
ROLE OF DIGITAL AND SOCIAL MEDIA IN SEEKING ADMISSION IN HIGHER EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS (HEI) IN COIMBATORE, INDIA

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ABSTRACT

Digital and Social media has played an important role in the lives of students who seek admission in Higher Educational Institutions in Coimbatore. Students prefer online media technology to avail information about their current educational Scenario. The educational institutions also rely on social media to admit Students in various courses. Students prefer social media to attain the relevant information such as, admission fees, facilities, discipline and the course to which they can seek admission which is widely available on social media sites. This research paper aims at examining admissions in general context and impact of social media in the decision making process to seek admission in Higher Educational Institutions (HEI) in Coimbatore District of Tamilnadu. The population of the current study involves Higher Educational Institutions (HEI) which are functioning in Coimbatore. 165 students have been selected at random by using online surveys. A questionnaire has been framed and information is collected and analyzed with the help of SPSS (Statistical package for social services) and the results have been obtained. Statistical tools such as simple percentage and one way ANOVA test have been used to arrive at valid conclusion. Based on the findings, the following suggestions have been given as strategies for effective digital marketing to leverage admission of students. It is suggested that, Higher Educational Institutions (HEI) should create an authoritative Website to reflect the image of the University among the targeted audience. Higher Educational Institutions (HEI) should adopt itself to modern technology to admit students instead of following traditional methods.

Key words: Digital and Social media, HEI, Decision making, Students Admission.

1. INTRODUCTION:

Digital and Social media has played an important role in the lives of students who seek admission in Higher Educational Institutions in Coimbatore. Social networking sites (SNS) have become increasingly popular since the rise of the second generation of web-based communities (Web 2.0) because of increased collaboration and sharing between users through interactive applications such as blogs, podcasts, and live feeds. Recently, Face book has experienced surging popularity, particularly by people who use new technologies as a virtual space that complements or replaces

social interaction as “real life”. Social networks are created specifically for educational purposes as e-learning platforms which provide a unique opportunity for educators to create a sense of community among students and encourage personal interaction leading to the creation of new knowledge and a collective ethos. Students prefer online media technology to avail information about their current educational Scenario. The educational institutions also rely on social media as the target audience for them. Students prefer social media to attain the relevant information such as, admission fees, facilities, discipline and course to which they can seek admission which is widely available on social media sites. Students visit University websites, Face book, twitter, you tube and the educational information is updated which will provide participation and information exchange which further attracts new Students. There is severe competition among Educational Institutions and they have to apply modern communication techniques to reach Students. Students also seek admission through internet and they are closely linked with modern technology and education becomes open and flexible as compared to traditional educational approach. Internet enabled chat helps them to choose the educational institution and the course in which they can join so that their education will be of value to them to seek jobs in the market. The online accessibility increases educational opportunities for the Students and they learn new educational facts every day. This research paper aims at examining admissions in general context and impact of digital and social media in the decision making process to seek admission in Higher Educational Institution (HEI) in Coimbatore District of Tamilnadu.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

The following is the review of literature.

Andriani Kusumawati (2018), The number of higher educational institutions in Indonesia both public and private increased in the last decade. This research involves a large public university in Indonesia which is actively engaged in managing institutional digital marketing media particularly at the university department of marketing and public relations. Creswell's analysis model is used for analysis. Findings show that university marketing management engages with digital media since it has now become a trend in all the businesses around the globe including HEIs.

Alghizzawi, M., et. al.,(2019), This study investigates the influence of social media usage on the acceptance of e-learning platforms at the British University in Dubai. A modified Technology Acceptance Model was developed and validated for the quantitative study, which comprised data collected from 410 graduate and postgraduate students via electronic questionnaire. The findings showed that knowledge sharing, social media features and motivation to use social media systems, including Face book YouTube and Twitter, positively affected the perceived usefulness and perceived ease-of-use of e-learning platforms, which, in turn, led to increased e-learning platform acceptance by students.

Vikas Kumar(2019), Higher Educational Institutions across the world have started using social media to reach out to the prospective students as well as to interact with current students and alumni. Social media improves the communication on one hand and helps in promotional and developmental activities on the other. Present work explores the integration of social media in

different processes in Higher Educational Institutions. A comprehensive study has been carried out to identify the role of social media in different activities of the Higher Educational Institutions. A framework has been proposed to integrate the specific social media channels in different processes in the Higher Educational Institutions.

Omar salem (2020), The purpose of the study is to analyze social media marketing in higher educational institutions and determine the tools and strategies that are used by universities to promote their brands and how social media marketing affects and to strengthen the competitive advantage of HEIS. The researcher followed a systematic review process that aims to summarize, identify, and evaluate all related researches about social media marketing in HEIS. As the study indicates, Social media platforms are the most important channels to promote advertising campaigns and communicate with current and prospective students.

(Aque et al., 2021) in his article, it is found that digital marketing and economic stability are interrelated, as an online business has a significant impact on economic growth. There is a high chance that online selling affects the growth and stability of our economy. Consumer behavior has a major effect on e-commerce. Due to the convenience of the practice, e-commerce is anticipated to gain popularity. Local industries should embrace it rather than oppose this new reality. They can use digital marketing to develop a website and advertising campaigns that will put them in front of their targeted audiences. It is not tough to compete against giant corporations. It only needs a well-thought-out online strategy and a capable digital marketing business.

Alreany C. Tabuena et al (2022) in an article it is found that, effective marketing enables the collection of data to understand more about the targeted consumers, allowing advertising and other strategies to be more directed. In addition, this was initiated to deeply understand how the digital marketing strategies of online business sellers work. The researchers has identified the following themes: digitalization and digital marketing, digital and traditional modes of marketing, social media as a digital marketing strategy, information technologies as marketing tactics, e-commerce, internet, mobile, and digital marketing, preferences, and future research directions, and implications. Digital marketing has evolved into an internet advertising platform for small business owners, despite a lack of funds to update technology and harness internet development. Advertising on social media is attracting the attention of digital marketers. Because of the potential market share gains that social media marketing could give for internet marketers, it is expected that spending on social advertising will continue to grow in the coming years.

Poonam Chaudhari (2022), Consumer behavior, business models, marketing strategies, and competition capabilities have changed with the increasing use of digital technologies. Educational organizations are not exceptions to the proliferation of digitalization. This research aims to understand the use of social media platforms used by HEIS as a channel for communicating information. It aims to study the adoption of social media platforms by HEIs for increasing awareness, brand building, and activities related to CSR and fund raising. Data has been collected for two higher educational institutions (HEIs) from the United States of America and India through social media accounts, posts, followers, and websites for the fall and winter periods in the United States of America and the first half of the academic year in India, followed by content analysis.

Social Media Marketing channels such as Face book and Twitter are helping HEIs to reach out to the students in a targeted manner as per this study. Social media channels are ideal platforms for stakeholder engagement and interaction amongst the youth.

Based on the available literature, it is found that Students use social media for 10 hours per week. Comparatively, girl students use social media platforms more compared to boys while seeking admission. They have social media accounts and are able to communicate with Students worldwide who are of same interest. They share their ideas and communicate effectively in order to make scientific decisions. Social media platforms communicate with young students who depend on the internet to communicate and avail information. There is meaningful communication between Students and instructors and it is done only through social media platforms and it becomes an integral part of the life so that they can avail information and share with others. Through these social media, the needs, desires and expectations of the Students can be gratified by educational institution and live video and chats are made by them in order to obtain faith and build confidence in them. The development of education is not only limited to the methods of teaching but also to reach them. Students prefer face book media to find more information and it helps the Students to develop their personality and inter personal skills.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of this research paper is to attain the results relating to the research problem of the present study.

1. To find out the demographic profile of the respondents in the study area.
2. To test the hypotheses such as,
H01: There is no significant association between social media activities and students admission.
H02: There is no significant association between demographic variables and digital marketing towards students admission and
3. To give suitable suggestions based on the findings of the study.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

The research is a descriptive quantitative approach to obtain data from the Students who seek admission in Higher Educational Institutions in Coimbatore District of Tamilnadu. A questionnaire has been framed and information is collected and analyzed with the help of SPSS (Statistical package for social services) and the results were obtained. Statistical tools such as simple percentage and one way ANOVA test have been used to arrive at valid conclusion. The population of the current study involves selected Higher Educational Institutions (HEI) which are functioning in Coimbatore. 165 students have been selected at random by using online surveys.

4. ANALYSIS OF DATA.

With the help of the primary data collected through questionnaire, the primary data has been analysed and interpreted with the help of statistical tools.

4.1 DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE:

The following Table 1 shows the Demographic profile of the student respondents and it is very important to find out the background and profile of the students of Higher Educational Institutions (HEI) in Coimbatore. The following table shows the gender, age, education, residential and marital status of the students.

Table - 1
Demographic Profile of the respondents

S.No	Variable	Category	No. of respondents	Percentage
1.	Gender	Male	73	44%
		Female	92	56%
2.	Age	15-20	91	55%
		21-25	53	32%
		25 & above	21	13%
3.	Education	Bachelor	89	54%
		Master	58	35%
		Ph.D	18	11%
4.	Location	Urban	94	57%
		Rural	71	43%
5.	Marital Status	Single	135	82%
		Married	030	18%

Source: Primary data

From the above table it is found that out of the total 165 respondents 44% were male and 56% were female. Moreover (55%) of the respondents belong to the age group between 15 – 20 and 32% belong to the age group between 21-25 years of the age. 54% of the participants enrolled in the bachelors program and 35% enrolled in Master Program and the remaining 11% were pursuing Ph.D. With regard to residence, 57% of the participants were from urban areas and the remaining 43% of them were from rural areas. Besides that, it is found that 82% of the participants were single and 18% of them were married. Majority of the Students belong to the age between 15 to 25 years of age and they enroll in Bachelors Program and are from Urban areas and they are single and do not have family commitment.

4.2 DIGITAL AND SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE:

The following Table 2 shows the social media usage such as, social media account, facebook, twitter, instagram, you tube, reference, online chat and university website.

Table - 2
Summary of Students responses regarding digital & social media usage

Usage of Digital & Social Media	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Google Search	91	55%
Face Book	107	65%

Twitter	99	60%
Instagram	66	40%
You tube	91	55%
Reference	66	40%
Online chat	99	60%
University web site	116	70%

Source: Primary data

Table 2 contains the summary of students' responses regarding the use of digital marketing. In this regard, majority of the respondents (n= 91 or 55%) use Google to search for information, look for authentic educational related information resources. Majority of the Respondents (n= 107 or 65%) use Face book, Majority of the Respondents (n= 99 or 60%) use twitter, Majority of the Respondents (n= 66 or 40%) use Instagram, Majority of the Respondents (n= 91 or 55%) use You tube, majority of the Respondents (n= 66 or 40%) use information obtained from friends, relatives and other well wishers. Majority of the Respondents (n=99 or 60%) use on-line chat and most of the Respondent (n=166 or 70%) used Institutional web sites to find good HEI.

4.3. DIGITAL AND SOCIAL MEDIA ACTIVITIES:

Students use social media to seek admission in Higher Educational Institutions. The opinion of the Students has been collected based on the statements such as that, they look for information on computers, services, health, diet and fitness information, latest fashion trends, buy things online, create blogs and forums, participation in education, advertisement in blogs and social network, and to copy images relating to educational advertisement. The following Table 3 shows the opinion summary of student's responses regarding social media activities.

Table - 3

Summary of Students responses regarding digital and social media activities

S.No	Digital & Social media activities	Students responses				
		SA	A	UD	D	DA
1.	Look for information on computers	71	58	6	23	7
2.	Look for information on services	85	57	7	10	6
3.	Look for health diet and fitness information	95	61	2	6	1
4.	Look for latest fashion trends	97	59	1	5	3
5.	Buy things online	94	59	1	6	5
6.	Create blogs and forums	59	47	12	16	31
7.	Participate in education	92	56	0	15	2
8.	Advertisement in blogs and social network	103	56	0	3	3
9.	Copy images relating to educational advertisement.	84	62	0	9	10

Source: Primary data

SA=Strongly Agree, A=Agree, UD=Undecided, D=Disagree, SD=Strongly Disagree

Table 3 contains the summary of students' responses regarding social media usage. In this regard, a majority of respondents strongly agree that they use social media to search for information, look for authentic education related informational resources, use of social media to create blogs and forums, participate in the educational debates and discussions. Majority of the respondents indicated that they look for educational advertisements posted in educational forums and save advertised images regarding educational institutions and courses offered by them. In that way, they select Higher Educational Institutions (HEI) based on the advertisements posted by them and the advertised images were saved in order to seek admission.

Hypothesis Testing:

The following null hypothesis has been framed in order to test whether there is significant association between social media activities and students admission with the help of one way ANOVA based on Table 3

H₀: There is no significant association between social media activities and students admission.

H₁: There is significant association between social media activities and students admission.

Table 3.1
One-way ANOVA

Result Details					Table Value	Level of @ 5%
Source	SS	df	MS	F - ratio		
Between-treatments	49632.6667	4	12408.1667	173.82442	1.32	Significant
Within-treatments	2855.3333	40	71.3833			
Total	52488	44				

The F- ratio 173.82, Table Value is 1.32 the result is Significant at $p < .05$

Result

Since the table value is less than the calculated value, the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, it is concluded that there is significant association between social media activities and Students responses regarding admission. It is concluded that Students who seek admission in Higher Educational Institution (HEI) participate actively in various social media activities and there is positive association between social media activities and admission in Higher Educational Institution (HEI) in Coimbatore District of Tamilnadu.

4.4 AVAILABILITY OF ONLINE INFORMATION REGARDING HIGHER EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS:

After finding out information relating to social media activities, students select universities in which they seek admission. Once they select Higher Educational Institution (HEI), they started collecting information about the variables such as, show casing to the students by the university, course information, detailed information about courses, information about financial support,

infrastructural facilities, university Profile, rank holders, rules and regulations and their opinion has been collected and presented in Table 4.

Table - 4
Student's response regarding online information availability

S.No	Variable	SA	A	UD	D	DA
1.	Show casing to the Students by the University	102	63	0	0	0
2.	Course information	112	53	0	0	0
3.	Detailed information about courses	103	62	0	0	0
4.	Information about financial support	67	59	1	25	13
5.	Infrastructure facilities	94	59	1	6	5
6.	University Profile	155	10	0	0	0
7.	Rank Holders	72	56	0	25	12
8.	Rules and regulations	103	56	0	3	3
9	Placements	84	62	0	9	10

Source: Primary data.

SA=Strongly Agree, A=Agree, UD=Undecided, D=Disagree, SD=Strongly Disagree

Table 4 contains the summary of participants' responses regarding online information availability. As visible, majority of respondents strongly agree that they interact with other students who are studying in Higher Educational Institution (HEI) showcasing educational achievements on online platforms. These online platforms also provide a course for e-learning on their social media pages and accounts and all the other relevant information. Similarly, participants also told that the social media platforms contain all the information concerning fee structures, scholarships, financial aids and other facilities for the potential students. According to the respondents, these social media platforms also give information about Higher Educational Institution (HEI) address and their rank both on National and International levels. Besides that, Students also revealed that due to the availability of online information, they are capable of estimating all the educational expenditure and information about all the disciplines being taught in Higher Educational Institution (HEI). Thus social media sites have largely facilitated the information gathering process through the ease of access and direct communication with Higher Educational Institution (HEI).

4.5 DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS AND DIGITAL MARKETING:

The researcher is keen in finding out whether demographic variables such as, gender, age, education, marital status and place of residence have any influence on digital marketing modes such as, attitude towards digital marketing, content marketing, e-mail marketing, search engine advertising and social media in seeking admission in Higher Educational Institution (HEI). The following hypothesis has been framed to test whether there is any association between demographic variables and digital marketing which results in student's admission in Higher Educational Institution (HEI) with the help of one way ANOVA.

Hypothesis Testing:

H₀: There is no significant association between demographic variables and digital marketing towards students admission.

H₁: There is significant association between demographic variables and digital marketing towards student's admission.

Table - 5**One way analysis of variance to test the difference based on Demographic characteristics**

S.No	Variables	Influence of social media on students admission				
		Attitude toward social media. marketing	Content Marketing	Email Marketing	Search Engine Advertising	Online chat.
1.	Gender	25	5	15	18	102
2.	Age	37	18	16	27	67
3.	Education	28	7	21	4	105
4.	Marital Status	14	21	15	18	97
5.	Residence	15	10	18	19	103

Source: Primary data

Table 5.1
One Way ANOVA

Result Details					Table Value	Level of @ 5%
Source	SS	df	MS	F - ratio		
Between-treatments	24210.8	4	6052.7	64.97102	1.70	Significant
Within-treatments	1863.2	20	93.16			
Total	26074	24				

The F- ratio 64.97, Table Value is 1.70 the result is Significant at $p < .05$

Result

Since the table value is less than the calculated value, the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, it is concluded that there is a significant association between demographic variables and digital marketing towards student's admission. There is a strong positive association between Digital Social Media Activities and Students admission based on demographical data in seeking admission in Higher Educational Institution (HEI). From the above results, it is found that social media marketing has strong influence in seeking admission in Higher Educational Institution (HEI) irrespective of the demographic profile.

Findings of the Study

- With regard to demographic profile, majority of the students are female aged between 15 to 20 years of age who seek admission for Bachelors Degree, they are from urban area and most of them are unmarried or single.

- With regard to usage of social media, it is found that more than 60% of the students use Face Book, twitter, internet chat and Higher Educational Institution (HEI) websites.
- With regard to social media activities, based on the opinion, majority of respondents strongly agree that they use social media to search for information, look for authentic education related informational resources, use social media to create blogs and forums, participate in the educational debates and discussions. These respondents also indicated that they take educational advertisements posted in educational forums and save advertised images regarding educational institutions and courses offered by them. One way ANOVA test has been conducted to test the hypothesis and it is found that the table value is less than the calculated value, the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, it is concluded that there is significant association between social media activities and Students response regarding admission
- With regard to availability of online information regarding Higher Educational Institutions (HEI) it is found that majority of the respondents strongly agree that they interact with other students showcasing educational achievements on online platforms. These online platforms also provide a course for e-learning on their social media pages and accounts and all the other relevant information. Similarly, participants also told that the social media platforms contain all the information concerning fee structures, scholarships, financial aids and other facilities for the potential students. Thus social media sites have largely facilitated the information gathering process through the ease of access and direct communication with the concerned educational authority.
- To find out whether there is any association between demographic characteristics and Digital marketing in seeking admission, a null hypothesis has been framed to test whether there is any association between demographic variables and social media marketing which results in student's admission with the help of One way ANOVA. It is found that the table value is less than the calculated value, the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, it is concluded that there is a significant association between demographic variables and social media marketing towards student's admission and the Hypothesis is accepted. There is a strong positive association between Digital Social Media Activities and Students admission based on demographical data.

6. SUGGESTIONS:

Based on the findings, the following suggestions have been given as strategies for effective digital marketing to find admission in Higher Education Institutions in Coimbatore District. It is suggested that ,Higher Educational Institution (HEI) should create an authoritative Web site to reflect the image of the Higher Education Institutions the targeted audience. Google display and video advertising has to be used to raise brand awareness. Social media marketing has the ability to connect new audiences, engage with existing customers and grow on following the Students who seek admission. Social media platforms such as Facebook, instagram, snapchat should be used to reach the targeted audience. We can make the Students to interact through likes, shares and comments.

7. CONCLUSION:

Students look for Higher educational Institutions that make them better and adapt them to changing technology like web 3.0. The parents also feel that the life of their children is to be safe and secure. Effective marketing strategies have to be adopted to meet the needs of the students and provide a sense of security to parents. By analyzing the latest trends among students and online models we can reach the students effectively by creating a domain, website designing Browser, search engines and social media marketing. Higher Educational Institution (HEI) should adopt itself to modern technology to admit students instead of following traditional methods.

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