

EVALUATING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF CAREER SELECTION THROUGH COLLEGE ADMISSIONS COUNSELING VIA FACEBOOK

Duong Duc Tam

tamdd@neu.edu.vn

Vu Trong Nghia

vutrongnghia@neu.edu.vn

Vi Thanh Ha

havt@neu.edu.vn

Truong Dinh Duc

ductd@neu.edu.vn

National Economics University, Hanoi, Vietnam

Bui Trung Hai

buitrunghai.khtc@gmail.com

Office of The Central Committee of the Ho Chi Minh Communist Youth Union, 60 Ba Trieu street, Hoan Kiem district, Ha Noi, Vietnam

Abstract

Facebook is the leading medium which is used for communication during the COVID-19 pandemic in Vietnam. Due to social distancing by this pandemic, the way college admissions counseling must also change by remote consultation. This paper examines the impact of facebook usage on students' career selection. In addition, it also analyse the effectiveness of career selection through college admission advisory based on facebook. Empirical data was collected from 6.404 freshmans using questionnaire survey at National Economics University, Vietnam. The obtained results show that high school students often search for admission information via Facebook and then the university's website.

Key words: *Admission; Facebook; Freshman; Recruitment*

1. Introduction

Nowadays, it can be recognized that students are as digital members of the Net Generation because they were born in the digital age and digital technology has affected them from an early age (Prensky, 2010; Thompson, 2013; Laura, Genevieve, Beth, & Matthew, 2020; Arteaga, Cortijo, Javed, 2014; Aiman, Adrienne, Cathy, Nijina, Maria, 2021). This Generation is considered as groups of young people who live in a computer-based environment. This has brought a completely new approach of learning, thinking and sharing. In today's world, one of the most effective mechanisms of communication is social media. There were 4.2 billion active social media users and 4.66 billion active internet users by January 2021. 4.2 billion active social media users show the penetration of social media.

The most popular social media worldwide is Facebook with more than 2.6 billion monthly active users (Statista, 2021). It has become unprecedented popularity among college students both in their academic and social life. The distribution of Facebook users aged 18-24 by gender worldwide as of January 2021 was 9.6% for women and 14.2% for men, respectively (Statista, 2021). Thompson and Loughheed (2012) found that 80.24% of college students suppose that using Facebook is an important factor in college social culture.

Recently, a study (Kayla, H., 2018) that detailed recruitment information from a large online study of family caregivers aimed to develop a method to assess how family caregivers control stress day-by-day. Twitter and Facebook was used for these recruiting strategies. Here, Facebook was the most effective to target family caregivers with 86% of the sample. This research also points out that the use of social media recruitment methods should be very attractive because of cheap price, simplicity, and efficient methods for large samples.

A lot of features for users such as posting photos, updating status, livestreaming video, updating wall, reading news feed, giving comments, giving likes, messaging, forming groups, managing fanpage, playing games, creating events, online marketing, taking notes and chatting in the groups are provided by Facebook (Ryan & Xenos, 2011; Silvia, Giulia, 2018). A number of advantages have been shown when using Facebook, such as generating new ideas, a chance to make new friends, getting someone to do things (Dholakia, Bagozzi & Pearo, 2004), higher-level of life satisfaction (Valenzuela, Park, & Kee, 2009), the need for admiration and to belong (Silvia, Giulia, 2018), knowledge sharing, information distribution, quick feedback (Seo, Kim, & Yang, 2016), making social circle strong, learning new ideas, and information-seeking (Syed, Wasim, Nida, Muhammad, Shahzad, 2020), and bridging and bonding social capital (Phua, Jin, & Kim, 2017).

Although students have considered Facebook as a social technology rather than a formal teaching tool (Madge et al., 2009; Shihui, Yip, Lai, Liaquat, 2019; Mazman & Usluel, 2009; Reynol, 2012; Selwyn, 2009; Hong et al., 2014), students' performance could be impacted significantly by Facebook. Recently, the potential of social media platforms, such as Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, and Instagram, were also explored to use for enhancing students' active learning (Isaiah, Mark, Tijana, 2019; Stone and Logan, 2018).

Vietnam is among one of the Asian countries which lie in Southeast Asia. The total population of Vietnam is 98,168,833 in the year 2021 (internetworldstats, 2021). Statistics reveal that Vietnam is among the top seven countries in terms of number of Facebook users with more than 68 millions accounts in the first quarter of 2021 (Statista, 2021).

If we, as educators, wish to make strong connections with our future students and engage them with the admission documents we want them to consider choosing, we need to fit our approach strategies to their lifestyles. It is necessary to move from a traditional admissions counseling to digital one, especially in COVID-19 pandemics.

2. Literature review

2.1. Employer branding, and Social media

The Internet completely assists recruitment at the same time for recruiters and those being recruited (Carrillat et al., 2014). Social network platforms are a main source of future talent who are available to recruit at a low cost and very easily. These social networks further reveal valuable information that was previously unreachable to recruiters. For that reason, implicit employers exert to expand their digital presence, attractiveness, and reputation, which are important to their ability to attract talented employees. Recruiters hold on their own profiles, design their pages for business, animate their blogs, send their newsletters, and enter into professional communities. Social networks are also used to check and add the information supplied by their implicit employees. Besides, automated tools are constantly used to scan social networks in search of the rare pearl (Faliagka et al., 2012). However, these social networks are creating a risen pressure in recruiters to work faster and occlude more diversified and much bigger information flows to search the suitable candidates for their jobs.

Recruitment based on social media through 4 different ways: (1) as a connector, it allows quick and direct contact between job seekers and employers, (2) along with the growth of the employer's reputation, it contributes to the brand, the visibility and the attractiveness of the business and motivates the candidate to contact, (3) together with transparency relationships, it contributes to increased trust, richer and more humane exchanges, far from job interviews, and (4) identifying specifically the proposed job data, which conducts to a gradual ranking of candidates according to individual and fair criteria. On the other hand, social networks also create a form of snatching and uncertainty that makes it hard to follow and master the flows of talent (Kumar et al., 2018; Mas and Gómez, 2020).

The attracting employees are the target of employer branding through cultivating unique and compelling perceptions of a company in the potential candidates' minds (Mandhanya & Maitri, 2010). Some authors (Michaels et al., 2001, p. 1) show the "war for talent," in which battles between companies are to recruit skilled candidates. Now, the trend of candidates who often switch jobs during their careers makes this war seriously (Verma & Ahmad, 2016). This tendency could lead to a situation in which battle for the best candidates will be as intense as that for clients (Sehgal & Malati, 2013).

To cope with the challenges of attracting a limited number of talented employees, companies need to conduct employment marketing activities in multichannel systems. Social media is one of the most effective and newest channels for employment marketing (Simon, Anne, Robbert, Mariët, 2021); Dimitri, Jan, 2019; Kayla, Jaclene, Kate, 2018; Kaur, Sharma, Kaur, & Sharma, 2015).

An electronic recruitment flyer was made with appropriate study information consisting of the study's purpose, eligibility criteria, expected timetable, and contact

information before either social media profile was created. The study flyer was posted on Facebook and Twitter. A link to the Qualtrics survey from social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter was clicked by potential candidates. After that, they were prompted to reply eligibility questions. If the latent candidates are suitable for the criteria, they were then automatically forwarded to the online approval form (Kayla, Jaclene, Kate, 2018).

A recruitment strategy for research used the social media is a new recruitment approach because social media is a new technological environment. Some authors have successfully applied these media as a recruitment tool in caregivers of persons with cancer (Pohlig et al., 2017; Gage-Bouchard et al., 2017), diabetes (Scarton et al., 2017), dementia disorders (Bateman & Brady, 2017; Dam, Van Boxtel, Rozendaal, Verhey, & Vugt, 2017) as well as family caregivers (Kayla, Jaclene, Kate, 2018).

2.1. Recruitment of high quality students

Freshman recruitment for all universities in the world is a very important topic. This recruitment process includes those activities and practices conducted by the universities or independent organization. Its main target is attracting potential candidates (Winter & Melloy, 2005). The international student recruitment management was studied elsewhere. The international student recruitment was investigated from considered institutional elements and an institutional perspective that can have an effect on recruitment (Ross, Heaney, and Cooper, 2007). The global trend was studied in recruiting engineering and technology freshman (Islam, 2003). This study's purpose is to persuade and entrain best students to enter on technology and engineering specialities. The related target areas have been identified such as: to have an effect on the candidates to technology and engineering vocation in the K-12 level, to modify the admission standards, to investigate the global accreditation need of technology and engineering programs, to kick off special drive to be attractive for underrepresented groups as well as solving employment opportunities and social status. The recruitment of undergraduate Geographers was studied in Enland and Wales (Croot and Chalkley, 1999). Besides a national-level evaluation, the streams of applications and enrolments between localities were also identified and discussed in this study. Some important components was found such as interested subject, prestigious course, job opportunities, teacher advice and etc that is very important for students in making decision concerning on selection of courses or university (Maringe, 2006).

3. Method

3.1. Data sample and measures

To analyze the effectiveness of the recruitment marketing process on Facebook, we selected a survey of freshmans of the National Economics University, Vietnam. We chose this university because it is a top famous university in Vietnam specializing in the fields of economics, management and business administration. The study was conducted online from

October 8th, 2020 to November 14th, 2020. This study period was the first time that freshman learnt offline at university after entrance admission. This investigation aimed to explore the students' decision-making regarding collecting recruitment marketing process on Facebook. The covering criteria of the study were measured by self-report.

3.2. Survey instrument

A self-completed, cross-sectional, nameless online survey was designed in the google form. Freshman entered the survey through scanning QR code or a direct link to the google form included on a formal Fanpage designed for the study. The Member Information Declaration became visible in the first line of survey before any survey questions were seen, and notified contributors that fulfillment of the questionnaire was considered as agreement to join. In addition, this declaration strengthened that this survey was nameless as well as did not collect any identifying data.

3.3. Data collection and analysis

The data were directly downloaded as an Excel file from Goole form data. The obtained data were preliminarily processed through Microsoft Excel. After that, secondary data were run on SPSS 22.0 software. The demographic characteristics of the sample and their use of Facebook were illustrated by descriptive statistics.

4. Results

Among all participants, the number of female students accounted for more than 70%. This is a fact that most female students prefer to study economics, management and business administration. The survey results show that the majority of freshmen have a birth year of 2002 (95.60%), which means they have just graduated from high school. There are 11 students going to school before their required age, accounting for 0.17%. The rest are students born in 2001 or earlier (table 1). The results in table 1 also showed that the number of students from towns accounted for the largest proportion with 33.55%. After that, students from rural areas took second place with 29.28%. The third place belongs to students from big cities with 25.25%. The rest are students from other regions.

There are 4021 (76.2%) students responding that the major they are studying is right for their interest. In contrast, 1446 (23.8%) respondents said that the current major is not their original interest.

Table 1. Sample demographics

		Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Gender				
	Male	1873	29.23	29.23

	Female	4503	70.27	99.50
	Unknown	28	0.50	100.00
	Total	6404	100.00	
Year of Birth				
	1995	1	0.02	0.02
	1997	3	0.05	0.07
	1999	7	0.11	0.18
	2000	33	0.52	0.70
	2001	227	3.54	4.24
	2002	6122	95.59	99,83
	2003	11	0.17	100
	Total	6404	100	
Living area of freshman before entering NEU				
	Rural area	1876	29.29	29.29
	Town	2148	33.54	62.83
	City	1618	25.27	88.1
	Mountainous area	643	10.04	98.14
	High mountainous area	90	1.41	99.55
	Border area	9	0.14	99.69
	Island	20	0.31	100
	Total	6404	100	

Since the Covid-19 pandemic broke out in Vietnam in early 2020, students in localities have been converted to e-learning. Therefore, students are facilitated to have access to the internet through different forms.

With the results of using the devices for entering the internet, the internet connection service also includes 4 main types. Wifi connection is the highest with 5596 options to use (87.33%); followed by 3G/4G networks with 618 options to use (9.64%); the wired network and Bluetooth are the rest.

In table 2, the device used accessing the Internet typically consists of 4 types including desktops, tablets, laptops, and smart phones. In which, smartphones are used frequently and with the greatest frequency. The number of respondents to the question of using smartphones is also the highest with 6269 students. 52.52% of respondents say that they have used smartphones very often. Besides, 40.48% of respondents say that they have often used smartphones to access the Internet. Using laptops seems to be less with 12.34% of respondents saying that they always use laptops to access the internet. The percentage of respondents who regularly and occasionally use laptops accounted for 35.49% and 36.49%, respectively. Meanwhile, the percentage of respondents who never and rarely use the desktop is 23.17% and 34.33%, respectively. This figure is higher with tablet usage rate of 43.30% and 27.95% respectively for never and rarely used. This shows that, in the era of rapidly developing technology, smartphones and laptops are two devices that are applied a lot to serve the work daily activities of individuals. Today, desktops and tablets are no longer common. Desktops do not have many conveniences such as not being able to carry them to work, bulky size, etc. Tablets are also inconvenient during use, although their functionality is not much different from smartphones and laptops. According to this result, during the COVID-19 pandemic, smartphones are mainly used by students for e-learning as well as Internet access due to low price, their popularity and easier internet connection. This is consistent with the results of using e-learning devices, smartphones and laptops, mainly using wifi and 3G/ 4G connection services. In addition, wifi is used more generally because of their convenience such as high capacity, high-speed lines and cheap prices, while 3G / 4G networks have higher usage fees and they are often limited in the capacity of internet connection per day. Besides, desktops use wired networks. Although internet connection used a wired network is faster, easier and more stable, it is not possible for students to install this system during the unexpected COVID-19 outbreak and it is also inconvenient to carry. The wifi network is considered to be a slower Internet connection than a wired network, but the flexibility of wifi allows students to access the internet from neighbors to serve their studies without having to install the cable.

Table 2. Devices employed for accessing the internet

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Wifi	5596	87.38	89.26	89.26
	Wired Network	49	0.77	0.78	90.05
	3G/4G	618	9.65	9.86	99.90
	Bluetooth	6	0.09	0.10	100.00
	Total	6269	97.89	100.00	
Missing		135	2.11		
Total		6404	100		

Smart phone	Never	43	0.67	0.69	0.69
	Rarely	130	2.03	2.08	2.76
	Occasionally	265	4.14	4.23	6.99
	Often	2535	39.58	40.48	47.48
	Always	3289	51.36	52.52	100.00
	Total	6262	97.78	100	
Missing		142	2.22		
Total		6404	100		
Laptop	Never	366	5.72	5.89	5.89
	Rarely	608	9.49	9.78	15.67
	Occasionally	2268	35.42	36.49	52.16
	Often	2206	34.45	35.49	87.66
	Always	767	11.98	12.34	100
	Total	6215	97.05	100	
Missing		189	2.95		
Total		6404	100		
Desktop	Never	1409	22.00	23.17	23.17
	Rarely	2088	32.60	34.33	57.50
	Occasionally	1672	26.11	27.49	84.99
	Often	673	10.51	11.07	96.05
	Always	240	3.75	3.95	100
	Total	6082	94.97	100	
Missing		322	5.03		
Total		6404	100		
Tablet	Never	2627	41.02	43.30	43.30
	Rarely	1696	26.48	27.95	71.25
	Occasionally	1095	17.10	18.05	89.30
	Often	449	7.01	7.40	96.70
	Always	200	3.12	3.30	100
	Total	6067	94.74	100	
Missing		333	5.26		
Total		6404	100		

Related to the obtained results, 20.39% and 33.87% of the sample is the percentage of students accessing Facebook for 1 hour and 2 hours per day, respectively (see Table 3). Meanwhile, 23.18% of the sample spends an average of 3 hours on Facebook. Furthermore, the percentage of students who are on Facebook for more than 4 hours accounts for 16.79%. Only 5.77% of students are on Facebook for less than 30 minutes a day. This result shows that the daily rate of students accessing Facebook for 1 hour or more is very high, accounting for 94.23%. Students reported spending a mean of 3.25 hours (SD 1.130) per day for accessing the Facebook. This is less than 4.5 hours per day that Taiwanese university students are on Facebook (Hong et al., 2014). However, related to the study by Thompson and Loughheed (2012), which set the indicator of Facebook addiction at usage of more than one hour, this would indicate that nearly 80% of university students have reached the behavioral standard for Facebook addiction.

Table 3. Time spent on Facebook

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	<=30 minutes	363	5.67	5.77	5.77
	1 hour	1283	20.03	20.39	26.16
	2 hours	2131	33.28	33.87	60.04
	3 hours	1458	22.77	23.18	83.21
	>=4 hours	1056	16.49	16.79	100
	Total	6291	98.24	100	
Missing		113	1.76		
Total		6404	100		

According to the data in Table 4, 50.85% of the respondents chose the field of study according to their hobby. Meanwhile, up to 32.42% of respondents said that they chose their current major because they did not have enough points to enter the desired major. Only 6.91% and 3.20% of the respondents answered that their current major is advised by family members and teachers or friends, respectively. Furthermore, 6.63% of the respondents enrolled in their current major by chance. This is a fact because National Economics University (NEU) is a leading university in economics, management and business administration in Vietnam, so the annual entry points of students are often very high and are not the same between different majors. In addition, high school students can be enrolled in many different subjects at the same time for admissions department of NEU to consider.

Table 4. Reasons for choosing a major

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Hobby	3151	49.17	50.85	50.85
	Not enough points to enter the desired major	2009	31.35	32.42	83.27
	Family members' advice	428	6.68	6.91	90.17
	Teachers and friends' advice	198	3.09	3.20	93.37
	Random	411	6.41	6.63	100
	Total	6197	96.71	100	
Missing		211	3.29		
	Total	6408	100		

As the leading university in Vietnam training in economics, management and business administration, this criterion plays the most decisive role in the students' choice (82.37%). Followed by the long tradition and reputation of NEU, the second decision comes to the student's choice (69.71%). Successful alumni network determines 51.05% of students' intention to choose a University. Other factors such as having many majors, easy to find a job, and the opportunity to have a high income only partly determine the tendency of students to choose a university with rates of 45.24%, 45.18% and 28.42%, respectively.

Table 5. Statistical data on the reasons for choosing NEU

Reasons for choosing NEU	Frequency	Percent (%)
Long tradition and reputation	4467	69.71
Successful alumni network	3271	51.05
Many majors	2899	45.24
Easy to find a job	2895	45.18
Have chance to earn high income	1821	28.42
Have chance to be leader	877	13.69
Many beautiful boys and girls	1627	25.39
Best university in economics, management and business administration in Vietnam	5278	82.37
My relatives study at NEU	729	11.38
Total	6404	100

Students' awareness of admissions information was assessed using a five-point Likert scale: strongly disagree, disagree, neither agree nor disagree, agree or strongly agree (Table 6). This study found that university students had the most access to NEU admissions information via Facebook with an average value of 4.33, followed by website of NEU and internet, with an average of 3.58 and 3.56, respectively. Besides, the average value of NEU-tour, In-person counseling sessions are held locally by NEU, leaflets, radio stations are all lower than 2.

Table 6. Summary of items to measuring students' awareness of NEU admissions information

	N	Min	Max	Mean		Std. Deviation	Skewness		Kurtosis	
				Statistic	Std. Error		Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
Television	6404	1	5	2.61	.014	1.102	.335	.031	-.422	.061
Radio	6404	1	5	1.89	.013	1.052	1.015	.031	.319	.061
Internet	6404	1	5	3.56	.013	1.077	-.476	.031	-.403	.061
Facebook	6404	1	5	4.33	.011	.849	-1.351	.031	1.625	.061
Teachers and classmate	6404	1	5	3.48	.012	.961	-.312	.031	-.286	.061
Website of NEU	6404	1	5	3.58	.014	1.128	-.452	.031	-.553	.061
Leaflets	6404	1	5	1.93	.013	1.067	.956	.031	.140	.061
Family members	6404	1	5	3.10	.014	1.091	-.151	.031	-.591	.061
Admission counseling sessions of previous years	6404	1	5	2.56	.015	1.212	.342	.031	-.802	.061
Admission counseling session organized by Tuoi Tre Newspaper in 2020	6404	1	5	2.06	.015	1.193	.908	.031	-.166	.061
In-person counseling sessions are held locally by NEU	6404	1	5	1.97	.015	1.237	1.062	.031	-.022	.061
NEU tours	6404	1	5	1.53	.012	.981	2.008	.031	3.423	.061
Valid N (listwise)	6404									

Table 7. Summary of items to measuring student evaluation concerning on the importance of admission counseling via Facebook

	N	Min	Max	Mean		Std. Deviation	Skewness		Kurtosis	
				Statistic	Std. Error		Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
Increase direct reply on enrollment news	6243	1	5	1.61	.009	.705	1.179	.031	2.101	.062
Run admission information advertisement	6205	1	5	2.62	.012	.944	.222	.031	.073	.062
Increase enrollment information sharing	6229	1	5	1.83	.010	.799	.871	.031	.967	.062
Strengthen news, introduction to the field of study	6228	1	5	1.59	.009	.731	1.281	.031	2.078	.062
Increase news and articles on job opportunities after graduation	6200	1	5	1.67	.010	.785	1.127	.031	1.370	.062
Increase news on NEU activities	6208	1	5	1.78	.010	.764	.870	.031	.969	.062
Enhancing the beautiful images of students of NEU	6205	1	5	2.16	.011	.873	.432	.031	.021	.062
Increased introduction of typical students	6213	1	5	2.15	.011	.849	.405	.031	.043	.062
Increased introduction of typical alumni	6203	1	5	2.11	.011	.847	.465	.031	.114	.062
Enhance the introduction of arts, sports and extracurricular activities	6206	1	5	1.94	.010	.814	.713	.031	.644	.062
Increased introduction of scientific research activities	6198	1	5	1.97	.010	.812	.649	.031	.511	.062
Increased introduction of students' internship activities	6206	1	5	1.72	.010	.772	1.059	.031	1.495	.062
Valid N (listwise)	5963									

Evaluation of students related to the importance of admission counseling via Facebook was rated using a five-point Likert scale: strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree or strongly disagree (Table 7). We inverted the scale of the question in this table from the questions in table 6 to make sure that students read the question carefully before answering. All items have an average mean of less than 2.7. In which, the items with average value below 2.0 are Strengthen news, introduction to the field of study, Increase direct reply on enrollment news, Increase news and articles on job opportunities after graduation, Increased introduction of students' internship activities, Increase news on NEU activities, Increase enrollment information sharing, Enhance the introduction of arts, sports and extracurricular activities and Increased introduction of scientific research activities. Strengthen news, introduction to the field of study and Increase direct reply on enrollment news are the two items rated as the most important by students with values of 1.59 and 1.61, respectively. This shows that students want to find more information about their majors as well as receive direct answers from the admissions department on the Facebook platform.

4. Conclusion

In the current period, the young generation in Vietnam is regularly using social networks, typically Facebook. The average time they spend on Facebook 3.25 hours (SD 1,130) per day. Therefore, educators or those who work in the admissions department of universities should pay more attention to the issue of enrollment counseling through this social network in order to recruit best students. In addition, those who work as administrators of University's fanpage need to research and enhance the information that students are most interested in, in order to be able to meet the requirements of students.

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