

Marketization and Consumerism in Pakistani Higher Education: A Multimodal Discourse Analysis of Admission Brochures from Leading Lahore Universities

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Abstract

The study presents an analysis of the relationship between education and marketization that is constructed through admission brochures advertised by the leading universities of Lahore. A total of 29 Admission brochures from five leading Lahore universities (LUMS, FAST, FCCU, UMT, and UCP) advertised in 2024 were selected purposively as data for qualitative analysis. By applying the multimodal analysis of Kress & van Leeuwen (2006), the study delves into the multimodal strategies used by these institutions to attract students in an increasingly competitive educational landscape and for the success of higher education. The results indicate that by using language and semiotic means as a tool, universities market themselves as brands and target students as consumers to influence their choice of selection. FC and UMT reflected a career-oriented approach being inclusive of female students, while LUMS, FCCU, and FAST reflected attracting clients for radiant ambiance through visual elements, color typography and pictorial representation of satisfied and successful university's alumni together with linguistic choices. The strategic utilization of linguistic and visual features significantly contributes to the broader discussion of neoliberalism, educational branding, and use of multimodal resources, conforming to market-oriented practices. Additionally, the research offers policymakers and university administrators' valuable insights into traversing complexities of today's higher education marketing transitioning towards a business model.

Keywords: Admission brochures, multimodal critical discourse analysis, leading universities, marketization, consumerism, higher education

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Introduction

Many applied linguists, particularly CDA linguists, advocate for the marketization of higher education. The encompassing form aligns with a broader understanding of the purpose of higher education, as the term 'university' originates from the Latin word for 'whole' (Palfreyman and Temple, 2017). This is especially important because the role of higher education institutions, as well as the vision they present are being debated. Rustan (2009) noted that advertising brochures are major informative signs used by customers to estimate product quality and inspire advertising behavior. Universities have used websites to provide information, present themselves to the public, and promote their identities and missions since the internet became widely available (Zhang and O'Halloran, 2012, p.88). Words such as customers, client, market, mission statement, strategic plan, and corporate identity are found in university discourse. Advertisements provide more than just information to students, as they are now targeted as consumers. The lines between 'telling' and 'selling' have now become obscured (Teo, 2007).

It is noteworthy to shed light on Pakistan's higher education institutions. Pakistan's public higher education system is not in good shape (Abbasi, 2020). According to HEC (2020), out of 211 universities in Pakistan, 128 are public and 83 are private. Higher education is currently promoted as a "product" to attract prospective customers (Fairclough, 2010), compete for clients and benefits (Nasir and Shakir, 2015), and meet the needs of stakeholders by providing value. Following the trend, Pakistani universities have too incorporated marketing strategies to attract clients. Brochures, in the context of Lahore's competitive higher education system, have emerged as major places for visual and linguistic marketing and consumerism. It can help university administrators and marketing professionals develop promotional materials that strike a balance between market appeal and academic integrity. While research on marketization and higher education exists in Western contexts, however, literature in Pakistan's context remains insufficient. Especially, very few scholars look at social media advertised brochures as ideological texts due to its informal nature. Therefore, it becomes necessary to explore the relationship between education and consumerism that is constructed through advertising by prestigious universities in Pakistan's context and to determine the distinct identity that is created by these universities through marketing trends.

This study addresses that gap by investigating how leading universities in Lahore employ visual and textual strategies to reflect and reinforce market-oriented

narratives. The current research aims to achieve this objective and investigates following research questions through a multimodal perspective:

- What relationship is constructed between education and consumerism through advertising by prestigious universities of Lahore?
- How the multimodal resources are employed by the prestigious universities of Lahore to create a distinct identity of the university and its students?
- How the prestigious universities of Lahore employ language in advertisements to create a distinct identity of the university and its student?

Drawing on Kress and van Leeuwen (2006), the current study is valuable both in theory and practice. It provides a more profound understanding of marketization and consumerism. It takes into account diverse modes of communication, including text, graphics, layout, underlying themes and design elements used by these prestigious universities to portray themselves as products and key stakeholders. The study may help educational institutions learn and improve their marketing efforts while maintaining their status as providing quality education. The research can be a source of implications for higher education sector in Lahore and beyond. Finally, the study creates an interaction of education and marketing, assisting many stakeholders on making better and informed decisions that can lead to larger dialogue on the role of marketization and consumerism in higher education.

Review of the Literature

❖ Multimodal Discourse Analysis

A text is dependent upon context because the meaning of the language varies depending on the setting and function. Mode is a source of meaning that is socially constructed and culturally recognized writing, layout, pictures, gestures, music, moving visuals, conversation, and sound (Kress, 2009). Multimodal texts are defined as communications that employ more than one semiotic system or modality to communicate information. The origin of Multimodal discourse analysis began through the publication of two books. The first book was named "The Language of Displayed Art" (1994) by Michael O'Toole. The second book that contributed to the foundations of multimodal analysis is "Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Design (2006) by Gunther Kress and Theo van Leeuwen. Baker and Levon (2015, 233) propose employing Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to analyze the linguistic and visual elements of brochures to better understand their ideological

context. It largely focuses on Western contexts, leaving a gap in understanding how multimodal discourse operates in non-Western settings.

❖ **Neoliberalism and Marketization in HE**

In Western contexts, research (Fairclough, 1993; Askehave, 2007) demonstrates that university brochures, websites, and prospectuses reflect neoliberal ideologies through persuasive and promotional discourses. These materials employ various techniques (images, layout, typography) to influence how people perceive institutional worth. According to Andersson and Machin's (2014) analysis of university brochure images, universities are increasingly presented as colorful and vibrant places. Universities market themselves as a positive experience, highlighting emancipation over centralized rule. This research is their limited examination of the linguistic elements alongside visuals. Gibbs (2018) proclaimed against consumerism, saying it turns students into consumers who want degrees as commodities. Institutions are marketing the higher education (HE) experience as having commercial value. It critiques consumerism in higher education but overlooks the semiotic strategies used to construct this narrative. One significant research was held on global university branding (Delmestri and Drori, 2015) that investigated pictures, symbols, and logos used to advertise HE institutions. The research revealed differences from the West and the rest of the world. It focuses on visual branding elements but give limited attention to the interplay between visuals and language in constructing institutional identity. Chapleo (2015) examines the inception, growth, and development of higher education branding in the UK and discovers a worthy potential for branding in the HE environment. Interestingly, the university heritage factor has a greater influence on parents than on coming students (Rose and Merchant, 2017). Ren (2023) examines how neoliberal theories are established in Chinese higher education through a multidisciplinary critical discourse analysis approach. It offers a multidisciplinary discourse analysis of neoliberalism in Chinese higher education but does not specifically focus on multimodal representations in institutional marketing.

❖ **Visual Branding in Universities**

A recent study found that the university's brochures use multiple semiotic modes, highlighting the emergence of marketization and the dichotomy between various identities. Globalization and stiffer competition have led to universities transitioning to a corporate or entrepreneurial model (Zhang and O'Halloran, 2012). This requires them to market themselves and attract more fee-paying students.

Universities have evolved from prestigious educational institutions to a broader system that provides general education to a wider range of students. Universities are adjusting their promotional materials to meet market demands in response to increased competition and reduced public funding (Zhang and O'Halloran, 2012). According to Dholakia and Acciardo (2014), academic institutions are transforming into knowledge enterprises, rebranding themselves as global service providers, and changing the status of key stakeholders. They discuss the transformation of academic institutions into global service providers but do not explore how this shift is communicated through multimodal discourse.

❖ **Pakistan's Higher Education Context**

According to Shahnaz and Qadir (2019), market-driven forces are reshaping promotional practices in Pakistani universities, with admission materials strategically designed to influence student decisions. The study does not examine real textual or visual advertising materials; rather, it concentrates on the ideological perspectives of university officials. The Pakistani universities utilize advertisements to position themselves in the competitive educational market (Ibrahim, & Hussain, 2024) According to the study, advertising frequently highlight institutional status, faculty qualifications, and infrastructure in order to attract potential students, commodifying education to increase enrollment. The study lacks focus on brochures or multimodal texts. The visual or layout analysis was limited.

This study addresses that gap by analyzing how brochures visually and linguistically construct the identity of universities as market-driven knowledge enterprises. Therefore, recognizing the positive representation and marketization would facilitate our interpretation of the semiotic modes in the leading public/private university brochures, which the current research attempts to look at, specifically from the perspective of private education sector.

Methodology

The current study is purely qualitative. The qualitative research allows the researcher to emphasize comprehension by vigilant documentation including in-depth investigation of words, semiotics and other elements. Language and pictures are used to convey meaning, philosophy, and representation rather than being numerically coded. The current research is a complete visual and textual picture as

it aims to study the marketing strategies used by the leading private universities in their respective advertisement brochures.

For the purpose of current research five leading private higher education universities were selected. For the analysis of brochures advertised by these leading universities, the data was gathered from the information accessible on the official social media platforms of universities, specifically Instagram. It is a free digital platform, offering its users to share photos and videos, and socially connect with friends, family, and colleagues through visual content in any part of the world. Moreover, it has now become a vital platform for marketing and sales for many businesses. Instagram business model allows businesses with tools to create content, advertise, and target specific demographics and interests to reach the potential clients. Besides businesses and entrepreneurs, education sector too worldwide has made use of this platform to share important information and advertise their products through appealing graphics. Education sector particularly does so to attract students and parents. Due to Instagram's popularity especially among the youth and students, the current research found it feasible to gather brochures from this platform. The data was first gathered purposively, i.e., the brochures advertising spring 2024 admissions, were gathered. The universities had advertised a number of brochures (except FCCU which only advertised a single brochure), and analyzing all of them was out of the scope of the current research. For the purpose then, using quota sampling, the brochures were selected to ensure diversity and proportional representation of each group in the sample, such that only one brochure was selected from a number of brochures representing a single school/institute existing in the university. A total of 29 brochures were selected for detailed analysis. The selected leading private universities and the number of brochures selected for analysis are provided in Table 1 below:

Table 1

Number of Leading Private Universities and Selected Brochures for Analysis

Sr. #	Name of Selected Universities	No. of Selected Brochures
1	Forman Christian College University (FCCU)	01
2	University of Management Technology (UMT)	08
3	University of Central Punjab (UCP)	06
4	Foundation for Advancement of Science and Technology (FAST-NUCES)	05
5	Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS)	09

The current study uses multimodal critical discourse analysis (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006) as an analytical framework to unravel marketization employed through advertisement. It seeks to explore how different modes interact and generate meaning in discourse. Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) social semiotic framework of visual grammar includes three Metafunctions: 1) Representational Metafunctions: ideational meta-function which analyzes what is being represented in the university brochure by using visuals text and actions stated indirectly. 2) Interactive Metafunctions: Ideational meta-function analyzes the relationship between the producer and viewer through language, gaze and layout choices. 3) Compositional Metafunctions: Textual meta-function analyzes structure, layout and hierarchy in brochures. The three Metafunctions were applied on each selected brochure to analyze the relationship between higher education and consumerism through the interplay of visual and textual elements present in the selected brochures.

Analysis and Discussion

This section presents a comprehensive multimodal discourse analysis of the admission brochures advertised by the leading universities of Lahore in order to achieve the research objectives.

❖ Forman Christian College and University (FCCU)

Opening the spring admissions for Bachelor programs for the year 2024, Forman Christian College University (FCCU) advertised a single post.



Figure 1

Representational Metafunctions: The representational Metafunctions in this brochure can be realized through speech process, whereas no clear action and reactional processes are visible. The brochure has a picture of the university campus in the background with a few students enjoying in the ground. The primary focus of the brochure is text, which includes a big logo of the university in blue color, followed by the university tag line “A transformative liberal arts university”, which includes adjectives like ‘transformative’ followed by three nouns. This is a politeness strategy namely declaration. The black font color in combination with small letter space in this tagline shows that though the university has authority, it is not essential as compared to the rest of the information. The tagline is followed by a combination of blue and yellow fonts to call for attention that the university is opening its gate for new students, building trust, harmony, optimism and creativity among those interested. The brochure also mentions the motto of the university using a combination of nouns and verb, which is again a positive politeness strategy.

Again, in blue color, the brochure mentions in block letters “BACHELOR’S PROGRAMS” followed by a list of the programs being offered which suggests that the admission call is for those wanting to enroll themselves in bachelors. At the bottom, the brochure also mentions that financial aid and scholarships are also being offered by the university for those who are unable to pay their fee and have outstanding results. Overall, the speech process shows a combination of nouns, adjectives and verbs, and uses politeness strategies in order to attract the students and uses a very simple brochure to convey to the point information.

Interactive Metafunctions: In terms of the interactive Metafunctions, the brochure uses long shot of the university while none of the student is looking in front of the camera suggesting the observer to take an aerial view of the university and focus only on the specifics. Additionally, within the vertical dimension, equal eye level frame is used in the brochure to portray the equal treatment given at the university. The brochure uses a gradient background with hexagonal shapes and a medium modality with not overly exposed and overly saturated graphics.

Compositional Metafunctions: The compositional Metafunctions is realized through the logo placed at the top left corner, the university motto and call to admission occupies top space to represent the authority and optimism of the university, while the tabs for financial and scholarships at the bottom suggest the inclusive policies of the university for the financially overburdened and outshining

students so that they can have access to quality education as well. In terms of salience adding to the compositional meaning, the brochure focuses on “FCCU admissions spring 2024” in block letters which suggests that this is the main information, while rest of the information is secondary.

❖ University of Management and Technology (UMT)

University of Management and Technology opened its Spring Admissions for 2024 by posting a series of brochures on its official social media platforms. On its official Instagram page, UMT advertised one main brochure which is a call for admission. 5 more posts were advertised representing the existing departments of the university and programs offered by them.

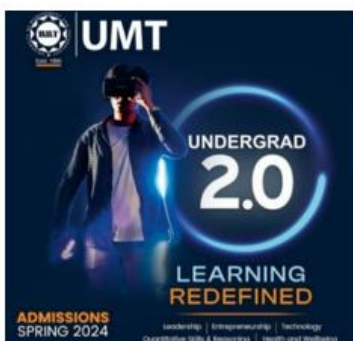


Figure 2



Figure 3



Figure 4



Figure 5



Figure 6



Figure 7



Figure 8



Figure 9



Figure 10



Figure 11



Figure 12



Figure 13

Representative Metafunctions: The main brochure (figure 2) advertised by UMT shows a futuristic character which is a non-transactional action process. The character makes an indirect gaze with the viewers as he is wearing a pair of virtual reality (VR) glasses. Complementing the speech process “learning redefined”, the participant moves forward his leg, portraying that UMT offers contemporary pedagogical learning and advanced technology to its students. Moreover, the brochure conveys the additional perks the university has to offer like “leadership, entrepreneurship, technology, quantitative skills and reasoning, and health and well-being”. To thrive in the fast-paced life of the 21st century, learning these skills have become essential for students, and UMT makes it clear in its official brochure that it is going to provide all of these skills to its students. Figures 3, 4, and 5 were clubbed in a single post by UMT to represent School of Science Department. The phrases “breaking boundaries” and “making discoveries” in figure 3 are punch lines (primary text) for intensification and gaining the attention of the target audience. In combination with a participant facing away from the viewers in the foreground and wearing a space costume and a bag pack, the brochure suggests that if the students want to excel in future and look beyond the societal norms, UMT is the right place for them. At a macro level, the brochure suggests that UMT will enable its students to become globally competitive. The brochure includes a neon purple background to attract the students which again represents the artificial intelligence future. The background extends in figure 4 and 5, however it dims to focus on the speech process which includes a list of programs being offered.

Figure 6 and 7 is another set of brochures published by UMT to publicize its School of Professional Psychology Department. The brochure in figure 6 includes a participant gazing directly towards the audience and carries a book as means. The phrase “shaping minds that transform lives” consists a combination of verbs, nouns, and demonstrative. Additionally, using a theme of yellow, red, and white, the phrase translates passion, strength, optimism, and intellect among the students. The foreground contains an image of the human brain. This particular thread overall conveys the message that UMT will open horizons for the students while positively impacting student’s lives, with top-notch psychological education.

Brochures in figure 8 and 9 represent UMTs’ Institute of Liberal Arts. The foreground is in dark blue colour with a yellow and white font captioning “breaking out of the box”. The speech process pragmatically conveys an idea that the students will explore the contemporary global academia while enabling them to think

creatively to come up with globally competitive research ideas. Figure 9 complements this brochure which mentions the main programs the students are offered at this institute. The participant in this picture looks directly towards the observer to get their attention and welcome them into their world.

Figure 10 and 11 are brochures advertising the Institute of Aviation Studies. The speech process “where dreams take flight” compliments the aeroplane shown in the foreground, and a satisfied, happy and successful female aviation pilot adds. The brochure reflects that UMT is the right place for female candidates to turn their dreams into reality. Likewise, figure 12 and 13 include a passionate and successful student as a participant working as an agriculturalist with plants used as means and are faded in the meaning-making process. The participant is gazing directly towards the audience to advertise the perks of studying at the ‘School of Food and Agricultural Sciences’. The phrase “sowing knowledge harvesting success” compliments the programs offered at the department and metaphorically represent knowledge as a seed, and success as the by-product of that seed. Overall, the tagline shows that at UMT, the students will be enabled with deep knowledge to become successful as food scientists and agriculturalists.

It is important to notice here that almost all the brochures (except figure 2) advertised by UMT include female participants. This may represent the ideology of the UMT where it targets the female audience while it breaks the socio-cultural norms in Pakistan where the education of girls is not prioritized. This shows the universities principles of being gender inclusive and giving equal opportunity to girls in education sector, while preparing them for competing in the job sector in the existing patriarchal landscape of the country.

Interactive Metafunctions: The interactive Metafunctions is realized through direct gaze of the participants as mentioned earlier. Moreover, the brochures include medium shots of the participants and complimentary objects at equal eye levels (vertical attitude) to portray the equal treatment that is being offered by the university to anyone who is interested in getting enrolled in their programs. Additionally, the brochures include saturated, illuminated, bright, and in-depth pictures, while using neon and shades of blue which are a reflection of inculcation of politeness strategies like optimism, ambition, and trust. By using these colours, high modality, and demanding gaze, the brochures interact with the audience to

catch the attention of the reader and directly welcome the students to become a part of the university.

Compositional Metafunctions: The information value includes the logo of the UMT alongside the names of its departments on the top left corner of the brochures. The color of the university' logo changes to compliment the brochures representing each department of the university. All the taglines are mentioned on left side which signifies that the university has a notable repute in offering the best programs in the country and has enabled the participants (on the right corner of the brochures) to become successful in their respective fields, while turning their dreams into reality. Saliency has been given to the taglines by using big fonts in block letters to attract the participants. Saliency has also been given to the participants with smiling faces with sharp images, while space, brain, airplane, and plants are in background.

❖ University of Central Punjab (UCP)

University of Central Punjab (UCP) posted a thread of 6 brochures on its official Instagram platform to advertise its 2024 spring admissions.



Figure 14



Figure 15



Figure 16



Figure 17



Figure 18



Figure 19

Representative Metafunctions: Representative Metafunctions can be realized through both narrative and conceptual structures with an emphasis on the speech process. The color scheme of the brochures aligns with the university logo, i.e., red, white, and blue. Figure 14 features a participant in the foreground creating vector with the reader through a non-transactional reactional process. Books and a bag pack are used as means and using an SEO keyword strategy that is used in the contemporary marketing, the brochure includes a tagline “5 reasons why UCP should be your top priority” to captivate its readers. The tagline includes number

strategy (5), nouns (reasons, priority), modal verb (should), adjective (top), and possessive pronoun (your). By using active voice, the tagline marks an assertive behaviour and includes politeness strategy of reasons. Using a medium shot, the representative Metafunctions in figure 14 is also realized through symbolic attributive, where the girl with books creating a direct gaze with the audience is the carrier in the foreground, while the faded university campus is the symbolic attribute. The following figures (15, 16, 17, 18, and 9) have a similar pattern with a picture of the participants at the top, while the text is written at the bottom of the brochure. The brochures again using the SEO keyword strategy, intensifying and pervasive language outline the qualities of the university to attract the audience. Each text includes a primary text (tagline) followed by a secondary text. The texts include possessive pronoun (your) and second person pronoun (you) to directly involve the audience, as well as it creates an ideology that UCP takes care of its students interest more than any other thing. Likewise, the modal verb 'will' is used to directly captivate the mind of the readers and stress on the benefits of studying at UCP, while this modality marker also represents the use of promise and optimism as politeness strategies.

The primary texts include compound words, signifying intensity and hyperbole. For instance, in figure 15, take-off is used metaphorically, meaning that if you get enrolled at UCP, you will be able to build an outstanding career. The secondary text directs the reader's attention towards the "career development" opportunities the students will be enabled with UCP's programs. The text compliments the picture at the top, where the participants are working on the laptop (means); signifying career development programs. In figure 16, the stress is on the noun "real-world" to portray that the students will be exposed through "workshops, scholarships, and research programs" that will prepare them for practical applications of their knowledge, leading to a remarkable career "as soon as" they graduate. "As soon as" is again dramatization of the process to attract the students. The secondary text in figure 17 use adverb of degree "actually" along with the verb "care" to emphasize that UCP cares about its students and only offers them the best. Furthermore, figure 18 attracts the audience through announcement of scholarship programs to include those with financial burden as well as those who have talent. Lastly, the brochures construct a positive identity by using the adjective "amazing" for the university. The participants are shown through medium shots, who are all happy, satisfied and focused at UCP to build a career for themselves.

Interactive Metafunctions: In figure 14, the participant is looking directly towards the viewers, while the rest of the brochures include participants which create offer instead of demand. The medium shots in figures 14, 15, 16, 17 and 18 give salience to the products, which are the diverse range of activities being offered by the university. Figures 14, 16, and 19 are shot from a frontal angle, while the remaining images have oblique angle which portrays a relationship of subordination. The brochures are saturated, illuminated, and bright, as well as they include color differentiation and modulation techniques. The texts use a combination of blue and red fonts, where red has been used make the readers attentive while arising a sense of ambition, assertiveness, and excitement among its readers. On the other hand, blue color has been used to build brand trust and reliability. Additionally, the text is written against a white background to keep the design minimal and reader friendly.

Compositional Metafunctions: The brochures give salience to the text against a white background which is positioned at the bottom in figures 15, 16, 17, 18, and 19. In the visuals, foreground in all the images include participants performing different activities which are captured through medium shots as already mentioned. These participants are given salience to highlight that the incoming students will also receive similar treatment with top-notch educational and co-curricular services to excel in the fast-paced life of 21st century. Additionally, the information value is realized through ideal-real relationship where the participants are positioned at the top while the text is at the bottom. This narrates that the text is dependent on the pictures and an image of the university is created that the university only offers what works in the current educational space while having a proven record.

❖ **Foundation for Advancement of Science and Technology (FAST NUCES)**

Foundation for Advancement of Science and Technology (FAST NUCES) advertised a series of brochures to announce opening of spring admissions 2024 at the university. The university first announced the call for MS/PHD admissions in December 2023 and the last date to apply was December 31st, however, the date extended with a series of new posts in which the brochures advertised different programs being offered at the university. For the purpose of this research only 5 brochures advertised in January were selected, on the basis of proportional representation of programs and brochure format.

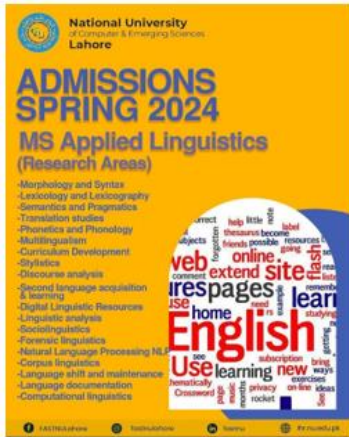


Figure 20

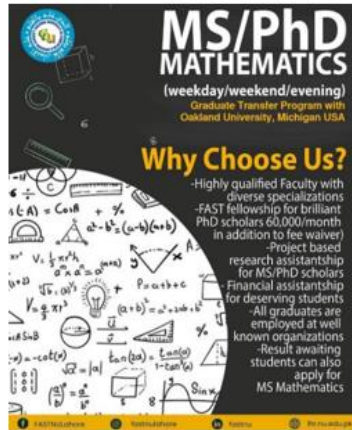


Figure 21



Figure 22



Figure 23



Figure 24

Representative Metafunctions: The representative Metafunctions can be realized mainly through speech process. Figure 20 includes a logo of the university, followed by the headline “admissions spring 2024” and the program the admission is open for “MS Applied Linguistics”. The secondary text includes a list of research areas which the students can opt for while studying at FAST. The visual image at the bottom right corner of the brochure includes a list of nouns and verbs which signify the intricacies of Linguistics the students will be learning during the course of their degree. Figure 21 includes a headline to grab attention towards the program being listed in the brochure, followed by different time slots the program is being offered. It tactically includes information on the transfer program to study mathematics in USA, to arise a sense of ambition among the readers. It further uses politeness strategy of reason “why choose us?” to create attention, while using an inclusive pronoun “us”. The following lists includes adverbs (highly), adjectives (qualified and diverse) to create a positive picture of its faculty. Furthermore, the university offers fellowship to “brilliant” (adjective) PhD scholars which is a nominalization process. Another adjective used in the brochure is “deserving” to include the financially burdened students to avail the opportunity for studying at leading university of Lahore. These adjectives and adverbs are used as politeness strategy of concern for hearer wants and a possible use of language to intensify the situation. The text includes categorical modality by using relational transitivity verb “are” and an action transitive phrase in “all graduates are employed at well-known organizations”. The visual image only includes a combination of mathematical formulas to compliment the text.

The visual in Figure 22 includes a civil engineer with machinery as means in the background and he is creating a vector through non-transactional action process, assuming he is directing the workers (who are absent in the current picture) at the site (locative). The speech process only includes a call for admissions, and the program being offered which in this brochure is “MS Civil Engineering”, followed by a secondary text which includes the range of areas the students will be exploring for practical application to stay to the point. Figures 20, 21, and 22 also include a row of information at the bottom which includes the usernames of university’s official social media platforms and website where the audience and enrolled students can get more information. It is usually considered a good technique for the ease of the audience in the marketing strategy as it increases the engagement of the brands as well.

The brochures in Figure 23 and 24 have a similar layout with a visual image at the top right corner, and the text is positioned in the centre of left margin. While figures 20 and 22 include the headline “admissions spring 2024” on the left corner of the brochure, these figures mention the headline at the bottom right corner. The speech process is realized through a simple mention of the respective department and the program being offered in the individual brochures. At the bottom, the brochure again mentions additional information for contacting the university. It is pertinent to notice that figure 22, 23, and 24 also include an action button “apply now” which is used in marketing strategy to create excitement and a sense of urgency. The visuals in both the figures include business analytical charts with participants hands working on them to showcase what the students will be learning in these programs.

Interactive Metafunctions: The interactive Metafunctions is realized in figure 22, 23, and 24 through medium angle shots. Additionally, a range of modality has been used in the brochures, especially, high saturation, illumination, brightness, and color differentiation. By using a combination of yellow and red (figure 20), the brochure creates optimism among its readers. In figure 21, black and white combination has been used which is high color differentiation while yellow fonts are calling for attention (high modulation). Likewise, in the following figures, a combination of neon and primary colours have been used to increase graphic text readability and attract the viewers (high modulation). Additionally, the graphics are contextualized according to the programs being offered to complement each other in the process of meaning-making.

Compositional Metafunctions: The brochures give salience to texts and font colours as the text occupies 2/3 space in the brochures. Additionally, the primary text font size is larger than the secondary text (figure 20, 21, and 22).

❖ Lahore University of Management and Sciences (LUMS)

Lahore University of Management and Sciences advertised a number of spring admissions 2024 brochures on its official Instagram page. Out of more than 35 brochures, 9 brochures which represent undergraduate programmes and what it offers to its students, and existing departments at LUMS were selected for analysis.



Figure 25



Figure 26



Figure 27

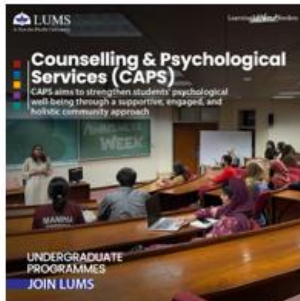


Figure 28



Figure 29



Figure 30



Figure 31



Figure 32



Figure 33

Representative Metafunctions: Figures 25-29 were posted separately to advertise call for admissions in undergraduate programs, while figures 30-33 represent respective departments of the university. These figures use university campus (figures 25, 31 and 32), classroom (figures 26 and 33), seminar room (figures 27 and 28), and a football tennis field (figure 29) as locative. Figure 25 includes 3 participants, where the right and left participants create a vector and generate demand through direct gaze, while the participant in the centre is looking straight in the direction of their walk. The students are shown roaming around the campus enjoying the university life with their friends. Likewise, figure 26, 28 and 33 show a number of students as participants looking at the speaker/instructor or blackboard. Figure 26 portrays that the students are focused on their studies, learning from capable instructors. The picture is used to compliment the tagline “academic excellence”, consisting of combination of an adjective and noun, and secondary text. The secondary text uses persuasive techniques to attract the students. Interestingly, the students are nominalized as “leaders” and “changemakers”. These nouns suggest that the students enrolled here are given exposure in order to lead the world, especially to address “societal challenges”, which have become the focus of attention in recent times. Figure 28 creates attention towards the psychological needs of the students. In the recent times, mental health has been discussed widely, and is being incorporated in various educational, health and recruitment programs. The brochure portrays that LUMS acknowledges the psychological needs of the students and provides services through “supportive, engaged, and holistic community approach”. The secondary text uses a combination of adjective, verb, and adverb to modify the following noun while establishing ethos. The secondary text also uses

politeness strategy of promise by aiming to strengthen the psychological needs of students.

Figure 27 includes a group of male and female students creating a vector with the audience (direct gaze) to represent the diversity of students, complementing the headline “office of accessibility and inclusion”, while bringing attention towards “equal opportunities” for students regardless of their gender and background. The inclusive language is a politeness strategy of using in-group identity markers. Figure 29 shows students playing in the field for some recreation and remaining healthy. The participants create a transactional action and reaction process. The text includes an exclamation mark at the end of the sentence to create an excitement among the readers through use of declaration politeness strategy.

The following 4 figures, i.e., figure 30, 31, 32, and 33, all include the program name at top left corner, and a tagline at the bottom representing the aim of each of the four departments. Syed Babar Ali School of Science and engineering aims to create “globally competitive” “leaders”. Likewise, school of humanities and social sciences also aims to “shape global economies”. The intensifying wording like the adjective ‘global’ here indicates that LUMS offers top-notch education which will enable its students to create an impact at the global level. It signifies a promise (politeness strategy) the university is making while offering diverse range of programs. It is pertinent to notice that all the brochures nominalize LUMS students as ‘leaders’, indicating that those learning at LUMS will rule and lead nationally and internationally, in business, science, technology, social sciences, and educational sector. In other words, a super-ordinate relation of the LUMS alumni is being created. Additionally, the linguistic choices are building audience interest towards university programs. The text also includes modality by using modal auxiliary verb “be” (figure 31), and through the absence of any modal verbs like in figures 30, 32, and 33 as the text uses an assertive tone through active voice structures. The brochures mostly include visual images of students which represents that students are of utmost importance to the university, while they are greatly focused to excel in their academic careers.

Interactive Metafunctions: Figure 27 includes participants creating a direct contact (demand) with the audience, while in the other figures the participants create an offer with the audience. Figure 27, 28, and 29 include visuals captured through long shots, while rest of the images are captured through medium shots. As

mentioned above, the focus is mainly on the students (giving significance to the product) while they are studying and performing other recreational activities, while minimizing the background. The brochures represent attitude through horizontal vectors, i.e., frontal angles are captured in figures 25, 26, 27, 31, and 33, while the remaining images are captured through oblique angles. By using a combination of the two, the brochures arouse ambition among the readers. In terms of modality, the brochures include medium level saturation, brightness and illumination. Additionally, the background and foreground in the visuals are not completely blurred, which suggests that the university wants the reader to take a maximum view of the activities being promised by the university. Moreover, high contextualization, modulation and differentiation can be seen in the brochures as they include white texts against dark visuals.

Compositional Metafunctions: All the brochures include texts at top right corner to bring attention towards the services being offered by the university (figure 26-29) and the respective programs (figure 30-33). The text has been given enough space to give importance to the students (by-products). Additionally, by including university campus as background, the brochures give salience to the university life.

Discussion

The analysis of the brochures advertised indicates a carefully crafted and strategic shift towards adaptation of a business approach by the higher education sector of Lahore. Each university market's their respective institutes by differing number of brochures which either focus on the positive representation of the university itself, or by giving importance to the students as their consumers. While FC University advertised a single brochure, yet through the use of adjectives, and inclusive information, with a careful use of gradient background and minimal portrayal of campus life, suggests the use of results-oriented approach while establishing authority and audience trust.

UMT, UCP, FAST and LUMS were found to advertise a number of brochures. Like FC university brochure, these institutes also included a range of action words. They also used SEO strategies by including relevant keywords, appealing graphics, easy to read font, and strategic placement of text, call to action buttons and visual images. The font colours have also been strategically used in these brochures. For instance, UCP mentions "top priority" in red color to grab audience attention. Action words,

call to action buttons, SEO techniques and careful placement of visuals reinforcing the text in the brochures are a comprehensive marketing tool, often used by businesses in digital marketing to grab attention of customers (Lucid Advertising, n.d.).

The choice of images in the brochures complementing the text suggests that UMT and FAST created a vision of the future of the students by including images referencing to their careers. For instance, UMT included a female student in aviation costume with an aeroplane in the background reflecting its gender inclusive approach. Likewise, FAST included a male figure at a construction site. On the other hand, FC, UCP, and LUMS included images of students getting exposure through the campus life and its radiant ambiance. Additionally, UMT brochures reflected futuristic graphics, while LUMS radiant ambiance reflected a mix of traditional and modern approaches. This indicates that the former institutes focused on preparing the students with practical applications of their education in real world to form their careers. Contrarily, the latter institutes focused on creating a positive aura of the university, showing colourful and vibrant places to attract the students, which aligns with the results of Andersson and Machin's (2014). This is also true of the contemporary era, where students not only look for an excellent faculty and curriculum, but also the ambiance of the university holds great importance as part of their grooming and exposure.

The universities reflected women empowerment by including female students as their subjects and also showed inclusivity for financial deserving students, yet all the universities failed to be inclusive of people with disabilities and functional limitations. This vulnerable group often remains neglected in educational landscape and the current analysis reveals their further marginalization in accessing education.

Conclusion

The analysis overall indicates a noticeable transformation of the higher education sector towards a business-model approach through strategic use of linguistic and visual elements, inherent in their representational, interactive and compositional value, aligning with the remarks of Zhang and O'Halloran (2012) and Dholakia and Acciardo (2014). By adding carefully curated small and catchy taglines, the brochures advertised by the leading universities of Lahore exhibit compelling brand

strategies to attract target audience in co-education landscape. Additionally, through use of more medium shots, high modality in most of the brochures, and salience to students and careers as by-products, the brochures suggest an intentional effort to attract the potential audience as consumers of the product, i.e., respective educational institutes in the current globalized and competitive world. Though marketing techniques employed by the higher universities may prove to be beneficial in attracting students, with universities often quoting the number of students they have produced. However, the marketization trend reflects that the strategy exists merely to attract clients only rather than to educate. In other words, the results reflect strong prevalence of neo-liberalism in higher education discourse of Pakistan, where education is just for the sake of degrees rather than being a beacon of knowledge. This in the long run may not be beneficial in producing well-pup professionals and may threaten the very meaning on which educational institutes were set.

It is recommended that the educational institutes should improve marketing strategies by being inclusive of people with disabilities and maintain their status as providing quality education. Additionally, it is recommended that educational policy-makers should integrate the insights into broader quality assurance frameworks to ensure that over-marketization does not compromise quality education, and influence discussions about ethical representation and equal access in higher education. Lastly, scholars interested in the field of linguistics, multimodal discourse, communication, and marketing should further explore the trends in higher education in other media forms like YouTube and print media to strengthen the results and offer valuable insights to improve higher education system of Pakistan.

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