

The Influence of Social Media Marketing Features on Purchase Decisions in Education Services

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Abstract

The present research examines the impact of various social media marketing features, including interactivity, entertainment, perceived relevance, and informativeness, on consumer purchasing decisions in the educational service sector. The present study is anchored in the theoretical framework of consumer behaviour theory. A quantitative research design was employed, utilising a structured questionnaire administered to 100 high school students who actively utilise social media and have participated in educational programmes at the Brain Academy Centre in Semarang. Multiple linear regression analysis was performed using SPSS software. The findings suggest that perceived relevance ($\beta = 0.220$, $p = 0.027$) and informativeness ($\beta = 0.280$, $p = 0.001$) exert a statistically significant positive influence on purchase decisions, accounting for 44.6% of the variance ($R^2 = 0.446$). Conversely, interactivity and entertainment did not demonstrate significant effects. These findings contribute to the extant literature on social media marketing for intangible services and emphasise the practical importance of aligning content with consumers' informational needs. It is recommended that future research extend this analysis across a range of other social media platforms and demographic groups. This would allow for the validation and expansion of the insights derived from this analysis.

Keywords: Social Media Marketing; Purchase Decision; Educational Services, Consumer Behavior.

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INTRODUCTION

The swift evolution of digital technologies has established social media as a central platform for interaction and everyday life, shaping human behavior in diverse spheres that range from education and entertainment to consumption patterns and commercial activities. Within this dynamic environment, the strategic deployment of social media marketing has become indispensable for organizations that seek to strengthen relationships with consumers, stimulate active engagement, and transform digital interactions into tangible purchasing decisions through persuasive messages and interactive features. A considerable volume of scholarly inquiry has concentrated on the strategies adopted by firms in product-oriented industries such as food and beverages, automotive, and luxury goods (Alalwan, 2018; Hermawan et al., 2024). Yet, investigations into the strategic role of social media marketing within service sectors, and particularly within the field of education, remain relatively underexplored despite its escalating importance in shaping competitive advantage.

The service sector constitutes a cornerstone of Indonesia's economic expansion, contributing substantially to national output, generating employment opportunities, and playing a crucial role in alleviating poverty. Statistical reports reveal that the sector's gross domestic product reached approximately IDR 50,861.80 trillion in the final quarter of 2024, reflecting an increase from IDR 49,690.00 trillion in the preceding quarter and thereby affirming its central role in national development (Trading Economics, 2024). Despite its growing economic significance, service providers, including institutions in the education industry, continue to face considerable challenges in securing and sustaining market share. These challenges stem from the inherently intangible character of services, which frequently creates information asymmetry and amplifies perceptions of risk among prospective consumers.

Brain Academy Center, which has operated under the management of Ruangguru since 2019, combines conventional classroom-based instruction with digital learning support offered through the Ruangguru platform. Although the institution delivers competitive educational programs and introduces innovative learning facilities, its market presence remains limited when compared to more established competitors, representing only 1.8 percent according to the 2025 Top Brand Award survey. Enrollment trends at the Brain Academy Center Pandanaran Semarang further highlight this challenge, as a downward trajectory was recorded in both 2024 and 2025. These conditions have raised concerns among managerial stakeholders regarding the center's capacity to sustain long-term growth in an increasingly competitive educational landscape.

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To confront these challenges, social media marketing emerges as a vital strategic instrument for strengthening consumer engagement, articulating the value of educational services, and shaping behavioral intentions within the sector. The incorporation of e-commerce features into social networking platforms, commonly referred to as social commerce, is projected to expand globally by 82.85 percent between 2024 and 2028, highlighting the vast opportunities available for educational institutions to connect with prospective students through digital channels (Statista, 2024). Through the dissemination of interactive, informative, relevant, and entertaining content, providers of educational services can narrow information asymmetries, cultivate trust, and ultimately improve decision-making among potential consumers.

Although existing scholarship provides compelling evidence regarding the effectiveness of social media marketing in shaping consumer responses within markets for tangible products, its application to intangible services, particularly within the educational domain, has received relatively limited attention. Previous studies by Hanaysha (2022) and Alalwan (2018) emphasize that features such as interactivity, perceived relevance, informativeness, and entertainment possess significant potential to influence purchase intentions and shape brand attitudes. Nevertheless, the extent to which these attributes translate into actual purchasing decisions in the educational services sector remains insufficiently established and calls for more rigorous empirical validation.

This research seeks to address the identified gap by examining how four fundamental features of social media marketing, namely interactivity, entertainment, perceived relevance, and informativeness, influence consumer decision-making in the educational service sector. The empirical scope of the study is concentrated on high school students enrolled at the Brain Academy Center in Pandanaran Semarang, which provides a contextually appropriate setting for analysis. The findings are expected to make a substantive contribution to theoretical advancement by extending discussions of social media marketing into the field of educational services, while at the same time offering practical insights that can inform the design of more effective digital marketing strategies in emerging market contexts.

LITERATUR REVIEW

Consumer Behavior Theory

The field of consumer behavior examines how individuals and groups engage in the processes of selecting, acquiring, using, and evaluating products or services to satisfy

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their needs and preferences (Schiffman & Wisenblit, 2019; Sulistiyani et al., 2024). This theoretical perspective underscores that purchasing behavior is not determined solely by rational considerations but is also shaped by consumers' lived experiences, subjective perceptions, and socially embedded values. The consumer behavior framework proposed by El Gozmir et al. (2024) illustrates how external stimuli, including promotional activities, interact with internal psychological mechanisms to form attitudes that eventually drive purchasing choices. This conceptualization holds particular significance for the education sector, where the intangible nature of services elevates the importance of reputation and highlights the role of social media as a channel for shaping favorable perceptions among prospective students.

Purchase Decision

The purchasing process can be understood as a sequence of stages that begins with the recognition of needs, continues with the search for information, proceeds to the comparative evaluation of available alternatives, and culminates in the selection of the product or service considered most suitable (Aqila et al., 2023). Consumer decisions are influenced not only by rational assessments but also by previous experiences, perceived quality, and the reputation of service providers. In the context of educational services, a greater level of trust is required from consumers because the quality of the service cannot be directly verified prior to its consumption. As a result, communication strategies delivered through social media become essential in reducing uncertainty and mitigating perceived risks (Salem, 2018).

Interactivity

Interactivity constitutes a central attribute of digital platforms, reflecting their capacity to enable responsive and open communication between users and service providers. Mechanisms that allow audiences to pose questions, provide feedback, and participate in direct exchanges cultivate a sense of recognition and reinforce emotional attachment. When such two-way communication is effectively facilitated, consumers are more likely to develop trust in educational services, which in turn enhances the probability of advancing to actual purchase decisions (Chung & Chang, 2019; De Vries et al., 2012; Jan et al., 2020; Jiang et al., 2024; Kiouis, 2002; Kuo & Chen, 2023; Zafar et al., 2021).

H1: Interactivity within social media marketing has a significant positive effect on consumer purchase decisions.



Entertainment

Entertainment represents the extent to which consumers experience enjoyment and positive emotions when engaging with promotional content on social media platforms. Content designed to entertain not only creates a sense of comfort and relaxation but also fosters a stronger connection between audiences and service providers. These pleasurable experiences diminish resistance toward persuasive messages and simultaneously strengthen consumers' willingness to proceed with service purchases (Cheung et al., 2021; Pertierra, 2021; Sheth & Kim, 2017; Zia et al., 2022).

H2: Entertainment in social media marketing exerts a significant positive effect on consumer purchase decisions.

Perceived Relevance

Perceived relevance refers to the degree to which marketing content resonates with the specific needs, interests, and expectations of its intended audience. When consumers find promotional messages aligned with their personal goals, the content is more likely to capture attention, foster a sense of affinity, and build trust toward the service provider. Empirical studies have shown that the perception of relevance increases consumers' propensity to engage in purchasing behavior, as the message is viewed as congruent with their priorities and decision-making processes (Chen et al., 2023; Zhu & Chang, 2016).

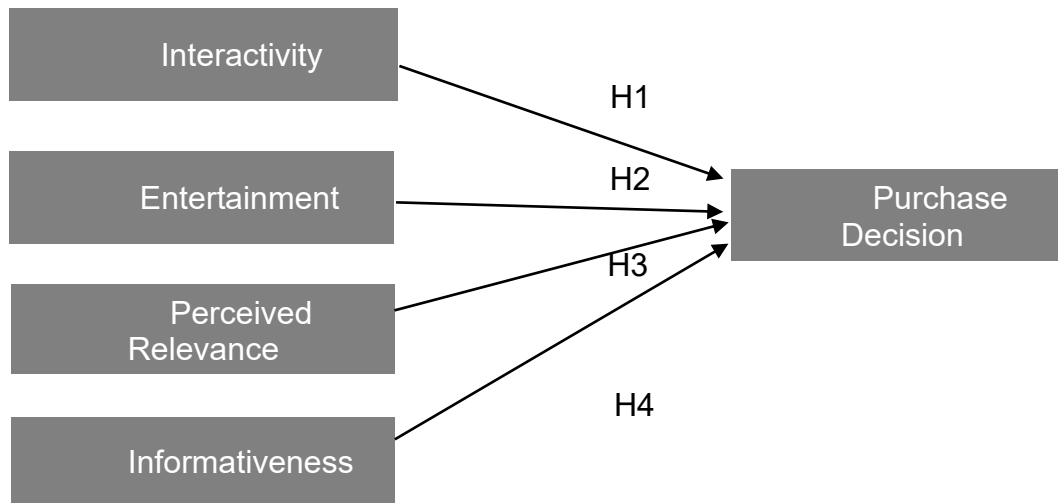
H3: Perceived relevance in social media marketing has a significant positive effect on consumer purchase decisions.

Informativeness

Informativeness reflects the extent to which marketing content delivers accurate, clear, and readily accessible information that assists consumers in making well-informed decisions. The availability of reliable information reduces uncertainty, facilitates the evaluation of alternatives, and strengthens confidence in choosing educational services. Prior research has demonstrated that informative content not only shapes favorable perceptions of service quality but also enhances consumers' willingness to proceed with purchase decisions (Alalwan, 2018; Chen et al., 2023; Gkikas et al., 2022; Kitsios et al., 2022; Lee & Hong, 2016; Sheth & Kim, 2017; Wang et al., 2019).

H4: Informativeness in social media marketing exerts a significant positive effect on consumer purchase decisions.





Source: Hanaysha (2022)

Figure 1: Theoretical Framework

METHODOLOGY

Research Variables

This study designates purchase decision as the dependent variable, representing the final outcome of consumer evaluation and choice behavior. The independent variables comprise four principal dimensions of social media marketing, which include interactivity, entertainment, perceived relevance, and informativeness. These variables are selected based on their theoretical relevance and empirical support in prior literature, reflecting their potential to influence consumer decision-making within the context of educational services.

The Population and Sample

The population of this study consists of senior high school students enrolled in learning programs at Brain Academy Center Pandanaran Semarang who are also active users of social media. The sample was determined through purposive sampling, in which respondents were selected according to predetermined criteria aligned with the research objectives. The inclusion criteria required participants to be high school students who had utilized social media to obtain information regarding educational services and had interacted with the content disseminated by Brain Academy Center.

The determination of the sample size referred to the table developed by Isaac and Michael with a significance level of 0.05. Based on the target population of 130 students, the minimum sample size recommended was 97 respondents. To satisfy this requirement and to minimize the possibility of invalid responses, the present study employed a sample of 100 students.

Data Categories and Sources

This study adopted a quantitative approach by utilizing both primary and secondary sources of data relevant to the research objectives. Primary data were derived from questionnaires administered to respondents who fulfilled the established sampling criteria. Secondary data were gathered from scholarly journals, academic books, institutional reports, and official documents that discuss social media marketing practices and purchasing decisions within the educational service sector.

Data Collection Method

Data for this study were obtained through a structured questionnaire consisting of closed-ended items measured on a five-point Likert scale, with response options ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The questionnaire items were developed by adapting indicators from prior studies and were subjected to content validity assessment as well as preliminary reliability testing to ensure measurement accuracy. The data collection process was conducted over a one-month period through direct distribution at the designated research site.

Data Analysis Method

The influence of the independent variables on the dependent variable was analyzed using multiple linear regression, with SPSS version 26 employed as the primary statistical tool. The validity of the instrument was assessed through Pearson Product-Moment correlation, while internal consistency was evaluated using Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient. To ensure the robustness of the regression model, classical assumption tests were performed, including assessments of normality, multicollinearity, and heteroscedasticity. Hypotheses were tested using the t-test to evaluate the significance of individual predictors, and the coefficient of determination (R^2) was applied to determine the extent to which the independent variables explained the variance in purchase decisions.



RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

General Description of Respondents

The descriptive analysis of the questionnaire data provides an overview of the demographic characteristics of the respondents. Table 1 illustrates the distribution of respondents by gender. Out of the 100 participants, 33 percent were male and 67 percent were female. These results indicate that female students represented a larger proportion of the sample, suggesting that women may have been more responsive to participation in this study.

Table 1. Distribution of Respondents by Gender

Gender	Frequency	%
Male	33	33%
Female	67	67%
Total	100	100%

Source: Author's elaboration based on primary data (2025)

Grade Level of Respondents

Table 2 presents the distribution of respondents by grade level. The data show that 12 percent of the participants were in grade X, 20 percent were in grade XI, and the remaining 68 percent were in grade XII. This pattern suggests that most respondents were in their final year of high school, which may indicate stronger involvement in evaluating and considering educational services at this stage.

Table 2. Distribution of Respondents by Grade Level

Grade	Frequency	%
X	12	12%
XI	20	20%
XII	68	68%
Total	100	100%

Source: Author's elaboration based on primary data (2025)



Duration of Enrollment

As presented in Table 3, the respondents' distribution is categorized according to the length of their enrollment at Brain Academy Center Pandanaran Semarang. The results show that 4 percent of participants had been enrolled for less than one month, 30 percent for one to six months, 40 percent for six to twelve months, and 26 percent for more than one year. This pattern suggests that most respondents had acquired adequate experience with the institution's educational services, thereby strengthening the validity and credibility of their responses.

Table 3. Distribution of Respondents by Duration of Enrollment

Duration of Enrollment	Frequency	%
< 1 month	4	4%
1–6 months	30	30%
6–12 months	40	40%
> 12 months	26	26%
Total	100	100%

Source: Author's elaboration based on primary data (2025)

Instrument Testing

Table 4 reports the results of the validity and reliability assessments for each construct and its associated indicators. The validity of the measurement items was examined using Pearson's Product-Moment correlation, while the reliability of the instrument was evaluated through Cronbach's Alpha coefficients. These procedures were applied to ensure that the research instrument demonstrated both accuracy and internal consistency before hypothesis testing.



Table 4 Summary of Validity and Reliability Testing

Results of Validity and Reliability Testing			
Variable	Indicator	r-calculated	Cronbach's Alpha
Interactivity (X1)	INT 1	0,787	0,714
	INT 2	0,735	
	INT 3	0,747	
	INT 4	0,666	
Entertainment (X2)	ENT 1	0,714	0,793
	ENT 2	0,832	
	ENT 3	0,842	
	ENT 4	0,756	
Perceived Relavance (X3)	PR 1	0,841	0,894
	PR 2	0,889	
	PR 3	0,828	
	PR 4	0,854	
	PR 5	0,791	
Informativness (X4)	INF 1	0,830	0,885
	INF 2	0,832	
	INF 3	0,824	
	INF 4	0,842	
	INF 5	0,819	
Purchase Decision (Y)	PD 1	0,737	0,720
	PD 2	0,772	
	PD 3	0,594	
	PD 4	0,683	
	PD 5	0,681	

Source: Researcher's own calculation using primary data (2025)

As shown in Table 4, all indicators fulfilled the validity requirements, with correlation coefficients exceeding the r-table threshold of 0.195. The reliability of each construct was likewise confirmed, as Cronbach's Alpha values ranged between 0.714 and 0.894, surpassing the minimum recommended threshold of 0.70 (Ghozali, 2011). These results provide evidence that the measurement instruments employed in this study are



both valid and reliable, thereby ensuring accuracy and internal consistency in capturing the intended research constructs.

Classical Assumption Tests

Table 5. Summary of Classical Assumption Tests

Test of Normality	Test of Multicollinearity	Test of Heteroscedasticity
Data distribution shows a normal pattern	No indication of multicollinearity among predictors	Residual variance is homogeneous

Source: Researcher's own calculation using primary data (2025)

Normality Test

The residual normality test was conducted using the Kolmogorov–Smirnov method, which produced a probability value of 0.200. Since this value exceeds the conventional significance level of 0.05, the null hypothesis of normally distributed residuals cannot be rejected. These results confirm that the assumption of normality is satisfied, thereby allowing the regression model to proceed with valid parametric analysis.

Multicollinearity Test

The evaluation of multicollinearity showed that all independent variables exhibited tolerance values above 0.10 and Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) scores below the critical threshold of 10. This evidence demonstrates the absence of problematic intercorrelations among the predictors, indicating that the assumption of independence across explanatory variables is met. Accordingly, the regression model is free from multicollinearity issues and is suitable for further statistical interpretation.

Heteroscedasticity Test

The Glejser test was employed to examine heteroscedasticity, and the results indicated that the significance values for all independent variables were greater than 0.05. This finding suggests homogeneity of residual variances, thereby confirming that the regression model satisfies the assumption of homoscedasticity.



Empirical Explanation of Statistical Model Outputs

Multiple Linear Regression Analysis

Regression analysis constitutes a fundamental analytical technique employed to forecast future demand patterns based on historical data and to examine the extent to which multiple independent variables collectively influence a dependent variable. Within the framework of simple linear regression, the general functional form can be expressed as:

$$Y = a + b_1X_1 + b_2X_2 + b_3X_3 + e$$

Where Y denotes the dependent variable, aaa represents the constant, b_1, b_2, b_3 are the regression coefficients, X_1, X_2, X_3 are the independent variables, and e refers to the error term. The empirical results of the multiple linear regression estimation are summarized in the subsequent table, and the corresponding regression equation is formulated as follows:

Table 6. Results of t-test Analysis

Coefficients ^a						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.493	.306		4.879	.000
	Interactivity	.066	.091	.074	.732	.466
	Entertainment	.060	.089	.071	.669	.505
	Perceived Relevance	.220	.098	.267	2.249	.027
	Informativeness	.280	.085	.359	3.290	.001
a. Dependent Variable: Purchase Decision						

Source: Processed from primary data collected by the researcher (2025)

$$Y = 1,493 + 0,066X_1 + 0,060X_2 + 0,220X_3 + 0,280X_4 + e$$

Interpretation of the Regression Equation

- The constant value (1.493) indicates that when all independent variables, namely interactivity, entertainment, perceived relevance, and informativeness, are assumed to be zero or held constant, the baseline level of purchase decision at Brain Academy Center Pandanaran Semarang is 1.493 units.



- b. The regression coefficient for interactivity (0.066) suggests that for every one-unit increase in interactivity, the purchase decision is expected to rise by 0.066 units, provided that all other variables remain unchanged. This implies that interactivity contributes positively, albeit modestly, to students' decision-making behavior.
- c. The regression coefficient for entertainment (0.060) demonstrates that a one-unit improvement in entertainment leads to an increase of 0.060 units in purchase decision, assuming the influence of other variables is held constant. Although the effect is relatively small, the direction remains positive, indicating that engaging and enjoyable content may enhance student interest.
- d. The regression coefficient for perceived relevance (0.220) shows that a one-unit increase in the relevance of marketing content results in a 0.220 unit increase in purchase decision, while other factors are constant. This underscores the importance of aligning marketing messages with the needs and expectations of the target audience.
- e. The regression coefficient for informativeness (0.280) signifies that a one-unit increase in the informativeness of social media marketing content leads to a 0.280 unit increase in purchase decision, assuming other variables remain unchanged. Among the four predictors, informativeness exerts the strongest positive influence, highlighting the critical role of accurate and transparent information in reducing uncertainty and fostering trust in educational services.

Partial Analysis (t-test)

Hypothesis 1

The statistical examination reveals that the interactivity variable generated a t-value of 0.732, which falls below the reference t-table threshold of 0.195, with a probability value of 0.466, exceeding the conventional 0.05 benchmark. These findings indicate that interactivity does not produce a measurable influence on students' purchase decisions at Brain Academy Center. Accordingly, the first hypothesis is not supported by empirical evidence.

Hypothesis 2

The analysis of the entertainment variable produced a t-statistic of 0.669, which remains under the critical t-table value of 0.195, with a significance probability of 0.505 (> 0.05). This outcome implies that entertainment fails to exert a significant effect on



purchase decision-making in the present context, thereby leading to the rejection of the second hypothesis.

Hypothesis 3

The results demonstrate that the perceived relevance variable attained a t-statistic of 2.249, which exceeds the critical threshold of 0.195, accompanied by a significance probability of 0.027 (< 0.05). This statistical evidence substantiates the notion that the perceived relevance of marketing messages positively and significantly contributes to students' purchase decisions. Thus, the third hypothesis is empirically supported within the scope of this study.

Hypothesis 4

As reported in Table 7, the informativeness variable recorded a regression coefficient of 0.280 with a significance level of 0.001, far below the 0.05 criterion. These results provide strong empirical justification that informative social media content plays a decisive role in shaping consumer purchase decisions in the educational services context. Consequently, the fourth hypothesis is validated.

Simultaneous Significance Testing (F-test)

Table 7. Results of the ANOVA (F-Test)

ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	<i>Regression</i>	12.781	4	3.195	19.109	.000 ^b
	<i>Residual</i>	15.885	95	.167		
	<i>Total</i>	28.666	99			
a. Dependent Variable: Purchase Decision						
b. Predictors: (Constant), <i>Informativeness</i> , <i>Interactivity</i> , <i>Entertainment</i> , <i>Perceived Relevance</i>						

Source: Processed from primary data collected by the researcher (2025)

The findings presented in Table 6 reveal that the F-calculated value of 19.109 is considerably higher than its critical benchmark of 2.467, with a significance probability of



0.000. This strongly affirms the empirical validity of the proposed regression specification and demonstrates that the independent variables, taken in concert, exert a decisive influence on purchase decision behavior

Results of the Determination Coefficient Analysis

Table 8. Analysis of R-Squared Results

Model Summary^b				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.668 ^a	.446	.423	.40891
a. Predictors: (Constant), <i>Informativeness</i> , <i>Interactivity</i> , <i>Entertainment</i> , <i>Perceived Relevance</i>				
b. Dependent Variable: Purchase Decision				

Source: Processed from primary data collected by the researcher (2025)

The estimation results in Table 8 reveal an Adjusted R Square statistic of 0.423, which confirms that nearly 42.3% of the variance in purchase decision outcomes is explained by the four predictors central to social media marketing strategies. The unexplained 57.7% variance underscores the presence of additional contextual variables not examined in this study, thereby pointing toward potential avenues for future research in the educational service domain.

CONCLUSION

The primary objective of this investigation was to evaluate the direct influence of strategic social media marketing attributes on purchase decisions for educational services at Brain Academy Center Pandanaran, Semarang. The independent constructs analyzed comprised interactivity, entertainment, perceived relevance, and informativeness, while purchase decision served as the dependent construct. Data collection was undertaken through the administration of structured questionnaires to 100 purposively selected respondents, and subsequent analysis was conducted using SPSS to examine the hypothesized relationships within the proposed research framework.

The results of the hypothesis testing process yield several key conclusions:



1. Interactivity was found to exert no statistically significant influence on purchase decision-making, thereby offering no empirical validation for the first hypothesis.
2. Entertainment similarly demonstrated an absence of significant effect, thus rejecting the second hypothesis and providing no empirical support within the current context.
3. In contrast, perceived relevance exerted a positive and statistically significant effect on purchase decisions, thereby substantiating the third hypothesis.
4. Likewise, informativeness emerged as a significant positive determinant of purchase decisions, offering strong empirical support for the fourth hypothesis and reinforcing its academic robustness.

Collectively, these findings highlight the salience of relevance and clarity of information as primary drivers in shaping consumer decision-making in educational services, whereas interactivity and entertainment, despite their prominence in social media environments, appear to play a comparatively marginal role in influencing purchasing behavior at Brain Academy Center.

Research Limitations

This study is subject to several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the demographic composition of respondents was predominantly restricted to senior high school students, which constrains the generalizability of the findings to wider consumer populations. Second, the relatively moderate value of the Adjusted R Square indicates that the explanatory capacity of the proposed model remains partial, suggesting that additional social media marketing dimensions not examined in this study may also exert a meaningful influence on consumer decision-making. Third, the scope of the investigation was confined to Instagram as the primary platform of analysis. As a result, behavioral dynamics specific to other major platforms such as TikTok, X (formerly Twitter), or YouTube were not included, which may reduce the comprehensiveness of the insights obtained.

Recommendations

Future research should extend its scope beyond Brain Academy Center Pandanaran Semarang by incorporating a larger and more diverse sample to improve representativeness. Considering the moderate value of the adjusted R-squared obtained in this study, subsequent investigations are advised to expand the conceptual framework by integrating additional determinants that may influence purchase decisions. Such an

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approach would provide a more comprehensive understanding of consumer behavior in the context of educational services. Moreover, future studies are recommended to apply the analytical model to various research settings and across alternative social media platforms, including TikTok and YouTube, in order to generate broader and more nuanced insights into the dynamics of digital marketing strategies within the education sector.

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