

The Role of Online Media in Higher Education: A Study with Reference to Government and Private Universities

Shyam Sunder Verma¹, Dr. Pragya²

¹ Research Scholar, Department of Journalism and Mass Communication, Vivekananda Global University, Jaipur, Rajasthan, India.

Email: shyamsu2013@gmail.com

² Assistant Professor, Department of Journalism and Mass Communication, Vivekananda Global University, Jaipur, Rajasthan, India.

Email: pragya7journalist@gmail.com

Corresponding Author:

Shyam Sunder Verma

Email: shyamsu2013@gmail.com,

Abstract

The world of higher education has completely changed, especially in the rapidly evolving world of digital technologies. The use of online media, such as social media, learning management systems, Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs), institutional websites, and digital educational resources, has become almost a part of the educational process, communication, and the branding of institutions. Furthermore, the COVID-19 pandemic spurred the increasing use of online media as a means for universities to transition from in-person classes to online learning. This study explores the role of internet media in the world of higher education and its application especially in government and private universities. The paper examines the impact of online media in academic communication, student participation, institutional recognition, the educational results and choice of university. Existing literature review and conceptual interpretation of digital practices in Higher education provide a comparative analysis of Government and Private Universities. The results showed that both types of universities are increasingly using the internet as a means of communication, whereas the private universities are more flexible, oriented towards marketing, and technologically responsive. However, government universities may have more extensive reach in terms of their social responsibilities and public education goals. The research findings show that the effective integration of online media can improve the quality of learning and increase access to learning, especially in enhancing university competitiveness, both for public institutions and private universities. Advice is provided for policymakers and university managers on how to further enhance digital ecosystems in higher education..

Keywords Online media, Higher education, Government Universities, Private Universities, Social media, Digital learning, MOOC's.

Introduction

The 'Digital Revolution' has completely transformed the architecture and pedagogy of higher education. Consistent with this, online media is increasingly being used by universities for teaching and learning, communication, administration, sharing research, and student engagement. Online media includes social networking sites, institutional websites, digital learning environments, online educational resources, video sharing platforms and virtual collaboration tools. The technologies have contributed to the shift of higher education from mainly campus-based learning to a more flexible and interwoven learning system.

Especially during the COVID-19 pandemic when educational institutes across the globe switched to online modes of instruction, the growing importance of the online media took prominence (Mishra et al., 2020). This shift presented some challenges and opportunities for digital learning. Academic continuity was ensured by universities turning to social media, video conferencing platforms, learning management systems and digital content repositories (Dutta, 2020).

The governance, funding, institutional agenda and flexibility of government and private universities are different. These distinctions have an impact on how online media is adopted and used. The private universities tend to be more preoccupied with branding, recruiting students and staying competitive in the market, whereas the public universities are more concerned with accessibility and the public service and equity of education (Marginson, 2018). Thus, the use of Web-based media can differ widely according to these categories of institutions.

This study aims to delve into the use of e-media in higher education, emphasizing the government and private universities. Combining state-of-the-art research, the study aims to reflect on the role of digital platforms in the effective learning process and the development of institutions.

2. Review Of Literature

Over the past decade, higher education and the online media have become more prominent foci of academic research. Studies have shown that social media platforms have transformed from personal, informal means of communication to strategic tools that help achieve educational engagement, institutional communication and student recruitment.

Constantinides and Stagno (2012) discovered that social media makes a substantial impact in students' decisions on which university to choose. More and more prospective students turn to digital content, the institution's websites, and social media networks to get a sense of the higher education institution.

Likewise, Alexa et al., (2012) pointed out the increased relevance of Internet marketing and social networks in the higher education sector in Romania. From their research, they found that digital platforms have the power to help universities to better reach stakeholders and enhance visibility.

Garde Sánchez, et al. (2013) analyzed disclosure of public and private universities in the United States on the web. The study showed that institutional websites as one of the main channels for transparency, accountability and engagement of stakeholders. Similarly, Son-Turan and Lambrechts (2019) found there is an increasing tendency for public and private universities to publish data on sustainability on the internet, albeit with varying levels and degrees of disclosure.

MOOCs have further revolutionized digital higher learning. Bulfin, et al., 2014 suggested that MOOCs are a new paradigm of knowledge sharing and are a sort of educating beyond the boundary of the traditional school. Other researchers also found that MOOCs, social media, and digital technologies are transforming higher education, as they provide new options for personalized and flexible education systems (see for example, Kaplan and Haenlein, 2016).

The world pandemic COVID-19 increased the global adoption of online media. Indian Higher Education institutions used social media and other digital technologies to continue the learning process extensively, said Dutta (2020). Mishra et al. (2020) identified that online learning was continuity but also highlighted inequalities in technological infrastructure and digital literacy.

Moreover, Sengupta and Vaish (2024) proved that social media played an important role in sustaining the education communication and engagement of students during the pandemic period. Their conclusion is that digital platforms are not mere stopgap measures but are essential elements, and, in fact, permanent parts, to higher education ecosystems.

Other insights can be gained from a study of the comparative performance of public and private universities. Naidu and Derani (2016) noted that the perceptions about quality of education in both private and public school varied. Lee (2017) suggested that the former achieved the wide-range general public benefits, while the latter exhibited a sense of responsiveness and innovation. A study undertaken by de Jager (2018) revealed that students' expectations of educational experiences become evident and vary between public and private universities, especially in the field of service and technological support.

Aithal and Kumar (2016) highlighted private universities for India were facing both opportunities and challenges. They also recommended that technological innovation and digital interaction are key factors of competitiveness in the case of private institutions. Private sector adaptability and market-oriented strategies were also contributing to the growing demand for private higher education, as pointed out by Garwe (2016).

Research on the SLS further reinforces the significance of online media. Research on the SLS also confirms the importance of online media. Maleko Munguatosha et al. (2011) proposed a model of the adoption of social network-based learning, which highlights collaborative learning context that is supported through digital social networks. Aldahdouh et al. (2020) showed the impact of individual innovativeness in higher education contexts on technology and social media use.

Lastly, Marín et al. (2020) provided evidence of the positive role of digital educational resources and national digital infrastructures in improving access and effectiveness in education. Their results highlight the importance of strong technological ecosystems in universities.

In conclusion, all the literature reviewed indicates that existing media has a significant role in learning processes, institutional communication, students' participation and competitiveness of organizations. But the comparative study of government and private universities is still rather limited, and therefore more investigation is needed.

3. Research Gap

While there have been a lot of studies on social media, online learning, MOOCs and digital learning resources, few studies have tried to comprehensively examine the role of online media in government and private universities. Current literature may center on any one tech or one institutional setting. The syntheses of evidence on the relationship between institutional features and online media use and result are still needed.

4. Objectives of the Study

1. To explore the role of the Internet in higher education.
2. To study the effect of online media in teaching and learning process.
3. To compare and contrast online media use among government and private universities.
4. To assess the impact of online media on student engagement and choice of universities.
5. To discover opportunities and obstacles for the use of online media in higher education.

5. Hypotheses

H1: In higher education institutions, the positive influence of online media on the learning outcomes of teachers and students.

H2: Government universities use online media less than private universities in promoting the institution and interacting with students.

6. Research Methodology

Research Design

The type of research used in this study is descriptive and analytical research type with a secondary data approach.

Data Sources

Online media and higher education was the subject of peer-reviewed journal articles, scholarly publications, and academic studies leading to data collection. This study made use of the references provided for the investigations.

Method of Analysis

Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA) was used to determine the relationship between the pattern, similarities, and differences between online media use of government and private universities. Data from previously conducted studies were synthesized using thematic interpretation.

7. Findings and Discussion**7.1 Online Media as a Learning Tool**

The use of online media as a learning medium has been an important educational tool for collaborative learning, sharing knowledge and engaging in academic discussions. It has been found from the studies carried out during the Covid-19 situation that digital platforms have helped to keep provision going for teaching and learning in the face of physical constraints (Dutta, 2020; Mishra et al., 2020).

Use of video conferencing technology, LMSs and educational social networks enhanced access and flexibility. Students were provided opportunities to experience learning outside of the classroom.

7.2 Student Engagement and Communication

Communication between students, faculty and university administration is made possible through online media. Academic conversations, peer learning and feedback in real-time are enabled on social networking sites. Maleko Munguatosha et al. (2011) discovered that learning environments enabled by social networks allows for collaborative education experiences.

Moreover, universities can broadcast their announcements, academic news, and institutional information easily and quickly through social media. This helps to build better relationships with stakeholders and better transparency amongst them.

7.3 Impact on University Choice

A number of studies have found that online media affect prospective students' decision making. Constantinides and Stagno (2012) and Zia and Šola (2021) found that the social media content, the institutions' reputation and digital engagement are significant factors in university selection.

The importance of a university's website, reviews, social profiles, and communication via digital channels is growing in importance for students. The result is that the role and importance of online media as a component of institutional competitiveness have increased.

7.4 Government versus Private Universities

According to the comparative review, there are significant differences in online media use.

Private universities have typically invested more heavily in digital marketing, branding and student recruitment initiatives. They have a market-oriented structure which facilitates rapid technological adoption and innovation (Aithal & Kumar, 2016).

Government Universities may have more robust public service obligations and public education outreach. They are more and more using digital technologies, but implementation processes can be compromised by bureaucratic procedures and by a lack of resources.

Still, both types are aware of the strategic value of online media. Accessibility and outreach have been improved at government universities by making use of digital platforms, and the same holds true for private universities to boost institutional diversity and competitiveness.

7.5 MOOCs and Digital Educational Resources

MOOCs and open courses have helped to increase access to higher education. BCKP, (2016) and Bulfin et al., (2014) stated that digital learning environments offer opportunities for a lifelong learning and global sharing of knowledge.

In addition, the national investments that are made in digital educational infrastructures help in the incorporation of online media in higher education systems (Marín et al., 2020). Thanks to these steps, geographical limitations have been done away with and educational inclusivity has been promoted.

7.6 Challenges of Online Media Adoption

Although this has many advantages, there are a few obstacles to overcome.

1. Access to technology and the digital divide.
2. Poor digital literacy of the students and faculty.
3. Information Quality and Misinformation concerns.
4. Risk of data privacy and cybersecurity.
5. Decreased in-person contact and/or social isolation.

All the above challenges need coordinated institutional strategies and policy interventions.

Table 1: Online Media in Higher Education

Characteristic	Description	Benefits	Examples
Online Media as Learning Tool	Facilitates collaborative learning and knowledge sharing	Keeps provision going during constraints	Video conferencing, LMSs, educational social networks
Student Engagement & Communication	Enables communication and real-time feedback	Builds better relationships with stakeholders	Social networking sites, university announcements
Impact on University Choice	Influences prospective students' decision-making	Increases institutional competitiveness	University website, reviews, social profiles
Government vs. Private Universities	Differences in investment and implementation	Improves accessibility and outreach	Private universities invest in digital marketing
MOOCs & Digital Resources	Increases access to higher education	Promotes educational inclusivity	MOOCs, open courses, digital infrastructures
Challenges of Adoption	Obstacles to overcome in adoption	Coordinated strategies and policy interventions	Access to technology, digital literacy, misinformation

8. Conclusion

Online media is not only becoming a force of change but is already changing the landscape of higher education. It affects the teaching and learning process, pupil's engagement, institutional communication & choice of

university. The findings of this study confirm that private and governmental universities rely more and more on digital platforms to fulfil their educational and organizational goals.

The digital marketing competencies and the rate at which technological innovations are being adopted is usually stronger in private universities than in government universities, while the latter focus on public accessibility and impact on society. With all these differences, the successful integration of online media has a positive impact on the quality and the efficiency of education and institutes in both sectors.

The smart design of digital environments that deliver an inclusive, secure and innovative experience will be vital to the future of higher education. Policymakers and institutional leaders should thus focus technological infrastructure, digital literacy programmes and the development of online pedagogies to make the most of the use of online media.

References

1. Aithal, P. S., & Kumar, P. M. (2016). Opportunities and challenges for private universities in India. *International Journal of Management, IT and Engineering*, 6(1), 88–113.
2. Aldahdouh, T. Z., Nokelainen, P., & Korhonen, V. (2020). Technology and social media usage in higher education: The influence of individual innovativeness. *SAGE Open*, 10(1), 2158244019899441. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244019899441>
3. Alexa, E. L., Alexa, M., & Stoica, C. M. (2012). The use of online marketing and social media in higher education institutions in Romania. *Journal of Marketing Research & Case Studies*, 2012, 1–9. <https://doi.org/10.5171/2012.721221>
4. Bulfin, S., Pangrazio, L., & Selwyn, N. (2014). Making MOOCs: The construction of a new digital higher education within news media discourse. *International Review of Research in Open and Distributed Learning*, 15(5), 290–305. <https://doi.org/10.19173/irrodl.v15i5.1856>
5. Constantinides, E., & Stagno, M. C. Z. (2012). Higher education marketing: A study on the impact of social media on study selection and university choice. *International Journal of Technology and Educational Marketing*, 2(1), 41–58. <https://doi.org/10.4018/ijtem.2012010104>
6. de Jager, J. (2018). Students' expectations of higher educational experience in public vs. private universities in Indonesia. *The New Educational Review*. <https://doi.org/10.15804/tner.2018.54.4.12>
7. Dutta, A. (2020). Impact of digital social media on Indian higher education: Alternative approaches of online learning during COVID-19 pandemic crisis. *International Journal of Scientific and Research Publications*, 10(5), 604–611. <https://doi.org/10.29322/IJSRP.10.05.2020.p10169>
8. Garde Sánchez, R., Rodríguez Bolívar, M. P., & López-Hernández, A. M. (2013). Online disclosure of university social responsibility: A comparative study of public and private US universities. *Environmental Education Research*, 19(6), 709–746. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13504622.2012.749976>
9. Garwe, E. C. (2016). Increase in the demand for private higher education: Unmasking the paradox. *International Journal of Educational Management*, 30(2), 232–251. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJEM-05-2014-0064>
10. Kaplan, A. M., & Haenlein, M. (2016). Higher education and the digital revolution: About MOOCs, SPOCs, social media, and the Cookie Monster. *Business Horizons*, 59(4), 441–450. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bushor.2016.03.008>
11. Lee, Y. J. (2017). Understanding higher education institutions' publicness: Do public universities produce more public outcomes than private universities? *Higher Education Quarterly*, 71(2), 182–203. <https://doi.org/10.1111/hequ.12120>
12. Maleko Munguatosha, G., Birevu Muyinda, P., & Thaddeus Lubega, J. (2011). A social networked learning adoption model for higher education institutions in developing countries. *On the Horizon*, 19(4), 307–320. <https://doi.org/10.1108/10748121111179439>
13. Marín, V. I., Bond, M., Zawacki-Richter, O., Aydin, C. H., Bedenlier, S., Bozkurt, A., & Xiao, J. (2020). A comparative study of national infrastructures for digital educational resources in higher education. *Open Praxis*, 12(2), 241–256. <https://doi.org/10.5944/openpraxis.12.2.1071>

14. Marginson, S. (2018). Public/private in higher education: A synthesis of economic and political approaches. *Studies in Higher Education*, 43(2), 322–337. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2016.1168797>
15. Mishra, L., Gupta, T., & Shree, A. (2020). Online teaching-learning in higher education during lockdown period of COVID-19 pandemic. *International Journal of Educational Research Open*, 1, 100012. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedro.2020.100012>
16. Naidu, P., & Derani, N. E. S. (2016). A comparative study on quality of education received by students of private universities versus public universities. *Procedia Economics and Finance*, 35, 659–666. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S2212-5671\(16\)00081-2](https://doi.org/10.1016/S2212-5671(16)00081-2)
17. Sengupta, S., & Vaish, A. (2024). A study on social media and higher education during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Universal Access in the Information Society*, 23(3), 1249–1271. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10209-023-00988-x>
18. Šola, H. M., & Zia, T. (2021). Social media and students' choice of higher education institution. *European Journal of Management and Marketing Studies*, 6(4). <https://doi.org/10.46827/ejmms.v6i4.1160>
19. Son-Turan, S., & Lambrechts, W. (2019). Sustainability disclosure in higher education: A comparative analysis of reports and websites of public and private universities in Turkey. *International Journal of Sustainability in Higher Education*, 20(7), 1143–1170. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJSHE-02-2019-0070>.