

Research Theme / Area: Management

## **Effectiveness of Social Media Promotion in Attracting Students to Online Degree Programs**

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The rise of digital marketing has significantly transformed how educational institutions attract students, especially for online degree programs. Based on the context, this study investigates how effectively Social Media Platforms (SMP), Content Type (CT), and Engagement Metrics (EM) influence Students' Attraction (AS) regarding online degree programs in Sri Lanka. As the sample, eighty-eight existing or potential online degree following students in Sri Lanka were selected to gather data using structured questionnaires as a part of a quantitative research method. To analyze the gathered quantitative data, multiple linear regression was conducted as the core statistical analysis. The results showed the statistically significant and positive influence of SMP and EM on AS for online degree programs. However, CT did not show a statistically significant positive impact on AS, emphasizing that SMP and EM may be more important in influencing AS than CT. These findings suggest some important implications for higher educational marketers and policymakers. Accordingly, higher educational institutions should prioritize active engagement strategies on high-impact social media platforms. In particular, online degree-offering universities should better adapt their promotion strategies to the behavior of students in the digital age by emphasizing interaction-driven advertising and utilizing effective platforms. Policymakers should intervene to maintain accurate social media promotions to ensure the security of students to engage with reliable online degree programs. However, this study only adapted with quantitative data which were gathered from a limited sample size at a single point in time as a cross-sectional study. Therefore, future research can consider longitudinal studies combined with qualitative or mixed approaches to validate these findings across diverse educational contexts.

Keywords: Social Media Platforms, Content Types, Engagement Metrics, Attraction of Students, Online Degree Programs