



INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF RESEARCH IN COMPUTER APPLICATION AND MANAGEMENT

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- Bowersox, Donald J., Closs, David J., (1996), "Logistical Management." Tata McGraw, Hill, New Delhi.
- Hunker, H.L. and A.J. Wright (1963), "Factors of Industrial Location in Ohio," Ohio State University.

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AN INVESTIGATION ON PREFERRED CHOICE OF MEDIA AMONG INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS IN MALAYSIA**SARAVANAN RAMAN**

**HEAD, MARKETING PROGRAMME
FACULTY OF BUSINESS AND MANAGEMENT
AIMST UNIVERSITY
SEMELING, 08100 BEDONG
KEDAH DARUL AMAN
MALAYSIA**

SUBHASENI CHINNIAH

**FACULTY OF BUSINESS AND MANAGEMENT
UNIVERSITY UTARA MALAYSIA
MALAYSIA**

ABSTRACT

This study was undertaken to investigate the preferred media among international students enrolls in Malaysian Higher Education Institution. The study was conducted on a sample of 55 randomly selected from two major public and private university in Malaysia. Based on the investigation conducted on the preferred media among international students enroll in Malaysian Higher Education Institution (MHEI), it shows that most respondents prefer websites advertisements to be conducted. This is due to easy access of information and it gives clear pictures what is offered in MHEI. The other media are important as well such as television, radio, newspapers, brochures, education exhibition, and preview as it helps to capture various target groups from various places. Improvements should be done on the lower percentage media to enhance the credibility of the promotional activity. The main factor has creates problem in this research is language barriers among international students. Many of the international students were referring to electronic dictionary to answer the questionnaire.

KEYWORDS

Media, International Students, Promotion, Websites, Higher Learning.

INTRODUCTION

The number of the international students in Malaysia has been increased. Traditionally, the large majority of them have come from the neighboring Asian countries of Indonesia, Thailand, Bangladesh, the Maldives, Singapore and, overwhelmingly, China. Malaysia, it appears, has profited from being considered as a desirable and highly competitive alternative to other countries in Southeast Asia. Private higher education institutions in Malaysia have been successful in recruiting students in key Asian markets (including the Middle East).

Malaysia has set a target of 100,000 foreign students by 2010 and in this connection; related strategies and programmes have been put in place to achieve this target (Ahmad Nazri, 2005). This is clearly spelt out in the recently released *National Higher Education Action Plan, 2007–2010*. Malaysia is one of the countries that attract international students for higher education. In Malaysia, the institutions make every effort to provide quality education. A wide range of courses are offered.

Living costs are generally kept low. English has been made the medium of instruction for postgraduate courses. These factors have resulted in Malaysia becoming an attractive destination for international students from various parts of the world. The public higher education institutions in Malaysia in 2008 comprised 21 public universities, 55 private universities and colleges (Expat, 2010). While early groups of international students that arrived in Malaysia came from neighboring countries, in recent years the international students have come from nearly 161 different countries, most of whom belong to three main areas of the Indian subcontinent, the Middle East, and the African countries (Alimudin, 2005).

International students comprise a growing proportion of degree-seeking students in Malaysian universities. A variety of reasons govern overseas students' decision to study in another country, including poor or overcrowded educational provision in their home country, competitive tuition fees and affordable living expenses in Malaysia, a stable and sound socioeconomic environment in Malaysia, they desire to develop intercultural understanding, and improve future social and business networks and etc.

RESEARCH PROBLEM

Since the Malaysian Ministry of Higher Education has set its goal of becoming regional hub for higher learning, universities and colleges have attempted to attract students from other countries. The Malaysian government and institutions of higher education are competing with other global competitors for their 'market share'. Countries such as UK, Australia, Canada, Singapore and New Zealand are also striving to attract international students, especially at the graduate level (Times Higher: the UK International Student Market: Trends and Challenges, 2006).

Malaysia has set a target of 100,000 foreign students by 2010 and in this connection, related strategies and programmes have been put in place to achieve this target. As the number of international students attending institutions of higher education in Malaysia has increased in the recent years, and the number is expected to rise in the future, Malaysian Ministry of Higher Education have to identify the best media to attract international students. However, there is relatively little research literature in Malaysia concerning the preferred media among international students enroll in Malaysian Higher Education Institution. This study attempts to fill these gaps and needs identified above.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The main objective of this research is to identify the preferred media selection among international Students enroll in Malaysia. Besides, to achieve the following objectives:

- To identify the preferred media among international students such as newspaper, television, radio, website, brochures, preview and education exhibition.
- To assist the Ministry of Tourism to develop strategies to increase number of international students in Malaysia.
- To identify the reasons of preferred media chosen by international students.

SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY

Malaysia is moving toward internationalization. The Ministry of Higher Education aims to make Malaysia as a hub of excellence in the region. As a result, universities and institutions are striving to provide the best quality of education to attract international students from all over the world. Media selections that

use to promote to the international students are very important to attract and increase the number of international students in Malaysia. The results will assist the Ministry of Tourism and Ministry of Higher Education to strategies their promotional activities with minimum expenses to target the potential international students.

SCOPE OF STUDY

The scope of our duties would be international students in Malaysia. The population for the study comprises international students at two public and private universities in Malaysia. The results of the study can assist national policy makers to achieve their objectives in making Malaysia a hub of excellence in higher education and attract more international students. It also is strengthening the institutions position in national and international higher education industry.

LITERATURE REVIEW

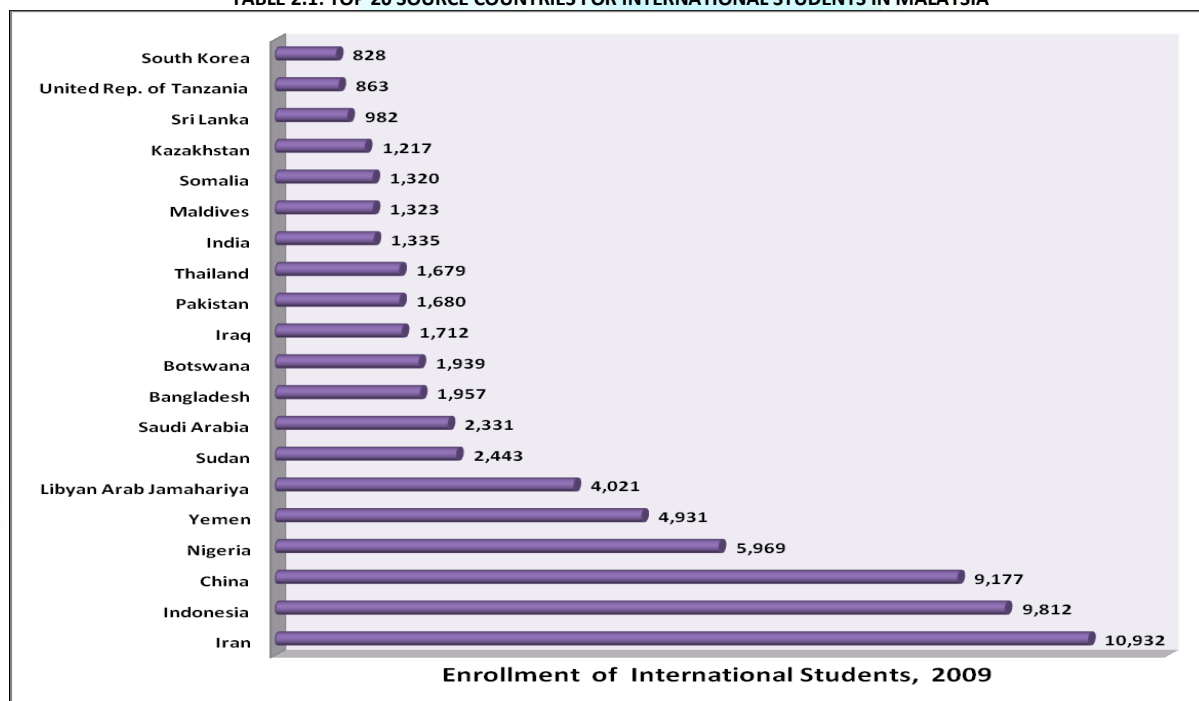
Universities are traditionally viewed as places for higher education and basic research but yet they are encompassing much more nowadays. According to ICF (2003), universities are the knowledge creators, innovation accelerators and high skilled workers providers. Universities play an essential role in yielding advanced scientific knowledge through applied research and scientific 16 breakthroughs that will enhance lives and strengthen economy. Chakrabarti and Rice (2003) pointed out that universities play a crucial role in regional development of high technology industries by providing intellectual property and talent through knowledge generation and transfer process.

The need for good higher education often takes students out of their home countries. Due to limited facilities in their own countries, many students pursue their studies abroad. Students also study abroad to acquire a more global perspective, to develop international attitudes, make their resume` more attractive, or to improve their language proficiency. Students also benefit through learning about new customs, holidays, foods, art, music, and politics firsthand. They may also study abroad to advance their studies in specialized areas not available at home. In many developing countries, a foreign degree, especially if obtained from certain countries, is considered more prestigious than a local one (Johnson, 1992; Lacina, 2002).

Fu (2004) reported that the number of international students enrolling in higher education in Malaysia is increasing each year. While the total number of international students was 5,635 in 1996, it rose to 11,733 in the academic year 1998-99. In the year 2003, Malaysia issued 39,577 student visas to international students representing a 9% cent increase from 2002. At the end of 2005, it was estimated that there were about 40,000 foreign students studying in Malaysian public and private higher educational institutes (Clark and Sedgwick, 2005). Table 1 on the following page shows the international student population in Malaysia in 2004, listed by the 20 most important source countries. The positive contributions of international students to the success and enrichment of colleges and universities are numerous. They usually come to another country with solid to superior academic credentials and contribute significantly to academic excellence of universities. Their presence tends to enrich campus diversity by exposing other graduate and undergraduate students to different cultural and ethnic experiences. Their presence also brings an international perspective and promotes a degree of global awareness on campus (Wang and Frank, 2002).

While efforts are made to make these international students welcome and adapt to the new environment, it cannot be denied that these students face problems. Earlier studies have indicated that the problems include adapting to the new educational and social environment, pressures of staying away from home, financial pressures, language problem, and lack of friends (Australasian Law Teachers' Association, 1995). Other studies that have examined the problems of international students, categorized them into 11 groups: financial aid, placement services, the English language, academic records, health services, socio-personal issues, admissions and selection, living/dining services, orientation services, students' activities, and religious services (Michigan International Student Problem Inventory, cited in Galloway and Jenkins, 2005).

TABLE 2.1: TOP 20 SOURCE COUNTRIES FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS IN MALAYSIA



Source: Ministry of Higher Education, Malaysia (as of 31 December 2009)

ADVERTISING

Advertising is a powerful tool which aims to influence consumer decisions and thus behaviour. One definition of advertising by Ann Burgess cited in Hart, 1990, p. 101, is the action of calling something to the attention of the public, and especially by paid announcements. Advertising enables the consumer to become an active member of the economic cycle rather than a passive agent (Burgess cited in Hart, 1990). It is this freedom of choice for the consumer that means companies' advertising strategy must portray the correct advertising message and select the correct advertising media (Kotler & Armstrong, 2005).

ADVERTISING AND REGULATIONS

Advertising can be affected in several ways by local regulations. The availability of media (or the lack of it) is one example. When and how much media time and space are made available, if at all, is determined by local authorities. Belgium prohibits the use of electricity for advertising purposes between midnight and 8:00 A.M. German was regulate TV advertising contents and limit advertising on the national TV channels to twenty minutes a day, forcing advertisers to switch from

state-run TV to private channels. Greece and South Korea ban the erection of new signs. Furthermore, nationalism may intrude in the form of a ban on the use of foreign languages and materials in advertising. The advertising industry may have a local self-regulatory organization which regulates the styles and contents of promotional activities.

ADVERTISING MEDIA

International advertising is the practice of advertising in foreign or international media when the advertising campaign is planned, directly or indirectly, by an advertiser from another country. To advertise overseas, a company must determine the availability (or unavailability) of advertising media. Media may not be readily available in all countries or in certain areas within the countries. Furthermore, the techniques used in media overseas can be vastly different from the ones employed in the Malaysia.

Internet has two unique features 'it is both a market and a medium' (Ngai, 2003) which transcends national boundaries and stage a new set of international marketing where organizations connect with their potential and existing customers. According to Chaffey et. al. (2006) there are four types of web sites. Higher education falls into the category of 'service-oriented relationship-building web site' where it provides information to stimulate purchase and build relationships. The internet offers a means for geographically remote students to access university and course information (Veloutsou, Paton, and Lewis, 2005).

The customers will usually seek for clear and accurate information and representation since they cannot see or feel the offers. The university's web site needs to have clear graphic representations and is visually accurate. The more clear and accurate the web site, the more it will reduce the probability of losing its potential. Gomez and Murphy (2003) highlighted that trust in the information cannot be established until consumers trust the site, and trust in fulfillment requires prior trust in the site and its information. To lower the dissonant, a two-way communication can be provided to support the web site such as staff's e-mail, fax or a toll-free telephone number that the customers can relay for fast response. Other supporting aids are multiple-language options, chat room, bulletin board and Frequent Asked Questions (FAQs) through the web site. This will enhance the competitive edge for the business (Chai and Fun, 2003).

A resource based web page serves the interest of the visitors by providing easy site navigation and easily accessible information or add-a-link feature for users to search university's news and updates, public seminars and conventions, and university's calendar. This will create a university community atmosphere. The importance of such a service (university's) is highlighted by the presence of many stakeholders and their interests, either social or economic (Petrzellis et. al., 2006). Not only that students are seeking for knowledge but at the same time seek for social expectations (Binsardi and Ekwulugo, 2003; Russell, 2005; Cubillo, 2006).

RESEARCH DESIGN

The data of quantitative aspects of the study is collected by using 55 questionnaires. 200 questionnaires were prepared for this study. But 55 respondents were responded on these issues. Many respondents reluctant to fill up the questionnaires. For this study, researcher selected 2 Higher Education Institutions in Malaysia that is University Sains Malaysia and AIMST University. Most of the information about international students was collected from the Ministry of Higher Education and online materials related to the subject of study. Information about literature review is collected from online materials and library

DISCUSSION

OVERVIEW

As mention earlier, a total number of 55 questionnaires that comprises of small size of international students' preferred media in University Science Malaysia (USM) and AIMST University who enroll in both institutions. This section will discuss noteworthy details from the analysis and findings of responses.

PERSONAL PARTICULARS

The highest population of students age group of international students are 23 years and above, which is account for 63.6% of total students as compared to 17 – 18 years old, 19 – 20 years old, and 21 – 22 years old. Next would be the comparison on the gender whereby male shows slightly higher (50.9%) than female group (49.1%).

TELEVISION

The research shows, that promotional activity done through television is very low (36.4%) compare to others. Survey shows that advertisements on Malaysia Universities is not been viewed at all as it shows the highest percentage of all which is (49.1%). The respondents feel that the advertisements are not advertised on the right time of people to view whereby (60.0%) say no. 72.7% of respondents spend less than 2 hours on television per day. It means that advertisements done through television would not be effectively aware by respondents since they spend less time on television per day. Chart 4 shows that 4.00 – 8.00 pm (38.2%) is the right time for promoting advertisements because that is the time parents back from work and spend some time to get entertainment through television. 12.00 – 4.00 pm (5.5%) is not the right time to promote as most of the parents are working at that period of time.

RADIO

The research shows, that promotional activity done through television is very low (45.5%) compare to others low (18.2%), moderate (27.3%), high (7.3%) and very high (1.8%). Survey shows that advertisements on Malaysia Universities is not been listened at all as it shows the highest percentage of all which is (45.5%). The respondents feel that the advertisements are not advertised on the right time of people to listen whereby (56.4%) say no and (43.6%) say yes. 70.9% of respondents spend less than 1 hour on radio per day. It means that advertisements done through radio would not be successfully transferred to respondents since they spend less time on radio per day. Chart 6 shows that 8.00 – 12.00 am (45.5%) is the right time for promoting advertisements. It is the right time to promote because that is the time most of the parents are going to work on that time. They will listen to radio while they are on the way to work. 12.00 – 4.00 pm (16.4%) and 4.00 – 8.00 pm (16.4%) are not the right time to promote as most of the parents and students are working and studying at that period of time.

NEWSPAPER

The research shows, that promotional activity done through newspaper is moderate (34.5%) compare to others very low (12.7%), low (20.0%), high (23.6%) and very high (9.1%). According to the respondents advertisements on Malaysia's Higher Education Institution is been viewed moderately as it shows the highest percentage of all which is (41.8%). The respondents feel that the advertisements are not advertised on the right time of people to listen whereby (56.4%) says no and (43.6%) say yes. Besides that, the respondents feel that the information is been advertised at the right page to view whereby (65.5%) say yes and (34.5%) says no. 52.7% of respondents agree that information about education should be advertised on education section whereas (9.1%) agree on news section, (18.2%) agree on entertainment section, (7.3%) agree on sport section and (12.7%) agree on others. It means that when respondents are searching for information about education, they more prefer the information are advertised on education section compare to others.

WEBSITES

The research shows that promotional activity done through television is moderate (38.2%) compare to others very low (5.5%), low (14.5%), high (27.3%) and very high (14.5%). From the research, it shows that (81.2%) of respondents feel that advertisements on Malaysia Universities through Internet is easy to access. The respondents feel that the advertisements are not advertised on the right time of people to listen whereby (56.4%) say no and (43.6%) say yes. Respondents are moderately (38.2%) aware of website as they agree on the usage of website to gain information about Malaysia's Universities. Besides that, it shows that (61.8%) of respondents spend more than 4 hours on Internet per day. It means that advertisements done through Internet might be successfully transferred to respondents since they spend more time on Internet per day

BROCHURES

The research shows, that promotional activity done through television is low (36.4%) compare to others very low (30.9%), moderate (20.0%), high (10.9%) and very high (1.8%). The brochures are not attractive enough to be promoted to capture people whereby (65.6%) of respondents said no. it is been identified that (21%) of respondents do not often receive the brochures at their area. Besides that, (56.4%) of them do not really look into the information in brochures and it will cost the waste in advertising through brochures.

EDUCATION EXHIBITION

The research shows, that education exhibition had been conducted in respondent’s country before as (65.6%) of them says yes. Yet, respondents are not often (41.8%) to visit education exhibition to find the related information compare to very often (1.8%). 32.7% of respondents support that the promotional activity done through education exhibition is moderate whereby (7%) say very low, (29.1%) say low, (10.9%) say high, and (14.5%) say very high.

PREVIEW

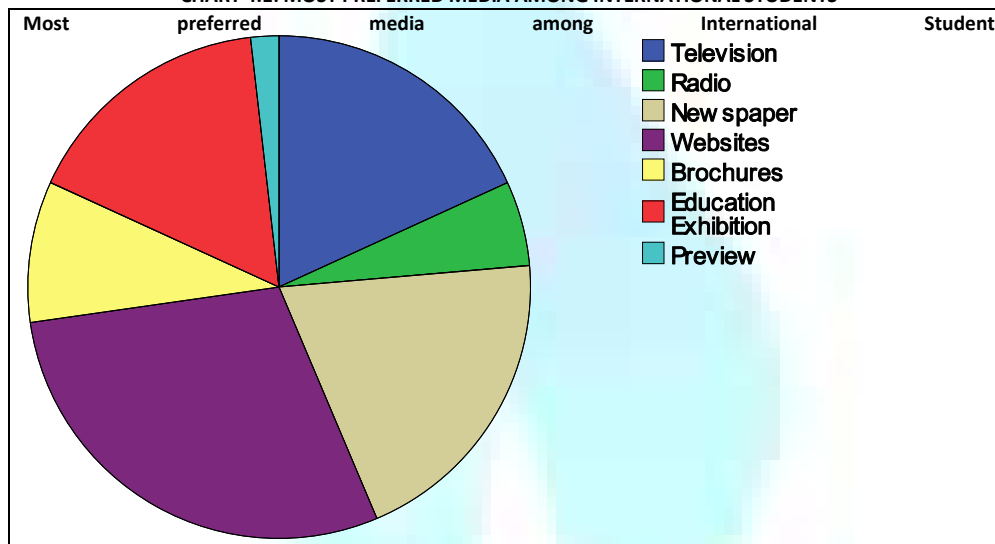
The research shows, that promotional activity done through preview is moderate (40.0%) compare to others. The results show that the preview is organized less than 2 times (76.4%) in their country per year. In order to be more successful target the students, government has to organized more preview in a year. Besides that, respondents agree that they get to know the preview through Internet (45.5%) is most comparing to others. Government should advertise more information on Internet to get students attention.

RESULTS ANALYSIS BASED ON THE RESPONDENTS’ SURVEY

TABLE 4.1: PERCENTAGE OF PREFERRED MEDIA AMONG INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

Types of media	Frequency	Percent (%)	Cumulative Percent (%)
Television	10	18.2	18.2
Radio	3	5.5	23.6
Newspaper	11	20.0	43.6
Websites	15	29.1	72.7
Brochures	5	9.1	81.8
Education Exhibition	9	16.4	98.2
Preview	1	1.8	100.0
Total	55	100.0	

CHART 4.1: MOST PREFERRED MEDIA AMONG INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS



Based on the table and chart above, it clearly shows the overall summary of the survey on the preferred media among international students. The survey shows that students are more interested with websites which shows the highest percentage (29.1%). Secondly would be newspapers advertising which is (20.0%). Thirdly would be television which is (18.2%). Next would be education exhibition (16.4%), brochures (9.1%), and radio (5.5%). Lastly would be preview which is only (1.8%).

CONCLUSION

The mass media are a highly effective means of transmitting information. However, mass media are rarely favored over participatory or traditional communication media. However, that does not mean that they should be neglected altogether. It is important to strike a proper balance between mass media and media based on interpersonal communication. Before using mass media, it is important to identify their different forms, to clearly understand their advantages and their audiences and to be aware of the contacts that can be developed through them. In other words, the use of mass media is a process that requires organization. Based on the investigation conducted on the preferred media among international students enroll in Malaysian Higher Education Institution (MHEI), it shows that most respondents prefer websites advertisements to be conducted. This is due to easy access of information and it gives clear pictures what is offered at USM and AIMST University. In this current digital media world, everyone are using Internet or online to do daily works. Same goes to the respondents, they can access to websites to search for the information they want anytime and it is convenience for them. Besides that, the impact of advertisements through websites is high compared to other media. Website promotion becomes a very popular advertising media since Internet has been introduced. The other media also plays vital role such as television, radio, newspapers, brochures, education exhibition, and preview. It helps to capture various target groups from various places. Improvements should be done on the lower percentage media to enhance the credibility of the promotional activity.

RECOMMENDATION

The lower percentage media such as television, radio, newspapers, brochures, education exhibition, and preview need to be improved in terms of sufficient of information delivered. The information delivered must be able to stimulate and attract the various groups of students even though they prefer different types of media.

LIMITATION & FUTURE RESEARCH

The main factor has creates problem in this research is language barriers among international students. Many of the international students were referring to electronic dictionary to answer the questionnaire. Some of them refused to answer the questionnaire due to language efficiency. Second limitation is, after approval granted from USM and AIMST University, we realized that the students were having their final exam in that week. This caused a lot of problems during our research. We felt hardly to search for the international students to conduct the research during their examination period and some of them reluctant to fill up the questionnaire when they were having their revision.

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