THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING IN RECRUITMENT OF UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS: CASE STUDY OF A PRIVATE INSTITUTE IN SRI LANKA

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirement for

Bachelor of Art (Honours) degree in Business Management

Department of Business

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in collaboration with

University of Westminster, UK

2021

Abstract

The higher education sector is considered one of the most challenging fields in the world. This is owing to fact that there are many universities in the nation which compete with each other to recruit more students; especially private universities. In the meantime, social media plays a major role in the student recruitment process as the growth of social media generates new opportunities as well as challenges for student recruitment. Nowadays people are actively engaged in social media whether it be Facebook, Instagram or Twitter, and other platforms. All individuals can be categorized as daily users of one or more of these social media platforms. Due to this fact, private universities consider this as an opportunity and create new communication channels for the process of student recruitment and retention. This study is to determine and analyses the impact of social media marketing in the student recruitment process of private universities and provide recommendations to improve the marketing and sales strategies for undergraduate programs. Approximately 107 respondents participated in the quantitative research which was conducted as an online questionnaire. The gathered data were analyzed through the SPSS statistical tool in an effective way. Based on the literature review the information awareness and engagement are the two main factors influencing social media marketing in student recruitment. The majority of respondents responded that Facebook is the most appropriate and effective social media platform. This research states that Facebook is considered an effective platform therefore advertising more on Facebook creates more awareness for the universities.

Keyword: Private Higher Education Sector, Social Media Marketing, Awareness, Information, Engagement