Social Media's Influence on Students' College Selection Processes

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Abstract

Colleges have a keen interest in learning how students choose a college. In the present age of science and technology, young students are extremely influenced by social media. This influences how students make decisions while selecting colleges for their higher education. The main objective of this study was to explore the influence of social media on the college choice process of students in higher education. This study deployed a descriptive survey method under a quantitative research design. The sample was selected by stratified random sampling method. Education, Management, and Humanities faculties were considered as strata for this sampling purpose, within the strata, 270 students have been selected containing 90 students from each stratum using the simple random sampling method. The instrument used to collect the primary data for this study was a self-structured questionnaire. The questionnaire consisted of various structured items, including several four/five-point Likert scales, ranking scales, and multiple-choice questions. Descriptive analyses, t-test, and analyses of variance (ANOVAs) at 95% level of significance were used to identify the purpose of using ICT and effect of social media in college choice process of +2 students for their further study. The finding of this study shows that every faculty, gender, and ethnicity group students equally influenced by social media in their college choice process.

Keywords : Influence, social media, selection, higer education, descriptive analyses

Introduction

Background of the study

Marketing plays a major role in any organization, and so for universities to survive and to succeed in the changing environment, it must become a key aspect in their general strategy (Alexa1 & Stoica, 2012). Education marketing is a challenging issue than other sectors of marketing. Marketing strategies for educational institutions have become increasingly competitive and complex over time. Education is a unique sector within the marketing sphere, and therefore, its strategies can get complex. However, it is possible to design a good marketing strategy that helps you turn your leads into students. The students also seek a good college to obtain higher education for their bright future. Many factors are part of a student's decision-making process, including proximity to home, majors offered, costs, financial aid or scholarships offered, selectivity, environment, and parental influence, just to name a few (Kinzie et al., 2004).

In today's world, advertising uses every possible medium to get its message through. Some common means of advertising are radio, television, newspapers, the internet, posters. In this time of information commutation and technology (ICT) social media (SM) is one of the most effective means of commutation. SM, a term describing a wide range of new generation internet applications, has been an issue of intense debate and commercial interest. Social media technology (SMT) is very essential for every business organization including educational institutions, especially for community colleges. We know little about the intent, strategies, tactics, and effectiveness of SMT to influence institutional and student outcomes. Social networking usage refers to online space that is used by students to connect, share, communicate, establish, or maintain a connection with others for academic, entertainment, socialization, etc. Gupta and Bashir (2018) noted that social networking as a communication medium is rising quickly, mostly in the prosperous increase of applications for mobile devices. People of every age, profession, gender, and ethnic group are equally affected by social media. Their everyday working style and decision-making process depend on the information published on social media. Especially young adults are becoming familiar with sharing their everyday life and experiences, keeping in touch with teachers, friends, and family online, and talking about their interests (Leung 2002). The past few years have observed an explosion of social networking such as Twitter, Facebook, TikTok, YouTube, etc. which have changed the social dimension of people. Social media help to broadcast information in a quick and effective way so, every business organization including educational institutions use social medial to broadcast their information. There have been a rapidly increasing number of online connections among groups of persons who share similar interests, though they are assembled in absolute space (Wilson & Peterson 2002). Several social networking

sites have employed dynamic social contexts in which online communities can be made and continued easily by the facilitation of communications and social connections among users. Such networking opportunities help make groups, communities, and people with shared interests remain more associated. Because of the excellent results of social media marketing in the past for businesses and the high percentage of younger generations using social media, using it as a tool for higher education marketing is an appealing idea (Boyd, 2008).

Despite the widespread use of SMT, studies have not systematically explored the benefit of its use for specific purposes like student enrollment and student engagement. Even less is known about the use of SMT in community colleges (Davis III, Deil-Amen, Rios-Aguilar, Canche, 2015). "Marketing had once been a term that could be spoken only in the most hushed tones in academia" (Edmiston-Strasser, 2009) and ideas about the marketing of educational institutions have often gained limited support. The usage of SM makes the teaching-learning process more effective and promotes enrolment in higher education institutions (HEIs), making it a hot topic among academics and businesspeople. Higher education institutions in Nepal have taken a few initiatives in this area, although there haven't been a lot of published studies on this particular topic.

Nevertheless, there appears no clear studies to explore the situation use of social media and its influence on newcomer students for higher education. The existing literature mainly focuses on the importance of ICT to the extension of the business, internet user demographics, the reason for online shopping, the respondent's preferred items when online shopping, satisfaction or dissatisfaction with online shopping, advantages of internet marketing. However, this gap has not been investigated clearly in the prevailing literature. Thus, due to this gap, a study is required to identify the present situation and influence of SM in educational marketing. Specifically, this study was explored the influence of social media on the college choice process of students in higher education

Literature Review

This review can help us move toward the goal of paying enough attention to social media to begin identifying best practices that exist across community colleges and other colleges and universities. We have assumed that engagement of SM applications as part of HEI marketing could contribute to increased enrolment numbers and help prospective students make better-informed decisions regarding their study choice and institution selection. However, it was little known about how university students use social media and what impact social media have on the decision-making process of future students regarding their choice for a study and university (Constantinides & Stagno, 2012). In the words of Whitehead (2012) "web and social media are not only crucial tools in student recruitment,

but they have also forcibly sharpened the accuracy of university branding."

According to PBP Executive Report (2010) found that both Facebook and Twitter can be effective tools for marketing higher education to potential students. Twitter can be used to provide quick, admissions-related information to students and direct them to the main university website for further details. Some institutions also use Twitter functions such as re-tweet to broadcast tweets received from former or prospective students. The report concluded that while both Facebook and Twitter can be effective tools for marketing higher education, Facebook provides more affordances than Twitter.

Mazurek, Korzynski & Gorska (2019) had carried out empirical research in the period of April-June 2017 on a sample of 90 (HEIs) in Poland, using an online questionnaire. This study aimed to investigate how HEIs take advantage of social media marketing activities along with the barriers to implementing such activities in HEIs in Poland. The finding of this study shows that social media mainly utilizing for relationship building, brand building, information, and enrolment activities. The main barriers to a more comprehensive adoption of social media at Polish HEIs were: lack of understanding of the significance of social media in building the education institution's brand among academic and administrative staff. Next on the list are the issue of financial resources and the sense of having not enough expert knowledge to carry out and fully manage these activities.

Constantinides & Stagno (2011) conducted a national survey among future university students in the Netherlands to understand how potential students use social media and what their role is in the decision-making process of choosing a program of study, a university, or College. They segment the market among future students based on the use of social media and examine the impact of social media on the choice of a higher education program and institution. The population of this survey was students in the last two years of high school and 120,000 students were selected as a sample using the probability method of stratified sampling. The major finding of the study was that college level students are mostly interested in social interaction and seeking information through social media.

The various studies discussed above illustrate a growing trend in adopting social media for admissions purposes in higher education. It has therefore become imperative to review the efficacy of specific social networking tools to provide administrators with adequate knowledge to select the tools that meet their specific needs.

Theoretical Framework

This study has linked with the Uses and Gratification (U & G) theory. The U & G theory was developed by Katz and Blumler (1974), it seeks to explain the relationship

between the user and how they use social media and discusses the effects of the media on people. It explains how people use the media for their own needs and get satisfied when their needs are fulfilled. In other words, it can be said that the theory argues what people do with media rather than what media does to people. The U&G theory identifies the complete process of media use and provides acknowledgment to media users by selecting the right media to gratify their initial needs. According to Katz and Blumler, people have different categories of needs and gratifications. The needs and gratification can be categories as; cognitive needs, affective needs, personal integrative needs, social integrative needs, and tension-free needs.

Cognitive needs are related to mental and intellectual needs. People use media for acquiring knowledge, information, facts, etc. Different people have different needs. For example, people who want to know facts and knowledge watch quiz programs, and to know about current affairs people need to watch the news channels. Affective needs talk about the emotional fulfillment of people. It is related to all kinds of emotions, pleasure, and moods of people. When the audience watch movie, the audience cry and laugh along with the character of the movie. Personal integrative needs are the needs for self-esteem and respect. People use media to reassure their status, credibility, strength, power, etc. For example, people watch advertisements in the media like jewelry, clothes, furniture and know which products change their lifestyle and fit in with other people. The social integrative need of each person to socialize with people like family and friends is social integrative need. For social intersection nowadays, people do not seem to gather socially during weekends instead they turn to social network sites like Facebook, My Space, Twitter, etc. to satisfy their needs. People also use media not only for their one interest but also to talk with the near and dear ones about the current topics. People some time the media as a means to escapism from the real world and to relieve their stress or when they feel bored. People might have various tensions in life which they do not want to face, so take the help of media to escape from it. People feel relax while watching television, listening radio, and surfing the internet.

Methodology

The college management has a keen interest in learning how students choose a college. The choice process is unique to each person, so understanding how persons make that choice is complicated. This study deployed a descriptive survey method under a quantitative research design. Descriptive research aims to describe a population, situation, or phenomenon and allows to gather of large volumes of data that can be analyzed for frequencies, averages, and patterns (McCombes, 2020) accurately and systematically. Quantitative research focuses on gathering numerical data and generalizing it across groups of people or explaining a particular phenomenon (Labaree,2020).

Population and Sampling

The total population of this study was 830 bachelor first-year of Sindhuli district on academic year 2077/078. The sample was selected by stratified random sampling method. Three colleges of Sindhuli district were selected by convenience method and the students were selected by multistage stratified sampling method. Education, Management, and Humanities faculties were considered as strata for this sampling purpose to avoid the chances of selecting more students from the same faculty. Within the strata, by using Solvin's formula, 270 students have been selected consisting 90 students from each stratum using the simple random sampling method.

Data collection procedure

This study was intended to investigate purpose using SM and its' effect in college choice process in higher education. For this purpose, the first-hand data was collected with the potential students of bachelor level. A cross-sectional survey was conducted on the bachelor's first-year/semester students. The instrument used to collect the primary data for this study was a self-structured questionnaire. According to McLeod (2018), a questionnaire is a research instrument consisting of a series of questions for the purpose of gathering information from respondents. The questionnaire consisted of various structured items, including several four/five-point Likert scales, ranking scales, and multiple-choice questions relating to factors that led to the participants' decision to choose a college for higher education.

Scheme for Data Analysis

Various analytical methods were used throughout the study to summarize the results of the survey. The responses from the paper and pencil surveys were tabulated and organized using a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet. Data was then transferred into SPSS software to perform further analytics. In quantitative data analysis, we are expected to turn raw numbers into meaningful data through the application of rational and critical thinking (Dudovskiy,2019). The quantitative data will initially tabulate for frequency distribution and descriptive analyses, t-test, and analyses of variance (ANOVAs) were used where appropriate.

Results and Discussion

This study was conducted to aid the marketing strategies at community colleges to increase their enrollment. The focus of this study centered on the influence of social media on the college choice process of the student.

Results

Demographic Information Participant

The first part of the data analysis presents the demographic information of the participant. Tables 1 provide the gender breakdown of the students based on the faculty of study. The table shows 119 (44%) male and 151 (56%) female students have participated in the survey. The students were chosen from three faculties, Education, Humanities, and managements in equal proportions.

Table 1. *Participant Demographics by Gender*

Gender	Faculty			Total
	Education	Humanities	Management	
Male	24 (27%)	47 (52%)	48 (53%)	119 (44%)
Female	66 (73%)	43 (48%)	42 (47%)	151 (56%)
Total	90 (100%)	90 (100%)	90 (100%)	270 (100%)

From the Education faculty only 24 (27%) male students have participated in the survey wherein management they were 48 (53%). Female students are highest (73%) in the Education and least (47%) in Management faculty. This shows that mainly female students are interested in the Education faculty.

Tables 2 provide ethnic information of the students studying in three different faculties. The highest number (49%) of students were Janajati and the least number (23%) from the Brahmin/Chhetri community.

Table 2. *Participant Demographics by Ethnicity*

Ethnicity	Faculty			Total
	Education	Humanities	Management	
Brahmin/Chhetri	24 (27%)	24 (27%)	15 (17%)	63 (23%)
Janajati	45 (50%)	42 (47%)	45 (50%)	132 (49%)
Dalit	21 (23%)	24 (27%)	30 (33%)	75 (28%)
Total	90 (100%)	90 (100%)	90 (100%)	270 (100%)

An equal number (24) students from the Brahmin/Chhetri community have been chosen Education and Humanities faculty. Similarly, in the Education and management faculty, 50% of students were from the Janajati community. The least (23%) Dalit students have been studying in Education faculty and highest (33%) studying Management faculty.

College choice process of Students

One of the major objectives of this research-based study was to find the various sources from which students gather information about the college. Thus, questions were asked regarding their awareness of various information sources, which one they utilized in their college choice process, and how influential those sources were. Table 3 shows the sources of information and the number of students who obtain the information from these sources.

Table 3. *Sources of Information about college*

Sources	Frequency	Percent (%)
Parents	78	29%
Friends	89	33%
School Teacher	68	25%
Newspaper	23	9%
Radio	24	9%
Social Media	88	33%
Other	72	27%

The analyzed data shows that the sources of information of the students were their own friends. Similarly, students had been obtained more information about colleges through parents and school teachers. Table 3 shows, number of students who obtained the information from their friends were 89(33%) and from parents were 78 (29%). The other sources like campus prospects, brochures, admission champions of campus, school visits, also have been playing important roles to disseminate the information of campus. Near about (27%) of the students are being informed from these sources.

According to the data presented in table 3, we cannot ignore the role of social media as the source of campus publicity. One-third (33%) of the students had obtained information through social media. Social media like Facebook, Tiktok, and Youtube are very popular among the young generation. Campus Facebook page and website/Blog also considered as effective means of information.

Use of Social-Media

The purpose of this study was to gain a better understanding of how current internet-based resources are affecting the college choice process. Research questions were designed to gather information regarding the influence of internet-based resources on the college choice process from a quantitative perspective.

Social Media used by Students

Students are increasingly using social media. They were found to be using more than one social network or operating their accounts. Many students used to visit college's social media accounts before applying to that college.

The pie-chart (Figure 1) shows the percent of students visiting college's websites before entering that college. According to the pie-chart, 43% (116) of students have visited the college's social media sites
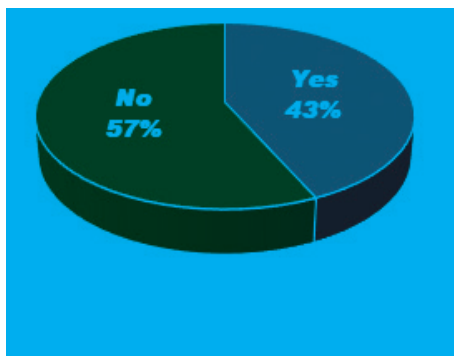

Figure:1 Number of students visiting the college's social media

Sources	Frequency	Percent (%)
Facebook	270	100
WhatsApp	49	18.15
YouTube	270	100
Instagram	23	8.52
Twitter	24	8.89
Tiktok	250	92.59
Viber	58	21.48

The result of this study shows that before entering a college, students used to study about that college and they were using social media for that. Before entering any college for higher study students collect information about the college by surfing the website and Facebook page. Among various social media Facebook, Youtube, WhatsApp, Instagram, Twitter, Tiktok are very popular among the new generation. Table 8 shows the details of students using various social networks.

Table 4. *Use of Social-Medias*

Purpose	Respondents	Percent
Keeping in touch with friends and family	215	80%

Facebook and YouTube are the most popular among the new generation. All the students who participated in the survey have a Facebook account and they were using the YouTube channel. After YouTube and Facebook next most utilized form of social networking app is TikTok. Out of 270 students, 250 (90%) students were using the TikTok app. Twitter and Instagram were not used by many students. About 8% of students were using Twitter and Instagram. The totals do not equal 100% because some students reported utilizing more than one social networking website.

Purpose	Respondents	Percent
Keeping in touch with friends and family	215	80%
Event Planning	70	26%
Reading News	112	41%
To meet new friends	150	56%
To find employment	92	34%
For academic use	118	44%
Entertainment	252	93%

Table 5. *Purpose of using social media*

The purpose of using means of social networking was found to be different among the students. Table 5 shows that the main purpose of using social media was found to be entertainment. Among 270 highest number of (93%) students who use social networking for entertainment, the second highest (80%) was to keep in touch with friends and family. Many students want to make new friends using social media and the number of students using social media for reading and writing was also not less. About 44% of students were using

social media for their academic use and 41% using it for reading news. Very few students (26%) were using social media for event planning and only 92 of them (34%) were using it for employment.

Impact of Social-Media

The main objective of this study was to identify how much different types of internet-based resources impact the college choice process of this group of students. Thus, questions were asked regarding their awareness of various internet-based resources, how they used social networking websites in their college choice process, and how influential those resources were on the college choice process. Further frequencies were calculated to examine the difference in answers based on gender, and ethnicity. The ANOVAs test was

conducted where appropriate to determine significant differences to further understand the data gathered.

Evaluating the Influence of Social-Media

This section mainly focuses on the influence of students on the college choice process by social media. The influence of students based on gender, ethnicity, and faculty have been discussed below.

Influence of Social-Media Based on Gender

To measure the influence of social media based on gender the mean of male, female, and overall mean have been calculated. The t-test is used to find out if there were significant differences between male and female students in the college selection process. The results of gender compared to the effect of social media are listed in Table 10.

Table 6. *Influence of Social-Media Based on Gender*

Gender	Respondents	Mean	SD	df	t-value	p-value
Male	69	2.29	1.11			
Female	47	2.62	1.13			
Total	116	2.56	1.13	114	1.5429	0.1256

The female (M = 2.62) students are more affected by social media than the male (M = 2.29). Overall, rated the social media influence is slightly less (M=2.56) than the average rating (M=2.5). The results from Table 6 showed that there was no significant difference between males and females in their ratings of the influence of social media on the college-choice factor. Since the p-value (0.1256) is greater than 0.05, it is not significant and H_o is accepted which means that there is no significant difference in the average of students influenced by social media based on gender in the college process in higher education.

Influence of Social-Media Based on Ethnicity

To measure the influence of social media based on ethnicity the means of different ethnic groups Brahmin/Chhetri, Janajati, Dalit, and overall mean have been calculated. One-way ANOVA brought into use to determine if there were significant differences among the responses of ethnic groups in regards to what influenced their college choice decision.

Table 7. *Influence of Social-Media Based on Ethnicity*

Ethnicity	Respondents	Mean	SD	F (2, 9)	$F_{0.05}$ (2, 9)
Brahmin/Chhetri	36	2.39	1.10		
Janajati	51	2.71	1.00	1.97	4.26
Dalit	29	2.52	0.95		
Total	116	2.56	1.13		

Table 7 shows that students from the Janajati community were found to be most affected (M = 2.71) by social media and students from the Brahmin/Chhetri community were found to be the least affected (M = 2.39). Overall, the rating of the social media influence was slightly greater (M=2.56) than the average rating (M=2.5). To compare the influence of social media in the college choice process of different community students for higher education one-way ANOVA test was used. The calculated value (F_{cal} = 1.97) is less than the tabulated value (F_{tab} = 4.26), thus we conclude that it is not significant and H_o is accepted. This means there is no significance in the average of students among Brahmin/Chhetri, Janajati, and Dalit influenced by social media in the college process in higher education.

Influence of Social-Media Based on Faculty

Here, the group of students influenced by social media based on faculty also have been compared by using descriptive and inference statistics.

Table 8. *Influence of Social-Media Based on Faculty*

Ethnicity	Respondents	Mean	SD	F (2, 9)	$F_{0.05}$ (2, 9)
Education	37	2.27	1.07		
Management	37	2.95	1.08	0.9	4.26
Humanities	42	2.17	1.02		
Total	116	2.56	1.13		

Table 8 shows that students from the management faculty were found to be most affected (M = 2.95) by social media and students from the humanities faculty were found to be the least affected (M = 2.17). Overall, the rating of the social media influence was slightly greater (M=2.56) than the average rating (M=2.5). To compare the influence of social media in the college choice process of different faculty students for higher education one-way ANOVA test was used. The calculated value (F_{cal} = 1.97) is less than the tabulated value (F_{tab} = 4.26), thus we conclude that it is not significant and H_o is accepted. This means there is no significance in the average of students among Education, Management, and Humanities influenced by social media in the college process in higher education.

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to know how much students were influenced by social media in the college choice process for higher education. For this, the first-hand data have been gathered from bachelor first-year students by using a survey questionnaire. This section presents the discussion about the analyzed data.

In this new era of science and technology, the use of social networking has been increasing day-to-day. Social networks like Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube have rapidly become a part of many people's everyday lives, especially for the new generations who have grown up with technology at their fingertips. Facebook, TikTok, and YouTube are the most used social networking among the new generation. The result research work carried out by Nyangau & Bado (2012) shows that Facebook is currently the most widely used social media tool which is consistence with the result of this research. All the students who participated in the survey have a Facebook account and they were using the YouTube channel. The study of Nyangau & Bado was also found that the recent emergence of social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and LinkedIn, and their popularity especially among young people, has contributed to a growing interest of admissions officers in their use for marketing purposes. Additionally, Ellison, Steinfield, and Lampe (2007) showed how Facebook presents an effective means for college students to stay connected with members of their pre-established social communities with whom they share an offline connection. After YouTube and Facebook next most utilized form of social networking app is TikTok. Out of 270 students, 250 (90%) students were using the TikTok app. Twitter and Instagram were used by very few (8%) students of the Sindhuli district.

Mainly IT is popular among the new generation and they are using them for different purposes. The question was asked to the 270 bachelors first year/semester student of batch 2077/078 from three different community colleges of Sindhuli district, for what purpose they were using social media. Of the seven choices offered here, the most public reason for social media usage was entertainment. It was found that 93% of students from the Sindhuli district use social networking for entertainment. The second most common reason for social media usage (80%) was to keep in touch with friends and family. Similarly, the number of students who want to make new friends was 41%, and students who use social media for academic use also not less, they were 44%. Very few students (26%) were using social media for event planning and only 92 (34%) students using it for searching for employment.

The analyzed data shows that female (M = 2.62) students are more affected by social media than males (M = 2.29). The students from the Janajati community were found to be most affected (M = 2.71) by social media and students from the Brahmin/Chhetri community

were found to be the least affected (M = 2.39). Similarly, students from the Management faculty were found to be most affected (M = 2.95) by social media, and students from the humanities faculty were found to be the least affected (M = 2.17). Overall, the rating of the social media influence was slightly greater (M=2.56) than the average rating (M=2.5).

The independent t-test and ANOVA were used to find out if there were significant differences between groups based on gender and ethnicity in the college selection process. Since the p-value (0.1256) is greater than 0.05, it is not significant. Thus, there is no significant difference in the average of students influenced by social media based on gender in the college process in higher education. To compare the influence of social media in the college choice process of different community students for higher education one-way ANOVA test was used. The calculated value (F_{cal} = 1.97) is less than the tabulated value (F_{tab} = 4.26), therefore we conclude that it is not significant and H_o is accepted. This means there is no significance in the average of students among Brahmin/Chhetri, Janajati, and Dalit influenced by social media in the college process in higher education. Similarly, to compare the influence of social media in the college choice process of different faculty students for higher education one-way ANOVA test was used. The calculated value (F_{cal} = 1.97) is less than the tabulated value (F_{tab} = 4.26), thus we conclude that it is not significant and H_o is accepted. This means there is no significance in the average of students among Education, management, and Humanities influenced by social media in the college process in higher education.

Major Findings

Marketing strategies for community colleges have become increasingly competitive and complex over time. Education is a unique sector within the marketing sphere, and therefore, its strategies can get complex. However, it is possible to design a good marketing strategy that helps you turn your leads into students. The students also seek a good college to obtain higher education for their bright future. Many factors affect a student's decision-making process, like proximity to home, the option of subject choice, costs, scholarships offered, selectivity, environment, school teacher counseling, the effect of friendship, and parental influence, etc. The effect of social networking is also an important part of this age of information communication technology. The main objective of this is research was to identify the effect of social media among the students in their decision-making process of college choice.

The results of this study have provided current information regarding how much students rely on internet-based resources in their college choice process, and identify which

resources seem to have the most influence. Every college wants to increase the enrollment rate and they are spent a large amount on advertisements. Every college wants to increase the enrollment rate and they are spent a large amount on advertisements. But the question arises here, how much effective were they and they were got achievement from the expenditure. To make the admission campaign more effective one should know by which factor students are influenced and the advertisement should be focused on that point. Thus, from the result of this research, the colleges may be benefited, especially private and public colleges could be helped which want to increase the enrollment of students.

This study deployed a descriptive survey method under a quantitative research design. The total population of this study was all students of bachelor first-year students from the Sindhuli district. The sample was selected by stratified random sampling method. Three colleges of Sindhuli district were selected and 270 students have been selected consisting 90 students from each college simple random sampling method. This research was intended to investigate how students choose the college for higher education. The quantitative data will initially tabulate for frequency distribution and central tendency measures where appropriate. Descriptive analyses, T-test, and analyses of variance (ANOVAs)were used to determine which factors most influenced the enrollment decision of freshman students.

The finding of this research shows that Facebook and YouTube are the most used social networking among the new generation. All the students participated in the survey were using Facebook and YouTube channel and they use them to entertain. Many students want to make new friends by using social networking and few students were using social media for event planning and for searching for employment. The number of students using social media for academic use was also significant.

The analyzed data shows that female students are more affected by social media than males. The students from the Janajati community were found to be most affected by social media and students from the Brahmin/Chhetri community were found to be the least affected. Similarly, students from the management faculty were found to be most affected by social media, and students from the humanities faculty were found to be the least affected. The independent t-test and ANOVA were used to find out if there were significant differences between groups based on gender, ethnicity, and faculty in the college selection process, but no significant difference was found.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Potential college students have many options to choose colleges when they deciding which higher education institution to attend. When making the college-choice decision, some potential students consider going to various colleges, while others quickly decide to enroll in a particular college. The use of social networking is found to be increasing, but the use of it was on entertainment more than academic use. If we observe result based on gender it was found that female student was more influence than male, and based on ethnicity Janajati student was more influenced than Brahmin/Chhetri and Dalit by social media on the college choice process. Similarly, the faculty-wise result shows that the students who were from management faculty were more influenced than other faculty by social media. Although there was some difference in the number of students affected by social media according to gender, caste, and faculty, there was not much difference between them.

In recent years, formalized marketing concepts have become important in the decision-making process of college administrators. Understanding the factors that influence enrollment can help universities succeed in an increasingly competitive marketplace for education. This study has reviewed the factors that contributed to students' choice to enroll in a specific college. The study may have several implications for policymakers, practitioners, and the academic community.

This study is important because it added empirical evidence to the understanding of college-choice influencers. Even though this study used a particular community college with limited diversity, some of the findings of this study supported previous studies findings and some new theory has been added in the field of education marketing. This study advanced the understanding of the influence of college-choice factors as well as filling a void in the research of college-choice factors in community colleges. Findings of this study can be used as a guide for admissions staff at community college to see which marketing factors have the most influence on the college choice of potential students. Those staff working at selective colleges who are seeking to enhance their methods and maximize their resources for recruiting students may be interested in the results of this study. The information gained from this study may help colleges and universities improve recruitment processes for future students.

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