



EFFICIENCY EVALUATION OF MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS IN STUDENT ADMISSION OF TNU - UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCES

Ngo Van Dinh

University of Sciences - Thai Nguyen University, Vietnam

Email address: dinh.ngo@tnus.edu.vn

<https://doi.org/10.51453/2354-1431/2023/989>

Article info

Received: 06/6/2023

Revised: 12/7/2023

Accepted: 12/10/2023

Keywords

*marketing
communication, higher
education, student
admission*

Abstract

The purpose of the research is to evaluate the effectiveness of marketing communication activities in full-time undergraduate enrollment of the TNU-University of Sciences through analyzing survey data, collecting opinions and evaluating of the students who have enrolled in this institution. From those analyses and assessments, we offer five fundamental solutions to improve the effectiveness of marketing communication activities in enrollment for higher education institutions in Vietnam



ĐÁNH GIÁ HIỆU QUẢ CỦA HOẠT ĐỘNG TRUYỀN THÔNG MARKETING TRONG TUYỂN SINH ĐẠI HỌC CHÍNH QUY CỦA TRƯỜNG ĐẠI HỌC KHOA HỌC - ĐẠI HỌC THÁI NGUYÊN

Ngô Văn Định

Trường Đại học Khoa học - Đại học Thái Nguyên, Việt Nam

Địa chỉ email: ding.ngo@tnus.edu.vn

<https://doi.org/10.51453/2354-1431/2023/989>

Thông tin bài viết	Tóm tắt
Ngày nhận bài: 06/6/2023 Ngày sửa bài: 12/7/2023 Ngày duyệt đăng: 12/10/2023	Mục tiêu của bài báo này là đánh giá hiệu quả của hoạt động truyền thông marketing trong tuyển sinh đại học chính quy của Trường Đại học Khoa học - Đại học Thái Nguyên thông qua việc phân tích dữ liệu khảo sát, lấy ý kiến đánh giá của chính các sinh viên đã đăng ký vào học tại cơ sở giáo dục này. Từ những phân tích, đánh giá đó, chúng tôi đưa ra năm giải pháp căn cốt nhằm nâng cao hiệu quả của hoạt động truyền thông marketing trong tuyển sinh đối với các cơ sở giáo dục đại học ở Việt Nam.
Từ khóa <i>Truyền thông marketing, tuyển sinh đại học, Kênh truyền thông.</i>	

1. Introduction

Marketing communication is “activities of indirectly or directly transmitting information about products and businesses to customers in order to persuade them to trust and buy the product” [3]. Marketing communication in undergraduate enrollment is understood as activities that indirectly or directly transmit information about training services and training facilities to parents, students, and people who are in need of studying at universities to convince them to understand and trust the educational institution as well as its training services and choose to register for admission to that educational institution. The basic content of marketing communications in university admission of higher education institutions includes identifying target audiences, determining communication goals, designing communication messages, selecting

channels and marketing communication media, selecting communication tools, determining marketing communication budget, implementing, evaluating and controlling marketing communication activities [4, 1].

In Vietnam, there are currently 243 higher education institutions. Higher education institutions are deeply aware that, marketing communication plays an important and necessary role in promoting the image of the institution in general as well as student recruitment, in particular [2].

University of Sciences is a member unit of Thai Nguyen University - one of three regional universities in Vietnam. The campus of the University of Sciences is located in Thai Nguyen City, one of the centers of the Northern midlands and mountains of Vietnam. The University of Sciences was established in 2008

on the basis of upgrading from the Faculty of Natural and Social Sciences. Currently, the University of Sciences trains undergraduate, master's, and doctoral degrees in many different fields, such as Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry, Journalism, Management Science, Law, Social Work, Tourism, English Language, Chinese Studies, Korean Studies, ... In recent years, the University of Sciences has had many successes in training as well as scientific research.

TNU - University of Sciences enrolls students nationwide. However, the main enrollment area is the Northern provinces and the majority of students come from the midland and mountainous provinces of Northern Vietnam. Like other Vietnamese universities, marketing communication for regular university admission is given special importance by the University of Sciences. In recent years, marketing communication activities in regular university admission at the University of Sciences have been carried out on many channels and media admissions, such as flyers, social networks, newspapers, and direct consultations, ... [5, 8]. These are also the main channels and media of universities in Vietnam.

The goal of this article is to evaluate the effectiveness of marketing communication activities in regular university admissions at the University of Sciences through analyzing survey data of admitted and enrolled students who enrolled at this institution for the two recent school years. By describing and comparing the data obtained, the article gives us an overview of the effectiveness of channels and media in current regular university admission. This research provides universities in Vietnam in general and universities in the Northern region of Vietnam in particular with good information to build better strategies for marketing communication activities in regular university enrollment. The research content is presented in three parts: firstly, the current status of the use of media channels and media in regular university admission at the University of Sciences in the last two academic years; secondly, the method used to evaluate the effectiveness of communication activities on the mentioned channels and media; and finally, the results obtained through the research process.

2. Marketing communication activities in student recruitment of TNU - University of Sciences

As mentioned above, in recent years, the main channels and media that the University of Sciences has used in regular university admission are flyers, social networks, newspapers, online or direct consulting, etc. Specifically, in the 2020-2021 school year, marketing communication activities in enrollment were mainly carried out by the school in the first half of 2021 when the situation of the Covid-19 epidemic in Vietnam was complicated. At that time, the University of Sciences mainly carried out communication through indirect channels, such as sending admission notices and flyers to high schools in the Northern region; conducting online consulting sessions on Facebook; post enrollment information introducing training majors on the website and electronic newspapers; In particular, the institution has focused mainly on implementing advertising campaigns for enrollment information, its images, and introducing training majors on Facebook [6]. In the 2021-2022 school year, the University of Sciences' enrollment communication plan has a number of changes to suit the new situation when the Covid-19 epidemic in Vietnam has basically been controlled. In early 2022, in addition to indirect communication activities, the university organized many admission consulting teams to conduct direct consulting for 12th grade students at high schools in the Northern provinces [9].

In addition to implementing communication channels, the University of Sciences always maintains a hotline with staff on duty to answer and advise regularly. The institution also develops many policies to attract and support students when they enroll and register to study, such as granting full scholarships, partial scholarships, and free dormitories.

After receiving the admission results of the candidates, the University of Sciences established support departments to welcome students to the school to enroll and register for study. In a complicated epidemic situation, students can enroll online.

3. Research methods

To evaluate the effectiveness of marketing communication activities in regular university admission at the University of Sciences, we conducted two surveys on the opinions of the candidates who had registered for admission and registered to study

at this university in 2021 and 2022 (See Table 1). In the first round, we conducted a survey of the opinions of 814 full-time students who enrolled in 2021, and in the second round, we conducted a survey of 989 full-time students who enrolled in 2022. In the first survey round, we received responses from 446 students, corresponding to about 54.8% [7]. In the second round, we received responses from 705 students,

corresponding to about 71.3% [10] (See Table 2}). From the survey data obtained, we analyze, compare and evaluate the effectiveness of communication activities that the institution has implemented in regular university admission. From these analyses and assessments, we provide solutions to improve the effectiveness of marketing communication activities in recruiting students at higher education institutions.

Table 1. Data surveys

Surveys	Population	Time/duration
Survey 1	Full-time university students enrolling in 2021	15-22/2/2022
Survey 2	Full-time university students enrolling in 2022	31/10-04/11/2022

Table 2. Number of students surveyed and response rate

Surveys	Population	Response	No response
Survey 1	814	446 (54,8%)	368 (45,2%)
Survey 2	989	705 (71,3%)	284 (28,7%)

4. Research results

4.1. Effectiveness of communication channels

To evaluate the effectiveness of admission communication channels, we asked students to indicate which of the information channels they learned about the admission information of the University of Sciences: introduced by acquaintances; through the university’s admission information flyers; through television channels and electronic newspapers; via Facebook and the institution’s website; or through direct consultation. Those surveyed were also asked to evaluate which information channels would be most effective. The results of student responses are shown in Table 3 and Table 4. Through this result, we see that the majority of students access admission information through Facebook and the institution’s website (1st round is 51.79%, 2nd round is 48,94%). The number of students who know the institution’s admission information through acquaintances is also very large (1st round is 21.52%, 2nd round is 37.16%). In this survey results, we also see that, due to the complicated epidemic situation in 2021, the university’s implementation of direct consultations is limited, so students mainly access the school enrollment information through indirect channels such as electronic newspapers, television,

Facebook and websites. In 2022, when the epidemic is basically under control, flyer distribution and direct consulting activities will be deployed more by the institution, so the proportion of students accessing admission information through these channels will also increase significantly.

When asked to evaluate the effectiveness of enrollment information communication channels, the majority of students said that the most effective information channels are through Facebook and the institution’s website, followed by direct consultation. Obviously, with the development of the internet environment, accessing information through social networking and electronic information sites has become easy. Besides, learners also need direct, specific advice to learn more clearly as well as to receive more specific advice. Due to the epidemic situation, the 2021 survey results show that a large number (26.91%) of students highly appreciate communication channels through electronic newspapers and television. However, the survey results with students enrolling in 2022 have completely changed, accounting for only 1.84%. Most students believe that communicating information through admission flyers is not the most effective.

Table 3. Effectiveness of communication channels in 2021

	Introduced by acquaintances	Flyers	Electronic newspapers, television	Facebook, websites	Direct consultation
Through which channels did you mainly learn about the institution's admission information?	21,52%	1,35%	21,8%	51,79%	4,26%
Which of the institution's admissions communication channels do you consider to be the most effective?	10,09%	2,24%	26,91%	32,96%	27,80%

Table 4. Effectiveness of communication channels in 2022

	Introduced by acquaintances	Flyers	Electronic newspapers, television	Facebook, websites	Direct consultation
Through which channels did you mainly learn about the institution's admission information?	37,16%	4,68%	1,56%	48,94%	7,66%
Which of the institution's admissions communication channels do you consider to be the most effective?	18,16%	5,96%	1,84%	45,25%	28,79%

4.2. Effectiveness of information about majors and information about institution

To evaluate the effectiveness of marketing communication content in recruiting students, we asked students who participated in the survey about the reasons they chose their major and the reasons they chose to study at TNU - University of Sciences. The feedback results of students participating in the survey on the reasons for choosing the major are shown in Table 5. Most of them choose a major based on their personal interests and job opportunities after graduation. Besides, the benchmark scores of previous years are also something that students are interested

in. The detailed content about the goals of the training program as well as the ability to study at a higher level is not of interest to many students when they enroll.

Regarding information about institutions, the response results are quite different between the two surveys (see Table 6). One of the results of high and stable selection in both surveys is that students choose the institution because of their favorite major. The university's reputation for training and scientific research is also a reason. Next is the institution's tuition fee. The remaining information such as teaching staff, facilities, incentives or benchmarks are not the reasons that many people choose.

Table 5. Reasons why students choose majors

Reasons why students choose majors	Survey 1	Survey 2
The major meets the labor market and makes it easy to find a job after graduation	30,94%	36,03%
The courses are designed with clear goals	4,93%	4,40%
The major has the ability to transfer to a higher level of education	10,76%	1,13%
The major has reasonable benchmark scores	34,08%	5,67%
Because loving the field of study	46,19%	40,99%

Table 6. Reasons why students choose TNU - University of Sciences

Reasons why students choose TNU - University of Sciences	Survey 1	Survey 2
The institution’s reputation in training and scientific research	53,36%	17,16%
Good facilities, ensuring training quality	4,93%	5,96%
Having a favorite major	33,18%	27,23%
Reasonable tuition fees	29,60%	13,05%
Many incentives for students	46,86%	3,55%
Clear information	17,04%	4,26%
Highly qualified lecturers	11,66%	6,10%
Reasonable benchmark scores	28,70%	8,51%

4.3. Solutions to improve the effectiveness of marketing communication activities in student recruitment

Through the results of research, analysis and evaluation of marketing communication activities in regular university admission at the University of Sciences - Thai Nguyen University, we propose the following five fundamental solutions to improve the effectiveness of marketing communication activities in student recruitment at universities in Vietnam.

Firstly, building a clear communication plan. At the beginning of each school year, institutions need to clearly analyze the situation, the general context of the country and the region, its strengths and weaknesses and the main competing establishments. From that analysis, the institution builds a detailed communication plan, which clearly defines the target audience; the communication goal; what needs to be the highlight in communication messages; communication strategy stages during the year; which communication channels to choose; which channels are the main ones; budget; human resources. Preparing a detailed plan for communication activities will help educational institutions proactively control this activity to be implemented in a consistent manner and will be an important factor in making this activity effective.

Secondly, choosing communication channels. Depending on the general situation of society, educational institutions need to choose communication channels which are appropriate to the situation and each communication stage. In the era of industry 4.0, increasing the use of social networks in communication

is inevitable. However, educational institutions need to clearly research the communication methods on each social networking platform, and the trend of using social networks of each target audience. In addition to communication on the internet platform, educational institutions also need to flexibly deploy traditional communication activities such as distributing flyers, participating or organizing face-to-face consultation sessions. These traditional communication activities will help increase society’s trust in educational institutions. Communication channels will complement each other during implementation. Educational institutions need to implement flexible coordination strategies at each specific time so that communication channels are mostly effective.

Thirdly, building and designing clear, identifiable and focused communication messages. The content of the educational institution’s communication messages needs to be designed in a consistent manner to create its own identity, while also helping interested people easily access the information. Communication content for majors needs to focus mainly on factors that learners are interested in, such as what are industry trends? What are the job opportunities after graduation? What are the main strengths of the educational institution for the major? Educational institutions also need to design content that focuses on image and branding to increase their reputation.

Fourthly, regularly control communication activities. When implementing marketing communication activities in enrollment, educational institutions need to regularly check and control the effectiveness of

each stage to make timely adjustments. Especially for each specific period, educational institutions need to evaluate and analyze the impact of marketing communication activities on enrollment, on their image and brand. From evaluating implementation practices, institutions need to adjust the communication plan to improve the effectiveness of this activity. However, educational institutions also need to pay attention to accurate assessment, including the delay of impacts, and avoid making too many adjustments to the initially determined implementation strategy.

Finally, at the end of each enrollment year, educational institutions need to conduct an overall assessment of the effectiveness of marketing communication activities to learn from experience and have better directions for this activity for next years. This is very important to improve the long-term effectiveness of marketing communications activities. Educational institutions need to conduct surveys and get extensive opinions from relevant parties to be able to accurately and objectively evaluate the effectiveness of this activity. Only by seriously summarizing, evaluating, and drawing experience, can the effectiveness of marketing activities be increasingly improved.

5. Conclusion

Marketing communication activities in enrollment are an essential activity of universities. This activity not only helps institutions improve the efficiency of enrollment, but more importantly, it helps institutions bring their information and images to society and to learners, thereby enhancing their position. This activity also helps learners have better access to information about educational institutions to make suitable choices for themselves when enrolling in university. At the same time, this activity also helps society better monitor the training work of educational institutions.

Through data analysis, we surveyed students who have registered for full-time university study at the University of Sciences of Thai Nguyen University - one of the multi-disciplinary and multi-field training universities in the Northern midlands and mountainous areas. We have made assessments on the effectiveness of marketing communication activities in recruiting students and proposed fundamental solutions to improve the effectiveness of this activity in higher education institutions in Vietnam.

Acknowledgments

This author's research is sponsored by TNU - University of Sciences through research project code CS2023-TN06-26.

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