ADVERTISING IN IT TRAINING INSTITUTIONS: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF TWO BRANCHES OF CMC IN WEST BENGAL, INDIA

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Abstract:

CMC Ltd. is one of the pioneers of IT education in India. Two branches of this institute are located in West Bengal. One is in Salt Lake City, Kolkata (state capital) and another one is in Konnagar, Hooghly district. Syllabuses, teaching methodology, student facilities, parameters for checking answer scripts, conduction of exams, marketing measures, advertising policies etc. are identical in nature in the two branches due to organizational policy. Still, the Konnagar branch continues to grow but Salt Lake branch steadily comes down since 2011 in terms of business acquisition i.e. student admissions.

A study was done to identify the reasons of steady growth of Konnagar branch and decline of Salt Lake branch. That study also revealed a lot about advertising in IT training institutions. These constituents and features of advertising were studied in case of growing (Konnagar) and declining (Salt Lake), both types of scenarios. In other words, it can be said that with the help of that study, the constituents and features of advertising policy which has to be considered in IT training institutions, were explored.

Key Words: *IT, student admissions, advertising, distinguishability, frequency, transparency.*

1. **Introduction:**

CMC Ltd. is one of the oldest IT training institutions of India. This institute started its journey in 1978. When IBM left India, the scientists of the Government of India (GOI) formed this organization with the objective of maintaining the computers owned by GOI. In 2000, CMC became a part of one of modern India's most acclaimed business groups, the TATA group.

Two branches of this institute, located in the province of West Bengal have been considered in this study. One is in Salt Lake City, Kolkata and the other one is in Konnagar, Hooghly district. There are some similarities between these two branches. Both these branches started operations almost in the same period of time i.e. in the mid-nineties. Curriculum, student facilities, operational and administrative policies, marketing strategies is identical for these two branches. It is the same faculty who rotate between these two branches and conduct classes. Students are taught the same courses following the same syllabus. Placement of students is looked after by the same placement department operating from the regional head office. Exams are taken on same dates with the same set of question papers. Same paper checking standards are maintained for both these branches. Business acquisition wise also there was a strong similarity between these two campuses. But the situation changed 2012 onwards. This can be proved by the series of statistics shown in Table 1.

Table 1:
Enrollment details of CMC Academy, Salt Lake branch and its % contributions to total number of enrollments in West Bengal.

| Year | Number of Enrollments | | | % Contribution of Salt Lake Branch |
	CMC, Salt Lake	CMC, Konnagar	CMC Ltd, West Bengal	
2003	2150	2367	7681	28% (aprox.)
2004	1823	2589	8298	22% (aprox.)
2005	2220	1972	8548	26% (aprox.)
2006	2445	2874	9064	27% (aprox.)
2007	2699	2543	9342	29% (aprox.)
2008	2982	3764	9634	31% (aprox.)
2009	2199	3463	10022	22% (aprox.)
2010	2558	2832	10640	24% (aprox.)
2011	2062	3777	10866	19% (aprox.)
2012	114	4198	11415	1% (aprox.)

Source: CMC Ltd, Regional Head Office – Eastern Zone.

The change in business acquisition volume of the Salt Lake campus despite operational, administrative and strategic similarities provided an opportunity of research. It was during that research that conclusions were reached about features of advertising in IT training institutions which have been put up in this article.

2. Literature Review:

i) Zemsky and Eisenstein (2000) wanted to explore if there is a relation between the expenses for training and the increase in the use of technology.
In order to find out the relation between the degree of use of technology and the demand for training, the researchers attempted to analyze the technical environment of the firms and the investments made by the employers for training employees. They reached the conclusion that there is a direct relation between the degree of the technology used and the expenses for training.

ii) Ivergard (2000) wanted to judge if the requirements for the training programs are met or not and the importance of the service delivery of training programs. Through his research he reached the conclusion that demand for training will increase if the skill requirements of the trainees are being met through training. He also concluded that a training program can become more effective if the service delivery is done by considering the existing culture of the organization.

iii) Payton (2000) with the objective to judge the factors on which the demand and supply of technically skilled workers depended started a research. He reached the conclusion that the demand and supply for technically skilled workers depend on the application of the theory of social contract between the employer and the employee, the use of technology, restructuring the work force and training the workers adequately.

3. Methodology:

3.1 Research Questions:

As indicated in the introduction part, the research questions considered for finding the constituents and features of advertising in IT training institutions is as follows:

1) What media of advertising activities caught the attention of the existing students to enquire about the course and the branch?
2) What are the features of advertising because of which these have been noticed by students?

3.2 Data:

Equal number of students from both the campuses i.e. 75 students from each campus took part in a survey. The data received from the survey was put under cross tabulation from the point of view of demographic factors of course enrolled into and in some cases age wise. This enabled to explore responses of each and every demographic group and explore if any particular demographic section has significantly different opinions about the same matter/ factors or not. Such cross tabulation of responses also helped to explore the concentration of

a variable around a particular group, if any, the main objective being, studying responses and its deviations from four different standpoints. Also the data captured has been put under statistical analysis (T-test analysis) to examine the statistical relation between the data from the two centres. This is done to capture those relations between the various portions of the data that may not seem to have a significant relation by a superficial study but actually may have a statistical relation.

A summary of distribution of demographic variables of respondents participating in the survey are as follows:

i) **Distribution of Age:** 139 (92%) respondents are young falling under the age group of 20 years and below to 40 years. 7 (5%) were middle aged falling under the age group of 41 to 50 years and 4 (3%) were from the heading of seniors falling under the age group of 51 years and above.

ii) **Gender Profile:** Among the respondents 104 (69%) were male and 46 (31%) were female.

iii) **Performance of Participating Students:** 46 (30%) students were falling under the category of 40% to 59% marks comprising the group of low marks students. 104 (69%) students were falling under the category of 60% to 76% and above marks and NA comprising section of high marks students.

iv) **Disciplines of Study:** 15 respondents were chosen from each of the five disciplines (MCA, BCA, PG and UG Diploma, Short Term Courses) from each of the centres to participate in the survey.

4. Results and Discussions:

Questionnaire required respondents to rate their satisfaction with respect to academic & non-academic factors as well as overall satisfaction with the campus. From these ratings (of individual students) average scores for each factor have been estimated for each campus and compared. Apart from the comparison of absolute mean satisfaction scores, statistical significance of different scores is also tested through t-test (of the mean satisfaction score). For Null Hypothesis was that there is no significant difference in satisfaction between the two campuses and variance of satisfaction rating are unequal. Based on such premises null hypothesis is tested at 95% confidence level. Finally it is on basis of all the above analysis, that research questions have been answered and conclusions reached. A discussion on the findings is as follows:

a) **Effectiveness of Medium of Advertising of CMC:**

In Konnagar campus only 6 students said that they have not seen advertisements of CMC that made them enquire about courses compared to 43 students of Salt Lake campus.

In Salt Lake branch, students had seen advertisements of CMC (that made them enquire about courses) in newspapers (2.1), hoardings (2.7) and banners (3.4) whereas students

of Konnagar branch had seen such advertisements in education fairs (1.2), newspaper (2.1) and radio (2.9).

b) **Comparison of Visibility of Advertisements of CMC in Various Media with Competitors:**

In this study visibility of advertisements of CMC were compared with its competitors like NIIT and BRAINWARE.

According to students of Salt Lake centre, advertisements of CMC have been seen mostly in banners (29.0), seminars (28.0) and newspapers (27.0). Advertisements of NIIT have mostly been seen in hoarding (70.0), newspapers (68.0) and seminars (55.0). Advertisements of BRAINWARE have mostly been seen in hoarding (65.0), newspapers (63.0) and seminars (60.0).

According to students of Konnagar centre, advertisements of CMC have mostly been seen in newspapers and hoardings (59.0), banners (55.0) and seminars (52.0), advertisements of NIIT have mostly been seen in newspapers (69.0), hoardings (51.0) and banners (40.0) and advertisements of BRAINWARE have mostly been seen in newspapers (68.0), hoardings (46.0) and banners (43.0).

c) **Comparison of Advertisements of CMC and its Competitors:**

According to students of Salt Lake branch, primary features of advertisements of CMC are frequency (1.8), distinguishability (1.4) and sharing relevant information (1.4) respectively. Those of NIIT are distinguishability (5.0) and frequency (4.6) respectively. Those of BRAINWARE are distinguishability (4.0) and frequency (3.4) respectively.

According to students of Konnagar branch, primary features of advertisements of CMC are distinguishability (4.0) and frequency (3.8) respectively. Those of NIIT are distinguishability (2.8) and frequency (2.4) respectively. Those of BRAINWARE are distinguishability (3.0) and transparency (1.8) respectively**.**

5. **Conclusions and Recommendations:**

    5.1 Conclusions:

    43 students in Salt Lake branch, out of which 12 were Short Term Course students, said that they had not seen advertisements of CMC which lead them to enquire about courses compared to 6 students of Konnagar branch.

    Those noticing advertisements in Salt Lake centre ranked banner (1), seminars (2) and newspapers (3) as the most effective medium. In Konnagar newspapers (1), hoardings (1), banners (2) and seminars (3) emerged as the most important medium.

    Students from both centres rated transparency among the least important feature of CMC's advertisements. Sharing relevant information was rated as the second most unimportant feature of CMC's advertisements in Salt Lake centre.

    More importantly, only 5.33% (4) students in Salt Lake centre rated convincing advertisement an important factor influencing selection of branch and assigned ranks from 1 to 3 compared to 46% (34) in Konnagar centre.

5.2 Recommendations:

There are three aspects of CMC's advertisements. Firstly, for advertisements also there are centralized policies. Same advertisement is getting published everywhere. It is getting noticed in Konnagar but not to that extent in Salt Lake. Secondly, mediums selected by students in both branches prove that localized advertising mostly attracts students. This proves that more of local advertising should be done in Salt Lake through advertisements in local newspapers and television channels. This also questions the central policy behind everything.

Moreover, there is room for improvement in advertising through seminars (rated 6th most important medium) and setting up kiosks (rated 7th most important medium).

Secondly, low rating of transparency and sharing relevant information proves that the matter of advertisements needs to be altered.

Thirdly, Short Term Course students are depending on impulses for getting admitted if they are not depending on visibility of advertisements. This is because such students stay in the institute for a short time and are usually influenced to get admitted to fill the skill gap in them. This impulsive buying behavior can be converted into planned buying through increasing local advertisements in the IT hub in Sector V. The working executives who require short term courses to fill up the skill gap in them can be tapped easily and sales of slots of short term courses can be rocketed.

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