

## Influences on Behavioural Intentions for enrolment in Higher Education Institutions in India: A review of literature

Simran Kapoor<sup>1</sup>, Deepika Jhamb<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1,2</sup> Chitkara Business School, Chitkara University, Punjab, India

Email: <sup>1</sup> [simran.kapoor@chitkara.edu.in](mailto:simran.kapoor@chitkara.edu.in), <sup>2</sup> [deepika.jhamb@chitkara.edu.in](mailto:deepika.jhamb@chitkara.edu.in)

### ABSTRACT:

The media influence on consumer behaviour (student and parents) has been observed as more strong across print media than social media as education. Induced and cultured behavioural biases are indeed a big obstacle towards the successive adoption of marketing appeal. Especially with regard to course marketing and with regard to issue of admissions into higher education institutions, a plethora of research seeks to link 'pre-existing' cultured biases as restraining the admission initiative. The paper hence explores the literature and figures out the diverse theme bound influences that collectively shape up intentions for enrolment in Higher Education Institutions in India. The paper discusses the literature and explores the prominent Indian studies on subject matter.

Keywords: HEI, Behavioural intentions, Print Media, Admission behaviour, Course Marketing, Mimetic Influences

### INTRODUCTION

Higher education institutions and admissions constitute a challenge as influences on students and parent's decision making are rising. The information processing and sense making with regard to merits and demerits of course and institutions (Okolie, 2019); is no longer a simple and straight forward exercise. The susceptibility of students and parents to media based influences and behavioral biases (Mwebi, 2020); identifies as a prominent problem before course marketing and sustainable intake of students. Higher education institutions (Bonaccorsi, 2007) often face the challenges of attracting meritorious, intelligent and performing students who can establish benchmarks and bring laurels to institution and academia. Higher education institutions (Awasthi, 2020) are facing the wrath of time and competition in attracting and retaining the students and captivating parent's attention to associate with a particular institution. The studies on students' and parents' attitude towards print media and its effect on their behavioral intentions across higher education institutions have emphasized the cognitive biases as being harnessed and leveraged in order to reap the positive benefits in terms of favorable outcomes. This brings the focus on consideration of media effects on shaping of student's and parent's prior dispositions. Media influence (Sama, 2019) on consumer behavior (student and parents) has been observed as more strong across print media than social media as education and career as still a dream across middle class. As

such the research and its focus on print media as shaping attitudes of students and parents while undertaking course enrollment; makes sense.

## **UNDERSTANDING PRINT MEDIA CHARACTERISTICS**

Print media identifies as a media that involves mass communication and acts as a powerful source of attitudinal change and motivation across readers. The studies on print media characteristics seem to reflect tremendously on the awareness creation role and enabling the masses develop an understanding of the events in question. In terms of academic brand positioning (Florence, 2012), the print media has been observed as playing a vital role in positioning the academic brand across student's mindsets and readership proportions.

## **PRINT MEDIA INDUCED BIASES AND NARRATIVE SETTING**

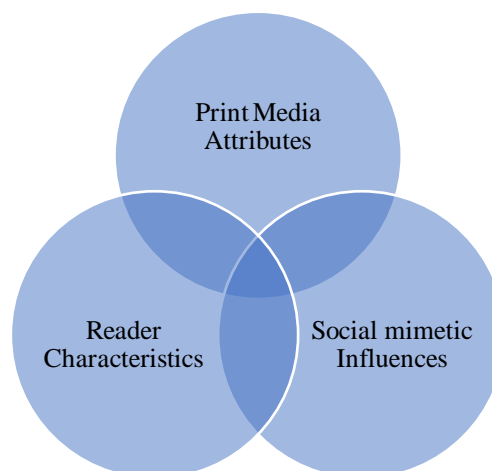
Print media is widely believed to exert a direct, immediate and uniform impact on the cognitions, mindsets and respective decision making capabilities across young minds. The projected message or coded information does possess the capability to stir the youth's unconscious instincts and are observed to harness the feelings of good or bad vis a vis the product or institution selection in particular. The media induced impairment of decision making abilities in youth is a widely researched aspect of cognitive and behavioral psychology. The evolving 'hypodermic needle' approach rightly captures the instincts of human decision making stimulus. The theory pertains to study of human behavior as susceptible to and vulnerable to stimulus from external environment as well as projected agenda across media and other channels of communication. The systematic and planned education of young minds with regard to institution's core advantages in a propaganda aspect could change the cards in favor of institution in question. The 'hypodermic needle' perspective (Aggarwal, 2020) elaborates on the reader's experiences with newspaper based projected stories and paid news. Opinion shaping and opinion transformation and media based agenda; bears a direct and conjugative relationship. The influence exerted by print media in formalization and molding of preset or pre-determined opinions is evident in media embedded societies. The print media based publishing of biased news coverage, media based slant in coverage of news, reporting practices and paid as well as fake news; equally seem to contribute to development of agenda driven task specific cognitions. Media bias identifies as the practice to engage in biased or selective coverage of an event and select coverage of aspects of the event at cost of under-reporting or merely ignoring the other aspects of the event in question. The embedded advertisements and their positioning in the newspaper too follow the slant that ultimately offers wider readability, acceptance, opinion transformation as well as induces the bias in admission based decision making across start of academic sessions.

## BEHAVIORAL BIASES AS PROBLEM FOR COURSE MARKETING

Induced and cultured behavioral biases are indeed a big obstacle towards the successive adoption of marketing appeal. Especially with regard to course marketing and with regard to issue of admissions into higher education institutions, a plethora of research seeks to link 'pre-existing' cultured biases as restraining the admission initiative. Behavioral biases as a problem as they represent a selective or slanted manner of thinking with regard to an issue at hand. In order to understand the role of behavioral biases one needs to first reflect on the difference between in born and harnessed biases. Some biases are in borne and cultivated by non-media activities and engagements yet some biases are sustained and maintained by media based framing of news. Both ways the behavioral biases can either support or restrain the favorable HEI admission seeking behavior. The student's or parent's self-assumed priority assignment to cultural capital (Zimdars, 2020) in institution selection has been observed as casting a lasting impact on choice making.

## NEED FOR SUSTAINABLE INTAKE OF STUDENTS: OVERCOMING BIASES

The studies (Stein, 2020) often point towards the difficulties of transforming the higher education and respective contextual environment in which the higher education institutions operate and grow. Media (Mwebi, 2020) continues to play a larger role in shaping and transforming the institution's image across public perspective. Not only does media (Awasthi, 2020) shapes and reinforces the image across students and parent alike yet also influence the attitudes, the perceptions and opinions towards the course admissions and outcomes. Media (print as well as social, electronic as well digital) in all its various manifestations (Bonaccorsi, 2007) have a reported history of shaping institution's positioning in social eco system and across economic perspective. Media (Lewis, 2020) has been observed as possessing agenda setting, narrative determination and persuasion capabilities that often interfere with student's and parent's sense of judgment and decision making.



Media insertions and featured news often aim at manufacturing and distorting the opinion in ways that could possibly shape or transform the student and parent's academic participation and change over all admission behavior and patterns. The art of managing incumbent student's and parent's desires could tilt the balance in favor of one higher education institution. Amidst these growing realities, it makes sense to explore the students' and parents' attitude towards print media and its effect on their behavioral intentions.

The students and parents classify as two prominent stakeholders along with institution; in the admission process and media seem to bring them together in a manner that benefits the higher education institution in terms of admissions and in takes for a particular academic year. The behavioral intentions under influence of media seem to be instrumental in shaping the outcomes. Media based agenda setting has long remained under analysis on account of the differential and variable roles that media plays in shaping and altering behavioral intentions. Print media in particular identifies as a media option with viable readability, reach and understanding a cross a nation with developing economy characteristics.

The universal acceptance along with critical role in agenda definition (Happer, 2013) and shaping the manner in which people think (Mccombs, 2014); identify as core characteristics of print media in Indian perspectives. Print media (Bray, 2018) in particular has been reported to be instrumental in perception development across masses with regard to an institution, its benefits and the employment perspectives.

Especially the media based attributes (conviction, content richness, and persuasion abilities) are the drivers that lend the media its characteristic property of engaging and shaping the reader in more than one way. Reader on other side also seems to be part of media advocated information processing influences. The extent of credibility of media across native readers, extent of perceived trust in news, extent of reader motivations and overall acceptance; seem to collectively reinforce the particular way of thinking and acting.

The societal mimetic pressures to adopt a course of action and choice of decision seem to be contingent on transforming students and parent's cognitive mindsets and bias inheritance. As such the research segregates the core influences as 'print media derived', as 'reader derived' and as an outcome of 'social influence'. These have been largely observed (Mwebi, 2020) as collectively shaping the impetus for 'behavioral intentions' leading to student enrollments in higher education institutions.

## **THEMES DETERMINING 'ADMISSION BEHAVIOR' CONCEPTUALIZATION**

The thematic discussion entails the emphasis on the direct and lateral influences that are shaping admission behavior and enrolment propensity across HEIs. The logic behind incorporation of distinct themes for conceptualization of HEI admissions is the rampant support as evident in the academic literature that classifies the phenomenon in this very

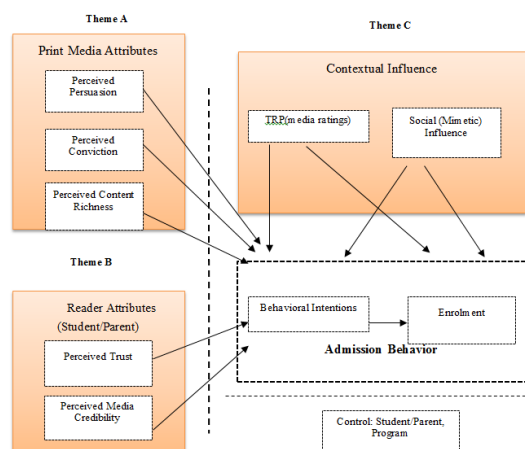
unique manner. The ‘admission behavior’ conceptualization matters as this determines the success of marketing as well as sustenance of student HEI engagement in variable propositions. The thematic influences have been observed from across the review of literature. Such a thematic approach seems essential to figure out the distinct aspects that are uniquely shaping the ‘admission behavior’ conceptualization in Indian perspective. The theoretical model hence proposes three influences that seem to shape up the contextual phenomenon across its roots.

**Influence A: Influences from the print media:** The first influence is from the print media attributes. This is sought to be operationalized with aid of factors ‘perceived persuasion’, ‘perceived conviction’ and ‘perceived content richness’. All these factors denote the print media based ability to garner the attention and lead to scope for change in opinion and transition in pre held views. The influences aim at capturing the reasoned action stimulus and persuasion knowledge perspective being created across the interaction.

**Influence B: Influences from the readers (student and parent):** The second influence is sought to be observed from the point of view of reader. The reader identifies as yet another stakeholder that equally shapes the impetus for behavioral intention development leading to enrollment into higher education institution. The influence has been operationalized with aid of factors ‘perceived trust’ and ‘perceived media credibility’.

**Influence C: Influences from social pressures and TRP ratings:** The third influence is from the social pressures and referrals that are contingent to the decision making process. The social influences along with perceptions of TRP of the print media equally impinge upon the behavioral intention development and respective admission intent. The influence has been operationalized with aid of factors ‘perceived TRP ratings’, ‘perceived behavioral intentions’, ‘social mimetic influences’ and ‘perceptions of enrollment’. The theme captures the influences from the neighboring environment.

Figure1: Thematic discussion of influences



Source: Self devised from literature

The prospect's admission behavior has been observed as susceptible to influences from media, reader and contextual influences. The rational justification involves the consideration of the influences that are generated from interactions amongst print media publications, reader's own attributes and social references in local contexts. The rational thinking suggests multi-dimensional workout of the influences. The phenomenon of "admission behavior" seem to involve the dimensions of 'print media publications', 'reader's own attributes' and 'social references' as well as 'TRP(media ratings)'.

## **INDIAN STUDIES**

A study (Dasgupta, 2020) evaluated the impact of bias in media and respective impact of peer circle as collectively shaping the admission cognitions in graduate course joining students in Delhi University students. The students were observed to bear a significant impact of media biases and rank on the cognitive attainments, economic preferences as per the personality types.

Another study across Indian students (Singh, 2020) pointed to the prevalence of admission decisive factors as shaping student's and parent's interests alike. The study figured out a set of determinants that shape the quantum of bachelor and master level admissions in engineering stream of education in premier North Indian registered universities.

A research (Shah, 2019) noticed the prevalence of student based inclination to develop a liking for course on basis of external influences and on the basis of peer pressure. The study pointed to instrumental role of student feedback in the framing of admissions based positioning of university courses across the intake season.

Another study (Mahajan, 2017) reported the incidence of 11 P's namely the program, price, place, promotion, people, physical evidence, process, as vital in shaping the impetus for managing media bred impact on course intake.

A research (Rana, 2020) highlighted the need for re-alignment as per changing environmental realities and need for tapping media for better and effective management of student intake in business schools. The study harped on the semi-structured interviews approach and observed the need to overcome the rampant sort term challenges being evident on account of pandemic.

Another academic study (Pandit, 2021) explored the aspects of online education and need for media marketing of the courses for increasing the course intake and adoption across larger cross section. The study reported the incidence of need of support from all major stakeholders to increase the student intake and streamline the student requisition process.

A research (Patil, 2020) figured out the need for adoption of innovation media outreach mechanisms to foster a healthy student intake while and after the pandemic. The study



pointed to need for better adoption of media mix and better inclusion of student and parent sensitivity in the program planning.

**Table 1: Mapping the linkages and influences with supportive literature**

| Influences on Admission Behavior                       | Supporting literature   |
|--|---|
| <b>Print Media Aspects -&gt; Behavioral Intentions</b> | (Happer, 2013), (Martinez, 2017), (Strouse, 2019)                 |
| <b>Reader Aspects→ Behavioral Intentions</b>           | (Happer, 2013), (Simiyu, 2020), (Whitaker, 2003), (Strouse, 2019) |
| <b>Social Influence Aspects→ Behavioral Intentions</b> | (Dennis, 1999), (Bonaccorsi, 2007), (Stein, 2020)                 |
| <b>Behavioral Intentions → Enrolment in HEIs</b>       | (Lewis, 2020), (Mwebi, 2020),                                     |

Source: Self Devised

A research (Rahul, 2021) figured out the role of marketing the university based academic and social accomplishments in order to make students and parents as adopting

Another research (Raghavan, 2020) observed the incidence of significant role of print media as well as electronic media is fostering a better institution-student connect

A study (Chandra, 2017) reported the incidence of exclusion of marginalized sections of society and their faltering access to print media as shaping and framing the respective image of higher education in the social perspective.

## IMPLICATIONS

The research vindicates and provides support for consideration of student's and parent's behavioral intentions as shaping decisions with regard to admissions in higher education institutions. The media influence on consumer behavior (student and parents) has been observed as more strong across print media than social media as education and career as still a dream across middle class. Induced and cultured behavioral biases are indeed a big obstacle towards the successive adoption of marketing appeal. Especially with regard to course marketing and with regard to issue of admissions into higher education institutions, a plethora of research seeks to link 'pre-existing' cultured biases as restraining the admission initiative.

## REFERENCES

1. Aggarwal. (2020). Media Bias detection and bias short term impact assessment. *ARRAY*, 6(3), 4-6.
2. Awasthi. (2020). Building agile and evolving higher education institutions. *Association of Indian Universities*.
3. Bonaccorsi, D. (2007). Indicators on individual higher education institutions: Addressing data problems and comparability issues. *Research Evaluation*, 67-73.
4. Bray. (2018). The role of media in shaping public opinion. *OPED*.
5. Chandra. (2017). Multi level exclusion of dalit students in professional elite colleges of India. *Social Change*, 47(3), 359-72.
6. Dasgupta. (2020). Effects of media pers and rank on cognition, preferences and personality. *Lanchester Review*, 20-21.
7. Dennis, K. (1999). Gender differences in the effects of media richness. *Small Group Research*, 406-430.
8. Florence. (2012). Towards a micro conception of brand personality: An applicaiton for print media brands. *Journal of Business Research*, 1, 7.
9. Happer, P. (2013). The role of media in the construction of public belief and social change. *Journal of Social and Political Psychology*.
10. Kapur. (2008). Indian Higher Education. *Universities*, 2(4), 305-14.
11. Lewis. (2020). Constructing public opinion: How media misrepresent the public . *Mault*.
12. Mahajan. (2017). Incorporating 11 P's of service marketing mix and its impact on the development of technical education. *Journal of Entrepreneurship Education*, 20(2), 1-4.
13. Martinez. (2017). Does richness from online social media platforms affect the effectiveness of the advertising message of product?
14. Mcombs. (2014). The agenda setting role of the mass media in the shaping of public opinion.
15. Mwebi. (2020). Student preference on choice of higher education institutions. *World Journal of Innovative Research*, 61-62.
16. Okolie, I. E. (2019). Enhancing graduate employability: Why higher education institutions have problems with teaching generic skills? *Policy Futures in Education*, 1-2.
17. Pandit. (2021). Exploring challenges of online education in COVID times. *FIIB Business Review*, 2(1), 1-8.
18. Patil. (2020). Selection of an engineering institution: Student's perceptions of choice characteristics and suitability under the COVID-19 pandemic. *ARXIV*, 2(1), 45-46.



19. Raghavan. (2020). Higher Education in the year 2020-21: How should it be? *University News*, 58(25), 20-21.
20. Rahul. (2021). Factors affecting choice of students in selecting an educational institute and university: A study focussing on private education sector in North India. *Psychology and Education*, 58(2), 10588-99.
21. Rana. (2020). A perspective on the positioning of Indian business schools post COVID-19 pandemic. *International Journal of Emerging Markets*, 4-5.
22. Sama. (2019). Impact of media advertisements on consumer behavior. *Journal of Creative Communications*, 54-62.
23. Shah. (2019). Making the student voice count: Using qualitative student feedback to enhance the student experience. *JARHE*, 2(2), 2-16.
24. Simiyu, B. (2020). Media and student's behavioural intentions to enroll in post graduate studies in Kenya: A moderated mediation model of brand personality and attitude. *Journal of Marketing for higher education*, 66-84.
25. Singh. (2020). Unleashing a quantitative approach to manage admissions in engineering: A case of the North Indian state. *Journal of Applied Research in Higher Education*, 2(1), 5-12.
26. Stein. (2020). Truth before reconciliation: The difficulties of transforming higher education. *Higher Education Research and Development*.
27. Strouse, N. (2019). Educational and Fun? Parent versus preschooler perceptions and co-use of digital and print media. *AERA*, 1-13.
28. Whitaker. (2003). Development and validation of reading engagement survey.
29. Zimdars. (2020). Elite Higher education admissions in the Arts and Sciences: Is cultural capital the key to admissions? *Sociology*, 2-14.