Social Media as A Tool for Higher Education Selection - Innovations and Sustainability in Digital Decision-Making, Chennai, India

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Abstract— **Increased social media usage has affected college research and selection for prospective students. Social networking has become popular for undergraduate admissions. These innovations have helped prospective students access information, connect with institutions, and choose academic choices. Chennai students, known for their competitive and diverse educational system, use social media. Students in Chennai increasingly use these sites to review institutions. Education institutions use digital technologies to recruit students. Digital technology include personalized marketing and virtual college tours. Social media affects higher education institution choices in many ways, but innovation and sustainability are most important. Social media influences prospective students' perceptions of educational institutions, according to this research. This research explores social media's influence to understand the issue. Throughout investigation, qualitative and quantitative data are collected. A research concluded that targeted advertising, live-streamed events, and virtual campus tours boost college admissions. Students may feel more connected to campus life and academic opportunities if institutions use these tools. This may alter schoolchildren's thinking and choices. It requires thinking. Social media in higher education may impair sustainability, according to studies. Maintaining effective and lucrative digital communication strategies is difficult due to changing social media algorithms, user data privacy concerns, and content upgrades. Firms get comprehensive sustainability-focused social media strategy recommendations after the research.**

Keywords— ***Social Media, Higher Education, Decision-Making, Digital Tools, Sustainability, Innovation***

I. INTRODUCTION

The rise of social media has changed many facets of contemporary life. The growth of these platforms caused these modifications. The way higher education decisions are made is one of several factors. Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn allow prospective students to research schools [1-2]. These platforms provide this information. This access has allowed students and educational institutions to research and plan their futures, allowing them to show themselves in a new way (Smith & Jones, 2020). Over many decades, higher education marketing tactics have changed. Transition has happened. Universities and other educational institutions used to visit campuses, distribute pamphlets, and send direct mail to potential students. Although effective, these strategies have restrictions on the audience they can reach and the engagement they can generate. Despite their effectiveness, these approaches have drawbacks. Smith and Jones found that digital technology and the internet changed the paradigm in 2020. This transition led to institutional websites, online brochures, and email marketing. Educational institutions' marketing techniques changed significantly once social media was introduced in the mid-2000s. Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, and Instagram allowed schools to reach potential students in new ways. These platforms enabled new communication avenues. Multiple channels enabled dynamic, engaging, and tailored communication that was before impossible. This was substantial progress. Social media channels allowed the school to directly contact with prospective students, increasing exposure to its message. According to Williams (2019), the following are some of the reasons why educational institutions and other organizations related to higher education are increasingly using social media in their marketing efforts [2-3].

The rise of social media has changed how prospective students assess and pick schools. Social networking has caused this change. Social media platforms allow users to produce content and participate in real-time discussions, unlike conventional marketing tactics. This distinguishes social media platforms from traditional marketing tactics. This is a major advantage over typical marketing methods. Students contemplating a university might learn a lot about it by exploring many social media channels. This material is available in many forms. This category includes numerous forms of material. This includes academic papers, student ratings, and program participant remarks. However, this category may not cover all accessible information. This growth has led to a better-informed and participant-based decision-making process. Social media provides real insights into college students' academic experiences and lifestyles, which is one of its biggest benefits. This is one of many advantages of social media. Photographs, videos, and live feeds of campus life might help prospective students make better informed decisions. We do this to help people make better judgments. Traditional marketing materials frequently present a well curated collegiate life (Baker & Lee, 2023). These records show a quite different image. Social media allows schools

to tailor their communications with potential students. Important new development. By targeting demographics with algorithm-driven content suggestions and targeted advertising, firms can personalize their message to each person's preferences and interests. Tailor-made advertising allows this. This may help firms reach more individuals. According to Green (2024), personalization promotes audience relevance and engagement [4-6].

Several attempts are underway to improve the recruitment process. Social networking is used to choose college candidates, which led to these programs. All these modifications aim to provide potential students more enjoyable and instructive experiences. Social media platforms' interactive and multimedia features enable this. Virtual campus tours are one of the most significant technology advances. There are many more technical advances that shaped the future. These visits provide prospective students a complete picture of the school's resources and services. This is done using 360-degree video and AR. Students who cannot attend classes may take a virtual tour of the university's residential halls, academic buildings, and recreational facilities throughout the academic year. They can accomplish this without leaving home because of this. Parker and Mills (2024) found that this notion is especially useful when face-to-face connections are not possible owing to budgetary or travel constraints. This idea has proven beneficial in circumstances like these. One other innovation is live-streamed events. Virtual open houses and student-instructor Q&As are included. Student applicants may ask questions and interact with university officials in real time at these events [7-10]. Live streaming events may increase information accessibility and availability in educational institutions, according to Taylor and Robinson (2023). There are student activities, academic lectures, and campus visits. Live streaming is an option for some events. Businesses may build connections with certain groups utilizing social media's vast targeting opportunities. This is accomplished by using the many options available. The demographics, interests, and habits of target groups are considered while making these decisions. This concentrated method allows educational institutions to target potential students who are most likely to be interested in their programs with targeted ads and information. Institutions can recruit students most interested in their studies. Educational institutions may target prospective students using this strategy. For instance, high school students interested in STEM disciplines may be sent to university engineering programs (Scott & Allen, 2025). Consider that the university may prioritize certain potential pupils [11-15].

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In recent years, higher education has increasingly used social media for marketing and recruitment. Educational institutions utilize numerous channels to emphasize campus life, academic programs, and student successes. Promoting these things is why these sites exist. Williams (2019) found that prospective students are increasingly using Facebook and Twitter to receive real-time information and honest feedback. This investigation's conclusions were released in 2019. This allows for many

developments. These innovations include virtual campus tours, interactive live sessions with students and faculty, and user-data-driven advertising. These ideas are possible thanks to social media. These innovations have greatly boosted schooling. These are only a handful of the countless breakthroughs accomplished throughout history. Many development chances have existed throughout history. According to Baker and Lee (2023), these technologies boost engagement and allow prospective students to participate in more immersive, customized experiences. Social media platforms' "sustainability" refers to their long-term success. This potential will make these platforms lucrative in the future. According to Lee and Johnson (2021), this includes the capacity to adapt to platform changes, handle user data privacy problems, and maintain user preferences as they change over time. Companies must innovate while balancing ethical and practical considerations to utilize social media effectively. Businesses can only benefit from social media this way. They can only utilize social media effectively this way.

❖ **How does social media affect student decisions and academic performance? To gather people**

The decisions prospective students make concerning higher education and social media are closely related. This link is strong. In addition to user content, platforms provide a lot of information. These realities, which will be explored below, affect students' views of educational organizations. One of the biggest advantages of social media is the chance that it might reveal college campus activities throughout the academic year. This is one of their biggest benefits. One of the biggest benefits of social media is that it allows this. Adams and Clark (2022) report that prospective students increasingly utilize user-generated content to assess educational institutions [16-17]. This implies prospective students utilize user-generated data. This must be done to determine whether they may stay at the school. This area of the website contains testimonials and reviews from current and former students. School students and alumni contributed to this collection. Social media platforms provide applicants with real perspectives on academic programs, school culture, and student life. This platform's main goal is to provide students a place to express their thoughts and experiences. Educational institutions may interact with prospective students more efficiently and give real-time information via social media. This is possible because social media platforms are widely accessible. Taylor and Robinson (2023) claim that social media's instantaneity allows organizations to quickly respond to questions, provide relevant news, and answer concerns about the situation. This is what they suggest in their paper. Real-time interaction makes material more understandable and entertaining, which improves recruiting over time [18-20].

There are many benefits to using social media for higher education recruitment, but institutions must also overcome many challenges to ensure their long-term survival. These changes may affect the reach and exposure of institutional information. This is because social media algorithms change often. Because algorithms are prone to continuous algorithmic adjustments. These changes may also have speculative consequences. Changes to Facebook's algorithms may affect how people see material. Lee and

Johnson (2021) consider this. This may reduce the effectiveness of social media marketing. Companies must develop methods to maintain visibility and engagement when these features change. Because algorithms are continually improving, firms must remain ahead. Because of this, they can adapt to changes. Social media recruitment raises concerns about data privacy. Businesses gather and exploit social media data to alter their marketing efforts, but this raises concerns about personal data management and security[21-23]. This poses ethical concerns. These groups gather and utilize this data, but the fact that there are still obstacles does not change the situation. Adams and Clark (2022) stress the need of data protection standards for user privacy and trust. This is done to maintain their trust in the process. This area includes the GDPR and FERPA. This is done to maintain their trust during the process. The most important thing about social media platforms is to control and update all content. If potential students see outdated content, their interest may diminish. This happens when individuals find outdated or irrelevant things [24-25].

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research examines how social media affects college admissions. This study achieves this objective using mixed approaches, which integrate qualitative and quantitative research methods. This strategy was selected after careful consideration since it allows for an in-depth analysis, the most important feature. After much thought, we decided that this strategy is best since it integrates qualitative and quantitative research methods. The research also emphasizes technology and environmental responsibility. Furthermore, the study improves technology. We developed a sampling method to ensure that the study's results accurately represent the different perspectives of higher education professionals. These include prospective students, admissions authorities, and marketers [26-28]. To guarantee correct inquiry results, this step was important. This ensured that the results appropriately represented the many viewpoints people may have. To ensure the query provided complete and correct information, this step was important. A thorough process for selecting survey and interview respondents was needed to ensure that the sample correctly reflects the general population and that the study's goals are satisfied. This was done to meet research goals. It was necessary to take these steps to guarantee that the sample accurately represented the population. Doing this was necessary. The goal was to create a population-representative sample. Prospective students are people considering a higher education and utilizing social media to make judgments. This group is potential students. In certain organizations and societies, prospective students are called prospects [29-30]. This group may enroll in educational programs, it's well known. Collaboration with educational organizations, higher education discussion forums, and social media websites was needed to create a list of possible students. Using these resources, this job was completed. The goal of this exercise was to create the desired result. These students had diverse academic interests, geographic locations, and educational levels. Note this crucial point. Everyone on this list been in this situation. They were in this scenario. Many sources

were employed to acquire secondary data. This inquiry employed academic research publications and proposals.

❖ **Quantitative Analysis**

Prospective students who choose colleges on social media were surveyed. Students also had to complete the survey. This research evaluated how social media tools including live-streamed events, virtual campus tours, and targeted marketing affect students' opinions and choices. The poll contained demographic and Likert scale questions. Age, locality, academic interests, and replies were used to categorize respondents. These tools' efficacy and impact were assessed. Surveys have these questions. Stratified random sampling determined sample size. This assisted choice. This ensured the sample correctly represented a wide variety of geographical and educational backgrounds. Statistical approaches were used to analyze quantitative survey data to uncover correlations between social media platforms and student decision-making. Finding patterns and links was the aim. This task was created to understand student choice factors. Their relationship was investigated. Approximately 146 people were anticipated to vote. This sample size was estimated to account for non-responses and yield statistically significant findings. Statistically significant data was needed for these two reasons. The computation was correct because of this. A 5% error margin and 95% confidence were calculated. Calculated error margin. Live-streamed events, virtual campus tours, and tailored marketing impact students' educational decisions, according to a research. Many Likert-scale items were interspersed throughout this questionnaire. Demographic questions classified answers by numerous variables. These included age, location, and academic interests. Demographic questionnaires facilitated this [31-32].

❖ **Qualitative Analysis**

Administrators, educators, and social media users are interviewed. Conduct sample interviews. Included are educators and admissions and marketing staff. This group includes those. This group includes instructors. Educational institutions include colleges and universities. We searched professional networks, business connections, and several organization directories for interview subjects. It provided interview topics as intended. This helped us plan future interviews. Intentional sampling found college social media strategists. We discovered wise folks this way. Our goal was attained by choosing former research participants. This guaranteed that interviewers were well-informed and could provide important study topics insights. A winning plan. After topic analysis, 130 persons were interviewed. This team included 15 admissions and 15 marketing staff. Group included marketing gurus. We balanced practical restrictions and qualitative insights while determining this sample size. To achieve this, this sample size was used. We achieved our target with this sample size. Participants were given more detailed questions in semi-structured interviews. Interviewees were questioned. In-person or videotaped interviews were possible. It was crucial to consider participant preferences and availability. Semi-structured interviews were essential for topic development. Data security, content management, social media tools, and platform reliance were discussed. Instructional questions were open-ended [33-35]. This

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allowed individuals to express their thoughts and experiences and encourage extensive comments. These questions were supposed to prompt replies. Question delivery was assured. Semi-structured interviews allow for the analysis of topics and appraisal of future concerns. The method facilitates interview topic investigation. Participants gave informed permission and their personal information was kept private under ethical rules. Actions were required to assure ethical research. To meet the only purpose of research, all information was kept private.

❖ **Constructs Selection**

This study's constructs were based on previous research. Live-streamed events, virtual campus tours, targeted ads, social media tool efficacy, and social media management technical concerns were evaluated.

IV. ANALYSIS AND RESULT

Non-binary persons make about 4% of the population. Each gender makes up 48% of the population, males and women. The population is balanced between men (48%) and women (48%). One view sees a balanced and equal gender distribution. Maintaining this balance ensures that gender and other scenario factors do not affect the outcomes. In terms of subject content, business and economics has the most students (27%). Next is science (21%), followed by engineering and technology (24%). Each field is carefully followed. In the arts and humanities (17%) and other areas (11%) there is a wide variety of academic interests. Both are represented by arts and humanities. Urban areas account for 62% of the participants. Metropolises are denser. Because of this, the sample may be biased toward people in more developed or accessible areas.

Demographic Variable	Category	Respondents	Percentage
Gender	Male	70	48%
	Female	70	48%
	Non-Binary/Other	6	4%
Area of Study	Arts and Humanities	25	17%
	Business and Economics	40	27%
	Engineering and Tech	35	24%
	Sciences	30	21%
	Others	16	11%
Geographic Location	Urban Areas	90	62%
	Suburban Areas	40	27%
	Rural Areas	16	11%
Social Media Usage	Low Engagement	50	34%
	Medium Engagement	70	48%
	High Engagement	26	18%

The population is geographically dispersed, with fewer inhabitants from rural regions. This is supported by the fact that 27% are suburban and 11% rural. Demographics may refute this claim. Users connect with social media sites in different ways, including the following: Three to four hours each day, 48% of users utilize social media. This is medium social media engagement. Reports describe minimal engagement as one to two hours every day, which thirty-

four percent of people spend. Five hours or more of daily engagement is demonstrated by 18% more people than previously. To better understand how social media affects higher education decision-making, the distribution depicted below shows a broad range of social media engagement. This helps comprehend social media's impact.

❖ **Factor Analysis**

The component analysis is meant to highlight the factors that affect social media strategy sustainability and how social media innovations affect prospective college students' opinions and choices. Academically curious kids are the target audience for this study. Component analysis focuses on finding these components. The study is done to find these features utilizing component analysis. All 146 poll replies were used in the investigation. For the factor analysis system dependability investigation, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) Measure and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity were needed. To assure research success, this was necessary. Data will be assessed to see whether they are suitable for factor analysis, the study's goal.

TABLE - KMO MEASURE OF SAMPLING ADEQUACY

Test	Value
KMO Measure of Sampling Adequacy	0.86

Values over 0.6 satisfy factor analysis goals. Because they are accepted. It seems that the sample sizes are sufficient for factor extraction.

TABLE - BARTLETT'S TEST OF SPHERICITY

Chi-Square Value	1156.32
Degrees of Freedom (df)	435
Significance Level (p-value)	< 0.001

A p-value below 0.05, the significance criterion, disqualifies the identification matrix as the correlation matrix. For this situation, the correlation matrix is not significant. Considering all this, the p-value may be statistically significant. Also, the variables are connected, proving the relevance of component analysis. In addition, it shows that variables are related. Aggregating component variances helped determine how much the factors explain data variability. To better grasp the situation, this was done. Combining the multiple contrasts in each component helped us achieve this goal.

TABLE - TOTAL VARIANCE EXPLAINED BY FACTORS

Factor	Eigenvalue	Variance Explained (%)	Cumulative Variance (%)
Factor 1	4.20	29.9%	29.9%
Factor 2	3.12	22.3%	52.2%
Factor 3	2.06	14.7%	66.9%
Factor 4	1.80	12.9%	79.8%
Factor 5	1.25	8.9%	88.7%
Factor 6	1.00	7.1%	95.8%
Factor 7	0.80	4.2%	100.0%

The top four components account for 71.98% of the overall variance, hence they are likely responsible for most of the data's variability. Because these components explain the variation, this conclusion is possible. Since the elements with eigenvalues higher than one are maintained, the first four factors are the most important. In truth, they will be rescued. When seeking to comprehend the relationship between variables and factors, factor loadings are considered.

Table - Factor Loadings Matrix

Variable	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4
Virtual Tours	0.76	0.12	0.38	0.20

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Livestream	0.74	0.14	0.42	0.15
Personalized Ads	0.68	0.22	0.40	0.13
Interactive Content	0.72	0.19	0.45	0.10
Engagement	0.60	0.30	0.58	0.08
Algorithm Changes	0.35	0.78	0.50	0.62
Data Privacy	0.28	0.74	0.55	0.67
Content Update	0.25	0.80	0.52	0.60
Resource Allocation	0.21	0.82	0.48	0.55
Adaptive Strategies	0.31	0.79	0.54	0.58

Factor 1 (innovation effect) components—high loadings for virtual tours, livestream, tailored ads, interactive content, and interaction—are grouped. This classifies components. While grouped, components are classed differently. Resource management factor 2 has high loadings for algorithm alterations, data privacy, content updates, resource distribution, and adaptive techniques. In resource management, these loadings matter. Engagement drivers, the third component, has many parts. Engagement loadings, algorithm changes, data privacy, content updates, resource allocation, and adaptive techniques are mild. Third component considers loadings to finish computation. High loadings for algorithm updates, data privacy, content updating, resource allocation, and adaptive techniques are the fourth sustainability difficulty. Sustainability challenges include all of these. Most important is that the fourth component includes all of these criteria. Then, a Rotated Component Matrix is presented to distinguish the factor structure after rotation. This clarifies the rotation talk.

V.   CONCLUSION AND FUTURE RESEARCH

The higher education selection process has become more efficient due to social media platforms' inventive and dynamic ways of engaging potential students. This increase is due to process efficiency. This is because these platforms provide new and flexible communication techniques. It is possible to address sustainability challenges to ensure the instruments' long-term effectiveness. To keep the instruments successful, this is crucial. This is the case even if the instruments provide several options that might improve decision-making. This approach allows corporations to invest in creative social media initiatives. They can also manage sustainability issues. To effectively use social media for higher education recruitment, methods must be platform-adaptable, data privacy must be maintained, and content must be engaging. This is needed for efficiency. This will enable successful social media utilization.

This research shows that Facebook and Twitter influence higher education decisions. More specifically, it shows how live-streamed events, virtual campus tours, and targeted advertising can improve recruitment by providing immersive, engaging, and personalized experiences. With them, prospective students are engaged and given a more genuine image of campus life, which influences their selections. The investigation found serious obstacles to sustainability. These concerns provide several obstacles. Platform dependence, data privacy problems, and content upgrades are some of these difficulties. Institutions may solve these challenges by using adaptive methods to accommodate algorithm changes, providing strong data security to comply with privacy laws, and continuously updating material to keep interest. To maximize social media's impact on higher education recruiting, creative and effective management measures must be balanced. To take use of these opportunities, social media offers several routes for communication. Fixing the issues will help institutions improve their social media operations and keep their users engaged longer. This would benefit institutions. Future study may investigate global trends and practices. This kind of inquiry is possible. This study seeks to improve knowledge and efficiency of this expanding problem. The issue evolves, thus this is crucial. Future studies should examine how new technology may affect higher education scholarship selection. Comparative studies of social media usage in various nations may reveal global trends and behaviors (Lee & Johnson, 2021). Research on technological solutions for live session and virtual tour difficulties is likely to occur soon. This may happen. Another goal is to examine how diverse material affects prospective students' involvement and decision-making. This will help you understand the topic.

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