.

The Figure 18.6 illustrate the value the respondent students put. They were asked to put value (1 to 5) according to the importance as an effective media and tool to communicate with prospective students where 1 is the least effective and 5 is the most effective value. The total value is counted 3419. In the graph, Discounting on Course Fees has got more value that is 325. Next, they have given priority to Facebook has got more value that is 318. Television, and Newspaper advertising which has got accordingly 317, and 309.

Conclusion

It is found that marketer of Bangladeshi university mostly are using newspaper advertising for their communication. Students are being communicated and influenced by the advice of their friends and families in choosing their university and the program. It is very much visible in the Figure 18.1 and in the Figure 18.2. Students are also being communicated by newspaper, television advertising; they visits website as well for their

queries. The difference of impact between ‘the advice of their friends and families’ and ‘other media’ are too high. It can be concluded that, the brand value of the university and the satisfaction of the students and their guardians have greater impact than any other communication tools. It has been reflected through the advices of the friends and families in choosing their university and the program.

The Figure 18.4 and Figure 18.6 illustrates that students have suggested the most effective communication media to communicate with prospective students is Facebook. In Figure 18.6, discounting on course fees has got highest value that is 325 and Facebook advertising has got 2nd highest value that is 318, but discounting on course fees should not be considered as communication media rather a tools to attract more students. Though students has given their opinion on most effective communication media is Facebook but they like to see their advertising (priority wise) in Television, Newspaper, Facebook and in their University website. This is may be the cause they think that theses media increases the brand value of university. On the other hand, Facebook most popular social communication media for students. Most of the students of secondary and higher secondary level are habituated in using Facebook in Bangladesh even in the rural area. And it is comparatively the cheapest way to reach the prospective students. Too much advertising in Facebook may decrease the brand value of the university. Less frequency of advertising may decrease the visibility of the advertising. Requires balance in frequency. Another very much important factor of communication is the quality of the communication content. Whatever the media and frequency is less quality of content may not decrease the brand value it will destroy the brand value not only to university but also any other organisation. Finally, a single communication media is not enough to communicate in this over communicated society; requires integrated communication of different communication tools and media though marketer can give emphasis on a particular media. Last but not the least, the most effective communication won’t communicate and admit students if the positioning is not properly designed, brand value is poor and the perception of the university and the program negative. Requires Satisfied Students + Guardians + Alumni + Employer + Effective Communication = Admission and again, satisfied students + guardians + alumni + employer + effective communication = admission and again and so on...

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