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PHAM HA PHUONG

Faculty of International Business and Management

**THE INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING ON
ATTRACTING BUDAPEST BUSINESS UNIVERSITY STUDENT
ENROLLMENT**

Supervisor: Dr. Hajeer Ahmad

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ABSTRACT

This research delves into the dynamic sphere of social media marketing and its influence on student enrollment at Budapest Business University (BBU). The study intends to thoroughly investigate the effectiveness of BBU's social media marketing methods in drawing in potential students in a time when digital engagement is crucial. Using a mixed-method approach, information is acquired via surveys and in-depth interviews, providing a wealth of perspectives on how social media influences students' decisions to enroll.

The findings underscore the pivotal role played by BBU's social media presence in raising awareness among students. Platforms such as Instagram and Facebook are mainly instrumental in this regard, with a significant proportion of students attributing their initial awareness of the university to these channels. The study reveals that academic programs, campus events, and admission-related content featured on BBU's social media platforms substantially influence prospective students' enrollment decisions.

Also, the survey underscores the impact of BBU's social media in student enrollment, 28% acknowledged the influence of such content on their decision to enroll, underscoring the increasing importance of social media in higher education enrollment.

Additionally, the study shows how competitive the field of social media marketing is in higher education. It highlights that BBU's social media content is perceived as moderately effective in distinguishing the university from its competitors. In an era where universities are vying for the attention of potential students, this insight is invaluable.

This study adds to our understanding of the relationship between social media marketing and student enrollment, as well as the unique environment of BBU. It also broadens our awareness of the role that social media plays in recruiting students to higher education. The insights from this research could guide BBU and other institutions to enhance and optimize their student enrollment strategies in an increasingly digital world. As prospective students navigate their college choices, this study provides valuable information and resources to aid them in making well-informed decisions and finding the best-fit educational institution.

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ABBREVIATION

BBU: Budapest Business University

CRM: Customer Relationship Management

FCHT: Faculty of Commerce, Hospitality and Tourism

FFA: Faculty of Finance and Accountancy

FIMB: Faculty of International Management and Business

HE: Higher education

HEIs: Higher education institutions

IMC: Integrated Marketing Communication

PPC: pay-per-click

Q&A: Questions and Answers

ROI: Return on Investment

SEO: Search Engine Optimization

SMM: Social media marketing

TPB: Theory of Planned Beha

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

In an age where the digital realm exerts an unprecedented influence on our daily lives, the landscape of higher education is not immune to its transformative power. The world of academia has witnessed a profound shift in how students are drawn to institutions, with digital platforms and social media marketing emerging as instrumental forces in the recruitment process (Constantinides & Stagno, 2012). Prestigious campuses, eminent professors, and cutting-edge programs have an attraction that transcends printed brochures and informational meetings and reaches the vibrant world of social media.

Social media marketing's impact extends beyond gaining likes, shares, and follows; it involves a sophisticated interaction of tactics, engagement, and content. As prospective students embark on their educational journeys, they increasingly turn to social media platforms to explore academic offerings, gain insights into campus life, and connect with the institutional identity of universities (uniRank Team, 2023). The allure of higher education institutions today is intricately linked to their online presence's effectiveness and ability to communicate their unique value proposition in the digital sphere.

As Budapest Business University (BBU), a prominent Hungarian higher education institution, seeks to navigate the evolving tides of student enrollment, it confronts the digital age's intricate web of challenges and opportunities. In this context, the author chose the topic: **“THE INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING ON ATTRACTING BUDAPEST BUSINESS UNIVERSITY STUDENT ENROLLMENT”** to understand the ins and outs of social media marketing and how it affects student enrollment at Budapest Business School. It examines prospective students' perceptions, behaviors, and experiences in response to the institution's social media initiatives, ultimately aiming to provide data-driven insights that can enhance BBS's recruitment strategies in the digital age.

In a world where the competition for top-tier students is fierce and the digital landscape is ever-evolving, understanding how social media marketing can shape the future of student enrollment is not just a matter of interest but a strategic imperative (SocialSellinator, 2023). In order to help Budapest Business University and other higher education institutions effectively harness the potential of social media marketing in attracting the next generation of scholars and leaders, this research aims to shed light on the future. It does this by providing practical recommendations.

1.1. Background

It is projected that 5.17 billion people, or more than half of the world's population, will be active social media users by 2024. (Dixon, 2023). In Hungary, as of January 2023, social media users stood at 7.4 million, representing 72.2% of the total population. Moreover, it was shown that a significant 80.5% of Hungary's internet users, regardless of age, utilized at least one social media platform (Kemp, 2023). Notably, social media usage has grown across all age groups, with the 18-34 age bracket boasting the highest percentage of users (napoleoncat.com, 2022). The 18-34 age range encompasses Millennials and Generation Z, who grew up in an era of contemporary computers, wireless internet, and various digital technologies. In 2019, a staggering 92% of individuals in this age group in Hungary owned a smartphone (Pew Research Center, 2019). Generation Z typically includes traditional university-aged students, with the

eldest Gen Z members completing high school or college by 2017 (Oesch, 2017). Hungary's continuing education landscape is marked by many options, with 64 accredited higher education institutions in operation during the 2023-2024 academic year (Tempus Public Foundation, n.d). Universities can differentiate themselves in a competitive market by using social media-integrated recruitment strategies that are part of their strategic marketing plans, which will help them draw in these prospective students. Considering how many people use social media in Hungary, social media marketing (SMM) is essential for attracting new students.

In addition to the fact that traditional college-age students use social media extensively, it is crucial to recognize that it significantly influences how they make decisions. Research indicates that many students utilize social networking sites to research potential colleges and universities, gather details about academic programs, and assess the campus atmosphere. (Constantinides & Stagno, 2012).

In order to learn more about the institutions they want to attend, prospective students can now effectively utilize social media. Professionals in student affairs should be knowledgeable about SMM techniques to interact with their target audiences efficiently. In addition, university admissions personnel should regularly solicit input from prospective students to assess the results of their social media campaigns. Universities need to invest in and hire staff members who can effectively manage social media accounts to bring themselves into the twenty-first century in this digital age (Peruta & Helm, 2018).

1.2.Problem statement

The problem concerns the effectiveness of Budapest Business School's (BBS) social media marketing strategies in student enrollment. There is a growing concern that despite the extensive use of social media platforms, current marketing efforts may need to achieve the desired results (Appel, Grewal, Hadi & Stephen, 2019).

Like many higher education institutions, BBS heavily relies on social media for student engagement, program promotion, and brand-building. However, assessing whether these strategies align with prospective students' preferences and influence enrollment decisions is crucial. The misalignment between BBS's social media marketing and its impact on enrollment is a critical issue. To address this, this research explores how prospective students perceive BBS's social media initiatives and aims to identify areas for improvement. The ultimate goal is to provide data-driven recommendations for enhancing BBS's social media marketing strategies.

1.3. Research objectives

The research objective of this study is to comprehensively examine the influence of SMM on the attraction of student enrollment at Budapest Business University (BBU). The primary aim is to investigate the effectiveness of SMM in enticing prospective students to choose BBU as their educational institution. To achieve this objective, the study seeks to gain in-depth insights into the perceptions and attitudes of current BBU students regarding the university's SMM efforts and how these factors influence their own enrollment decisions. By doing so, it aspires to identify the strengths and weaknesses of BBU's SMM strategies. Consequently, the research intends to provide practical recommendations and strategies for BBU to enhance its SMM endeavors, thereby optimizing the university's student recruitment process. Additionally, the

study aims to provide a valuable contribution to higher education marketing by illuminating the changing influence of social media marketing on students' choices. This will eventually help institutions that want to stay competitive in the higher education market.

1.4. Research question

From the problem statement and research objectives, the author came up with the research questions:

“How does social media marketing influence the enrollment decisions of Budapest Business University?”

CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. History of social media

The development of social media is driven by technological advancements and the human need to communicate. Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines social media as “forms of electronic communication (such as websites for social networking and microblogging) through which users create online communities to share information, ideas, personal messages, and other content (such as videos).”

Social media has existed a long time ago since the early days of the Internet. Online social networking emerged in the late 1990s with SixDegree.com, which lets users create profiles and connect with others. However, the modern era of social media was presented by platforms like Myspace in the early 2000s. Features like friend lists, user profiles, and content sharing were first available on these websites. The pivotal moment occurred in 2004 with the introduction of Facebook, initially limited to college students (Boyd & Allison, 2007). This platform quickly became a worldwide success and inspired the development of several other sites, such as LinkedIn (2003), YouTube (2005), Twitter (2006), Instagram (2010), Snapchat (2011) and TikTok (2016). The advent of the digital age has brought about a new era of interconnection through the significant impact of social media’s expansion on communication, society, and interpersonal interactions.

2.1.1. Facebook

Facebook, one of the giant social media platforms, was founded in 2004 by Harvard University Students as a method for students to connect online. Initially, it was limited to Harvard but soon expanded to other Ivy League institutions and later to colleges and universities worldwide (Phillips, 2007). By 2006, Facebook became a global phenomenon in social networking when it opened its door to users over the age of 13 (Facebook, n.d). Over the years, it evolved from a primary social networking site into a comprehensive platform. As of September 2023 (Facebook, 2023), the platform has over 3.05 billion monthly active users. It has had a significant impact on how people connect and communicate. It has significantly changed how people socialize online by allowing them to share live broadcasts, photos, videos, and text-based content. Facebook’s impact extends to information dissemination, marketing, and political engagement, making it a powerful force in shaping the digital age.

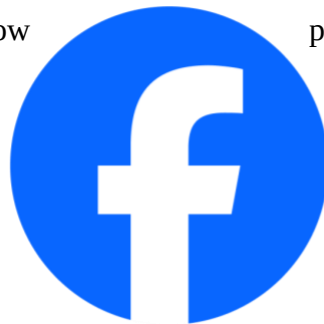


Figure 1: Facebook’s Logo

Source: Meta

2.1.2. Instagram

Kevin Systrom and Mike Krieger launched the well-known social networking site Instagram in 2010. Launched initially as an iOS-exclusive photo-sharing app, Instagram allowed users to apply filters to their images and share them with friends and followers (Eldridge,2023). This simple yet innovative concept resonated with users, leading to rapid growth. In 2021, Instagram, one of the largest social media networks globally, with over 1.44 billion monthly active users (Statista. com, 2023). After being acquired by Meta Platforms, Inc., the parent company of Facebook,



Instagram has access to a broader user base and has undergone significant development, introducing features such as Stories, Reels, and shopping capabilities. It has redefined visual storytelling and brand promotion in the digital age, emphasizing the importance of captivating imagery and short video content in modern communication strategies.

Figure 2: Instagram's Logo

Source: Meta

2.1.3. X/ Twitter

X, formerly known as Twitter (2006-2023), is an online social media platform and microblogging service that has a big influence on early 21st-century politics and culture by sharing brief messages of no more than 280 characters and significantly impacts early 21st-century politics and culture (Britannica.com, 2023). Jack Dorsey, Biz Stone, and Evan Williams found this platform in 2006. As of December 2022, Twitter boasts over 368 million monthly active users worldwide, demonstrating its enduring influence (Statista.com, 2023). It has fostered global connections, facilitated quick information exchange, and enhanced public discourse. Twitter is a dynamic and essential tool in the digital age, influencing social interactions, politics, marketing, and crisis communication.

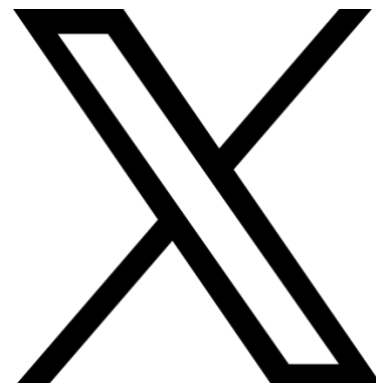
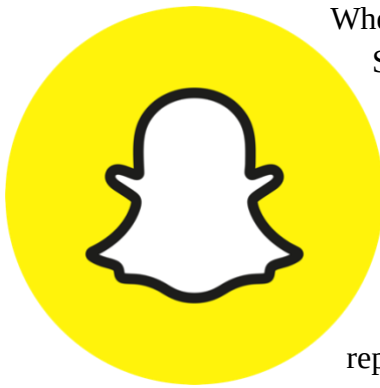


Figure 3: Twitter's Logos (old and new)

Source: Twitter

2.1.4. Snapchat

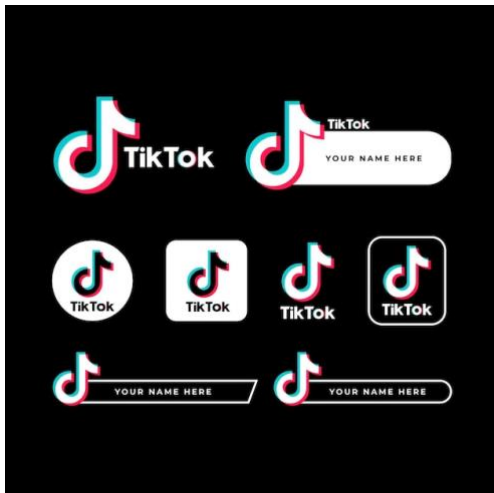


When Evan Spiegel, Bobby Murphy, and Reggie Brown founded Snapchat in 2011, they adopted a unique strategy for social media by emphasizing ephemeral material, or pictures and videos that vanish after being viewed. Initially seen as a platform for temporary messaging, Snapchat attracted a younger demographic and established trends in visual communication by adding Stories, Discover, and Lenses to its initial feature set of short-term messaging (O’Connell, 2020). As of the latest report, Snapchat reported over 375 million daily active users (Snap Inc., 2023). The platform fosters authenticity and creativity in online interactions by influencing how people and brands interact with content. Snapchat's focus on dynamic, short-lived content keeps it at the forefront of the ever-changing social media and digital communication scene.

Figure 4: Snapchat's Logo

Source: Snap Inc.

2.1.5. TikTok



Since its introduction in 2016, the short-form video platform TikTok has quickly gained international recognition. TikTok, a platform created by the Chinese business ByteDance, enables users to make and share brief, interesting films accompanied by music. Its history has been characterized by several mergers and acquisitions, such as the 2017 acquisition of Musical.ly, which facilitated the company's expansions (D'Souza, 2023). TikTok's power comes from its capacity to start viral trends and expose up-and-coming musicians and influencers to large audiences. Statista (2023) states, “In 2021,

TikTok had approximately 656 million global users. This figure was projected to increase by around 15 percent year-over-year, reaching 755 million users in 2022.” TikTok now become one of the most influential social media platforms globally. The app’s impacts extend to popular culture, with its users and trends shaping music, fashion, and internet humor.

Figure 5: TikTok's Logo

Source: freepik.com

2.1.6. YouTube

A website and social media platform for sharing videos is called YouTube. It was registered on February 14, 2005, by three former employees of the American online store PayPal: Steve Chen, Chad Hurley, and Jawed Karim. It was their assumption that common people would desire to distribute their "home videos." The company's headquarters are in San Bruno, California. Soon after its restricted ("beta") debut in May 2005, the website was receiving

roughly 30,000 hits every day. When YouTube first launched on December 15, 2005, it had over two million daily video views (L.Hosch, 2023). YouTube reported over 2.7 billion monthly active users (GMI Blogger, 2023). In addition to changing the media environment, this platform has given people and organizations a platform to reach audiences worldwide. YouTube has a significant impact on communication, education, and entertainment. It has also given rise to a new generation of content creators, or "Youtubers," now well-known characters in various professions. It has completely changed how people consume content and emphasized the value of video as an informational and entertaining medium.



Figure 6: Youtube's Logo

Source: YouTube

2.1.7. LinkedIn

"LinkedIn began in co-founder Reid Hoffman's living room in 2002 and was officially launched on May 5, 2003" (LinkedIn., n.d). It has distinguished itself in social media by emphasizing career advancement and professional networking. In contrast to many other social media sites, LinkedIn links people primarily to foster business relationships, exchange industry knowledge, and locate job openings. The latest data from LinkedIn indicates that there are over 950 million registered members in more than 200 nations and territories globally (LinkedIn, n.d.). It has a significant impact on business networking and employment. By encouraging people and businesses to interact with like-minded businesses online and establish a professional presence, it has changed hiring, job seeking, and personal branding. In the digital age, LinkedIn has become a central location for information sharing and an essential resource for job advancement.



Figure 7: LinkedIn's Logo

Source: LinkedIn

2.2. Introduction to digital marketing in higher education

2.2.1. The concept of online marketing in higher education

In reaction to the digital revolution, internet marketing in higher education (HE) has recently experienced a substantial metamorphosis. In today's digital age, prospective students have increasingly relied on the Internet and social media platforms to gather information about universities and academic programs (Haleem, Javaid, Qadri & Suman, 2022). In this context, higher education institutions (HEIs) are embracing and adapting digital strategies to engage with and attract students effectively.

Online marketing in HE encompasses a broad spectrum of techniques and strategies. This includes *search engine optimization* (SEO) to enhance the visibility of academic programs in search engine results; *content marketing* to provide valuable and informative content to prospective students, targeted social media campaigns to reach a broader and more specific audience; and *email marketing* to maintain a consistent and informative dialogue with potential students. (Fierro & Cardona & Gavilanez, 2017).

In addition, HEIs are increasingly utilizing other online marketing tactics such as pay-per-click (PPC) advertising, display advertising on relevant websites, and creating webinars and virtual campus tours (David, 2023). These approaches allow HEIs to engage with their audience innovatively and interactively, creating a more immersive experience for potential students.

This multidimensional approach aims to enhance universities' and colleges' visibility, reputation, and enrollment. Moreover, integrating data analytics and user behavior tracking has further refined online marketing efforts in HE. By gaining valuable insights on potential students' preferences, behaviors, and interests, these technologies enable HEIs to customize their outreach and messaging to meet prospective students' varied needs better (Wankel & Blessinger, 2017).

By harnessing the power of data analytics, HEIs are better equipped to create targeted and personalized marketing strategies that resonate with their audience, ultimately enhancing the effectiveness of their online marketing campaigns. This all-encompassing digital strategy for higher education is necessary in a world where online presence and technology are critical for drawing in and keeping students.

2.2.2. Significance of digital marketing and online platforms in promoting educational institutions

The significance of digital marketing and online platforms in promoting HEIs is paramount in today's rapidly evolving educational landscape. These tools have become instrumental in reaching, engaging, and attracting students to academic programs and institutions. Digital marketing, characterized by its versatility and cost-effectiveness, enables HEIs to extend their reach globally and engage with a diverse audience (Fierro, Cardona & Gavilanez, 2017). Using targeted social media campaigns, SEO strategies, content marketing, and email marketing empowers universities and colleges to communicate effectively with prospective students, offering them valuable information and fostering community (Makrydakis, 2021).

Furthermore, the measurement capabilities of digital marketing provide institutions with the means to assess the performance of their marketing efforts and refine strategies based on data

and analytics (Chaffey & Smith, 2013). This adaptability is invaluable in optimizing campaigns to resonate with different demographics and diverse student populations. A solid online presence is essential for enhancing brand visibility and recruiting students in a technology-driven world. Digital marketing and online platforms are essential to educational marketing and provide a competitive edge for HEIs striving to meet the expectations of today's tech-savvy students (Haleem, Javaid, Qadri & Suman, 2022).

2.2.3. The growing importance of online marketing channels, including social media, in student enrollment strategies.

The way higher education marketing is developing is demonstrated by the increasing significance of social media and other online marketing platforms in student enrolment tactics. In the current digital age, students are using social media and the internet more and more as their main information source and method of communication with colleges (Fierro, Cardona, & Gavilanez, 2017). Social media is pivotal in student recruitment strategies, providing a dynamic platform for universities and colleges to reach, connect with, and influence prospective students.

Social media sites that facilitate community building, content sharing, real-time communication, and targeted advertising are LinkedIn, Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and TikTok. Creating engaging and interactive content on these platforms allows institutions to showcase their unique attributes, share student success stories, and directly converse with prospective students. By leveraging social media, universities can personalize their outreach efforts and establish a sense of belonging, thus influencing students' decisions to enroll.

The data-driven nature of online marketing channels also allows HEIs to measure the effectiveness of their strategies and refine them based on user engagement and conversion metrics (Chaffey & Smith, 2013). This adaptability is crucial for optimizing enrollment strategies to cater to prospective students' diverse needs and preferences. As social media and online marketing channels evolve, their significance in student enrollment strategies is poised to grow, providing institutions with powerful tools to attract, engage, and convert potential enrollees.

2.3. Introduction to Social Media Marketing in Higher Education:

2.3.1. The role of social media marketing in the higher education sector.

In the HE sector, social media marketing (SMM) signifies a dynamic movement in the ways that HEIs interact with their audience and advertise their academic offerings. It is becoming more and more important in determining student involvement and institutional performance. Social media platforms serve as dynamic channels for universities and colleges to connect with current and potential students, alumni, and other stakeholders (Fierro, Cardona & Gavilanez, 2017). HEIs can use social media sites like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, TikTok, and LinkedIn to tell their stories, showcase their accomplishments, and interact with their audience in real time.

SMM allows HEIs to create community and belonging, showcase campus life, provide immediate responses to inquiries, and foster student and stakeholder relationships. Moreover, it enables universities to reach a global audience, making it easier for international students to explore academic programs and campus life (Sivakumar, Jayasingh & Shaik, 2023). The data-driven nature of SMM also offers opportunities to tailor messaging to specific demographics

and track the effectiveness of campaigns, allowing institutions to fine-tune their strategies for optimal engagement (LaFleur, n.d)

2.3.2. The importance of social media for student recruitment and enrollment.

It is impossible to exaggerate the significance of social media for HE student recruitment and enrollment. Social media platforms are becoming practical tools that HEIs can use to draw in, interact with, and enroll potential students.

- **Engagement and Connection:** Social media provides a platform for prospective students to interact with institutions personally. Universities create a sense of belonging and community through posts, comments, direct messages, and live events. This engagement allows students to ask questions, seek clarification, and form a strong connection with the institution (uniRank Team, 2023).
- **Peer Recommendations:** Prospective students often reply to peer recommendations and insights when making enrollment decisions. Social media platforms are ideal for sharing authentic and unfiltered reviews, comments, and testimonials from current students. This peer-to-peer interaction fosters trust and can influence decision-making (uniRank Team, 2023).
- **Content Diversity:** Multiple content formats, such as text, images, videos, live broadcasts, and tales, are supported by social media. Universities are able to communicate information in interesting and dynamic ways because of this diversity. For instance, they can showcase virtual campus tours, student testimonials, faculty interviews, and real-time updates on on-campus events.
- **Global Reach:** Social media transcends geographic boundaries, making it a powerful tool for international student recruitment. Institutions can specifically target and engage with potential students from various countries and cultures, providing a platform for cross-cultural exchange.
- **Data-Driven Insights:** Social media offers valuable data and analytics that help institutions refine recruitment strategies. Universities can track user behavior, campaign performance, and audience demographics. This data-driven approach allows for personalized messaging and effective allocation of resources (uniRank Team, 2023).
- **24/7 Accessibility:** Unlike traditional marketing, social media is accessible 24/7. Prospective students can access information, engage with the institution, and have their questions answered anytime, making it highly convenient and flexible.

2.4. Social Media Marketing Strategies in Higher Education:

2.4.1. Strategies employed by universities and colleges in their social media marketing efforts.

Universities and colleges employ various strategies in their SMM efforts to engage with prospective and current students effectively. These strategies are pivotal in showcasing their unique offerings, building brand presence, and fostering a sense of community. While specific approaches may vary, the following strategies are commonly used in HE SMM:

- **Content Marketing:** HEIs create and share diverse content, including blogs, articles, videos, and infographics that inform and engage their audience. This content often focuses on academics, campus life, faculty interviews, and student testimonials, providing valuable insights and information (Fierro, Cardona & Gavilanez, 2017).

- **Interactive Campaigns:** Universities initiate interactive campaigns, contests, and challenges to encourage engagement and user-generated content. These campaigns can foster a sense of participation and community among current and prospective students.
- **Live Events:** Hosting live events, such as virtual campus tours, webinars, and live Q&A sessions, allows HEIs to connect with students in real-time. Live content offers an immediate and personal touch, answering queries and showcasing the institution's vibrant culture.
- **Social Media Advertising:** Universities utilize targeted social media advertising to reach specific demographics, ensuring their content reaches the right audience. This approach is instrumental in increasing visibility and conversions.
- **Community Building:** Establishing and nurturing online communities around shared interests or academic programs helps institutions create an environment where students can connect with peers, faculty, and alumni. These communities often function as support networks and sources of information (Shields & Peruta, 2018).
- **Data Analysis:** Data-driven decision-making is at the core of SMM efforts. Institutions analyze user behavior and campaign performance to fine-tune their strategies and create content that resonates with their audience.
- **Personalized Messaging:** It is crucial to tailor messages to different audience segments based on their interests, demographics, and behaviors. Personalized communication enhances the effectiveness of SMM efforts (Chaffey & Smith, 2013).
- **Storytelling:** Storytelling is a powerful strategy for conveying the institution's values, culture, and success stories. HEIs use social media to share compelling narratives, connecting emotionally and intellectually with students.
- These strategies work in tandem to create a dynamic and engaging social media presence for universities and colleges, driving student recruitment, enrollment, and long-term engagement. By incorporating these strategies, HEIs can effectively navigate the ever-evolving landscape of social media and remain competitive in attracting and retaining students.

2.4.2. Types of content, platforms, and engagement techniques commonly used.

In SMM strategies for HE, various content types, platforms, and engagement techniques are commonly used to reach and engage with current and prospective students effectively. These strategies are essential in building and maintaining a solid online presence.

- **Content Types:** HEIs employ various content types to engage their audience. Blogs and articles cover various topics, including academic insights, campus news, and student success stories (Kenan, 2023). Video content, including virtual campus tours, faculty interviews, and student testimonials, offers viewers an immersive experience. Infographics convey information in a visually appealing and easy-to-understand format, making complex data more accessible to the audience. Live webinars and virtual events enable institutions to interact with their audience in real-time, addressing questions and concerns. It is recommended to use user-generated material since it builds community and authenticity when students and alumni submit their own content and experiences.
- **Platforms:** Different social media sites act as avenues for interaction with their followers. Facebook is a versatile platform for content sharing, live events, and community building. It offers extensive audience targeting options

(thebrandededucation.com, 2023). Instagram is ideal for visual content and storytelling, especially for showcasing campus life and culture. Twitter is used for quick and concise updates, live tweets, and engagement with trending topics. LinkedIn is valuable for professional networking, faculty engagement, and showcasing academic achievements. YouTube is a primary platform for video content, including virtual tours, lectures, and interviews (Haider, 2023).

- **Engagement Techniques:** To encourage engagement and participation, HEIs use a variety of strategies. Interactive content such as polls, quizzes, and posts invites user participation. Live Q&A sessions allow real-time interaction with students and faculty to address questions and concerns. Contests and challenges engage students in creative competitions and user-generated content. Storytelling is used to share narratives and personal stories, creating an emotional connection with the audience. Community building involves establishing and nurturing online communities or groups for specific academic programs or interests (Pei, Poortman, Schildkamp & Benes, 2023).

By leveraging these content types, platforms, and engagement techniques, universities and colleges can create a vibrant and effective SMM strategy that connects with their audience, promotes their unique strengths, and influences student enrollment decisions. These strategies are instrumental in navigating the ever-evolving social media landscape and remain critical in attracting and retaining students in HE.

2.5. Impact on Student Enrollment:

2.5.1. Advantages of Institutional Social Media.

As previously said, there are numerous advantages for businesses using social media as part of their marketing strategy.

First off, institutional social media provides a wealth of affordable advantages that hold immense value for HEIs. It is a budget-friendly recruitment tool for college admissions, allowing institutions to reach prospective students and faculty without incurring substantial costs. This cost-effective approach also extends to creating a continuous learning environment where students can succeed educational content at their own pace through video blogs, podcasts, lectures, and webcasts, all while promoting interaction within the classroom (Dwivedi, Y. K., Ismagilova, E., Hughes, D. L., Carlson, J., Filieri, R., Jacobson, J., ... Wang, Y, 2021). Additionally, it creates an environment of continuous learning by enabling students to interact with lectures, podcasts, video blogs, and webcasts at their own pace and encouraging classroom participation—all without paying much money. Real-time alumni engagement is also made possible by social media, which fosters solid online ties with former students and makes it possible to connect with alumni worldwide without requiring large financial outlays. Moreover, it links academic institutions and industry to establish beneficial collaborations and find subject matter specialists. This might be an affordable way to increase the availability of educational resources. Finally, it serves as a potent and affordable platform for brand-building, offering higher education establishments many chances to interact with and promote their online image among essential stakeholders, thus expanding their reach and influence without incurring a substantial financial burden (Raman, 2015).

2.5.2. Challenges of Institutional Social Media.

Although very beneficial, institutional social media poses particular difficulties for educational institutions. These problems cover some important topics that require serious thought. First and foremost, it might be challenging to keep a steady stream of attractive and pertinent material on several social media sites. This calls for careful planning, scheduling, and content development. Furthermore, time, money, and other vital resources must be set aside for content production, community management, and analytics to manage social media effectively. Maintaining a positive online reputation for the institution is essential since unfavorable remarks or occurrences can spread quickly on social media, requiring a thoughtful and proactive approach to problem-solving and mitigation. Data security and privacy are critical; organizations must protect sensitive data—like student data—from potential intrusions.

Social media companies also regularly change their algorithms, impacting material exposure. As a result, organizations need to stay informed and modify their plans as necessary. Managing social media crises requires quick thinking and decisive action to save the institution's reputation. Calculating social media initiatives' return on investment (ROI) can be challenging. Therefore, organizations need to use analytics to determine their methods' effectiveness. In order to avoid diluting the marketing message or coming across as unduly promotional, institutions must carefully balance promotional content with engaging, educational pieces. Institutions must also follow industry-specific regulations, legal requirements, and social media policies, including copyright, data protection, and accessibility. In order to optimize social media's benefits while reducing its risks, educational institutions must address these challenges with careful consideration and planning (Saleem & Siddik, 2019).

2.5.3. Issues related to privacy, transparency, and authenticity.

Using SMM in prospective student enrollment for HEIs raises significant privacy, transparency, and authenticity issues. These concerns are crucial in ensuring ethical and effective marketing practices:

- **Privacy Concerns:** Educational institutions must balance gathering essential student data for personalized marketing and respecting individual privacy rights. Collecting and using data transparently and complying with relevant data protection regulations is essential to building trust with prospective students (UNESCO, 2022).
- **Transparency in Advertising:** The line between informative content and promotional material can blur on social media. Maintaining transparency and distinguishing between advertising and informational posts is critical to avoid misleading prospective students (UNESCO, 2022).
- **Authenticity in Content:** Authenticity is a critical factor in SMM. Institutions should ensure their shared content reflects their values, culture, and offerings. Misrepresentation or embellishment can lead to disillusioned students and damage an institution's reputation (UNESCO, 2022).
- **Data Security:** Safeguarding the personal information of prospective students is paramount. HEIs are responsible for ensuring data security and compliance with data protection regulations to prevent data breaches and protect individuals from identity theft or other privacy infringements (UNESCO, 2022).

- **Ethical Targeting:** Social media platforms offer sophisticated targeting options. Institutions must exercise ethical and fair targeting to reach prospective students without discriminatory or invasive practices (UNESCO, 2022).
- **Content Verification:** Verifying the accuracy of information and claims made in SMM content is crucial. Misleading or false information can erode trust and deter potential students from enrolling (UNESCO, 2022).
- **Engagement with Authenticity:** While engagement is vital, institutions must engage with prospective students authentically. Automated or robotic responses can come across as insincere and diminish the student experience (UNESCO, 2022).
- Navigating these issues requires educational institutions to establish clear policies and practices prioritizing privacy, transparency, and authenticity in their social media marketing efforts. This not only upholds ethical standards but also enhances the effectiveness of enrollment strategies.

2.6. Student Decision-Making Process:

According to a 2017 Social Admissions Report (Turner, 2017), 60% of students have liked or following a college they were thinking about applying to. These students connected with the schools they were interested in using a variety of social media platforms: 67% utilized Instagram, 63% used Facebook, and 42% used Snapchat. Participants in this study reported researching the universities they were considering utilizing social media sites. However, only 12% of individuals used Snapchat for this reason, compared to 43% who used Facebook and 68% who used Instagram. This study found that Instagram was the most crucial medium for potential students, which differs from earlier studies that focused more on Facebook (Mohsin, 2020).

Notably, adding to the previous work, participants also disclosed that students were using YouTube, among other platforms, to research the universities they were considering. With the growing popularity of YouTube, academic institutions have a unique chance to produce interesting and educational videos for potential students. One way to showcase the institution's strengths is to work with current students with large YouTube followers and make material. While there isn't much data on how prospective students use YouTube to choose colleges, other studies have shown that high school students utilize the platform for research on a variety of topics and for educational purposes (Bardakci, 2019).

Participants in this study were asked to list the websites that were most useful for selecting their college. Instagram turned out to be the most influential of all the social media platforms used by the participants, indicating that social media influences students' decisions to enroll in a particular school. Participants who were enrolled and those who were not scored the platforms differently; non-enrolled students gave YouTube a higher ranking, which may indicate that the institution's YouTube persona is negatively impacted. The two sites that participants used most frequently and thought were most helpful in helping them choose colleges were Instagram and Facebook. Therefore, universities should consistently use these platforms to engage their audience with various content types, multiple daily posts, and feature usage to ensure a positive image and active engagement with their social media.

Regardless of their enrollment status, the participants selected Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube as the most popular and useful channels for learning about colleges, according to the survey. These online resources had a statistically significant impact on participants' decisions

to enroll at the university. Social media was regarded as an important source of information for prospective students and influenced their enrollment decisions, even though it was not the most important factor (Skinner, 2019). Other factors that significantly impact prospective students' college choices include cost of attendance, location, and parental influences.

2.7. Credibility and Trustworthiness of Social Media Content:

2.7.1. Perception of credibility and trustworthiness in social media marketing content.

The perception of credibility and trustworthiness in SMM content is a critical aspect of a successful marketing strategy, especially in the context of prospective student enrollment for HEIs (Yuan & Lou, 2020). Several factors influence how audiences perceive the credibility and trustworthiness of content. Source credibility, such as endorsements from well-known professors or trusted alumni associations, significantly impacts the perception of content (Yuan & Lou, 2018). Furthermore, consistency and accuracy in content, aligned with the institution's brand identity and transparent information about offerings and admissions, enhance trust (Constantinides & Stagno, 2012). User-generated content, like authentic reviews, testimonials, or stories from current students, is often seen as more credible than institution-generated content, providing real-life experiences and perspectives (Constantinides & Stagno, 2012). Active engagement with the audience and prompt responses to inquiries indicate a commitment to open communication, fostering trust (Hossain & Sakib, 2016). Consistency across various platforms and alignment with the institution's website and other materials create a cohesive and credible image (Ahmadi, 2019). Third-party validation, such as accolades and high rankings from respected organizations or publications, can bolster credibility (Hoang, Phan & Le, 2023). The perception of credibility and trustworthiness is pivotal in shaping the decisions of prospective students. HEIs must consistently produce accurate, transparent, and authentic content while engaging with their audience to maintain high trust in their SMM efforts (Rutter, Roper & Lettice, 2016).

2.7.2. How universities build credibility and trust with their target audience through their social media presence.

Universities should make it a priority in their marketing strategy to establish credibility and trust with their target audience through their social media presence. Several key strategies and practices contribute to achieving this goal:

- **Consistency in Branding:** Universities establish trust by maintaining consistent branding across their social media platforms. This includes using the same logo, colors, and messaging to create a recognizable and trustworthy identity (thebrandeducation.com, 2023).
- **Engaging Content:** Universities engage their audience by providing valuable and relevant content. This can include sharing educational resources, success stories, and informative updates that resonate with their target audience (thebrandeducation.com, 2023).
- **Transparency:** Transparency is crucial to building trust. Universities that openly share information about their programs, admission processes, costs, and campus life demonstrate honesty and build trust with prospective students (O'Toole & Bennis, 2009)

- **Interactive Communication:** Engaging with the audience through interactive communication, responding to inquiries and comments promptly, and fostering a sense of community through social media interactions enhance trust (Marx, 2020).
- **Authenticity:** Authenticity is crucial. Universities must ensure that their shared content reflects their values, culture, and offerings. Misrepresentation or embellishment can damage trust and credibility (thebrandeeducation.com, 2023).
- **User-Generated Content:** Encouraging and sharing user-generated content, such as student testimonials and reviews, can be a powerful way to build trust. Prospective students often trust the experiences and opinions of their peers (Singh, 2023)
- **Crisis Management:** How universities handle crises or adverse events on social media can significantly impact trust. Responding quickly, addressing concerns, and demonstrating accountability are essential (Bodo, 2023).
- **Data Security:** Prioritizing the protection of personal information published on social media platforms is imperative for universities. Building trust with their audience by protecting the privacy and security of their information (UNESCO, 2022).
- **Alumni Engagement:** Universities that maintain strong relationships with alumni and showcase their achievements on social media enhance their credibility and trustworthiness. Alumni success stories can inspire confidence (Alicescarl, 2023).

2.8. Theoretical framework

An in-depth analysis of the key theoretical underpinnings that will serve as the foundation for my research in this section will help you understand how important it is to comprehend various theoretical and conceptual frameworks in marketing and consumer behavior in order to interpret the complex dynamics influencing the students' decision to enroll in BBU and brand engagement. Using these frameworks, I aim to understand the complex mechanisms influencing consumer decision-making, communication tactics, and innovation diffusion in the dynamic marketing and consumer behavior domain.

2.8.1. Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB)

The Theory of Reasoned Action, which gave rise to the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) in 1980, sought to predict a person's propensity to act in a certain way given a set of conditions. It aimed to clarify actions inside one's self-control domain. The idea of behavioral intent, which is shaped by one's attitude toward the possibility that the conduct would produce the desired effects and subjective assessment of the risks and advantages involved, is at the center of this paradigm.

The TPB has demonstrated efficacy in predicting and clarifying a wide range of health-related behaviors and intentions, including but not limited to smoking, drinking alcohol, using healthcare services, breastfeeding, and substance abuse. It asserts that desire (intention) and ability (behavioral control) are the two main factors that determine how well a behavior performs. It divides beliefs into three groups: control, normative, and behavioral. The TPB consists of six constructs that together capture an individual's control over their behavior.

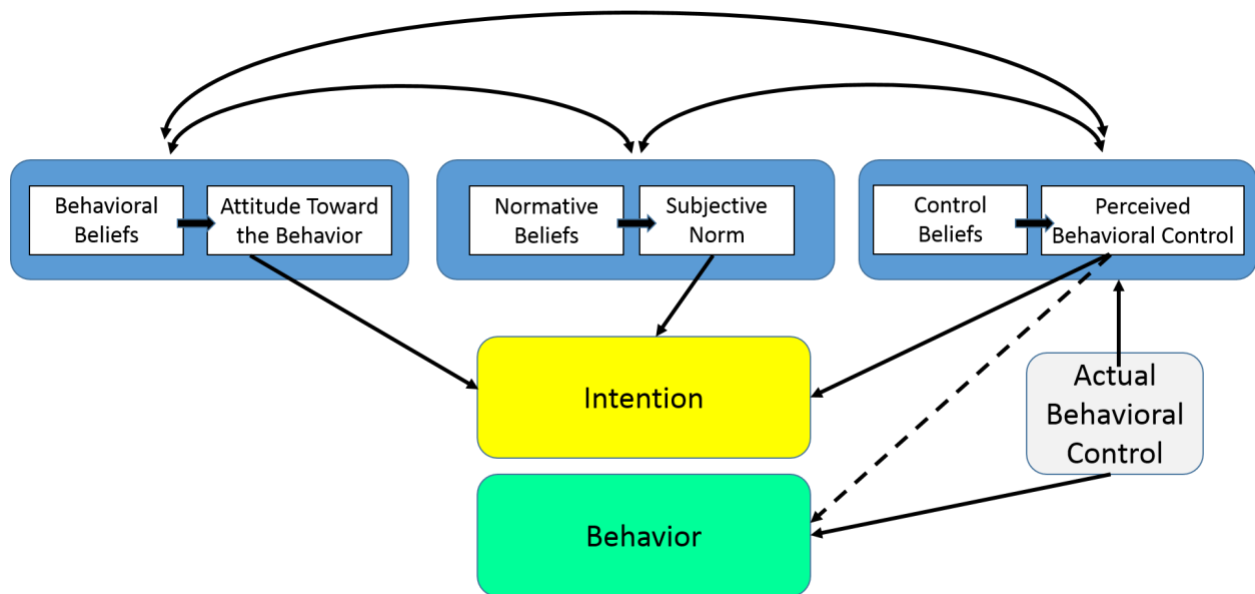


Figure 8: Model of Theory of Planned Behavior

Source: sphweb.bumc.bu.edu

- **Attitudes:** This concerns the degree to which an individual has a positive or negative opinion of the activity in question, considering the consequences that the behavior will cause.
- **Behavioral intention:** This includes the driving forces behind a specific conduct. The likelihood that an activity will be carried out increases with the strength of the intention to engage in it.
- **Subjective norms** concern how many people think the behavior is acceptable or unacceptable. It concerns how someone feels about whether or not essential people and peers believe they should engage in the action.
- **Social norms** are the accepted social norms in a community, a population, or a larger cultural setting. Social standards are accepted as standard among members of a certain community.
- **Perceived power:** This concerns the apparent existence of elements that could either help or impede the behavior's implementation. Their perceived power influences an individual's sense of control over these variables.
- **Perceived behavioral control:** This has to do with how easy or difficult a person believes the goal behavior to be to do. People's conceptions of control over their conduct can change depending on the setting and activity, as perceived behavioral control fluctuates. The Theory of Planned Behavior replaced the Theory of Reasoned Action when this specific construct was added later.

2.8.2. Customer Relationship Management (CRM)

Customer Relationship Management (CRM) is the collection of values, procedures, and policies that a company follows when interacting with its clients.

As seen from the organization's point of view, this all-encompassing relationship include direct customer encounters, like processes linked to sales and services, as well as the research of

customer behavior and the predictive analysis of consumer patterns and behaviors. CRM's ultimate goal is to improve the client experience as a whole.

CRM components include phone calls, bulk mailings, email correspondence, and websites for businesses. Businesses also use social media to adjust to trends that increase their revenue. CRM's primary goal is satisfying customer experiences that encourage loyalty and growing repeat business.

The technical tools managers and businesses use to handle external client interactions are increasingly called CRM. These systems show value at every point in the client journey, from initial discovery to education, purchase, and post-purchase assistance.

CRM technology is acknowledged as the fastest-growing sector in enterprise software, especially within the larger software-as-a-service (SaaS) market, with a global market value projected at over \$40 billion in 2018. Major players in the business, including Salesforce, Microsoft, SAP, Oracle, and Adobe Systems, are among the top five in the current CRM space. CRM includes every facet of contact between a business and its customers, but it's often connected to the technology that makes these connections possible.

CRM systems help companies organize and centralize client data so that it may be conveniently accessed for better customer service. CRM systems are used by businesses to improve client retention and sales and marketing initiatives. These solutions streamline data analytics, making it easier for companies to monitor the effectiveness of projects or campaigns, spot patterns, develop connections, and provide aesthetically pleasing data dashboards.

Improved service benefits customers, who are also more likely to express satisfaction. Customers no longer need to continually provide the same information because all customer contacts, including complaints, are kept and easily accessible.

2.8.3. Customer Decision Journey Framework

A model used in consumer behavior analysis and marketing to comprehend and map the decision-making process that customers go through while contemplating and eventually completing a purchase is called the Customer Decision Journey Framework, or CDJ Framework. This framework is designed to capture the various touchpoints and stages a customer experiences on their journey, from initial awareness of a product or service to the final purchase decision. It recognizes that the modern customer decision journey is not linear but a dynamic process influenced by multiple factors.

The typical stages in the Customer Decision Journey Framework may include:

- **Awareness:** At this point, advertising, social media, word-of-mouth, or internet research are ways that potential consumers learn about a product or service.
- **Consideration:** During this phase, clients actively investigate and contrast various solutions. They interact with the brand's content, read reviews, and look for information.
- **Preference:** Consumers begin to form a preference for a specific brand or product as a result of their interactions and research.
- **Purchase:** The customer makes a decision and purchases the product or service.
- **Post-Purchase:** After the purchase, the customer's journey continues as they use the product or service. Their experience at this stage can influence future decisions and brand loyalty.

- **Loyalty and Advocacy:** If customers are satisfied with their purchase and experience, they may become loyal and advocate for the brand, potentially influencing others.

The Customer Decision Journey Framework recognizes that customers have more control over their decision-making process than ever before, with the ability to research, compare, and seek recommendations at their own pace. It highlights the importance of engaging with customers at various touchpoints throughout their journey, providing valuable information, and ensuring a positive post-purchase experience to foster loyalty and advocacy.

2.8.4. Perna's Conceptual College Choice Model

According to Perna (2006), Perna's college choice model integrates sociological and economic college choice models, acknowledging that students' perceptions are shaped by their value systems and beliefs, which affect their college decisions. This model explores four different layers to determine the information students can access while making decisions, delving into the uniqueness of individual student choices.

Habitus factors are covered in the first layer at the model's center. These include social capital elements like access to resources and assistance for higher education and demographic characteristics like gender, color, and culture (Perna, 2006). The second layer relates to the school and community context, impacting the range and accessibility of resources and the structural benefits and obstacles that kids encounter.

The third layer focuses on the setting of higher education. It includes things like geography, institutional features that students found necessary when choosing a college, and marketing and recruitment strategies for universities and colleges. The social, economic, and policy context, which includes public policy problems like state or federal educational aid, economic indicators like unemployment rates, and elements about demographic characteristics, constitutes the fourth and final level.

Even in situations where the prices and benefits of several colleges are comparable, Perna's college choice model provides a thorough framework for understanding why students select certain universities. It assesses pupils' access to information sources in more detail. These models are useful for predicting the college selection process, but they are limited in explaining the subtleties of students' choices. However, they are reliable markers of the variables affecting students' choices to enroll in college. Perna's model served as a guide for creating survey questions for this study, which examined topics like the impact of gender and race, the use of social media to learn about colleges, the factors influencing students' decisions to enroll in the university, and the relationship between these factors and their decision to attend (Perna, 2006).

2.8.5. Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) Model

The 1980s saw the emergence of integrated marketing communication (IMC), which completely changed the way marketers and communicators interacted with their target audiences. According to the American Marketing Association, IMC is a strategic planning process that ensures every brand engagement a customer or prospect has with a company, service, or good is relevant to them and stays that way over time.

Historically, news release writing, distribution, and media pitching were the main facets of public relations (PR). But PR has become a more complex function, says Leigh Dow, a communication officer at 48 West Group in Phoenix. These days, PR teams are skilled at creating message strategies and determining how messages will be perceived; these insights are then carefully considered and incorporated into content strategy.

Furthermore, coordinating PR and IMC strategies has become more important due to the variety of venues available for content transmission, including social media, blog posts, and donated content.

The many terms related to communication, such as public relations, organizational communications, digital communications, promotions, publicity, media relations, corporate communication, "Marcom," public affairs, and investor relations, further complicate this picture. Many of these categories are interchangeable when referring to the process of teaching, persuading, and influencing audiences about a specific client, issue, or brand, even though some of them denote specialist areas within the larger field of communication. Notably, "strategic communications" and "public relations" are frequently used interchangeably.

Dow went on to say that she believes PR to be a highly specialized skill set and that IMC is a coordinated effort of specialists. She points out that the conventional definition of public relations, which frequently began with a news release, has mostly changed. Their company suggests to its clients that if a PR agency starts their approach with a news release, it might be time to look into other options.

Public relations, corporate communications, advertising, marketing, promotions, and publicity are just a few of the roles that are essential to the IMC framework in many modern firms. Through this partnership, communications coherence and consistency, brand promotion, and audience engagement are guaranteed.

As communication professionals, we must educate our clients and audiences about the nuances of our field. There is also growing consensus that our professional community should establish a single, unambiguous term and definition to reduce public confusion and misinterpretations. Leigh Dow agrees, emphasizing that while the message may be integrated, the delivery must often be more conscientious. PR is often considered the organization's "ethical compass," and it is the cornerstone of all other IMC elements. It develops the organization's key messages and then supervises the other IMC facets to ensure authenticity, consistency, and truthfulness across all communication channels, whether advertising, marketing materials, internal communications, or online content.

2.8.6. Social Media Engagement Theory

Di Gangi and Wasko (2016)'s Social Media Engagement Theory is based on Prahalad and Ramaswamy's co-creation model, which defines co-creation as cooperative value creation between a business and its clients (Prahalad et al., 2004). The foundation of this approach is the idea that customers should be able to influence corporate decisions through their interactions with brands, goods, and services. By describing a system where users engage with the technological elements of a social media platform and communicate with one another, Social Media Engagement Theory expands on the idea of co-creation (Di Gangi & Wasko, 2016).

Users participate in the social media platform while meeting their own requirements within this framework. Users can choose the extent of their engagement on the platform thanks to the highly personalized experience offered by the social dimension of connecting with other users. Notably, personalization becomes more crucial as user involvement levels rise. Experience creation opportunities lead to increased user engagement for organizations. An essential component of the Social Media Engagement Theory holds that greater utilization of the social media platform is correlated with higher levels of user engagement (Di Gangi & Wasko, 2016).

Here, "usage" refers to how often a person uses a social media platform, engaging in tasks including interaction, content retrieval, and exploration. According to the hypothesis, more user interaction results in a more worthwhile co-creation of value and increased use of the social media platform. The creation of survey questions to investigate participants' use of social media was informed by this theoretical approach. The research aimed to determine how much time participants spend on social media and whether or not this usage affected their choice to enroll in college.

2.8.7. Pull and Push Marketing Models

Pull and Push Marketing Models are essential concepts in the field of marketing. These models describe different approaches to reaching and engaging target audiences.

In a Pull Marketing Model, the focus is on attracting consumers to your product or service. This is typically done through creating valuable and relevant content that consumers actively seek out. Pull marketing strategies include methods like content marketing, social media, and search engine optimization (SEO) to increase brand exposure and loyalty. Consumers are "pulled" toward the brand as they actively look for information or solutions.

On the other hand, in a Push Marketing Model, the emphasis is on pushing the product or service to the consumer. This approach involves proactive promotion and advertising, often interrupting consumers' activities. Push marketing strategies include traditional advertising, email marketing, and direct sales efforts.

Two crucial factors come into play when deciding between push and pull marketing. The first factor is demand. Are there already robust, existing demands for your product or service? Do you understand clearly how and where to access customers at the point of sale, whether in an online or in-person setting, specifically for this product? If you can confidently respond affirmatively to these questions, push marketing should be your chosen strategy.

Conversely, if word-of-mouth marketing is significant in your strategy and your offer addresses needs, your customers might still need to recognize or be aware that your solution is their best option; pull marketing becomes your most suitable approach.

2.9. **Emerging Trends and Innovations:**

HEIs are constantly adjusting to new ideas and trends in the ever-changing field of SMM for student recruitment. These techniques are intended to draw in and engage potential students successfully (EduonTech, 2023). Here are a few notable trends in this category:

- **Interactive Content:** Engaging content that encourages interactions, such as polls, quizzes, live Q&A sessions, and contests, can capture the attention of potential students (Makhariya, 2023). These interactive elements foster community and involvement, making the recruitment process more appealing.
- **Video Marketing:** With the growing popularity of platforms like TikTok, Instagram Reels, and YouTube, incorporating short and engaging videos can be an effective way to showcase campus life, academic programs, and student testimonials (Honcho, 2023). Video content allows for a more immersive and authentic experience.
- **Influencer Partnerships:** Collaborating with social media influencers or student ambassadors can lend credibility and authenticity to your marketing efforts (Ibáñez-

Sánchez, S., Flavián, M., Casaló, L. V., & Belanche, D., 2021). These influencers can share their genuine experiences and recommendations with their followers, potentially influencing enrollment decisions.

- **Personalization:** Social media marketing may be made much more effective by focusing content and messaging on particular target audiences (Shah, 2023). You may connect with potential students by utilizing strategies like micro-targeting and data analysis to deliver information that speaks to their goals and interests.
- **Chatbots and AI:** Implementing chatbots and artificial intelligence in social media platforms can provide instant responses to inquiries, guide potential students through the application process, and offer a more personalized experience (Orai, 2021).
- **Data Analytics and Insights:** Leveraging data analytics tools and social media insights is crucial to understanding the impact of your marketing efforts (Longhurst, 2023). This information can help refine your strategies, identify what works best, and make data-driven decisions for future campaigns.
- **User-Generated Content:** Encourage students and alums to share their experiences and stories on social media using a specific hashtag or campaign theme (Slater, 2023). User-generated content can be a powerful tool for showcasing the real-life benefits of attending BBU.
- **Virtual Events:** With the rise of virtual events and webinars, you can organize online sessions that allow prospective students to interact with faculty, current students, and admission officers (VirtualDays.com, 2023). These events can be promoted on social media platforms to reach a wider audience.
- **Social Advertising:** Reach particular demographics and geographic locations that correspond with your hiring objectives by utilizing the targeted advertising tools of social media sites like Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn (Gujarat, 2023).
- **Feedback and Surveys:** Regularly gather feedback from your social media audience to understand their needs and preferences (Gujarat, 2023). Conduct surveys and listen to their suggestions for continuous improvement.

CHAPTER 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Mixed Methods Research is used in this research, which investigates the influence of SMM on attracting BBU student enrollment through online surveys and in-depth interviews. The online questionnaire will provide information for refining BBU's SMM marketing strategies, understanding its competitive positioning, and optimizing content creation to enhance its influence on prospective students' decisions. In addition, the interviews will touch on individual experiences and suggestions to enhance BBU's SMM's capacity to draw in prospective students. This chapter will detail the original research, secondary data gathering, participants, and instruments employed.

3.1. Research Design

This mixed-methods study examines how BBU students utilize social media and how institutional social media influenced their previous decision to enroll at Budapest Business University to quantify social media's impact on recruiting BBU student enrollment. These study techniques are based on earlier quantitative and qualitative studies on the effects of social media use on making decisions and the perceptions of institutional social media among college students.

I sent out an online survey to fifty BBU students in October of 2023. In addition to inquiries on participant demographics, the survey sought to determine how social media marketing (SMM) affected BBU student enrollments. Apart from the survey, I carried out six comprehensive interviews with five students from BBU and one employee involved in social media marketing to obtain additional perspectives and suggestions for improving and developing social media marketing tactics. Microsoft Excel was then used for the analysis of the survey and interview data.

3.2. Research site

I chose to conduct this research at Budapest Business University (BBU). BBU is Hungary's largest applied sciences university, educating around 20,000 students from 91 nationalities with 1300 international students. Although BBU only became a University of Applied Sciences in 2016, the school has almost 160 years of history in higher education and research dating back to the Pest Academy of Commerce, founded in 1857. The university is situated in the vibrant and culturally rich city of Budapest. It is strategically located in the heart of Budapest, with three faculties: FIMB (Faculty of International Management and Business), FCHT (Faculty of Commerce, Hospitality and Tourism), and FFA (Faculty of Finance and Accountancy) with different programs. BBU is becoming increasingly well-known internationally as it strongly emphasizes developing an international academy atmosphere. It offers exchange programs in various subject areas through its relationships with 225 partner universities across 38 countries.

3.3. Participants

In this research, for the online questionnaires, the participants were 50 students from Budapest Business University aged from 18 to 28 years old. Of these, 35 (70%) were females, and 15 (30%) were males. The participants are from different nationalities, including 18 Vietnamese (36%), 17 Hungarian (34%), 2 Brazilian (4%), 2 Ukrainian (4%), 2 Kyrgyz (4%), 1 Georgian (2%), 1 Chinese (2%), 1 Bosanac (2%), 1 Colombian (2%), 1 Indian (2%), 1 Laos (2%), 1 Thai (2%), and 1 Korean (2%). Most of the students come from the Faculty of International

Management and Business (FIMB) (56%), the Faculty of Commerce, Hospitality and Tourism (FCHT) (34%), and the Faculty of Finance and Accountancy (FFA) (10%).

In addition, the in-depth interviews included 6 participants (5 students and one social media marketing employee). The five students represent three different faculties: FIMB, FFA, and FCHT. Furthermore, the social media marketing employee is an online marketing manager at BBU.

3.4. Primary research

The research investigates the effectiveness of social media marketing in attracting potential students to enroll at BBU through online questionnaires and in-depth interviews. The online interview will be distributed to 50 BBU students, while the interviews will be face-to-face with 5 BBU students and the BBU online marketing manager. The study aims to suggest practical recommendations for BBU's social media and contribute insight into higher education marketing.

3.4.1. The online questionnaire

The author created a quantitative online survey with Google Forms to gather data for the study. In order to ascertain how each person uses social media, comprehends competitive positioning, and learn more about students' experiences with BBU's social media to their previous enrollment decision, the survey comprised demographic questionnaires along with multiple choice and Likert scale questions. Additionally, content creation was optimized to increase the survey's impact on the decisions of potential students. Three survey questions were created to correlate to the three primary categories:

Demographic Questions:

This part collected demographic information about the respondent's age, gender, faculty, major of study, and nationality. This information can be used to understand the diversity of the sample and how it may influence their social media usage and perception of BBU.

Social Media Usage:

This section captures questions about social media usage and provides insight into participants' frequency, purpose, and perception. These statistics can be used to evaluate the overall impact of social media as well as the reach of social media among the intended audiences.

The Influence of BBU Social Media Marketing Questions:

The following five aspects were rated using a five-point Likert scale and multiple choice questions in this survey section: Appendix A contains questions about Awareness and Exposure, Content Engagement, Influence on Decision Making, Competitors' Awareness, and Satisfaction. These inquiries are meant to collect various data from respondents, such as their inclinations, viewpoints, and experiences about BBU's social media marketing, and to assess how well social media works as a vehicle for BBU's content and promotion..

3.4.2. In-depth interviews

After starting with the survey to find out the overall issue, I followed by interviews to understand those factors better and seek suggestions from them for BBU's social media. I chose two types of samples for more diversified recommendations, from both students' aspects and both social media employees' views. The interviews with students cover various topics, from personal experiences to recommendations to BBU. The responses can offer valuable insights into the effectiveness of BBU's SMM and ways to improve its impact on attracting and

engaging prospective students. On the other hand, the interview with the online marketing manager can be used to assess the current state of BBU's SMM efforts and gather expert suggestions for improvement and innovation in student enrollment strategies. All the interviews are offline and in person. (See Appendix B & C for survey questions).

3.5. Secondary Data Collection

In order to gather information for the study on the influence of SMM on drawing in BBU students, the author collected and analyzed data from publically accessible sources, including blogs, forums, and online discussions about higher education and marketing. Specifically, I gather quantitative and qualitative data on the student's enrollment decisions, interactions with BBU's social media content, and the preferences and perceptions of potential students towards BBU as a university choice.

3.6. Data Analysis

Microsoft Excel was used to import the survey data and analyze the research topics statistically. Surveys that were not completed were eliminated and did not enter the analysis. Every participant's personally identifying information was removed from the survey findings, destroyed, and not utilized in any data analysis. The survey data was subjected to several tests to determine whether there is any correlation between decisions to enroll in BBU and the use of BBU social media.

CHAPTER 4. FINDINGS

Data from in-depth interviews and the online Google Forms survey will be presented in this chapter.

4.1. Online questionnaires

Results Demographic profile of participants

With 70% of participants identifying as female and 30% as male, the study sample is diverse and includes individuals between the ages of 18 and 28. These individuals represent a cross-section of students hailing from three distinct faculties at BBU (Budapest Business University): 34% originate from the Faculty of Commerce, Hospitality, and Tourism (FCHT), 56% from the Faculty of International Management and Business (FIMB), and 10% from the Faculty of Finance and Accountancy (FFA). The participants span various academic levels, including Bachelor, Master, and PhD programs, showcasing a well-rounded representation.

Furthermore, this participant cohort reflects a rich diversity of nationalities, including 18 Vietnamese (36%), 17 Hungarian (34%), 2 Brazilian (4%), 2 Ukrainian (4%), 2 Kyrgyz (4%), 1 Georgian (2%), 1 Chinese (2%), 1 Bosanac (2%), 1 Colombian (2%), 1 Indian (2%), 1 Laotian (2%), 1 Thai (2%), and 1 Korean (2%). This amalgamation of backgrounds and perspectives enhances the richness of our research dataset.

Results for Social Media Usage

The survey data reveals that 100% of the participants actively engage with social media platforms, and notably, each utilizes these platforms multiple times daily. Notably, there is some variation in the time allotted for social media use, with 76% of respondents reporting constant use throughout the day (Figure 9).

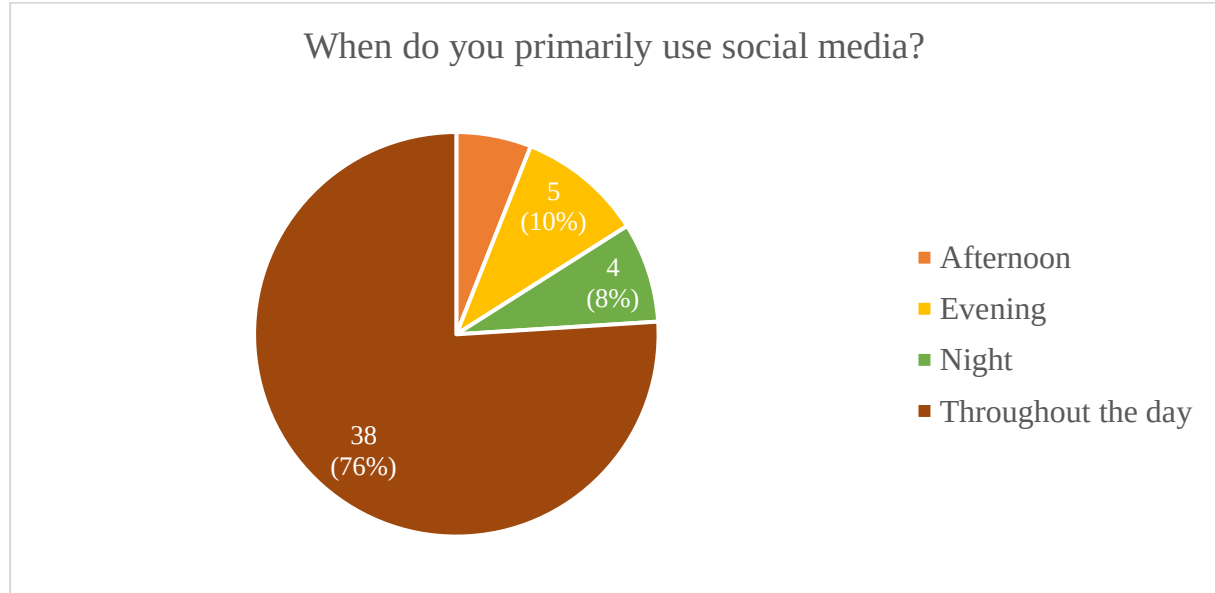


Figure 9: Social media usage time distribution

Source: Own questionnaire data

When examining the landscape of various social media platforms, Instagram emerges as the frontrunner, boasting an impressive user base of 96%. Notably, the top five platforms following Instagram's lead include YouTube at 84%, Facebook at 80%, TikTok at 78%, and LinkedIn at 56% (Figure 10); when it comes to the main reasons people use social media, the two most common ones—seeking entertainment and maintaining relationships with friends and family—

command significant interest. Additionally, 70% of respondents utilize social media platforms to gather information and recommendations (Figure 11). Furthermore, an appreciable 42% of participants employ these platforms for academic and university research, underlining the educational significance of social media in our contemporary digital landscape.

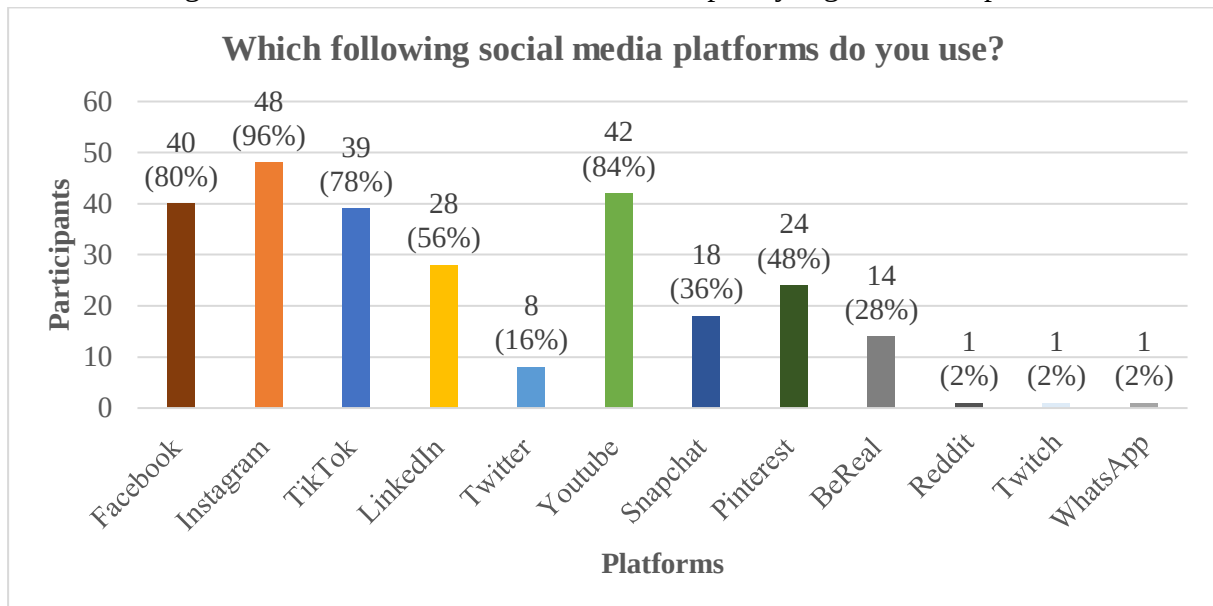


Figure 10: Social Media Platform Usage Among Respondents

Source: Own Questionnaire Data

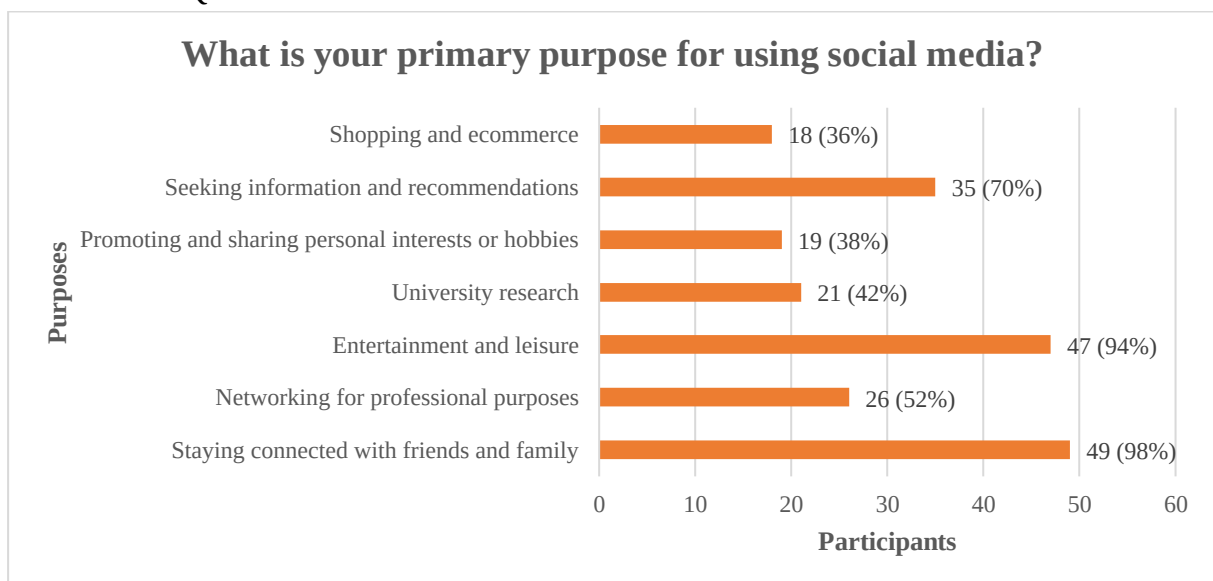


Figure 11: Primary Purposes for Social Media Usage Among Respondents

Source: Own Questionnaire Data

This survey also delves into the participants' perspectives regarding social media's dual role as an information source and an entertainment outlet. An impressive 76% of participants view social media favorably, considering it a valuable resource for accessing informative and entertaining content. Equally noteworthy, 74% of respondents expressed trust in the information and content disseminated through these platforms, with only 26% demonstrating

skepticism or mistrust. Moreover, the data underscores a high level of user engagement, with 82% actively interacting with content on social media (Figure 12).

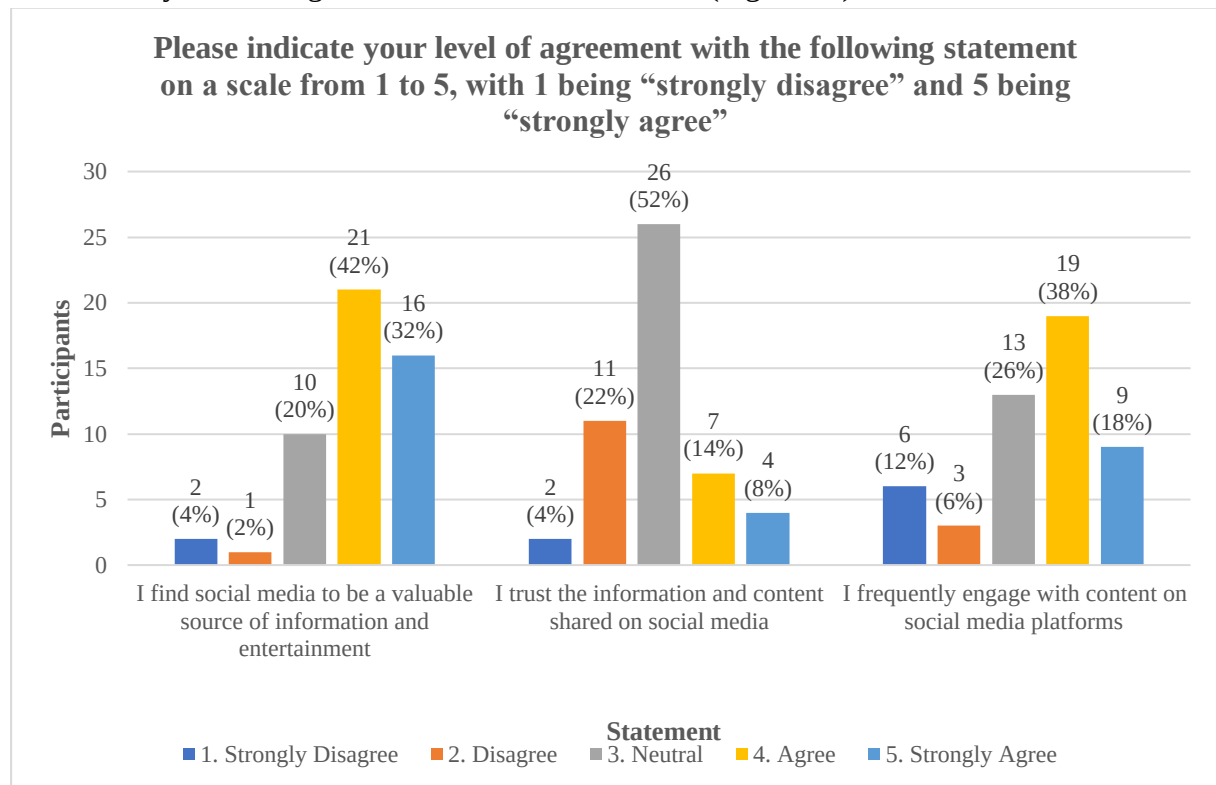


Figure 12: Perceptions and Engagement with Social Media Content

Source: Own Questionnaire Data

In a granular examination of content trustworthiness on social media, it becomes evident that participants place high trust in distinct categories. Notably, 74% of respondents trust educational content from recognized institutions. Additionally, expert opinions and advice offered by industry professionals garner a substantial 66% trust. Personal recommendations and reviews shared by friends and family also enjoy a commendable level of trust, with 64% of participants expressing confidence in them. Finally, 60% of participants trust news articles from reputable outlets. This data underscores the diverse dimensions of trust in content across various categories (Figure 13).

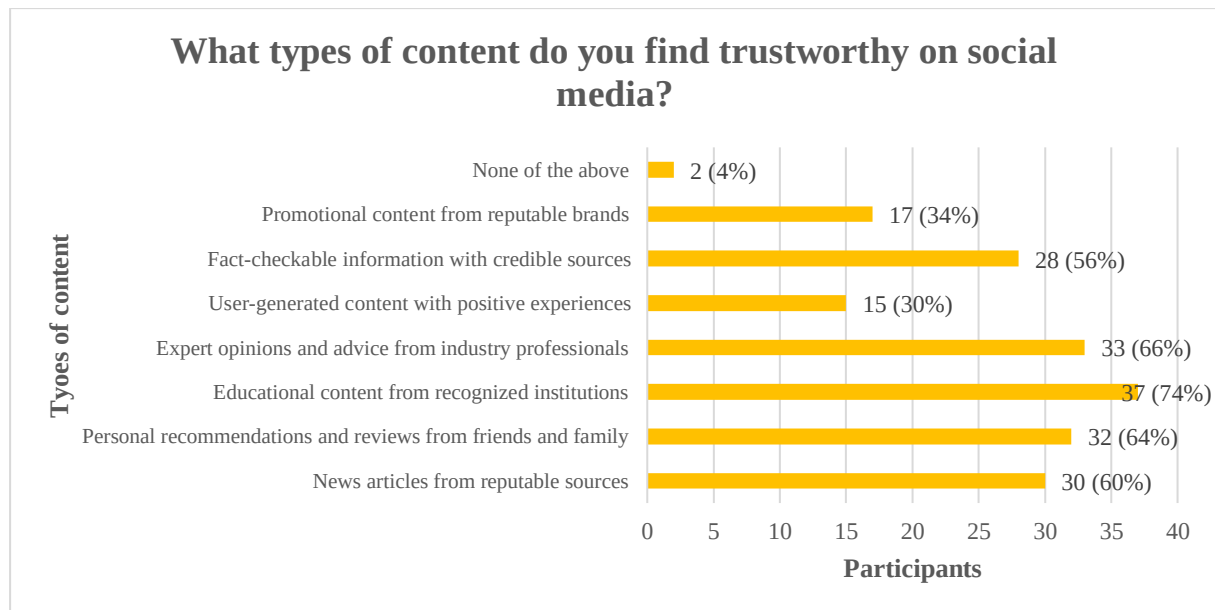


Figure 13: Trustworthiness of Social Media Content by Type

Source: Own Questionnaire Data

Results from the influence of social media marketing

1. Awareness and Exposure

When asked how participants first learned about BBU, 30% of respondents said they first learned about it from scholarship pages. Moreover, a significant 22% mention word-of-mouth as their main information source. Social media and educational fairs and events contribute significantly, accounting for 12% of respondents' initial knowledge acquisition. Other noteworthy sources of information include BBU's official website, school counselors or advisors, and search engines, all accounting for 6%. A more minor but noteworthy 2% reference online advertisements and local news or media coverage as their initial sources of awareness (Figure 14).

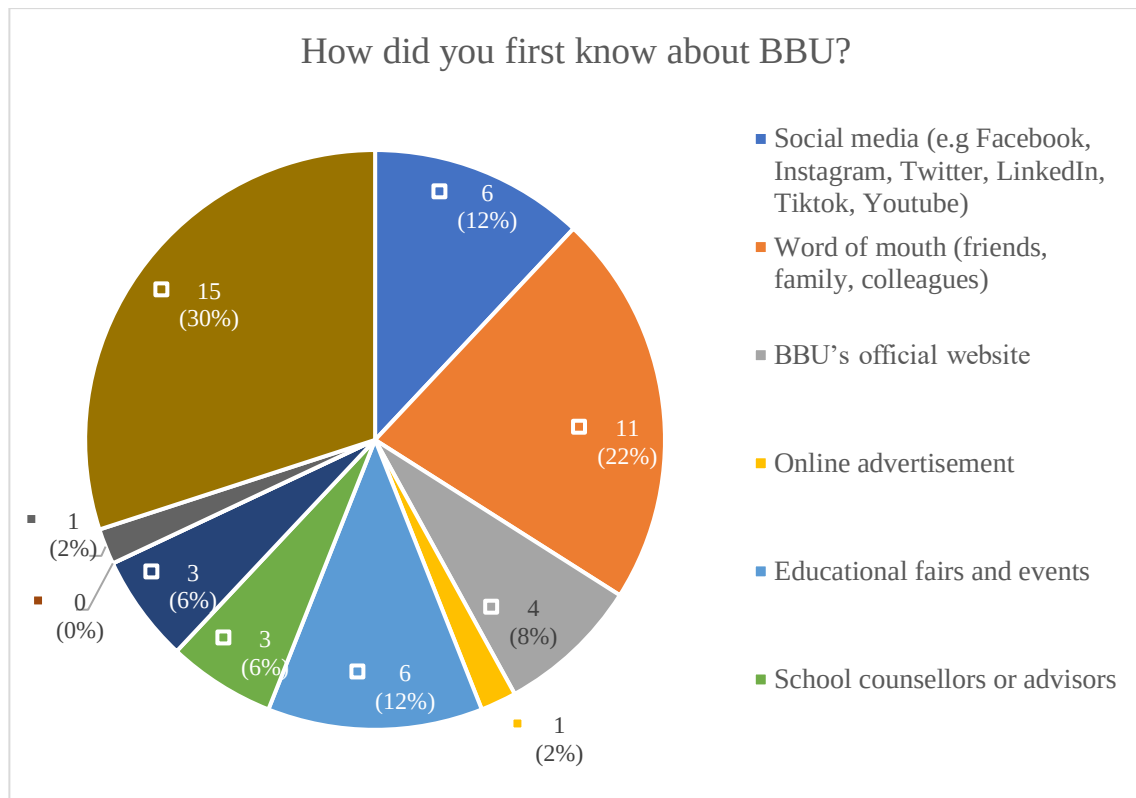


Figure 14: Initial Sources of Awareness About BBU

Source: Own Questionnaire Data

BBU has strategically engaged in social media marketing across a spectrum of five prominent platforms: Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, TikTok, and YouTube. The data underscores Instagram as the platform with the highest interaction rate, commanding a substantial 72% engagement from the audience. Following closely behind is Facebook, which boasts a noteworthy 70% engagement rate. Meanwhile, TikTok, LinkedIn, and YouTube exhibit 42%, 28%, and 12% interaction rates, respectively. Notably, only 2% of participants have yet to engage with BBU's presence on these social media platforms. This data reflects the university's effective utilization of diverse social media channels, offering valuable insights into audience engagement (Figure 15).

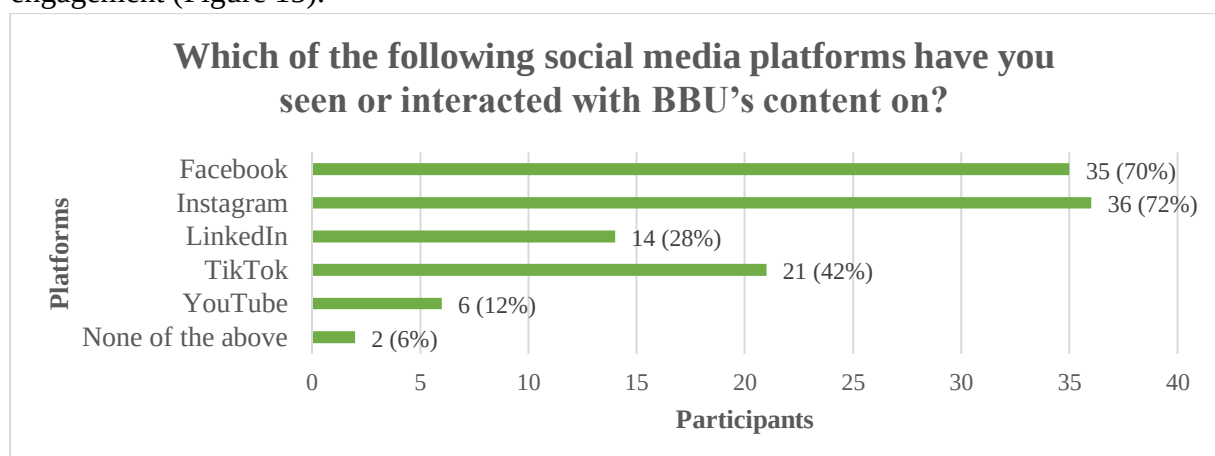


Figure 15: Interaction with BBU's Content on Social Media Platforms

Source: Own Questionnaire Data

When evaluating the efficacy of BBU's social media strategies in promoting the university and augmenting participants' knowledge and awareness of the institution, the findings indicate that 65% of respondents perceive these efforts as effective in acquainting them with the university. Conversely, the remaining 35% need to discern a significant impact attributed to BBU's social media initiatives.

Regarding BBU's social media effectiveness in heightening participants' awareness of the university, a notable 70% affirm that the institution's social media content has enhanced their awareness. Conversely, 30% suggest that the content has yielded a more modest impact. These insights comprehensively assess the influence and reach of BBU's social media endeavors (Figure 16).

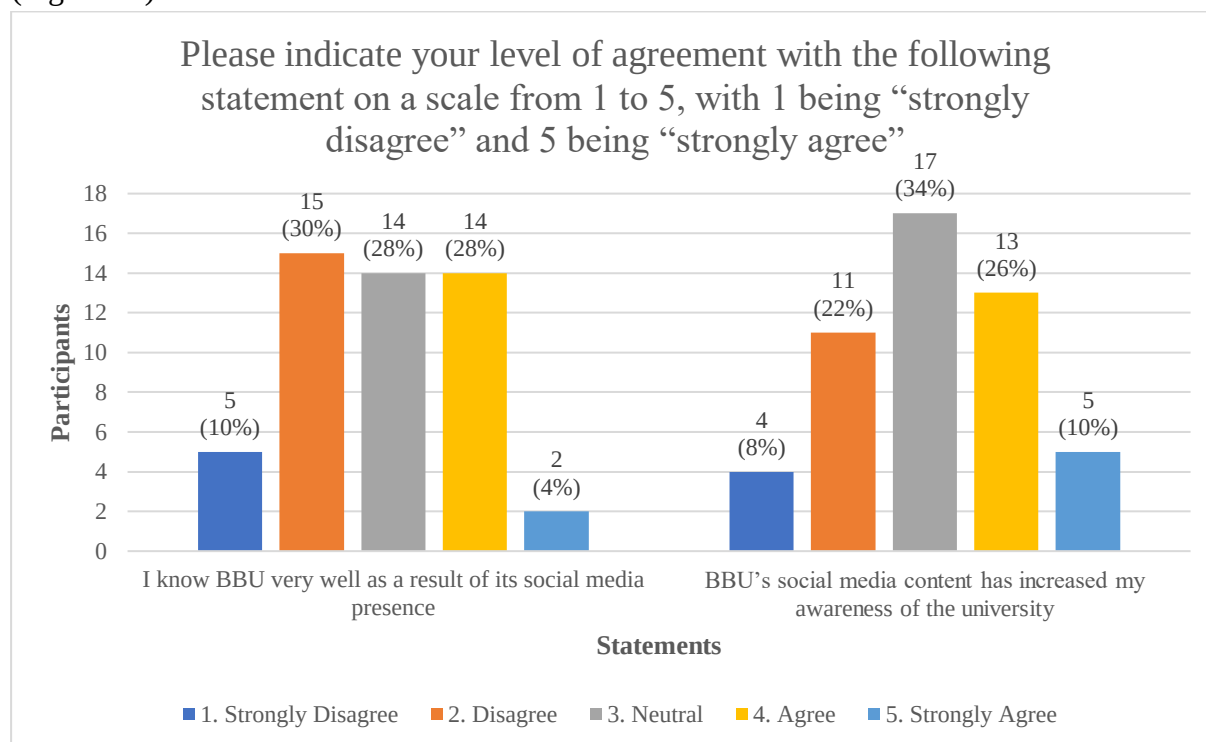


Figure 16: Perceptions of BBU's Social Media Impact on Awareness and Knowledge

Source: Own Questionnaire Data

2. Content Engagement

Regarding the degree of engagement with BBU's social media presence, 82% of respondents expressed a keen interest in events and activities showcased on these platforms. Approximately 48% have engaged with admission-related information, while 30% have shown interest in academic programs and student testimonials. When examining the frequency of engagement, the data reveals diverse patterns (Figure 17). Notably, 32% of participants indicate that they engage rarely, primarily when a particularly compelling post or event captures their attention. A further 24% of respondents engage consistently when they encounter content that imparts valuable information or aligns with their interests. An additional 24% engage periodically, although not with every post, reflecting varied engagement habits among participants (Figure 18).

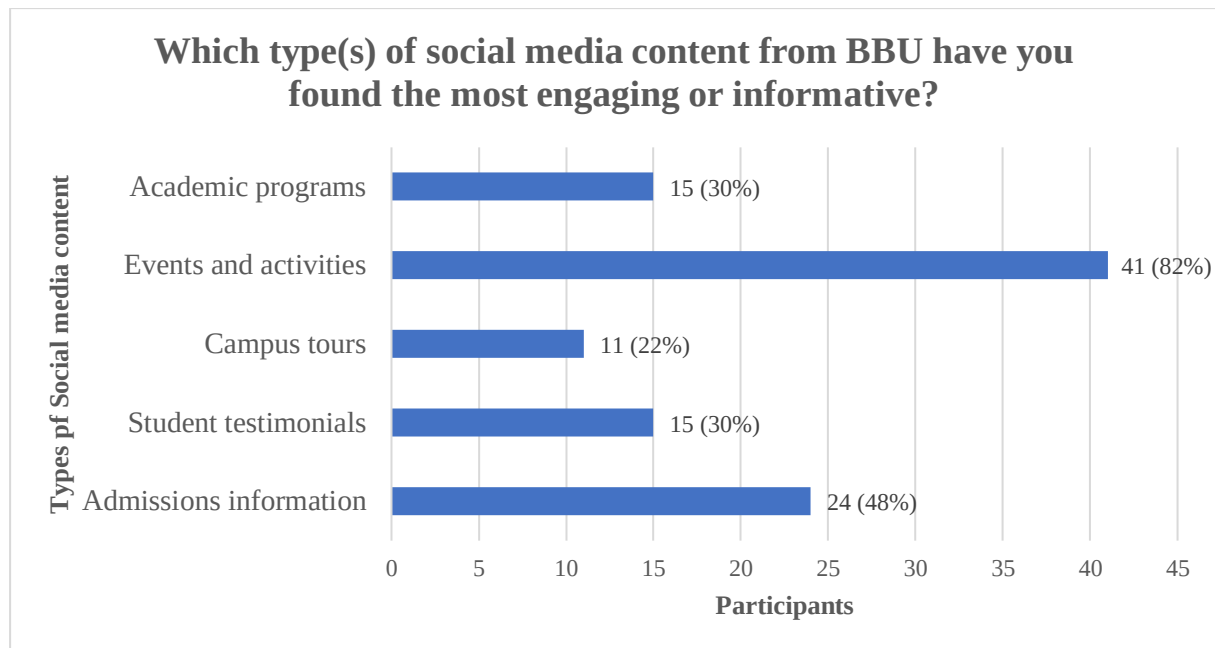


Figure 17: Engagement with BBU Social Media Content

Source: Own Questionnaire Data

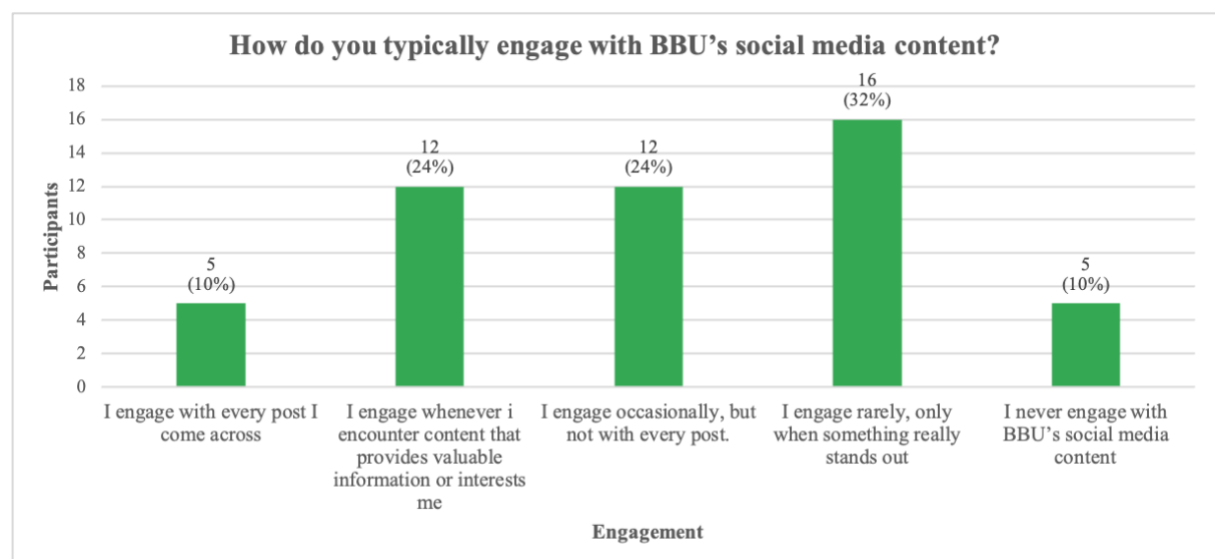


Figure 18: Engagement with BBU Social Media Content References

Source: Own Questionnaire Data

When scrutinizing the particular attributes that capture participants' attention, it is discerned that visually captivating images or graphics hold sway with 58% of respondents, closely followed by informative captions or descriptions, which resonate with 54% (Figure 19). However, in the broader context, most participants evaluate the quality of content disseminated by BBU as fair, comprising 38%. Notably, 36% express a more positive assessment, deeming the content good. Regrettably, a smaller 6% of respondents express dissatisfaction, characterizing the contents as poor (Figure 20).

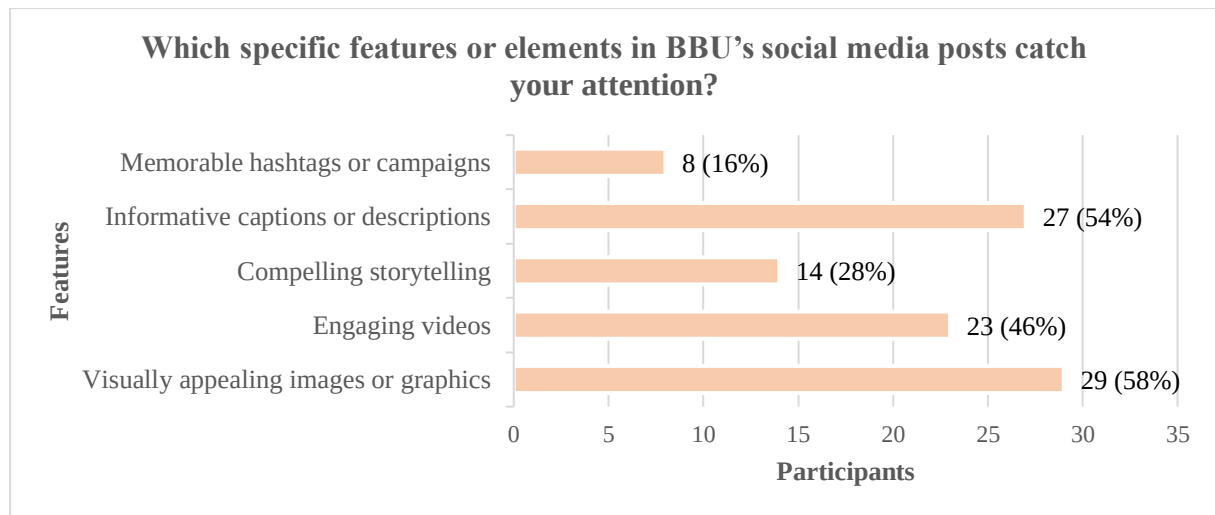


Figure 19: Factors Attracting Attention in BBU's Social Media Posts

Source: Own Questionnaire Data

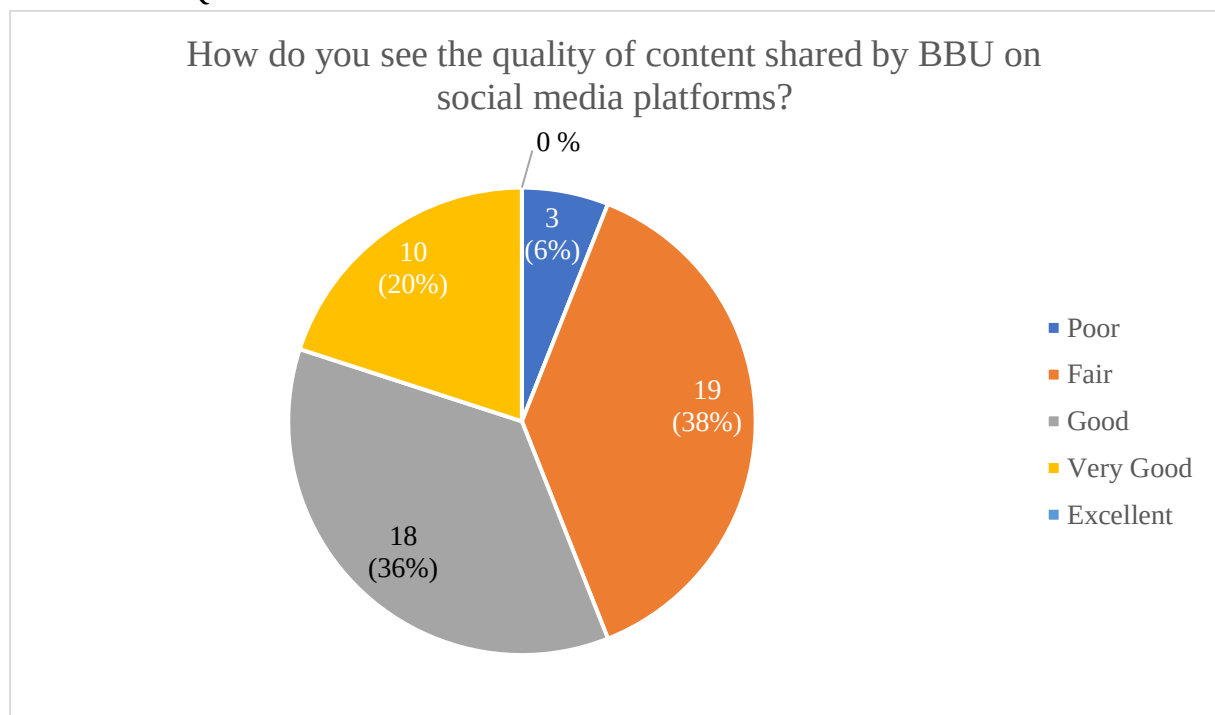


Figure 20: Quality Assessment of BBU's Social Media Content

Source: Own Questionnaire Data

The graph furnishes valuable insights into aligning BBU's social media content with participants' interests. It signifies that BBU's social media adeptly caters to the interests and sustains the engagement of an impressive 82% of participants. However, only 38% of participants actively share this content, suggesting room for potential amplification of its reach. Moreover, when examining participants' perceptions regarding the extent to which BBU's social media content faithfully represents the student experience and campus life at the university, 82% of respondents expressed a neutral stance, indicating a need for further investigation into this aspect (Figure 21).

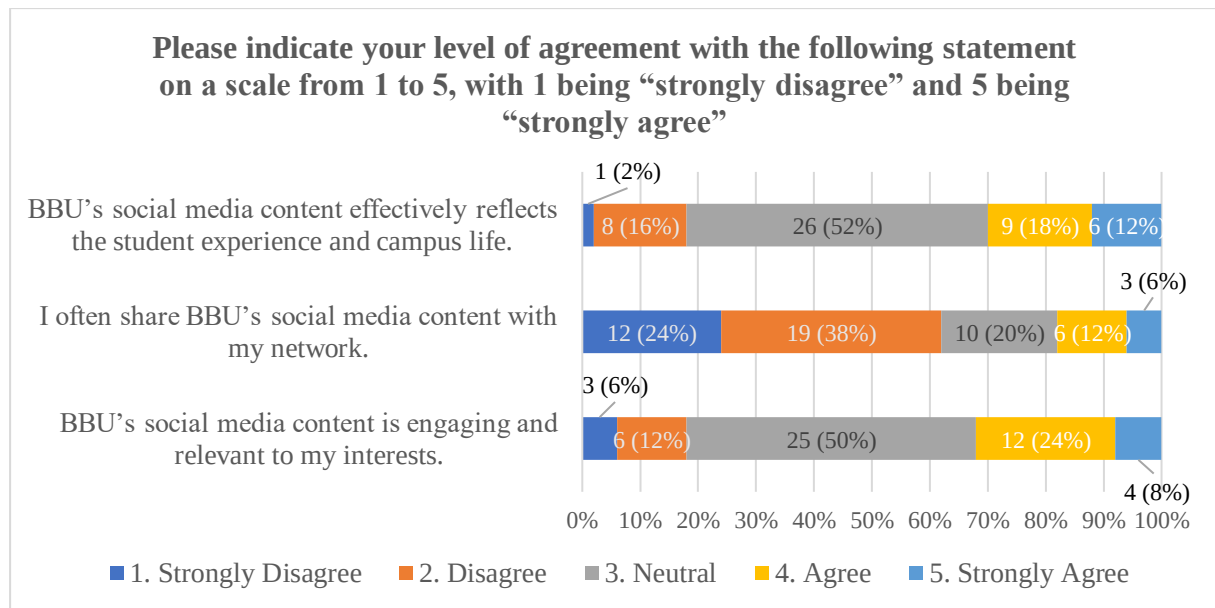


Figure 21: Perceptions of BBU's Social Media Content

Source: Own Questionnaire Data

3. Influence on Decision-Making

The graph clarifies how participants felt about BBU's social media presence in terms of legitimacy and influence. Surprisingly, 72% of participants claim that the social media content from the institution had no influence on their decision to enroll at BBU. On the other hand, 28% of respondents admit that the content significantly influenced their enrollment choices, highlighting the variety of effects of the information (Figure 22). Every respondent agrees that BBU's social media is a reliable and reputable source. Furthermore, the majority of participants have conflicting opinions, suggesting that BBU's social media posts accurately reflect their real experiences attending the university. The intricate relationship among perception, impact, and credibility highlights how diverse BBU's social media presence is.

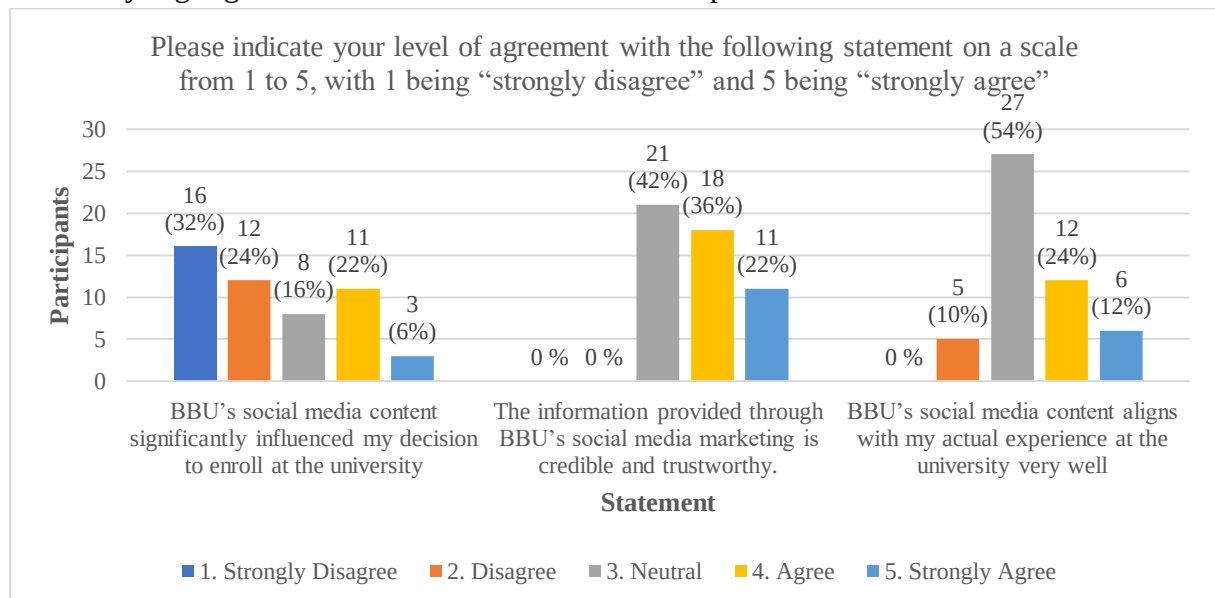


Figure 22: Perceptions of BBU's Social Media Influence and Credibility

Source: Own Questionnaire Data

This graph illustrates how BBU's social media material impacted participants' decision-making processes. Notably, most participants—exactly 56%—state that information about academic programs influences them. Furthermore, 46 percent of respondents affirm that updates on campus events and activities impact their decision-making and 42 percent state that information about admission and enrollment also has a big impact on their decision-making (Figure 23).

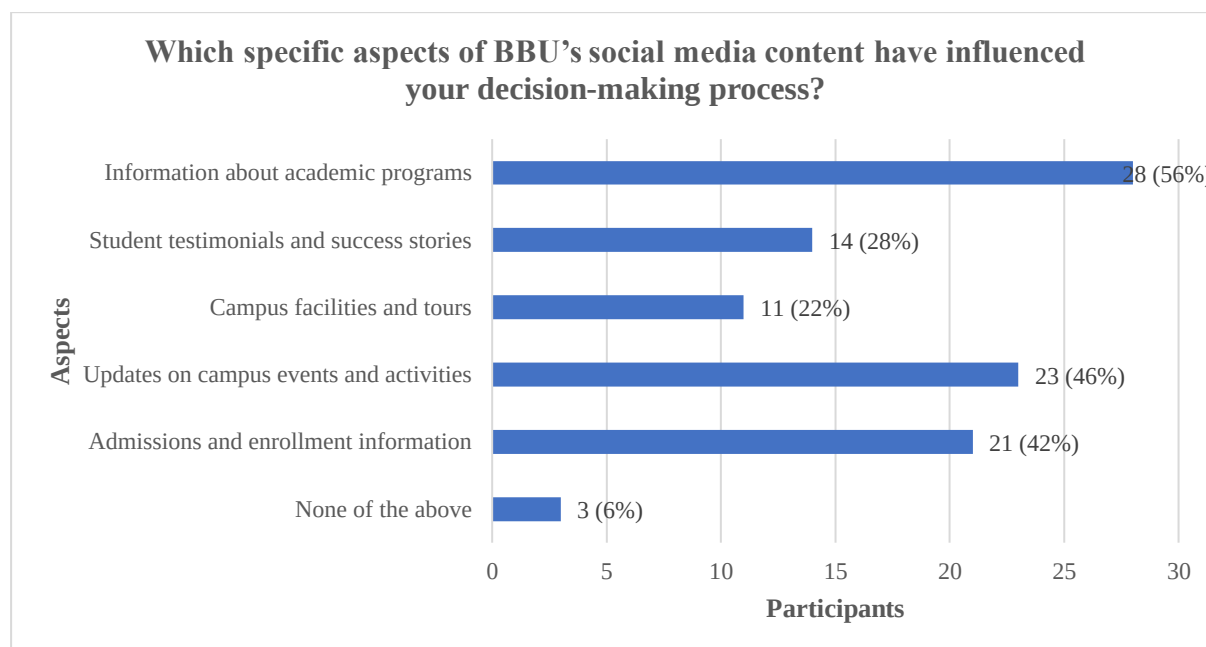


Figure 23: Influence of BBU's Social Media Content on Decision-Making

Source: Own Questionnaire Data

This graph illuminates additional influential factors, distinct from social media, that impact participants' decisions regarding student enrollment. 58% of participants revealed that recommendations from current BBU students hold substantial sway over their enrollment decisions. Likewise, providing scholarship and financial information equally commands a persuasive influence, garnering the same 58% response rate. Furthermore, the availability of courses and programs within the university's purview is a significant factor, with 56% of respondents acknowledging its impact.

In addition, BBU's ranking and reputation in the relevant field of study constitute a determinative influence for 48% of participants. In comparison, personal research and participation in online forums shape the decision-making processes of 40% of respondents. These findings underscore the multifaceted nature of factors shaping enrollment decisions (Figure 24).

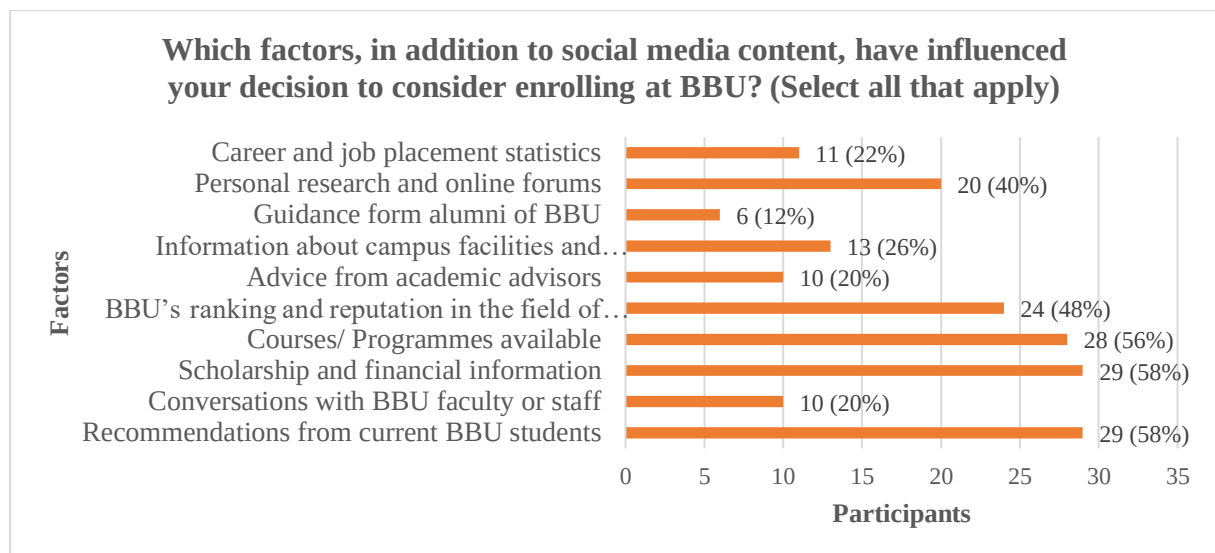


Figure 24: Influential Factors for Enrollment Decision at BBU

Source: Own Questionnaire Data

4. Competitor Awareness

A notable 54% of participants reported encountering social media content from BBU's competitors during their deliberation process for enrollment, signifying the presence of alternative options in the minds of prospective students.

Participants' opinions in this regard are measured by the question examining how well BBU uses social media marketing to set itself apart from its rivals. 60% of respondents exhibit a neutral stance, reflecting an absence of solid agreement or disagreement with the statement. This implies a requirement for a firm belief or a nuanced understanding of how social media marketing affects distinction. Conversely, 30% of participants believe BBU's social media marketing effectively sets the university apart from its competitors, signifying its role as a valuable tool for establishing a distinctive position in the competitive landscape (Figure 25).

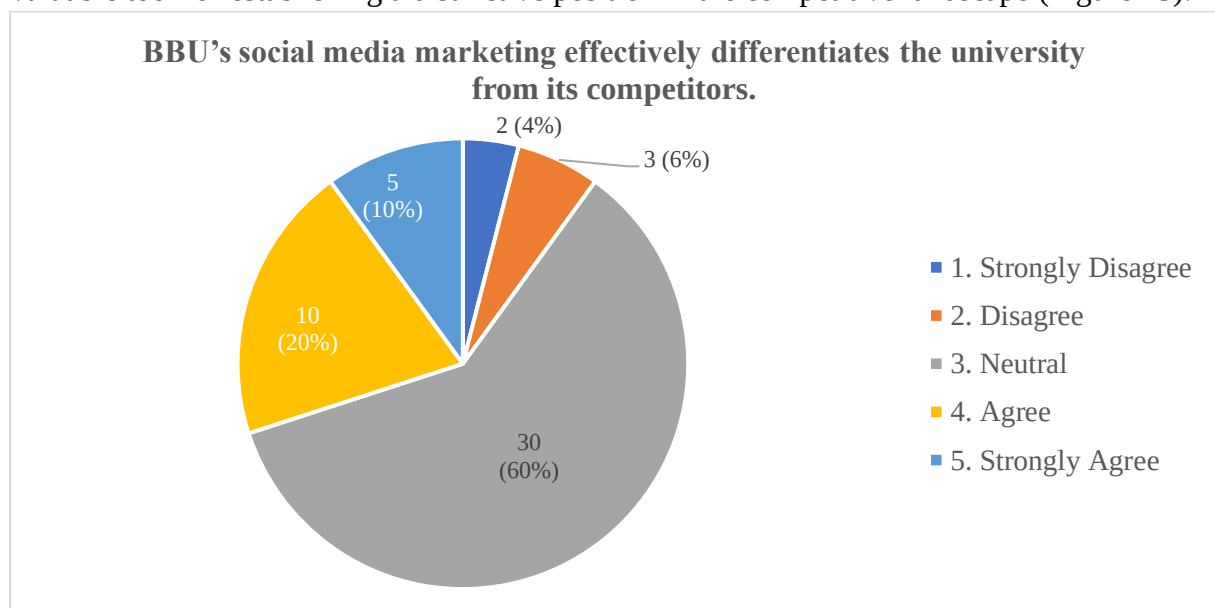


Figure 25: Perceived Effectiveness of BBU's Social Media Marketing in Differentiating from Competitors

Source: Own Questionnaire Data

This graph shows how social media postings from BBU's rivals influence prospective students' enrollment decisions. Notably, 38% of respondents perceive such content as having a moderate influence on their deliberation when considering enrollment at BBU. Conversely, a higher proportion, 42%, assert that BBU's competitors do not influence their decision-making process to select BBU as their institution of choice (Figure 26).

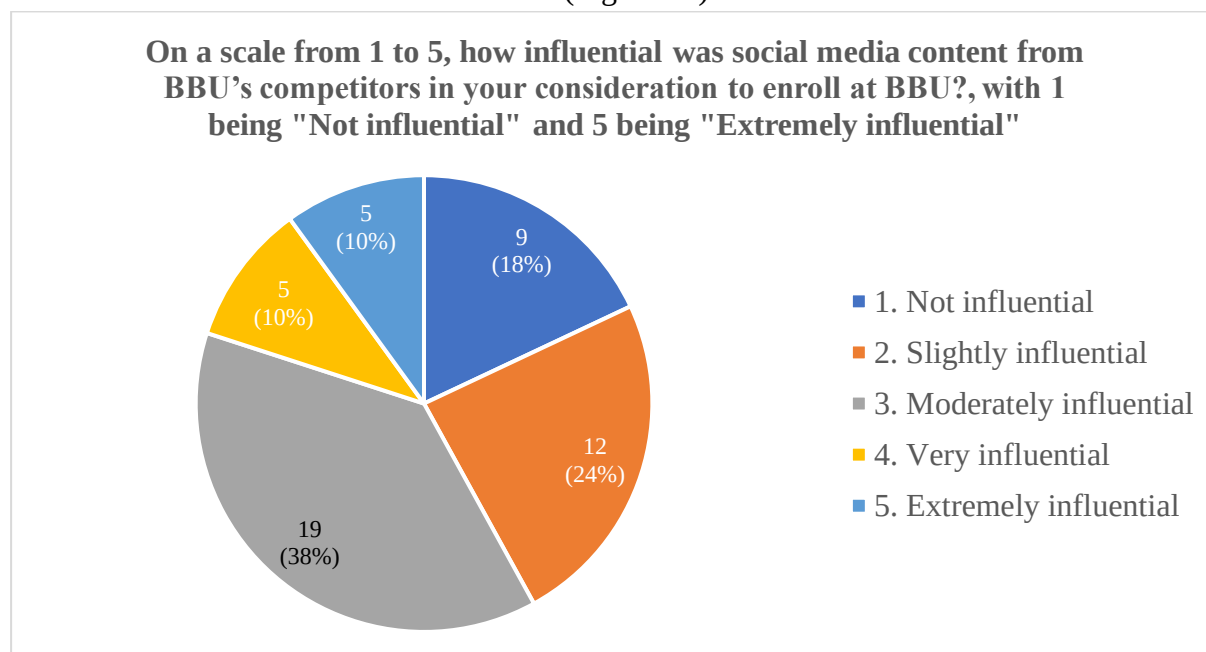


Figure 26: Influence of Competitor Social Media Content on Enrollment Decision

Source: Own Questionnaire Data

This graph illuminates the determinants that position BBU ahead of its competitors. While 30% of participants do not explicitly perceive BBU's social media outperforming its rivals, discernible trends suggest that BBU's social media excels in several key areas. These areas include the quality of visual content and design, as noted by 32% of respondents; the development of unique and creative content campaigns, acknowledged by 28%; the provision of engagement opportunities and interactivity, emphasized by 22%; and the effectiveness in presenting the student life and experience, cited by 20% (Figure 27). These strengths contribute to BBU's competitive edge in the social media landscape.

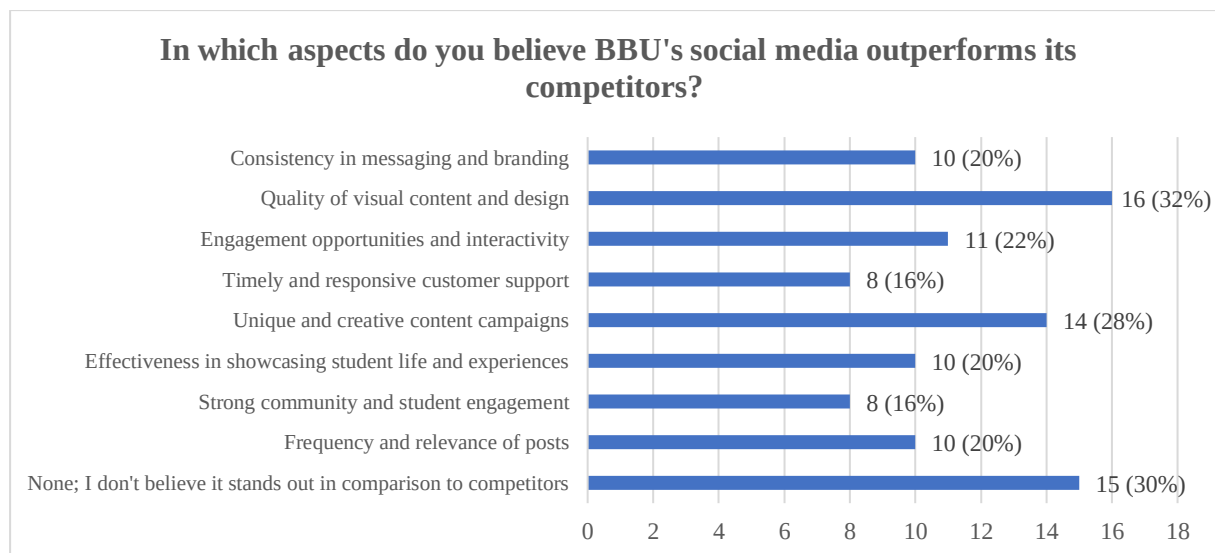


Figure 27: Perceived Areas of Superiority in BBU's Social Media Compared to Competitors

Source: Own Questionnaire Data

5. Satisfaction

This graph presents an overview of the satisfaction levels with BBU's Social Media Marketing (SMM). Notably, 44% of respondents express a neutral level of satisfaction with BBU's SMM endeavors. In contrast, a relatively more minor cohort, comprising 12%, registers their dissatisfaction, including both dissatisfied and very dissatisfied categories. On the positive spectrum, 44% of respondents indicated satisfaction, with 28% satisfied and 16% delighted with BBU's SMM efforts (Figure 28).

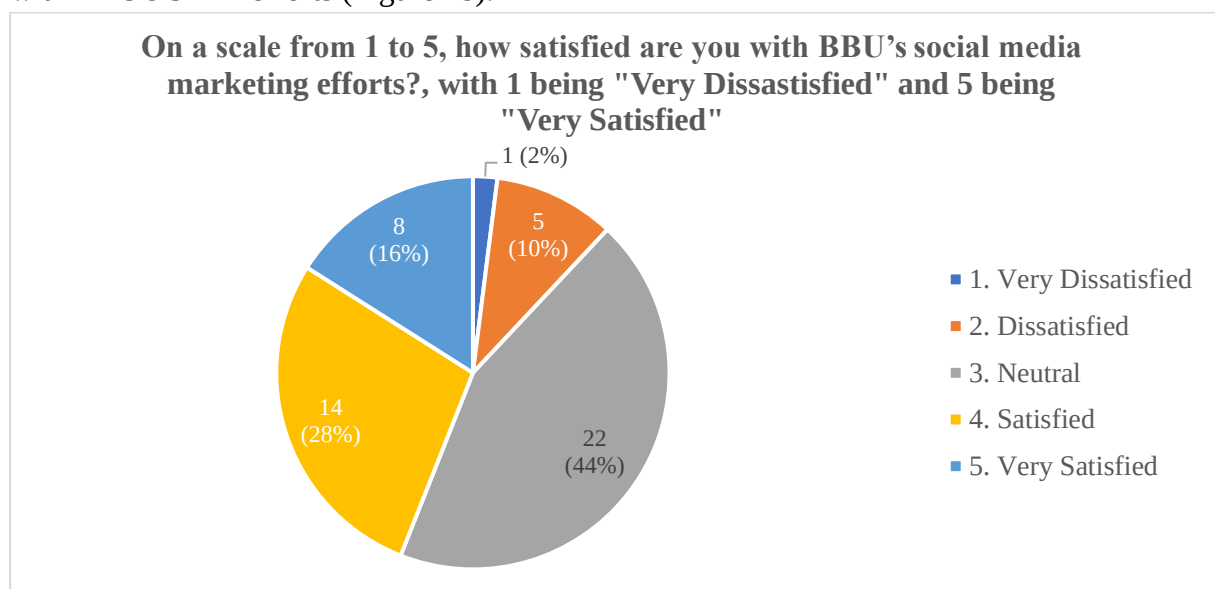


Figure 28: Satisfaction Levels with BBU's Social Media Marketing Efforts

Source: Own Questionnaire Data

This graph delineates the satisfaction levels and areas of potential enhancement within BBU's Social Media Marketing. Participants' contentment primarily revolves around three key facets, with Visual Appeal at the forefront, garnering a robust 60% satisfaction rate. Content relevance

follows closely behind, resonating with 46% of respondents, while the frequency of posts maintains a commendable 30% satisfaction level (Figure 29).

Conversely, participants identify several areas where improvements are warranted. Chief among these is the call for greater Consistency in Messaging, articulated by 50% of participants. A noteworthy 48% seek enhanced Responsiveness to inquiries and yearn to increase Engagement Opportunities, highlighting the avenues through which BBU's social media marketing can evolve and better serve its audience (Figure 29).

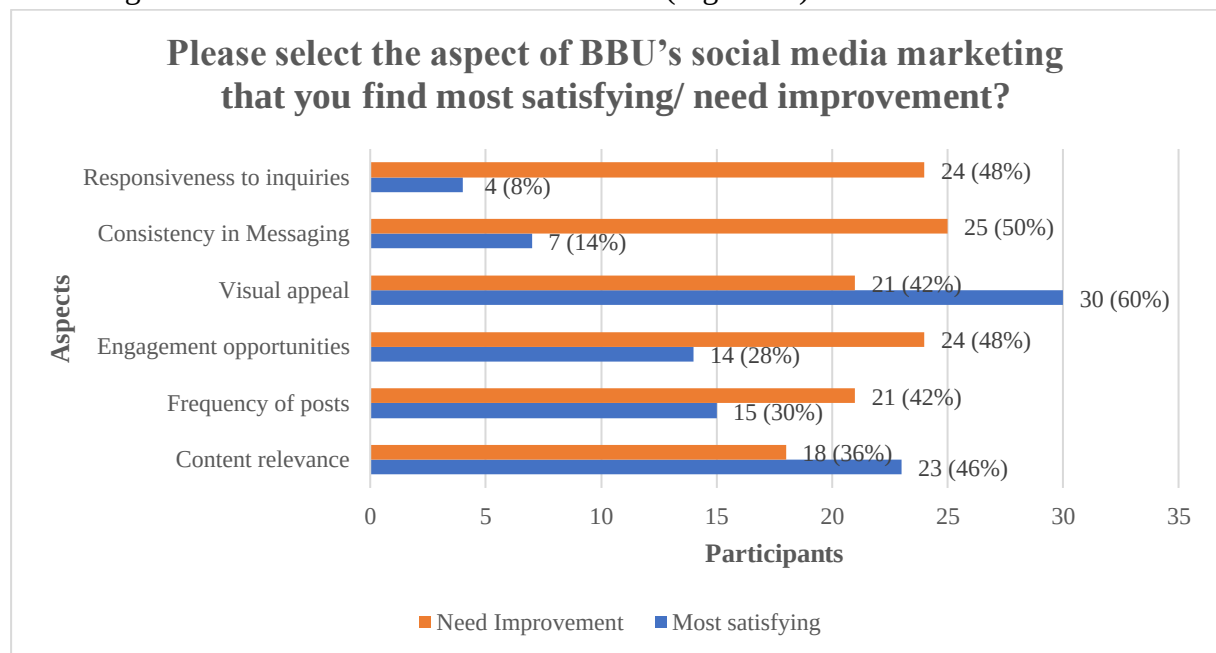


Figure 29: Satisfaction and Improvement Areas in BBU's Social Media Marketing

Source: Own Questionnaire Data

4.2. In-depth interviews

Profiles of interviewees

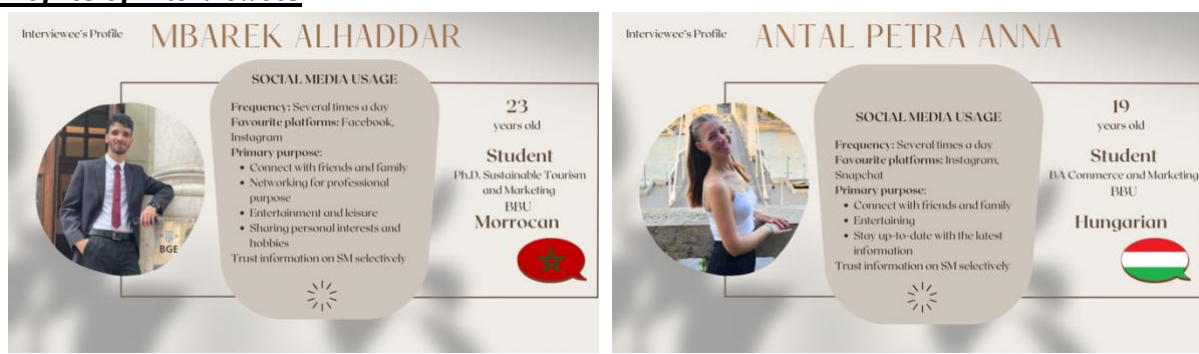




Figure 30: Profile of interviewees

Source: Own Research

Results from interview

1. Personal Experiences with BBU's Social Media

Table 1 presents a summary of personal experiences and insights shared by the interviewees regarding Budapest Business University's (BBU) social media presence and its impact on their enrollment decisions. Their experiences shed light on various aspects of BBU's social media engagement and provide critical insights for enhancing the university's outreach to both domestic and international audiences. (See Appendix D & E for survey answers).

Table 1: Interviewees' personal experiences with BBU's social media

Interviewers	Experiences
Mbarek Alhaddar	a Ph.D. student, emphasized the need for BBU to create more English content on platforms like Instagram and YouTube to attract international students effectively. He mentioned that while BBU had potential, it needed to balance its content in both Hungarian and English to cater to a broader international audience.
Antal Petra Anna	a first-year student and BBU Student Ambassador, mentioned that social media had a limited influence on her decision to enroll, but she found BBU's Instagram visually appealing. However, the content was primarily in Hungarian, and she suggested providing content in both Hungarian and English to attract more international students.

Nguyen Gia Huy	a final-year student from Vietnam, reported that BBU's social media presence was lacking when he enrolled. He relied more on the official university website for essential information. However, he recommended using platforms like TikTok and Instagram to create relatable content, leveraging trends and challenges, and highlighting student experiences.
Papp Virág	a 20-year-old Hungarian majoring in International Business Economics, mentioned that while BBU's social media didn't influence his enrollment decision, he found it useful as a current student. He suggested focusing on content accessible to international students, creating campus tour videos, and investing more in social media marketing.
Luong Thi Hue	another student majoring in Commerce and Marketing, shared that BBU's social media presence was not a significant factor in her enrollment decision. She primarily relied on the official university website for essential information.
Lövei Lili	the online marketing manager at BBU, provided valuable insights into the institution's current social media marketing strategies and recommendations for improvement.

Source: Own Questionnaire Data

2. BBU's Social Media Content and Its Appeal

The interviewees provided insights into the aspects of BBU's social media content that were appealing or engaging to them:

- **Mbarek Alhaddar** found interviews with students from various backgrounds most engaging, emphasizing the importance of showcasing student experiences.
- **Antal Petra Anna** appreciated the sports department content and highlighted the importance of creating English content to reach a broader international audience.
- **Nguyen Gia Huy** emphasized the potential of platforms like TikTok and Instagram for video content. He recommended content that provides a personal experience of campus life, highlighting trending topics and offering practical information.
- **Papp Virág** found posts about the freshman camp engaging but also highlighted the need for more English content to cater to international students.
- **Luong Thi Hue** shared that she relied on emails from BBU for information and had limited exposure to BBU's social media content during her enrollment process.

3. Influence and Impact of BBU's Social Media Presence

All interviewees acknowledged the potential influence of BBU's social media presence in attracting prospective students. However, they also pointed out areas where BBU's social media efforts could be more effective.

- **Mbarek Alhaddar** mentioned that BBU's strategy leaned towards Hungarian content, hindering its international appeal. He recommended balancing content in both English and Hungarian to attract a more international audience effectively.

- **Antal Petra Anna** highlighted that BBU's content was primarily in Hungarian, limiting its appeal to international students. She recommended creating content that resonates with a broader audience.
- **Nguyen Gia Huy** pointed out the need for BBU to invest more in social media marketing to enhance its presence and attract prospective students effectively. He also recommended the creation of content like "day in the life" videos on platforms like TikTok to provide a more accurate representation of campus life.
- **Papp Virág** suggested providing content in English, consistent posting, and involving different students in content creation to enhance engagement and represent diverse student experiences more accurately.
- **Luong Thi Hue** shared that her main information source was BBU emails, and she had not personally experienced the impact of BBU's social media on her choice to join.
- **Lövei Lili**, the online marketing manager, provided her expertise and perspective on the institution's social media marketing efforts.

4. Recommendation

Drawing from the results of the interviews and the perspectives offered by Lövei Lili, BBU's online marketing manager, we propose the subsequent suggestions to improve BBU's social media marketing endeavors and successfully draw in and involve potential students:



Figure 31: Summary of recommendations from interviewees

Source: Own interview data

- **Create More English Content:** BBU should prioritize creating content in English to make it accessible to a broader international audience.

- **Utilize Instagram and TikTok:** Instagram and TikTok are popular platforms among students. BBU can use these platforms to showcase campus life, create engaging content, and leverage trends and challenges.
- **Highlight Student Experiences:** Showcasing real-life student experiences, campus life, and success stories can provide prospective students with a better understanding of what to expect when they enroll.
- **Frequent Posting:** Consistent posting on social media platforms can keep prospective students engaged and informed about BBU's offerings and activities.
- **Involve Students in Content Creation:** BBU can involve various students in creating content to provide a more accurate and inclusive representation of campus life.
- **Balance Content in Both Languages:** BBU should balance its social media content in both Hungarian and English to cater to a more diverse international audience.
- **Incorporate Trending Content:** BBU can engage with popular trends and challenges on platforms like TikTok to increase visibility and engagement.
- **Use Student Ambassadors:** Leveraging student ambassadors who resonate with the target audience can effectively promote the university.
- **Create Personalized Content:** Content like "day in the life" videos, campus tours, and behind-the-scenes glimpses can make the university experience more relatable and appealing to potential students.
- **Showcase Diversity:** Highlight the diverse student community and experiences at BBU to attract students from various backgrounds.
- **Relaxed Approach with Fun Content:** Lövei Lili, the online marketing manager, recommends adopting a more relaxed approach with less academic content and more fun videos and posts to engage students effectively.

4.3. Evaluation of finding

Findings from the study are intended to shed light on how social media affects prospective students' choices to enroll at Budapest Business University. This analysis of the data, which focuses on social media usage and its impact on enrollment decisions, is based on data from in-depth interviews and online surveys.

Social Media Usage

The survey data revealed that all participants, constituting 100% of the sample, actively engage with various social media platforms. Notably, these individuals not only use these platforms but also do so multiple times a day, with 76% indicating consistent usage throughout the day.

Regarding social media platform preferences, Instagram emerged as the most popular platform, with 96% of participants using it. YouTube, Facebook, TikTok, and LinkedIn also maintained significant user bases. Participants primarily engaged with social media for staying connected with friends and family, seeking entertainment, gathering information, and conducting academic and university research, highlighting the multifaceted role of social media in their lives.

Moreover, a substantial 70% of respondents used social media for academic and university research, underlining the educational significance of social media in contemporary digital life. Participants expressed trust in the information and content shared on social media, with 74% trusting the content from recognized institutions, 66% trusting expert opinions, and 64% trusting personal recommendations from friends and family.

Influence of BBU's Social Media Marketing

1. Awareness and Exposure

Participants' initial awareness of BBU was influenced by various sources. Scholarship pages played a significant role, accounting for 30%, followed by word of mouth (22%). Social media, educational fairs, and events contributed substantially, making up 12% of respondents' initial knowledge. Other sources of information included BBU's official website, school counselors or advisors, and search engines (6% each), with a minor 2% citing online advertisements and local news or media coverage.

Different engagement rates were obtained via BBU's social media presence on sites including Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, TikTok, and YouTube. Facebook and Instagram had the highest engagement rates, at 70% and 72%, respectively. Following with 42%, 28%, and 12% interaction rates, respectively, were TikTok, LinkedIn, and YouTube.

When evaluating the effectiveness of BBU's social media marketing, 65% of respondents perceived it as effective in acquainting them with the university. Additionally, 70% felt that BBU's social media content had indeed enhanced their awareness of the university.

2. Content Engagement

The degree of engagement with BBU's social media content varied among participants. A substantial 82% expressed keen interest in events and activities, while 48% engaged with admission-related information. Additionally, 30% showed interest in academic programs and student testimonials.

Visual content and informative captions were the primary attributes that captured participants' attention, with 58% appreciating visually captivating images and 54% favoring informative descriptions. However, when evaluating the quality of content, 38% of participants found it fair, while 36% considered it good. Only a minor 6% expressed dissatisfaction.

While 82% of participants were engaged with BBU's social media content, only 38% actively shared it, suggesting potential for increased content amplification. Furthermore, 82% of respondents expressed a neutral stance regarding the extent to which BBU's social media content faithfully represented student experiences and campus life, indicating room for further investigation in this area.

3. Influence on Decision Making

The participants' evaluations of how BBU's social media content affected their decisions to enroll varied. Significantly, 72% of respondents said that social media content had no influence on their decisions, while 28% recognized that it did. The majority of respondents said that

BBU's social media content strongly related to their real experiences at the institution, and they all agreed to trust it.

The academic programs offered by BBU (56%), campus events and activities (46%), and admissions and enrollment information (42%), were all deemed to have an influence on decision-making. Nonetheless, variables influencing enrollment decisions included advice from current BBU students (58%), details regarding financial aid and scholarships (58%), and the availability of courses and programs (56%).

4. Competitor Awareness

Approximately 54% of participants reported encountering social media content from BBU's competitors during their enrollment decision-making process, demonstrating the presence of alternative options in prospective students' minds.

When asked if BBU's social media marketing has successfully set the university apart from its rivals, 60% of respondents gave a neutral response, suggesting that they have a balanced opinion or are unsure about their position. On the other hand, 30% of respondents thought that BBU's social media marketing successfully distinguished the university from its rivals and emphasized its significance in forging a unique position.

CHAPTER 5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. Conclusion

The findings provide insight into how social media marketing affects Budapest Business University (BBU) enrollment trends. Through the examination of survey results and in-depth interviews, this research has provided insightful information about how social media influences the enrollment decisions of potential students.

Social Media Usage and Preferences

The survey findings provide compelling evidence of the impact of social media on the daily lives of the study's participants. This research reveals that social media has permeated nearly every aspect of their existence, reflecting the omnipresence of these digital platforms in contemporary society. An astonishing 100% of the respondents actively and recurrently engage with various social media channels, underscoring the undeniable importance of these platforms in their daily routines.

Among the array of social media platforms, a specific set stands out as the preferred choice of the participants. Instagram, YouTube, Facebook, TikTok, and LinkedIn emerged as the quintessential tools for social connection and information dissemination. Each platform served a distinct purpose in the participants' lives, reflecting the multifaceted nature of their relationship with social media.

While the survey data highlights the prominence of social media in individuals' lives, it also offers valuable insights into the underlying motivations driving this extensive engagement. The most prevailing motivations for utilizing these platforms encompass staying connected with friends and family, seeking entertainment, and actively gathering information and knowledge. Social media serves as a virtual nexus for nurturing personal relationships, and it remains an inexhaustible source of amusement, often in the form of captivating videos, engaging posts, and interactive stories. Furthermore, the participants utilize social media platforms as knowledge repositories, harnessing their informational wealth for diverse purposes, including academic and university research.

This multifunctional role of social media extends its influence far beyond the realm of personal connections and leisure. It significantly impacts the educational landscape as well. The data underlines a high level of trust placed in content disseminated by recognized institutions and expert opinions. This trust is a testament to the profound influence of social media in shaping educational decisions and perspectives. Social media's importance in spreading reliable information and influencing educational decisions has grown as these platforms fill up with more and more scholarly content and professional opinions from the business world.

The awareness and exposure of BBU students to BBU social media

The examination of students' awareness and exposure to Budapest Business University (BBU) through various channels and notably, social media, offers a profound understanding of the institution's strategic outreach. Inquiries pertaining to the initial awareness of BBU revealed that several channels played vital roles in introducing prospective students to the university.

Scholarship pages, word of mouth, and social media emerged as pivotal sources of information for participants in their journey to get acquainted with BBU. Scholarship pages, renowned for providing financial opportunities and academic possibilities, were instrumental in directing the attention of 30% of respondents towards the university. Word of mouth, often considered an authentic and credible source of information, held substantial sway over the enrollment

decisions of 22% of participants. This underlines the importance of personal recommendations and firsthand experiences shared among peers and acquaintances.

However, it is in the domain of social media that the university's outreach strategies exhibit their prowess. BBU's presence on prominent social media platforms, including Instagram and Facebook, has proven to be highly effective in acquainting students with the university. The data demonstrates that 65% of respondents perceive these social media endeavors as impactful in their initial awareness of BBU. This underscores the institution's adept utilization of these platforms, effectively engaging with prospective students and rendering them cognizant of the opportunities it offers.

Furthermore, the survey findings reveal that BBU's social media content has successfully enhanced the awareness of a substantial 70% of participants. This aspect is particularly noteworthy as it underscores the content's role in capturing potential students' interest and imagination, thereby expanding their knowledge and understanding of the university.

Content Engagement

Analyzing participants' engagement with Budapest Business University's (BBU) social media presence unravels a compelling narrative of student interaction and their perceptions of the content offered. Notably, 82% of participants expressed a keen interest in the various events and activities BBU showcased on its social media platforms. This impressive level of engagement underscores the university's ability to curate content that resonates with its audience, drawing them into the vibrant tapestry of campus life and student experiences.

When delving into the specific attributes that participants found influential, visually captivating images and graphics held sway with 58% of respondents. These compelling visuals can transport viewers into the heart of BBU, offering a glimpse of the picturesque campus, dynamic events, and the diverse student body that calls it home. Accompanying these visuals, informative captions and descriptions provided context and meaning to the content, and they were deemed influential by 54% of participants. This emphasizes how important storytelling is in helping students engage with the material more deeply by giving them context, stories, and a feeling of direction.

However, it's worth noting that despite the high engagement levels and the presence of influential attributes, the majority of participants, 82%, expressed a neutral stance when evaluating the extent to which BBU's social media content faithfully represented the student experience and campus life at the university. This nuance highlights an intriguing aspect of the participants' perceptions. While they were actively engaged with the content and found specific attributes compelling, they might seek a more holistic and immersive representation of student life.

These findings reflect a strong foundation upon which BBU can further build and enhance its social media engagement strategies. The high degree of involvement and interest in the events and activities on display indicates an audience open to connecting with the university's story. Building upon the strengths of visually captivating images and informative captions, there's an opportunity to weave a more comprehensive story that encapsulates the diverse facets of student experiences and the vibrant tapestry of campus life.

Influence on Decision Making

Analyzing the influence of Budapest Business University's (BBU) social media content on enrollment decisions unveils a captivating interplay of factors that shape prospective students'

choices. A notable 28% of respondents acknowledged that BBU's social media content had a substantial impact, despite the vast majority of participants arguing that the content did not significantly affect their decision to enroll at the university. This information is especially important since it shows how social media is becoming more and more important for student enrollment and higher education.

The data suggests that specific content areas emerged as influential in swaying the enrollment decisions of this discerning group of participants. Academic programs, which constitute the core offerings of the university, played a pivotal role in driving the decisions of 56% of participants. This emphasis on academic programs underscores the significance of conveying information related to courses, majors, and educational opportunities effectively through social media platforms. It also highlights the role of digital content in helping prospective students make informed choices about their academic pursuits.

Campus events and activities, which breathe life into the university experience, were another key focal point. The findings reveal that these events significantly influenced the enrollment decisions of 46% of respondents. This result accentuates the value of showcasing the vibrant, dynamic nature of campus life through social media. It reinforces the notion that a comprehensive portrayal of student life, which encompasses both academic and extracurricular dimensions, holds sway in attracting and engaging potential students.

Equally noteworthy was the role of admission-related content, which impacted the decision-making processes of 42% of participants. This aspect underscores the importance of providing transparent and accessible information regarding the enrollment process, application requirements, deadlines, and other pertinent details through the university's social media channels. It also emphasizes the need to address the queries and concerns of prospective students effectively.

The multifaceted influence of BBU's social media content on enrollment decisions reflects the evolving landscape of student recruitment and engagement. It highlights the potential of these digital platforms to serve as informative and persuasive tools, guiding prospective students in their educational journeys. While the majority of participants might not attribute their enrollment decisions directly to social media, the notable minority that does underscores the need for universities to invest in a comprehensive and strategically curated social media presence.

Competitor Awareness

A considerable 54% of participants reported encountering social media content from BBU's competitors during their deliberation process for enrollment. BBU's social media marketing was perceived as moderately effective in distinguishing the university from its competitors by 30% of participants.

Satisfaction

The analysis of satisfaction levels with Budapest Business University's (BBU) social media marketing presents a nuanced picture, reflecting the diverse perceptions of the participants. With 44% of participants expressing a neutral degree of satisfaction, it is clear that the participants' satisfaction levels reflect a range of reactions. This result highlights the difficulty of measuring happiness in the context of social media marketing and provides insightful information about the components of BBU's social media efforts that need improvement and focus as well as the areas where they have been successful.

The most striking feature of the satisfaction data is the presence of neutrality among many participants. Although there isn't a lot of happiness or dissatisfaction, this neutrality implies that there might be opportunities for improvement in a few different areas of BBU's social media marketing initiatives. It is imperative to acknowledge that maintaining neutrality might be an invaluable initial step towards properly catering to the requirements and inclinations of the target audience.

Among the elements that garnered satisfaction, content visual appeal, relevance, and posting frequency stood out prominently. This result indicates that participants appreciate the visual aesthetics of the content disseminated through BBU's social media channels. The importance of eye-catching graphics, images, and videos in capturing the attention and interest of the audience cannot be understated. This is particularly relevant in a digital landscape where visual content holds immense power.

Another element that has influenced participant satisfaction is the content's relevancy. Content that speaks directly to the interests and problems of prospective students has a higher chance of connecting with them. Examples of this type of content include details about academic programs, campus events, and student experiences. The significance of customizing material to the unique requirements and expectations of the intended audience is shown by this study.

Participants expressed happiness with the frequency of posts as well. Regular and frequent posting on social media helps maintain audience interest and inform them of BBU's events and services. This is particularly important in the dynamic, often changing world of social media, where users anticipate frequent updates.

However, the data also highlights certain areas where participants expressed their desire for improvements. Chief among these is the call for greater consistency in messaging. This signifies the need for BBU to present a unified and coherent brand image and messaging across its various social media platforms. Consistency in messaging helps in reinforcing the university's identity and values, making it more memorable and recognizable to the audience.

Responsiveness to inquiries is another area that participants identified as needing improvement. Timely and informative responses to inquiries from prospective students can significantly enhance their experience and perception of the university. This aspect emphasizes the need for a proactive and engaging approach in managing and addressing inquiries and concerns effectively.

Moreover, participants expressed their desire for more engagement opportunities through BBU's social media channels. This implies that they seek a more interactive and participatory experience, where they can actively engage with the university's content and with each other. Encouraging discussions, Q&A sessions, live events, and interactive challenges are strategies that can contribute to greater engagement and satisfaction.

In-Depth Interview Insights

A greater grasp of the experiences with and attraction of BBU's social media content was made possible by the in-depth interviews conducted with students and the online marketing manager, Lövei Lili. Although a lot of students thought that BBU's content was visually appealing, the absence of English information made it less likely to draw in foreign students. Students suggested producing more content in English, using social media sites like Instagram and TikTok, exhibiting their experiences, offering dependable and timely content, and getting students involved in the process of making content.

Correlation Analysis

The efficiency of BBU's social media marketing in connection to students' enrollment decisions was evaluated using a correlation analysis. A statistically significant correlation was found in the results, and 28% of participants said that BBU's social media content had an influence on their decision to join.

5.2. Recommendation and Suggestions

Utilizing the potential of social media platforms represents a promising avenue for attracting prospective students to BBU. We can achieve more impactful results by channeling our collective efforts into this endeavor.

In our quest to harness the power of social media, BBU must establish a diversified presence across various platforms. Recent surveys indicate that a significant majority of participants, approximately 96%, are active users of Instagram. Therefore, we must allocate more resources and focus on enhancing our presence on this platform. Additionally, with the growing popularity of TikTok, this platform should not be overlooked. TikTok's effectiveness in reaching and engaging with the target audience cannot be underestimated.

People gravitate towards concise and visually engaging content in this era of information at lightning speed. To this end, BBU should place particular emphasis on short video formats, such as Reels on Instagram and TikTok videos. These videos should incorporate upbeat music and creative camera angles to enhance their visual appeal. To maximize engagement, scheduling posts during peak activity times is essential.

A particularly effective strategy for providing a genuine glimpse into student life is to have current students take over the university's social media accounts. They can share their daily routines, experiences, and what they cherish about BBU, thereby offering an authentic portrayal of campus life. Furthermore, language considerations are of paramount importance when it comes to BBU's social media presence. To cater to a more international audience, we should generate content in English or adopt a bilingual approach featuring both English and Hungarian languages.

To facilitate the implementation of these strategies, we have compiled a table of video content ideas (Table 2)

Table 2: Video content idea for BBU's Social Media platform

Type of content	Specific topic
Interview	Student's experience after studying at BBU for 1 year
	Fun Facts (Sharing interesting and lesser-known facts about BBU)
	Students' favorite classes/ teacher
	International Students' Stories
	Stories of successful students
	Internship and Career Opportunity
	Graduation Stories
Campus Tour	Showcase campus in a fun and engaging way (Highlight key landmark, dorm, libraries and recreational facilities)
	Faculty spotlight (Create short videos featuring professors and instructors talking about their research, teaching methods,..)

	“Day in Life” (Follow a student or staff member around for a day, showcasing their activities, classes, and interactions)
	Showcase various student clubs, organizations, and extracurricular activities available at your university.
Administration	How to use Neptun, Coospace?
	How to submit paper for internship, final exam
Challenges	Participate in popular TikTok or Reel challenges while incorporating university-related themes.
	Create fun challenges or contests related to BBU or academics, encouraging engagement and participation from viewers.
Virtual Events	Webinars
	Q&A session about application/ submitting final exam/....
	Admissions Process Tips (Break down the admissions process into easy-to-understand steps and offer tips for prospective students on how to prepare a strong application.)
	Internship and Career Opportunity

Source: Own Recommendation

An additional recommendation entails the development of an exclusive application tailored specifically for BBU students. This application will be a condensed version of BBU's social media platform. In contrast to the more formal nature of the university's official websites, the app will provide a platform where students can freely share entertaining content. Moreover, it will serve as a comprehensive resource hub, offering invaluable information to BBU students, from guidance on navigating platforms like Neptun and Coospace to assisting in the internship application process and final exam submissions. One noteworthy feature of this application is the seamless connectivity it fosters among students. It allows students to effortlessly communicate with their peers or contact university administrators for quick and efficient responses to their queries. Additionally, the student body has voiced the demand for an interactive university map, and the application will offer a virtual map, simplifying navigation throughout BBU's campus. We anticipate that this application will become a viral sensation among our students, setting it apart as a prominent feature associated with BBU. Through word-of-mouth advertising from one student to another, prospective students will be drawn to BBU, recognizing it as an institution offering a superb learning environment with comprehensive support.

BBU ought to seriously contemplate investing in online advertising as a strategic means to expand its reach and impact. It is essential to recognize that the organic audience, or the portion of individuals already acquainted with our university, represents a limited sphere. To propel BBU to greater heights and extend its influence beyond the existing boundaries, a proactive foray into sponsored online content is both a logical and compelling course of action. Online advertising widens the university's outreach and provides an avenue to establish a prominent and dynamic online presence. By allocating resources to sponsored content, BBU can effectively target a broader demographic, including potential students who might not yet be familiar with the institution. This approach allows us to engage with diverse individuals with diverse interests, aspirations, and backgrounds, thereby diversifying our prospective student

base. Furthermore, paid online advertising enables BBU to control and customize its message, ensuring that it aligns with the university's values, mission, and unique selling points. This targeted approach ensures that our promotional content is not only disseminated to a wider audience but also delivered in a manner that resonates with the values and aspirations of potential students. An efficient online advertising campaign in the digital age can make use of a number of tactics, such as social network advertising, display advertising, search engine marketing, and more. These strategies help BBU reach a larger audience and offer the flexibility to tailor campaigns to the unique characteristics of different platforms and audiences.

Finally, we must consider the potential of hosting a student video contest as part of our marketing strategy. This contest would entail students creating videos that showcase various aspects of the university, subsequently sharing these videos on their personal social media platforms. Through mechanisms such as likes and shares, we can organically disseminate information about BBU, all without incurring the expenses associated with traditional advertising campaigns.

5.3.Consideration for future research

The complex relationship between social media marketing and Budapest Business University students' enrollment decisions has been clarified by this study. As with any research, there are, nevertheless, a number of directions that could be pursued in the future for further analysis and research to gain a more thorough grasp of this dynamic relationship.

- **Longitudinal Studies:** Longitudinal studies conducted over a prolonged period of time would offer insights into the changing influence of social media marketing on college enrollment decisions. This would make it easier for academics to identify patterns, adjustments, and variations in students' views and preferences about the content of social media over time.
- **Comparative Analysis:** Comparing BBU's social media marketing efforts with those of other universities, regionally and globally, would offer a more extensive perspective on best practices and the unique factors influencing enrollment decisions. Analyzing successful strategies in various contexts can provide valuable insights for BBU's future marketing efforts.
- **Quantitative-qualitative Integration:** A deeper understanding of the impact of social media marketing can be achieved by combining quantitative data—such as the survey findings acquired in this study—with a thorough qualitative examination of the experiences and perspectives of students. Subsequent investigations may explore in greater detail the qualitative facets of social media material and how it influences people's decision-making processes.
- **Digital Marketing Trends:** Keeping up with new trends and technological advancements is essential given how quickly digital marketing evolves. Subsequent investigations may evaluate the efficaciousness of contemporary social media platforms, content types, and engagement tactics. BBU must remain at the forefront of digital marketing trends to keep its competitive edge.
- **Student Journey Mapping:** Carrying out thorough student journey mapping to pinpoint the touchpoints at which social media material is essential to the decision-making process. At pivotal moments, this strategy can assist in optimizing content for maximum impact.

5.4.Limitation

While this study has successfully achieved its objectives, it is not without limitations that may have impacted the accuracy of research estimates. The primary constraints pertain to the absence of access to more comprehensive enrollment statistics from universities, which would have allowed for a more detailed understanding of the factors and channels affecting student enrollment at BBU. Additionally, the study's scope could have been enhanced by a larger sample size of respondents, which would have provided a more in-depth exploration of potential students' profiles.

Furthermore, while substantial, the sample size of 50 respondents may not suffice for generalizing the findings to the broader context of social media marketing's influence on BBU student enrollment. Furthermore, there is a limitation on the scope and depth of the examination due to the time constraint that the study was undertaken within. Future research endeavors should prioritize the acquisition of comprehensive enrollment statistics from universities, facilitating a more granular examination of the factors and channels that impact student enrollment decisions at institutions like BBU. Additionally, increasing the sample size will improve the overall understanding of how social media marketing works to attract BBU students by include a larger and more diverse group of participants.

Furthermore, future investigations could delve into additional dimensions of this topic through extensive literature reviews, surveys, and interviews with students, prospective students, and social media marketing specialists. Such an approach would yield a well-rounded comprehension of the multifaceted relationship between social media marketing and student enrollment, offering a more nuanced perspective for both academia and university marketing strategies.

SUMMARY

This study attempts to investigate Social Media Marketing's (SMM) impact on Budapest Business University's (BBU) student enrollments in detail. It seeks to understand how BBU's SMM efforts affect current students' perceptions and, consequently, their enrollment decisions. By identifying the strengths and weaknesses of BBU's SMM strategies, the research aims to offer practical recommendations for improving the university's student recruitment process. Furthermore, this study contributes to the higher education marketing field by highlighting the evolving role of SMM in shaping student decisions.

From the research objectives, the author came up with the research questions: "How does social media marketing influence the students' enrollment decisions of Budapest Business University?"

To answer this question, the survey underscores the profound impact of social media on the participants' daily lives, with platforms like Instagram, YouTube, Facebook, TikTok, and LinkedIn as essential tools for social connection and information dissemination. The university's outreach strategies, particularly on Instagram and Facebook, have proven highly effective in raising awareness, as 65% of respondents credited these platforms. Visually captivating images and graphics play a significant role, with 58% finding them compelling. Although 82% had a neutral stance on the accuracy of BBU's social media representation of the student experience, 28% acknowledged the influence of such content on their decision to enroll, underscoring the increasing importance of social media in higher education enrollment. Academic programs were pivotal for 56% of participants, highlighting the need for transparent information on social media. While 30% found BBU's social media effective in distinguishing it from competitors, overall satisfaction varied, with 44% expressing a neutral stance.

In-depth interviews reveal a need for more English content to attract international students. Recommendations include creating short video content for platforms like Instagram and TikTok, developing a dedicated BBU student app, and organizing contests to increase BBU's visibility. These findings suggest opportunities for BBU to enhance its SMM efforts and better engage prospective students.

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APPENDIX
APPENDIX I
Online survey question

The Influence of Social Media Marketing on BBU Student

Dear Respondent,

Thank you for taking part in my research to find out the influence of social media marketing on BBU Student.

By completing our questionnaire, you will contribute to the success of my research. Please be assured that your responses will remain completely confidential and anonymous. We do not collect any personally identifiable information. The data will be used for research purpose only.

The survey will take approximately 10 minutes to complete, and I kindly request your candid and honest responses to the following questions.

With thanks and respects,

Pham Ha Phuong

DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONS

What is your age? *

Câu trả lời của bạn

What is your gender? *

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female
- ☐ Non-binary

What faculty are you currently studying? *

- ☐ Faculty of Commerce, Hospitality and Tourism (FCHT)
- ☐ Faculty of International Management and Business (FIMB)
- ☐ Faculty of Finance and Accountancy (FFA)

What is your current major of study? Please state your degree program BSc/BA or *
MSc/MA.

(e.g BSc International Business Economics)

Câu trả lời của bạn

What is your nationality? *

Câu trả lời của bạn

SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE

This part is designed to gather information about your social media habits and perceptions.

Do you use social media? *

☐ Yes

☐ No

How often do you use social media? *

☐ Several times a day

☐ Once a day

☐ 2-3 times a week

☐ 1 a week or less

☐ Never

When do you primarily use social media? *

- ☐ Morning
- ☐ Afternoon
- ☐ Evening
- ☐ Night
- ☐ Throughout the day

Which following social media platforms do you use? (Select all that apply) *

- ☐ Facebook
- ☐ Instagram
- ☐ TikTok
- ☐ LinkedIn
- ☐ Twitter
- ☐ Youtube
- ☐ Snapchat
- ☐ Pinterest
- ☐ BeReal
- ☐ Mục khác: _____

What is your primary purpose for using social media? (Select all that apply) *

- ☐ Staying connected with friends and family
- ☐ Networking for professional purposes
- ☐ Entertainment and leisure
- ☐ University research
- ☐ Promoting and sharing personal interests or hobbies
- ☐ Seeking information and recommendations
- ☐ Shopping and ecommerce
- ☐ Mục khác: _____

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statement on a scale from 1 to 5, with 1 being "strongly disagree" and 5 being "strongly agree" *

1. Strongly Disagree 2. Disagree 3. Neutral 4. Agree 5. Strongly Agree

I find social media to be a valuable source of information and entertainment.

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

I trust the information and content shared on social media.

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

I frequently engage with content on social media platforms.

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

What types of content do you find trustworthy on social media *

- ☐ News articles from reputable sources
- ☐ Personal recommendations and reviews from friends and family
- ☐ Educational content from recognized institutions
- ☐ Expert opinions and advice from industry professionals
- ☐ User-generated content with positive experiences
- ☐ Fact-checkable information with credible sources
- ☐ Promotional content from reputable brands
- ☐ None of the above
- ☐ Mục khác: _____

THE INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING QUESTIONS

This section contains 5 parts: **Awareness and Exposure, Content Engagement, Influence on Decision Making, Competitors Awareness and Satisfactions.**

AWARENESS AND EXPOSURE

In this part, I'd like to understand the impact of BBU's social media presence on your awareness and perception of the university.

1. How did you first know about BBU? *

- ☐ Social media (e.g Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn, Tiktok, Youtube)
- ☐ Word of mouth (friends, family, colleagues)
- ☐ BBU's official website
- ☐ Online advertisement
- ☐ Educational fairs and events
- ☐ School counsellors or advisors
- ☐ Search engines (e.g Google search)
- ☐ Academic forums or discussion boards
- ☐ Local news or media coverage
- ☐ Scholarship pages
- ☐ Mục khác: _____

2. Which of the following social media platforms have you seen or interacted with BBU's content on? (Select all that apply) *

- ☐ Facebook
- ☐ Instagram
- ☐ LinkedIn
- ☐ TikTok
- ☐ YouTube
- ☐ None of the above

3. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statement on a scale * from 1 to 5, with 1 being "strongly disagree" and 5 being "strongly agree"

1. Strongly
Disagree

2. Disagree

3. Neutral

4. Agree

5. Strongly
Agree

I know BBU
very well as a
result of its
social media
presence.

☐☐☐☐☐

BBU's social
media content
has increased
my awareness
of the
university.

☐☐☐☐☐

CONTENT ENGAGEMENT

In this section of the survey, I aim to understand the impact of BBU's social media content and engagement strategies from your perspective.

4. Which type(s) of social media content from BBU have you found the most engaging or informative? (Select all that apply) *

☐ Admissions information

☐ Student testimonials

☐ Campus tours

☐ Events and activities

☐ Academic programs

☐ Mục khác: _____

5. How do you typically engage with BBU's social media content? Please select the option that best describes your engagement behaviour. *

☐ I engage with every post I come across

☐ I engage whenever i encounter content that provides valuable information or interests me

☐ I engage occasionally, but not with every post.

☐ I engage rarely, only when something really stands out

☐ I never engage with BBU's social media content

6. Which specific features or elements in BBU's social media posts catch your attention? (Select all that apply) *

☐ Visually appealing images or graphics

☐ Engaging videos

☐ Compelling storytelling

☐ Informative captions or descriptions

☐ Memorable hashtags or campaigns

☐ Mục khác: _____

7. How do you see the quality of content shared by BBU on social media platforms? *

☐ Poor

☐ Fair

☐ Good

☐ Very Good

☐ Excellent

8. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statement on a scale *
from 1 to 5, with 1 being "strongly disagree" and 5 being "strongly agree"

1. Strongly
Disagree

2. Disagree

3. Neutral

4. Agree

5. Strongly
Agree

BBU's social
media content
is engaging
and relevant to
my interests.

☐☐☐☐☐

I often share
BBU's social
media content
with my
network.

☐☐☐☐☐

BBU's social
media content
effectively
reflects the
student
experience
and campus
life.

☐☐☐☐☐

INFLUENCE ON DECISION MAKING

In this part, I'm interested in understanding which specific aspect of BBU's social media content have been particularly influential in your decision making journey.

9. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statement on a scale * from 1 to 5, with 1 being "strongly disagree" and 5 being "strongly agree"

1. Strongly Disagree
2. Disagree
3. Neutral
4. Agree
5. Strongly Agree

BBU's social media content significantly influenced my decision to enroll at the university

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly Disagree	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	Strongly Agree

10. Which specific aspects of BBU's social media content have influenced your decision-making process? *

- ☐ Information about academic programs
- ☐ Student testimonials and success stories
- ☐ Campus facilities and tours
- ☐ Updates on campus events and activities
- ☐ Admissions and enrollment information
- ☐ Mục khác: _____

11. On the scale from 1 to 5, **how do you rate the credibility and trustworthiness of the information provided through BBU's social media marketing?**, with 1 being "Not credible and trustworthy" and 5 being "Completely credible and trustworthy" *

1. Not credible and trustworthy
2. Slightly credible trustworthy
3. Moderately credible and trustworthy
4. Very credible and trustworthy
5. Completely credible and trustworthy

	1	2	3	4	5	
Not credible and trustworthy	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	Completely credible and trustworthy

12. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statement on a scale from 1 to 5, with 1 being "strongly disagree" and 5 being "strongly agree" *

- | | | | | |
|----------------------|-------------|------------|----------|-------------------|
| 1. Strongly Disagree | 2. Disagree | 3. Neutral | 4. Agree | 5. Strongly Agree |
|----------------------|-------------|------------|----------|-------------------|

The information provided through BBU's social media marketing is credible and trustworthy.

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------

BBU's social media content aligns with my actual experience at the university very well.

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------

13. Which factors, in addition to social media content, have influenced your decision to consider enrolling at BBU? (Select all that apply)

*

- ☐ Recommendations from current BBU students
- ☐ Conversations with BBU faculty or staff
- ☐ Scholarship and financial information
- ☐ Courses/ Programmes available
- ☐ BBU's ranking and reputation in the field of study
- ☐ Advice from academic advisors
- ☐ Information about campus facilities and resources
- ☐ Guidance from alumni of BBU
- ☐ Personal research and online forums
- ☐ Career and job placement statistics
- ☐ Mục khác: _____

COMPETITORS AWARENESS

In this section of the survey, we delve into your awareness and perceptions of BBU in relation to its competitors in the field of economic sciences.

14. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statement on a scale from 1 to 5, with 1 being "strongly disagree" and 5 being "strongly agree" *

- 1. Strongly Disagree
- 2. Disagree
- 3. Neutral
- 4. Agree
- 5. Strongly Agree

BBU's social media marketing effectively differentiates the university from its competitors.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly Disagree	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	Strongly Agree

15. Which universities or institutions, if any, did you consider to be competitors to BBU in the field of economic sciences when you applied for university? (Select all that apply) *

- ☐ Corvinus University of Budapest (CUB)
- ☐ Eötvös Loránd University (ELTE)
- ☐ Budapest University of Technology and Economics (BME)
- ☐ University of Debrecen (UD)
- ☐ University of Szeged (SZTE)
- ☐ University of Pécs (PTE)
- ☐ Central European University (CEU)
- ☐ Óbuda University (ÓE)
- ☐ Budapest Metropolitan University (METU)
- ☐ Mục khác: _____

16. Have you encountered social media content from BBU's competitors during your decision making process for enrollment? *

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

17. On a scale from 1 to 5, **how influential was social media content from BBU's competitors in your consideration to enroll at BBU?** ^{*} with 1 being "Not influential" and 5 being "Extremely influential"

1. Not influential
2. Slightly influential
3. Moderately influential
4. Very influential
5. Extremely influential

	1	2	3	4	5	
Not influential	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	Extremely influential

18. On a scale from 1 to 5, **how well do you believe BBU's social media marketing compares to that of its competitors in terms of quality and engagement?** ^{*} with 1 being "Not influential" and 5 being "Extremely influential"

1. Much Worse
2. Worse
3. Neutral
4. Better
5. Much Better

	1	2	3	4	5	
Much Worse	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	Much Better

19. In which aspects do you believe BBU's social media outperforms its competitors? (Select all that apply).

*

- ☐ Consistency in messaging and branding
- ☐ Quality of visual content and design
- ☐ Engagement opportunities and interactivity
- ☐ Timely and responsive customer support
- ☐ Unique and creative content campaigns
- ☐ Effectiveness in showcasing student life and experiences
- ☐ Strong community and student engagement
- ☐ Frequency and relevance of posts
- ☐ None; I don't believe it stands out in comparison to competitors
- ☐ Mục khác: _____

SATISFACTION

This section will assess your satisfaction with BBU's social media marketing.

20. On a scale from 1 to 5, **how satisfied are you with BBU's social media marketing efforts?**, with 1 being "Very Dissatisfied" and 5 being "Very Satisfied" *

1. Very Dissatisfied
2. Dissatisfied
3. Neutral
4. Satisfied
5. Very Satisfied

	1	2	3	4	5	
Very Dissatisfied	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	Very Satisfied

21. Please select the aspect of BBU's social media marketing that you find most **satisfying?** *

- ☐ Content relevance
- ☐ Frequency of posts
- ☐ Engagement opportunities
- ☐ Visual appeal
- ☐ Consistency in Messaging
- ☐ Responsiveness to inquiries
- ☐ Mục khác: _____

22. Please select the aspects of BBU's social media marketing that you believe need **improvement**? *

- ☐ Content relevance
- ☐ Frequency of posts
- ☐ Engagement opportunities
- ☐ Visual appeal
- ☐ Consistency in Messaging
- ☐ Responsiveness to inquiries
- ☐ Mục khác: _____

23. Do you feel that BBU respond promptly to comments, messages and inquiries on its social media platform? *

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ I haven't got any experiences

THANK YOU

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this survey. Your valuable insights and opinions are crucial for MY research, and I trully appreciate your contribution.

If you have any additional comment, suggestions, or insights that you would like to share, please feel free to contact us via email: phhaphuong2002@gmail.com

Once again, thank you for your participation, and your input is greatly appreciated.

Pham Ha Phuong

APPENDIX II

Interview Questions for Students

1. Demographic questions

- Can you provide a brief introduction of yourself?
- Do you use social media? How often do you use social media, and when is your primary usage time? Which platforms do you frequent, and do you have a favorite?
- What is your primary purpose for using social media?
- Do you consider social media a valuable source of information and entertainment? How much trust do you place in the content shared on these platforms?
- How frequently do you engage with content on social media platforms?

2. Personal Experiences and Recommendations

- As a current BBU student, can you describe your experience with BBU's SMM and how it influenced your decision to enroll at the university?
- What aspects of BBU's social media content are most appealing or engaging? Can you provide examples of posts or campaigns that stood out to you?
- How influential do you believe BBU's social media presence is in attracting potential students to enroll at the university? Can you share personal or observed experiences that illustrate this influence?
- In your opinion, which social media platforms or content formats significantly impact reaching and engaging prospective students? What advice would you give BBU regarding the effective use of these platforms?
- To what extent do you feel BBU's social media marketing accurately represents the student experience and campus life? Are there areas where you believe there is room for improvement?
- Based on your experience, what recommendations or strategies would you offer BBU to enhance its social media marketing efforts to attract and engage prospective students effectively? Are there any specific practices or content types that would particularly appeal to students like yourself, based on your journey and experiences?

APPENDIX III

Interview Questions for Social Media Employee

1. Demographic questions

- Can you provide a brief introduction of yourself?
- Do you use social media? How often do you use social media, and when is your primary usage time? Which platforms do you frequent, and do you have a favorite?
- What is your primary purpose for using social media?
- Do you consider social media a valuable source of information and entertainment? How much trust do you place in the content shared on these platforms?
- How frequently do you engage with content on social media platforms?

2. Personal Experiences and Recommendations

- Can you describe the current social media marketing strategies that BBU Social Media Marketing Manager uses to attract students for enrollment?
- What social media platforms does BBU primarily use for marketing, and why have these platforms been chosen for engagement?
- How does BBU measure the success and impact of its SMM efforts on student enrollment?
- What types of social media content or campaigns have proven to be most effective in engaging potential students and encouraging them to consider enrolling at BBU?
- Are there specific content formats (e.g., videos, infographics, blogs) that have proven effective in engaging potential students on social media? Could you provide examples?
- In your experience, what strategies or approaches work best for maintaining consistent and engaging social media content over time?
- Based on your expertise, what practical recommendations would you offer to BBU for enhancing our SMM strategy to attract more students effectively?

APPENDIX IV

Students' Interviews

Interview 1:

1. Demographic questions:

Q: Can you provide a brief introduction of yourself?

A: Certainly. I'm Mbarek Alhaddar, a 23-year-old Ph.D. student specializing in Sustainable Tourism and Marketing. I hail from Morocco and currently work as a pricing analyst at X-mobile.

Q: Do you use social media? How often do you use social media, and when is your primary usage time? Which platforms do you frequent, and do you have a favorite?

A: I use social media daily, and it's a significant part of my day. I'm active on various platforms since my friends use different ones. My primary choices are Instagram and Facebook. When I was 15, Facebook was my go-to, especially in Morocco, where it's popular. However, as I entered university, I shifted more towards Instagram.

Q: What is your primary purpose for using social media?

A: My main reason for using social media is to connect with friends, share positive experiences, and seek information. As a tourism student, I often use social media to research tourist destinations and related information.

Q: Do you consider social media a valuable source of information and entertainment? How much trust do you place in the content shared on these platforms?

A: Social media is undoubtedly a valuable source and a great way to connect with people. However, its value depends on how one uses it. When it comes to trust, I'm cautious. I always verify the credibility of the sources, looking at things like the number of likes, followers, and comments. I follow reputable pages and cross-reference information from various sources to ensure accuracy.

Q: How frequently do you engage with content on social media platforms?

A: I'm active on social media, aiming to motivate and share my daily experiences with friends and viewers. I post on Instagram weekly and occasionally create YouTube videos. Lately, I've been more engaged with YouTube content.

2. Personal's experience with BBU's Social media and Recommendation

Q: As a current BBU student, can you describe your experience with BBU's SMM and how it influenced your decision to enroll at the university?

A: I can say BBU's social media didn't have many effects on my enrollment decision. My friends' recommendations led me to choose BBU. However, when seeking information about the university, I turned to YouTube but found limited content in English. BBU's social media didn't provide a clear picture because most posts were in Hungarian. I also sought advice from fellow Moroccans on Facebook groups like "Stipendium Hungaricum Morocco," which influenced my decision. Although I started my BBU journey with limited social media engagement, universities should showcase student experiences on platforms like YouTube to attract prospective students effectively. This approach is currently lacking and could be beneficial for universities.

Q: What aspects of BBU's social media content are most appealing or engaging? Can you provide examples of posts or campaigns that stood out to you?

A: BBU has been doing well on social media lately, and what I find most appealing are the interviews with students from various backgrounds. It's more relatable and exciting to hear from students, especially those from different countries. This approach has the potential to be highly effective in attracting prospective students.

However, BBU's content is still predominantly in Hungarian, which can be challenging. Focusing on English content is essential to reach a broader international audience. English content can attract students from various regions and financially benefit the university. So, emphasizing international students in their content strategy is crucial for BBU.

Q: How influential do you believe BBU's social media presence is in attracting potential students to enroll at the university? Can you share personal or observed experiences that illustrate this influence?

A: BBU's social media has the potential to be influential, but there's room for improvement. Recently, I noticed some English content on their Instagram, but it's still limited. For instance, they promoted a "TDK" competition, but the videos were only in Hungarian. This can be a hindrance when trying to attract an international audience. It's essential to balance content in both English and Hungarian to cater to a broader audience.

While BBU expresses its desire to be international, its strategy leans towards Hungarian content, which may not effectively support that goal. In my observations, content in English tends to garner more interest and engagement, making it a viable strategy for attracting a more international audience, as many people prefer English content on platforms like TikTok and Instagram.

Q: In your opinion, which social media platforms or content formats significantly impact reaching and engaging prospective students? What advice would you give BBU regarding the effective use of these platforms?

A: To effectively reach prospective students, I recommend utilizing various social media platforms. Each platform can cater to a different audience, and inclusion is essential. You can rely on more than just one platform. For example, Instagram might be popular among young people, but others may prefer Facebook, TikTok, or YouTube. To cover all bases, you should post the same content on multiple platforms simultaneously, like sharing a video on Instagram, TikTok, Facebook, and YouTube. Additionally, BBU should prioritize using more English in their content to attract international students. The university should also maintain a consistent posting schedule and optimize content sharing during peak times. Furthermore, BBU and BGE must establish more coherent connections between their social media efforts. Creating separate pages for Hungarian and English content can simplify the approach. Finally, BBU can engage students to create videos and link them to enrollment through creative scholarships, where students can bypass exams and directly enroll. These videos can depict various aspects of university life, from enrollment procedures to library facilities, giving prospective students a real insight into the university experience.

Q: To what extent do you feel BBU's social media marketing accurately represents the student experience and campus life? Are there areas where you believe there is room for improvement?

A: BBU's social media marketing appears accurate for Hungarian students but needs more international students. Much of the content is in Hungarian, making it challenging for international students to understand and participate in campus activities. The university

promotes numerous events and clubs on social media, often exclusive to Hungarian-speaking students, leading to disappointment for international students.

In terms of improvement, BBU is making progress by promoting international activities and sending emails to inform students about events. However, they should continue in this direction, involving and informing all students. Also, encouraging professors to ask students to follow social media pages during their classes could help increase engagement. BBU must invest in promoting its social media pages and consider targeted advertising to reach more students effectively.

Q: Based on your experience, what recommendations or strategies would you offer BBU to enhance its social media marketing efforts to attract and engage prospective students effectively? Are there any specific practices or content types that would particularly appeal to students like yourself, based on your journey and experiences?

A: I have several recommendations for BBU to improve its social media marketing. BBU should diversify its presence across social media platforms, including Instagram, TikTok, Facebook, LinkedIn, and YouTube, to reach a broader audience. Additionally, incorporating student interviews can provide genuine insights into the student experience and enhance the connection with prospective students. Prioritizing English content while respecting Hungarian heritage can broaden the university's international appeal. Engaging students through competitions, creating international clubs, and using multiple languages in content can increase interaction and inclusivity. Live streams and student-run social media accounts can add spontaneity and relatability. Allocating a budget for sponsored posts targeting specific regions is crucial to reach a diverse audience. These strategies will help BBU create an engaging and appealing social media marketing approach for prospective students.

Interview 2:

1. Demographic questions:

Q: Can you provide a brief introduction of yourself?

A: Of course. I'm Antal Petra Anna, a 19-year-old 1st-year student specializing in Commerce and Marketing at BBU. I'm from Hungary and currently serve as a BBU Student Ambassador.

Q: Do you use social media? How often do you use social media, and when is your primary usage time? Which platforms do you frequent, and do you have a favorite?

A: I'm active on social media, using platforms like Messenger, Facebook, Instagram, and Snapchat daily. I have to admit I'm somewhat addicted to it. Among them, Instagram and Snapchat are my favorites.

Q: What is your primary purpose for using social media?

A: My main reason for using social media is to stay in touch with friends and for entertainment. However, I also use it to gather information since I am interested in movies, music, and my favorite actors, actresses, and bands. I follow them to keep up with their latest songs, movies, and activities.

Q: Do you consider social media a valuable source of information and entertainment? How much trust do you place in the content shared on these platforms?

A: I generally consider social media a valuable source of both information and entertainment. However, I am cautious because I'm aware that some platforms publish fake news. To ensure accuracy, I rely on official media for information.

Q: How frequently do you engage with content on social media platforms?

A: I'm not a frequent poster, especially on Instagram, but I post on Snapchat multiple times daily. When it comes to content from my favorite actors and singers, I usually don't interact by liking or reposting. However, occasionally, I may comment on their posts.

2. Personal's experience with BBU's Social media and Recommendation

Q: As a current BBU student, can you describe your experience with BBU's SMM and how it influenced your decision to enroll at the university?

A: Well, at the time of my enrollment, the school's SMM efforts could have been more prominent, so it didn't have a significant impact on my decision. BBU has a variety of programs, and it was challenging to find information about the school since I came from a Technical School background. My high school promoted this course, so I only explored other options.

Q: What aspects of BBU's social media content are most appealing or engaging? Can you provide examples of posts or campaigns that stood out to you?

A: the sports department's content is interesting because I'm into dance. When I first visited the university's website, I noticed the sports department, and that's when I started checking their Instagram. I also follow the main BBU Instagram page, but the content is mainly Hungarian. Since I'm Hungarian, it's not a problem for me. However, I think BBU should consider providing content in both Hungarian and English to attract more international students, which could benefit the university financially.

Q: How influential do you believe BBU's social media presence is in attracting potential students to enroll at the university? Can you share personal or observed experiences that illustrate this influence?

A: BBU's social media presence has the potential to attract students, especially the younger generation, who are active on social media platforms. However, the current approach may need to be more effective. The university's posts seem disconnected from the interests of today's students needing to be updated. Nevertheless, I have noticed some positive changes recently, with the university creating TikTok and Instagram content

Q: In your opinion, which social media platforms or content formats significantly impact reaching and engaging prospective students? What advice would you give BBU regarding the effective use of these platforms?

A: Instagram is a good platform, and I believe TikTok is even more appealing to the younger generation as they spend much time there. In terms of content, personal experiences, and relatable content are key. For example, on TikTok, challenges like "get ready with me" can be turned into a contest involving the university. When prospective students see fun and engaging content, it can pique their interest. BBU has taken a positive step by applying students as ambassadors, which is excellent. They seem open to new ideas and are not sticking to old-fashioned methods. My advice would be to continue collaborating with students and actively use Instagram and TikTok to highlight the university's vibrant and dynamic community that can attract prospective students effectively.

Q: To what extent do you feel BBU's social media marketing accurately represents the student experience and campus life? Are there areas where you believe there is room for improvement?

A: I don't think BBU's social media accurately represents the student experience because they mostly post general announcements and not much personal content. I think it would be more attractive if they shared more unique aspects of campus life

Q: Based on your experience, what recommendations or strategies would you offer BBU to enhance its social media marketing efforts to attract and engage prospective students effectively? Are there any specific practices or content types that would particularly appeal to students like yourself, based on your journey and experiences?

A: BBU should focus on trending content, like aesthetics on Instagram and TikTok challenges. Utilize popular themes and trends to create engaging content. For example, on TikTok, students can participate in challenges related to BBU events. Additionally, the university could create content about learning and becoming successful in business, which aligns with its motto. Collaboration between international and Hungarian ambassadors could also be beneficial. Moreover, organizing giveaways and selling university merchandise, like hoodies, can generate interest and promote the school effectively.

Interview 3:

1. Demographic questions:

Q: Can you provide a brief introduction of yourself?

A: Hello, I'm Nguyen Gia Huy, a final-year student from Vietnam majoring in Commerce and Marketing specializing in online communication.

Q: Do you use social media? How often do you use social media, and when is your primary usage time? Which platforms do you frequent, and do you have a favorite?

A: Yes, I use social media regularly, primarily for leisure. I don't have a fixed usage time; it's whenever I'm free. My favorite platforms are TikTok and Facebook.

Q: What is your primary purpose for using social media?

A: My primary use of social media is for entertainment and staying connected with friends and family.

Q: Do you consider social media a valuable source of information and entertainment? How much trust do you place in the content shared on these platforms?

A: I find social media valuable for both information and entertainment. However, I'm cautious about trusting content. I often verify information by checking comments and relying on credible sources, especially if the data comes from an influencer or someone with expertise in the field.

Q: How frequently do you engage with content on social media platforms?

A: I usually like content on social media. I rarely comment, except for posts from friends or idols like Messi, where I might leave a comment or share the content.

2. Personal's experience with BBU's Social media and Recommendation

Q: As a current BBU student, can you describe your experience with BBU's SMM and how it influenced your decision to enroll at the university?

A: To start, I was initially unaware of the social media presence of BBU. I rarely saw it on my Facebook or Instagram feeds and didn't actively follow their Instagram account. Social media didn't play a significant role in choosing a university. My cousin's positive experience at BBU was the main factor in my decision. I once searched for BBU on YouTube, and what is interesting is that I found a video featuring an Indian student from my faculty who provided a

virtual tour of the dormitory where I would eventually live. This personal connection to a fellow student made my decision more exciting.

Q: What aspects of BBU's social media content are most appealing or engaging? Can you provide examples of posts or campaigns that stood out to you?

A: Thanks to its distinctive yellow and black color scheme, I find the BBU Instagram page visually appealing. It creates a unique brand identity that's easy to recognize. However, the content is primarily in Hungarian, which limits my engagement. I have a little experience navigating Hungarian content.

To stay updated on university events or campaigns, I usually rely on information from my friends or occasionally check BBU's website. I don't usually find out about university events through social media.

Q: How influential do you believe BBU's social media presence is in attracting potential students to enroll at the university? Can you share personal or observed experiences that illustrate this influence?

A: BBU's social media presence has excellent potential in attracting students because young people are active on social media. However, the effectiveness depends on how it's used. Personally, the language barrier, as I mentioned, is a challenge. It can be more effective if the university invests more in it. I can't speak for everyone, but I see the potential if they pay more attention to their social media content.

Q: In your opinion, which social media platforms or content formats significantly impact reaching and engaging prospective students? What advice would you give BBU regarding the effective use of these platforms?

A: I find Facebook and TikTok to be significant platforms. TikTok, in particular, is excellent for video content, which is more engaging than photos. Most students I know use Instagram and TikTok. While Facebook is still relevant, it may be less popular among Hungarian students. BBU should invest more in TikTok and Instagram. Creating valuable content, like tips for new students or technical guides, can improve engagement. Recapping events and showcasing the university's strengths are also good ideas. Social media can be more effective than email, and trendy content can attract new students. It's important to highlight what makes BBU unique and consider the student experience.

Q: To what extent do you feel BBU's social media marketing accurately represents the student experience and campus life? Are there areas where you believe there is room for improvement?

A: BBU's social media marketing has room for improvement in representing the student experience and campus life. The content often needs to be more formal and professional. To improve this, BBU could consider creating an app to foster community and engagement.

Q: Based on your experience, what recommendations or strategies would you offer BBU to enhance its social media marketing efforts to attract and engage prospective students effectively? Are there any specific practices or content types that would particularly appeal to students like yourself, based on your journey and experiences?

A: To enhance its social media marketing efforts and effectively attract and engage prospective students, I recommend BBU create more content boosting engagement. This can include interactive posts, contests, polls, and user-generated content to encourage active participation and interaction with the university's social media platforms. Additionally, BBU should consider

sharing real-life student experiences, campus life, and success stories to give prospective students a better understanding of what to expect. These practices can be particularly appealing to students like myself, as they provide a more personal and relatable connection with the university.

Interview 4:

1. Demographic questions:

Q: Can you provide a brief introduction of yourself?

A: I'm Luong Thi Hue, a final-year student majoring in Commerce and Marketing from Vietnam.

Q: Do you use social media? How often do you use social media, and when is your primary usage time? Which platforms do you frequent, and do you have a favorite?

A: I use social media frequently, with Instagram and Facebook being my primary platforms.

Q: What is your primary purpose for using social media?

A: My primary use of social media is to connect with friends and family and to stay updated with the latest information.

Q: Do you consider social media a valuable source of information and entertainment? How much trust do you place in the content shared on these platforms?

A: It varies; I always try to verify information on social media. I trust content from reputable sources.

Q: How frequently do you engage with content on social media platforms?

A: I occasionally engage publicly but share exciting content with friends through Messenger and Instagram.

2. Personal's experience with BBU's Social media and Recommendation

Q: As a current BBU student, can you describe your experience with BBU's SMM and how it influenced your decision to enroll at the university?

A: My experience with BBU's social media presence could be much better. When I enrolled in BBU, the university's social media channels needed to provide a wealth of information. As a result, I relied more on the official university website to gather the essential details I needed to make an informed decision about my enrollment.

Q: What aspects of BBU's social media content are most appealing or engaging? Can you provide examples of posts or campaigns that stood out to you?

A: I pay little attention to BBU's social media; the content could have been more appealing. I usually receive information through emails from BBU.

Q: How influential do you believe BBU's social media presence is in attracting potential students to enroll at the university? Can you share personal or observed experiences that illustrate this influence?

A: While I may have yet to personally experience the influence of BBU's social media influence on my enrollment, a solid and engaging presence could significantly impact potential students' decisions. Social media is a powerful tool for reaching a global audience, and universities can use it to showcase their offerings, campus life, and the student experience, which can be very appealing to prospective students, especially international ones.

Q: In your opinion, which social media platforms or content formats significantly impact reaching and engaging prospective students? What advice would you give BBU regarding the effective use of these platforms?

A: Instagram and TikTok are two platforms that can significantly impact reaching and engaging prospective students. BBU can focus on creating content that provides a personal experience of campus life, highlights trending topics, and offers practical information about administrative matters like how to use Neptun or Coospace and details about final exams. BBU should also consider engaging with popular trends and challenges on these platforms to be adequate to increase visibility and engagement. They can run campaigns featuring real students and their experiences and use influencers who resonate with their target audience to reach a wider pool of potential students.

Q: To what extent do you feel BBU's social media marketing accurately represents the student experience and campus life? Are there areas where you believe there is room for improvement?

A: Unfortunately, I haven't got much experience in this question.

Q: Based on your experience, what recommendations or strategies would you offer BBU to enhance its social media marketing efforts to attract and engage prospective students effectively? Are there any specific practices or content types that would particularly appeal to students like yourself, based on your journey and experiences?

A: While Instagram and TikTok are great for engaging younger students, LinkedIn can attract individuals looking for higher education opportunities like Master's or Ph.D. programs. BBU can establish a strong presence on LinkedIn, showcasing academic achievements, faculty expertise, and alumni success stories. Promote the various clubs, events, and extracurricular activities the university offers. Post updates, photos, and videos of these events, creating a sense of community and excitement that can attract prospective students. Post recap videos of past events, as these can provide prospective students with insights into what they can expect when they enroll. Such videos can showcase the vibrant campus life and foster a sense of belonging. TikTok offers a platform for short, engaging videos. BBU can use this to create content like "A day at the university," spotlights on teachers, favorite subjects, and behind-the-scenes glimpses, making the university experience more relatable and appealing to potential students.

Interview 5:

1. Demographic questions:

Q: Can you provide a brief introduction of yourself?

A: My name is Papp Virág, a 20-year-old Hungarian majoring in International Business Economics at BBU. I'm enrolled in a double degree program at KdG University in Belgium.

Q: Do you use social media? How often do you use social media, and when is your primary usage time? Which platforms do you frequent, and do you have a favorite?

A: I use social media primarily to stay connected with friends and family and to stay updated with the latest information.

Q: What is your primary purpose for using social media?

A: My primary use of social media is to connect with friends and family and to stay updated with the latest information.

Q: Do you consider social media a valuable source of information and entertainment? How much trust do you place in the content shared on these platforms?

A: Social media is a valuable source of information for various purposes, but I need to be more cautious about its reliability due to the potential for content editing. However, I find BBU's website reliable and up-to-date for university-related information.

Q: How frequently do you engage with content on social media platforms?

A: I often react to and share posts related to events, school activities, and things I'm interested in. I use heart emojis and reactions to show interest and share valuable posts with friends.

2. Personal's experience with BBU's Social media and Recommendation

Q: As a current BBU student, can you describe your experience with BBU's SMM and how it influenced your decision to enroll at the university?

A: While BBU's social media didn't directly influence my decision to enroll, I now find it useful as a current student. It provides easy access to information, and the responsive editors enhance the overall experience. Social media could influence potential students' decision-making process, but I didn't encounter it during enrollment.

Q: What aspects of BBU's social media content are most appealing or engaging? Can you provide examples of posts or campaigns that stood out to you?

A: I found posts about the freshman camp engaging, especially on Facebook. The design and content on Instagram are appealing. Student organizations, like the online and exchange programs, have excellent posts. However, I believe BBU should focus more on content accessible to international students, as some content is primarily in Hungarian.

Q: How influential do you believe BBU's social media presence is in attracting potential students to enroll at the university? Can you share personal or observed experiences that illustrate this influence?

A: While I didn't see specific content targeting potential students during my enrollment, creating content like "day in the life" or campus tour videos on platforms like TikTok could be influential. BBU should invest more in social media marketing to enhance its presence and attract prospective students effectively.

Q: In your opinion, which social media platforms or content formats significantly impact reaching and engaging prospective students? What advice would you give BBU regarding the effective use of these platforms?

A: Instagram and TikTok are the most popular platforms for engaging prospective students. BBU should create content that showcases campus life, dorm tours, and events. Translating content into English would make it accessible to a broader audience. Frequent posting and involving different people within the university can help enhance the social media marketing efforts.

Q: To what extent do you feel BBU's social media marketing accurately represents the student experience and campus life? Are there areas where you believe there is room for improvement?

A: BBU's social media seems one-sided, potentially not representing the diverse student experiences. To improve, involving various students in creating content and conducting interviews can provide a more accurate and inclusive perspective of campus life.

Q: Based on your experience, what recommendations or strategies would you offer BBU to enhance its social media marketing efforts to attract and engage prospective students effectively? Are there any specific practices or content types that would particularly appeal to students like yourself, based on your journey and experiences?

A: BBU can improve its social media marketing by providing content in English to reach a broader audience. Consistent posting and involving different students in content creation can enhance engagement. Furthermore, showcasing students' daily experiences and the campus environment, like dorm life, especially on platforms like Instagram and TikTok, can attract prospective students effectively.

APPENDIX V
Social Media Employee's Interviews
Interview 6:

1. Demographic questions:

Q: Can you provide a brief introduction of yourself?

A: My name is Lövei Lili, and I'm 35 years old. I'm from Hungary, currently working as the online marketing manager at BBU.

Q: Do you use social media? How often do you use social media? When do you primarily use SM? Which platforms do you use? What is your favorite forum?

A: I use social media daily, both at work and in my free time, essentially throughout the day. Personally, my favorite platform is TikTok. At work, I use Instagram a lot, along with TikTok, Facebook, and YouTube.

Q: What is your primary purpose for using social media?

A: Primarily, I use it for my work.

Q: Do you find social media a valuable source of information and entertainment? Do you trust the information and content shared on social media?

A: Sometimes, I find it valuable, but the sheer volume of information can be overwhelming. Overall, I do trust the information and content shared on social media.

Q: How frequently do you engage with the content on social media platforms?

A: Daily.

2. Experience and recommendations:

Q: Can you describe the current social media marketing strategies that BBU Social Media Marketing Manager uses to attract students for enrollment?

A: Currently, we are focusing on utilizing TikTok to reach potential students. In the past, we relied on online marketing campaigns, including Google Search, Display, Instagram, and Facebook campaigns.

Q: What social media platforms does BBU primarily use for marketing, and why have these platforms been chosen for engagement?

A: BBU primarily uses TikTok, Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube for marketing. These platforms were chosen before I started working here.

Q: How does BBU measure the success and impact of its SMM efforts on student enrollment?

A: We measure success using each platform's insights and analytics functions and Google Analytics.

Q: What types of social media content or campaigns have proven to be most effective in engaging potential students and encouraging them to consider enrolling at BBU?

A: The most effective are Google Display and Search campaigns and TikTok campaigns featuring student testimonials.

Q: Are there specific content formats (e.g., videos, infographics, blogs) that have proven effective in engaging potential students on social media? Could you provide examples?

A: TikTok videos have proven to be effective and engaging.

Q: In your experience, what strategies or approaches work best for maintaining consistent and engaging social media content over time?

A: Understanding our potential students' interests, addressing their questions and concerns, and incorporating student ambassadors to showcase university life have proven effective.

Q: Based on your expertise, what practical recommendations would you offer to BBU for enhancing our SMM strategy to attract more students effectively?

A: I recommend adopting a more relaxed approach with less academic content and more fun videos and posts.