


# Chapter 6

## Digitalization and the Globalization of Education: How Social Media and Websites Guide International Students in the Digital Era

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### ABSTRACT

*Globalization and digitalization have transformed how higher education institutions interact with potential students, particularly through social media. Prospective students face various challenges; hence, accurate, reliable information is essential to address these complexities. Students use university websites and social media as sources when researching study-abroad options. However, preferences differ across regions, highlighting the need for tailored digital strategies. Hence, understanding how social media and websites influence international students to study abroad is crucial. Higher education institutions use social media for digital marketing, enabling direct engagement and quick responses to student queries. By leveraging social media, institutions expand their reach, enhance visibility, and attract students globally. While the study emphasizes the transformative potential of social media, it primarily focuses on its role in marketing and decision-making processes, leaving room for further exploration of long-term outcomes and cultural nuances in student preferences.*

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## 1.0 DIGITALIZATION

Digitalization entails the integration of digital technologies which shifts the functioning of systems and processes. Such transformation has an effect on business, healthcare, and education sectors, among others, resulting in improved efficacy. In the 21st century, digitalization has become a cornerstone for the growth of society and innovation, hence changing the traditional methods and ways across all industries.

The introduction of computers and the internet marked the beginning of the digitalization process, which opened up opportunities for the automation of processes and the expansion of global connectivity. Over the decades, this has evolved into mobile technologies, cloud computing, and artificial intelligence, thereby contributing to the development of a digitally interconnected world. The COVID-19 pandemic served as a catalyst, speeding digital transformation across institutions worldwide and pushing industries and institutions to adopt digital solutions as quickly as possible (Bond et al., 2018). This transformation continues to evolve, influencing every aspect of modern life. Hence, this chapter aims to elucidate how digital transformation especially social media and websites influence international students studying in developing countries in this digital era.

## 2.0 DIGITALIZATION AND HIGHER EDUCATION

Education has been the key to rapid human and nation development. In this digitalization era, the acceptance of technology in higher education has undergone substantial transformation, transitioning from basic adoption of fundamental technologies to the integration of technology in its entirety. Today, higher education institutions (HEIs) worldwide have embraced digital platforms towards enhancing learning, teaching, and administration. Within the context of the 21st century, the learning and teaching process in higher education institutions have undergone a significant alteration as a result of digitalization. The implementation of this process not only includes the use of digital technology in the learning process but also fundamental changes in the way higher education institutions operate and provide educational services to students. Higher education institutions have evolved from the adopting simple technologies to embracing comprehensive technologies; an evolution that occurred throughout time (García-Morales et al., 2021).

In general, the process of digital transformation among higher education institutions in developed nations is relatively easier than that in developing countries. This is because these nations have more advanced infrastructure and facilitating policies. The implementation of digitalization in these countries is accelerated by their robust infrastructure, supportive educational policies, and facilitating regulations in higher education (Andi Kambau, 2024). However, the wide gap in digital infrastructure between the West and the East, the uneven quality of human resources, and the lack of government policy support including the unfair budgeting of higher education costs, are among the challenges faced by higher education in developing countries. For this reason, it takes time and a step-by-step process to equalize education, especially higher education in developing countries (Purwanto et al., 2024). For example, compared to higher education institution in developing countries such as Indonesia, those in the Western region demonstrate greater ease in implementing digital transformation. Akbari and Pratomo (2022) attributed this to the institutions' infrastructural readiness and human resource proficiency.

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