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## **An Empirical Tam Study Integrated Marketing Communications as a Media to Increase Interest in Choosing a Private School**

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### **Abstract:**

*This research aims to analyze the influence of integrated marketing communications (website, social media, advertising, public relations and direct marketing) on school image. As well as analyzing the influence of school image on interest in choosing a private school. The sample in this study was the parents of 320 students. The data analysis method used is PLS-SEM. This research found that the school website did not have a significant effect on the school's image. Meanwhile, the variables of social media, advertising, public relations and direct selling have a positive and significant effect on the school's image. Then the School Image has a positive and significant effect on interest in choosing a school. The results of the mediation analysis show that school image influences the relationship between IMC elements, namely social media, advertising, public relations and direct marketing, and interest in choosing a school. This research has limitations, namely that this study is limited in scope which has an impact on the generalization of the model in condition. Therefore, care is needed to pay attention to the profile of the background variables behind the test in order to avoid problems with the test results which result in errors in formulating the recommended management policies.*

**Keywords:** *Integrated Marketing Communication, School Image, Interest in Choosing a School*

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## **1. Introduction**

Competition in educational institutions is currently increasingly competitive. Schools are currently experiencing major changes in the form of the global educational environment. Education products that lack quality will be marginalized and people have started to choose quality schools for their sons and daughters (Anam, 2013). The competitive map is also very visible in Vocational High Schools (SMK). In Karanganyar Regency, vocational schools are increasingly developing, both public and private schools, offering their respective advantages to attract the interest of prospective students.

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The public's view of private schools is improving, however public schools are still the people's choice for sending their sons and daughters considering the school's image and more affordable costs. Therefore, schools need to carry out branding to build public trust that private schools are of good quality (Utaminingsih, 2020). The quality and quality of a school can be seen, one of the ways, through the advantages that the school has which are different from other schools, therefore school branding is very necessary so that the public knows and can assess the quality and worth of a school in the sense that the success of branding in a school will be able to build trust and increase student numbers (Utaminingsih, 2020).

To increase the effectiveness of branding carried out by schools, marketing communications need to be well integrated, namely between conventional marketing and digital marketing (Borić, Stanisavljev, Kavalić, Vlahović, & Tobolka, 2016; Foroudi, Dinnie, Kitchen, Melewar, & Foroudi, 2017). A significant number of marketers have embraced integrated marketing communications (IMC) in order to enhance the efficacy of brand recognition and generate optimal product sales to the appropriate target demographics (Foroudi et al., 2017; Husniati Sya'idah, Jauhari, Sugiarti, & Dewandaru, 2019; Khalaf Ahmad, 2016; Mihaela, 2015).

The acknowledgment of Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) by scholars and professionals is increasing. It is clear that empirical study is continuously advancing in exploring the connection between IMC and many aspects of brand, such as identity, awareness, image, position, reputation, and identification. The purpose of this research is to enhance comprehension of the constituent aspects of Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) and their impact on the intended brand identity. This will contribute to the existing theoretical framework created in prior research (Foroudi et al., 2017; Gupta & Yadav, 2020; Kilic, Elhadary, & Turker, 2022; Tamulienė, Rašimaitė, & Tunčikienė, 2020). This research focuses on improving the brand image of private school institutions. Image is recognized as the main goal of IMC implementation (Husniati Sya'idah et al., 2019; Pahlevi & Nurcahyo, 2022).

An image refers to the specific mental representation that an individual has of a brand or organisation. This can significantly affect an individual's feeling of affiliation with an organisation and is likely to have an impact on their behaviour (Foroudi, Melewar, & Gupta, 2014; Granata & Scozzese, 2019). According to Martinez and de-Chernatony (2004), brand image refers to how consumers perceive a brand based on the connections they have stored in their memory. Brand awareness is a crucial aspect of brand image creation. It refers to the ability of customers to recognise and remember a brand in different situations. This recognition and recall ability can be seen as a brand node or track recall ability (Foroudi et al., 2017). The enduring success of a brand hinges on the brand owner's capacity to select a brand significance prior to

entering the market, to implement the significance in the shape of an image, and to sustain the image over an extended period (Granata & Scozzese, 2019).

Through a comprehensive study of existing literature, this research suggests that the factors that precede a school's intended brand identity in integrated marketing communications (IMC) include brand aspects such as the logo, name, and colour (Foroudi et al., 2014), service attributes (Sultan & Wong, 2018), website (Kilic et al., 2022), social media (Barreda, Nusair, Wang, Okumus, & Bilgihan, 2020; Dwivedi et al., 2021; Golzadeh & Gharachorloo, 2021; Puriwat & Tripopsakul, 2021), advertisement (Kilic et al., 2022; Foroudi et al., 2014; Khan, Jadoon, & Tareen, 2016), public relations (Boonghee, Naveen, & Sungho, 2000;), direct marketing (Kilic et al., 2022; Shafi & Madhavaiah, 2013).

This research intends to analyse the impact of integrated marketing communications, including website, social media, advertising, public relations, and direct selling, on the image of schools, based on the findings of the literature review. In addition to examining the impact of school image on the level of interest in selecting a private school.

## **2. Theoretical Background**

### ***Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC)***

The concept of IMC planning involves acknowledging the enhanced worth of comprehensive planning that assesses the strategic functions of different communication disciplines, such as advertising, direct response, sales promotions, and public relations, and integrates them to generate lucid, coherent, and optimal communication impact (Hamzah & Azhari, 2019).

IMC regards any means via which customers or potential customers can be linked to a brand or company's products or services as possible channels for future message transmission. In addition, IMC employs all modes of communication that are pertinent and agreeable to clients or prospective customers. Put simply, the process begins with customers and potential customers, and then shifts to the organisation to identify and establish the specific forms and methods required for an effective communication programme (Hamzah & Azhari, 2019).

### **Image**

An image is a perception, emotion, or idea that is held by the general public about an object, person, or institution (Alma & Hurriyati, 2008). An image is created based on how an institution or organisation conducts its operational activities, with a primary focus on providing services (Alma & Hurriyati, 2008). An image is intricately linked to the evaluation, reaction, viewpoint, public confidence, affiliation, or specific

symbols pertaining to the manner in which a service is provided, the name of a firm, and the brand of a product or service, all from the perspective of the general public as the intended audience. This image has the potential to evoke either pleasant or negative emotions (Puriwat & Tripopsakul, 2021).

Image is a cognitive attribute, it can also be a memory about an event past, fact or opinion. However, image is only based on beliefs, traditions, value systems, and culture and is a product of the social construction of knowledge shaped by our worldview and personal philosophy (Puriwat & Tripopsakul, 2021).

### **Interest**

Interest is a psychological symptom that arises from a combination of desires and desires that exist within a person, which is realized or expressed by a feeling of pleasure that causes the greatest attention to an object, so that the person has a tendency to do something about that object (Khadijah, Indrawati, & Suarman, 2017). Thus, every activity carried out with a strong interest will tend to be carried out with a sense of liking and attachment so that it can increase enthusiasm or strong interest in the activity (Khadijah et al., 2017).

The relationships between variables in this study are explained below.

#### **a. School Website and Image**

The website is strategically crafted to embody the aspirations and principles of the brand and its operations, and it serves a crucial function in showcasing the brand to both internal and external stakeholders (van den Bosch, de Jong, & Elving, 2006). Developing and upkeeping a meticulously crafted website is a crucial tactic for achieving a company's triumph in the market (Tarafdar & Zhang, 2007). Websites contribute to brand awareness by facilitating the provision of relevant information to current and potential consumers (Tarafdar & Zhang, 2007). Liu and Arnett (2000) research has demonstrated that a meticulously crafted website can result in positive sentiments towards the site as well as its services and products. An intuitively designed website can reduce the probability of consumer errors and enhance their overall satisfaction. Tarafdar & Zhang (2007), the seven website elements that have been recognised include navigation design, identity/visual design, information design, usability, customisation, security, and availability. A company website serves as a communication channel via which organisations may showcase their identity and manage the image they make on others (Lestari, Ratna, & Anggilia, 2019; Prasetyo, 2016), a tool to reflect a company's image to signal its uniqueness (AbuGhazaleh, Qasim, & Roberts, 2012), an indication of brand identity and reputation (Argyriou & Kitchen, 2017) and a key determinant for building online loyalty (Kabadayi & Gupta, 2005; Tarafdar & Zhang, 2007). A company's website allows strengthening its brand and building its image in the minds of consumers (Tarafdar & Zhang, 2007) and is a crucial component of an organization's Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC)

strategy (Mulhern, 2009). Based on these findings from the literature, the following hypothesis is proposed:

*H<sub>1</sub>. The website positively influences the image of the school*

#### **b. Social Media and School Image**

Social media links facilitate the formation of virtual communities across many platforms, which in turn exert an influence on individuals' behaviour in the physical world (Zeng & Gerritsen, 2014). In their study, Mangold and Faulds (2009) introduce social media as a novel component that combines several elements of the advertising mix. Nekmat and Gower (2012) state that social media has offered IMC professionals an opportunity to study the interaction between customers and brands. Social media platforms are very influential areas for social interaction and sharing information (Hughes et al., 2012; Kim & Ko, 2012). They provide marketers with the opportunity to directly and without censorship send messages to both large and specific audiences (Wallace et al., 2011; Pegoraro and Clavio, 2010). Mangold & Faulds (2009) Social media facilitates open communication between brands and customers, leading to heightened customer engagement with brands.

Social media has two interconnected roles in IMC, according to Mangold & Faulds (2009): (1) it helps businesses communicate with their customers; and (2) it promotes customer-to-customer connections. The second is a relatively recent development, whereas the former is in line with IMC's customary role. In addition to becoming a crucial part of IMC strategy, social media platforms offer marketing practitioners and academics a whole new set of marketing goals due to their potential strength and breadth of prospects. According to Constantinides and Fountain (2008), social media has caused a shift in marketing techniques from focusing on broad markets to highly individualized and segmented markets. Higher education institutions view social media as a crucial tool for brand communication in their brand image enhancement strategies, as it is becoming one of the most popular platforms for social interaction and information sharing (Hughes et al., 2012). (Melewar and Akel, 2005). As a result, the following theory is put forth:

*H<sub>2</sub>. Social media positively influences the school's image.*

#### **c. Advertising and School Image**

As a part of brand knowledge, advertising can have a significant impact on raising brand awareness (Soehardi, 2022). Belch & Belch (2011) state that while IMC stresses upholding a consistent and representative image of the product or service through the various ways it is presented to internal and external consumer populations, advertising in business organizations concentrates on informing consumers about their product or service, its characteristics, availability, and position. This is particularly significant in the context of IMC since it builds upon the organization's brand image. Regardless of

the kind of communication medium used to deliver the message, Belch & Belch (2011) contend that the integrity of the brand's portrayal to customers is the most significant value that advertising contributes to IMC. Given that consumer brand encounters are increasing as a result of technology advancements, one may claim that IMC's adaptability promotes consistency, deeper brand understanding, and the development of enduring customer connections. In light of their significance in enhancing the perception of goods and services, it is crucial to identify the most suitable forms of advertising in an IMC strategy (Ariprayugo & Santoso, 2016; Mihaela, 2015; Mulhern, 2009). As a result, the following theory is put forth:

*H<sub>3</sub>. Advertising positively influences the school's image.*

#### **d. Public Relations and School Image**

The professional upkeep of a positive public image by a corporation, brand, or other organization is known as public relations. Building and maintaining relationships with the public is the goal of the public relations function, as these ties are the cornerstone of an organization's legitimacy, prosperity, and expansion. The literature on public relations and marketing communications with the function of public relations is noticeably lacking, despite the growing recognition of public relations and media relations as crucial elements of integrated marketing communications (IMC) (Kitchen, Kim, & Schultz, 2008). As a crucial component of corporate/brand communications, public relations is used to assess societal trends and create corporate policies that support innovation and proactive societal change adaptation for businesses and brands (Illia & Balmer, 2012; Kitchen & Panopoulos, 2010).

According to Foroudi et.al (2017), there is no consensus or conclusion about public relations. Furthermore, there is a continuing discussion concerning the relationship between IMC and public relations, with many academics and scholars seeing the former as a stand-alone strategic role within the context of the organization (Grunig, 2006). Public relations about marketing is the dominant communication function (Foroudi et al., 2017; Grunig, 2006) and public relations is a marketing support function (Foroudi et al., 2017; Grunig, 2006). IMC as a message and channel is introduced and carried out as a marketing planning process (Kerr & Patti, 2015).

P. Kotler, Wong, Saunders, & Armstrong (2005) state that public relations aims to generate information in order to capture attention for a product and raise awareness. This is achieved by the utilization of various instruments such as mass media and events, which possess the capacity to attract favorable attention to the company. As a result, public relations is assuming increasingly significant responsibilities in the process, and the impact of integrated marketing communication (IMC) on brand identity is being acknowledged. The research postulates:

*H<sub>4</sub>. Community relations positively influences the school's image.*

### **e. Direct Marketing and School Image**

Direct marketing is a versatile form of advertising that enables firms to directly communicate their brand to clients. It utilizes several advertising strategies such as mobile phone text messaging, email, interactive consumer websites, online display advertising, and database marketing. Direct marketing is a well-established component of Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) at advertising companies in the United States and the United Kingdom (Kitchen et al., 2008). According to Foroudi et al. (2017), there is a noticeable correlation between IMC (Integrated Marketing Communications) and the performance of marketing communications when a business reaches the IMC level. Direct marketing has the ability to generate and enhance brand recognition and awareness through the use of visual and verbal communication to customers. It also has the power to establish strong connections between the brand and consumers' memories (Foroudi et al., 2017). Moreover, it enhances the probability of the brand being taken into account by consumers, therefore enhancing brand performance (Barreda et al., 2020; Puriwat & Tripopsakul, 2021; Soehardi, 2022). Direct marketing enables organizations to establish strategic positions that distinguish their brands from competitors and foster positive relationships with consumers and stakeholders. Direct marketing's favorable advertising has a persuasive impact by influencing the emotional aspect of our brand attitude and image. This perspective can be expressed in a more formal manner to be tested empirically as follows:

*H<sub>5</sub>. Direct marketing positively influences the school's image*

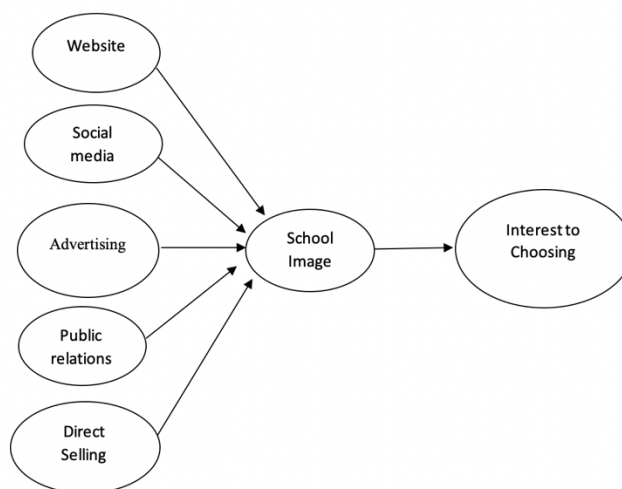
### **f. Image and Interest in Choosing a School**

Image is recognized as the main goal of IMC implementation (Husniati Sya'idah et al., 2019; Pahlevi & Nurcahyo, 2022). An image refers to the specific mental representation that an individual has of a brand or organization. This can significantly affect an individual's feeling of affiliation with an organization and is likely to have an impact on their conduct (Foroudi et al., 2014; Granata & Scozzese, 2019). According to Martinez dan de-Chernatony (2004), brand image is the way consumers perceive a brand based on the associations they have in their memory. Brand awareness is a crucial aspect of brand image development. It refers to the ability of customers to recognize and remember a brand in different situations. This recognition and recall ability can be seen as a brand node or track (Foroudi et al., 2017). The enduring prosperity of a brand hinges on the brand proprietor's capacity to select a brand significance prior to market entry, to implement the significance in the form of an image, and to sustain the image over an extended period (Granata & Scozzese, 2019).

Organizations employ Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) as a method to develop messages that can combine various strategies, techniques, and channels of communication. The goal is to create more impactful marketing messages that influence and encourage positive decisions and attitudes, while also fostering brand awareness and brand image (Kitchen et al., 2008). The results of several studies show that brand image influences purchase intention (Agmeka, Wathoni, & Santoso, 2019; Benhardy, Hardiyansyah, Putranto, & Ronadi, 2020; Haitao, 2022; Haro, Oktaviana, Trimulia Dewi, Anisa, & Suangkupon, 2020; Wahyuni, Munthe, Zarkasih, & Mandili, 2022) In the context of this research, purchase intention is equated with interest in choosing a school. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

*H<sub>6</sub>. School Image positively influences Intention to Choose a School*

Based on the literature review and hypothesis development, in general the conceptual model of this research can be described below.



**Figure 2. Conceptual Model**

### 3. Methodology

#### Samples and Sampling Techniques

This research approach uses quantitative methods. This research uses a survey method, namely a method of collecting primary data obtained directly from original sources through questionnaires. This research uses a structural equation model, where the sample size has criteria that can be processed, so the sampling technique used in this research is purposive sampling. Based on sample size guidelines using a structural equation model with the Maximum Likelihood Estimation technique, the researcher took 320 respondents as a sample from a total of  $32 \times 10 = 320$  questions. The sample



in this study was taken from representatives of parents of class IX junior high school students in Karanganyar Regency.

### **Variable Measurement**

#### **a. Integrated Marketing Communication**

IMC has been described as "one of the most influential marketing management" (Schultz & Patti, 2009). IMC variables in this research include websites, social media, advertising, public relations, and direct marketing (Foroudi et al., 2017).

Website indicators include information, navigation, usability, customization, download speed, security, and availability (Tarafdar & Zhang, 2007). Social media indicators include social media interactivity, social media psychological benefits, and social media rewards (Barreda et al., 2020). Advertising indicators include finding information about products easily, the information conveyed in the media is clear, the messages contained in the media can be trusted (Ariprayugo & Santoso, 2016). Public relations indicators include news that is spread about good companies, a unique company identity, different from others, community service activities (Ariprayugo & Santoso, 2016). The indicators used to measure direct marketing consist of face-to-face marketing, telemarketing and email marketing (Soehardi, 2022).

#### **b. School Image**

Image is a direct mental image that a person holds of a school. This can materially influence an individual's sense of association with an organization and is likely to impact behavior (Balmer & Podnar, 2021; Foroudi et al., 2017). School image indicators include overall image, seriousness, opportunities, attention, business practices, ethical standards, social responsibility, and innovation (Sultan & Wong, 2018).

#### **c. Interest in Choosing a School**

Interest is a condition where someone has attention to something and is accompanied by a desire to know, learn and prove further (Sultan & Wong, 2018). Indicators of interest include consideration of choosing a school, desire to choose a school, providing recommendations (Sultan & Wong, 2018).

Variable measurements in the study used a 5 point Likert scale (5 = strongly agree, 1 = strongly disagree).

### **Data Analysis**

This study employs Partial Least Square (PLS) Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), a multivariate statistical approach, to examine a multilevel causal link. This study is a form of statistical analysis that examines the impact of multiple variables at the same time, with the goal of predicting outcomes, exploring relationships, or developing structural models (Hair et al, 2019). PLS model evaluation encompasses the

assessment of the measurement model, structural model, and the overall goodness and fit of the model.

#### 4. Empirical Findings/Result

##### a. Evaluation of Measurement Models

The measurement model in this research consists of a reflective measurement model where the variables website, social media, advertising, public relations, direct marketing, school image and interest in choosing a school are measured reflectively. In Hair et al (2021), the evaluation of the reflective measurement model consists of construct validity and reliability which includes loading factor  $> 0.70$ , composite reliability  $> 0.70$ , Cronbach alpha and average variance extracted (AVE)  $> 0.50$ , as well as validity evaluation. The discriminants are the Fornell and Lacker criteria, as well as the HTMT (Heterotrait Monotrait Ratio) below 0.90. The results of the measurement model evaluation can be seen in the table below.

##### 1) Construct Validity and Reliability

The results of the construct validity and reliability tests for each variable are explained below.

**Table 1. Outer Loading, Composite Reliability, and Average Variance Extracted**

Variable	Outer Loading	Cronbach Alpha	Composite Reliability	AVE
Website (W)	0,750 - 0,916	0,958	0,963	0,725
Media sosial (SM)	0,783 - 0,948	0,962	0,969	0,816
Advertising (AD)	0,794 - 0,867	0,784	0,867	0,685
Public Relation (PR)	0,806 - 0,897	0,849	0,908	0,768
Direct Selling (DS)	0,718 - 0,867	0,916	0,931	0,628
School Image (SI)	0,779 - 0,864	0,931	0,943	0,674
Interest in choosing a school (IN)	0,781 - 0,892	0,900	0,926	0,715

In Table 1 above, it is known that the outer loading value for each variable indicator is greater than 0.5, which means that the measurement items are valid. The level of variable reliability is acceptable as shown by Cornbach's alpha and composite reliability above 0.70 (reliable). The level of convergent validity indicated by an AVE value greater than 0.50 meets the requirements for good convergent validity.

##### 2) Discriminant Validity

Discriminant validity was tested using the Fornell and Lacker Test, HTMT and Cross Loading. The results of the discriminant validity test can be seen in the table below.

**Table 2. Fornell and Lacker Criteria**

	AD	DS	IN	PR	SI	SM	W
<b>AD</b>	<b>0.828</b>						
<b>DS</b>	0.605	<b>0.792</b>					
<b>IN</b>	0.583	0.724	<b>0.845</b>				
<b>PR</b>	0.567	0.504	0.475	<b>0.876</b>			
<b>SI</b>	0.739	0.779	0.627	0.737	<b>0.821</b>		
<b>SM</b>	0.655	0.602	0.519	0.438	0.668	<b>0.904</b>	
<b>WB</b>	0.429	0.405	0.301	0.240	0.366	0.404	<b>0.852</b>

The criterion proposed by Fornell and Lacker states that the average variance extracted (AVE) of a variable should be higher than the correlation between variables. The Advertising (AD) variable has an AVE root (0.828) with a greater correlation with other variables (see correlation values for other variables), as well as the AVE value of the DS variable (0.792), IN variable (0.845), PR variable (0.876), SI variable (0.821), the SM variable (0.904), and the WB variable (0.852) have greater correlation with other variables.

**Table 3. Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT)**

	AD	DS	IN	PR	SI	SM	W
AD							
DS	0.684						
IN	0.666	0.840					
PR	0.653	0.561	0.541				
SI	0.806	0.817	0.683	0.827			
SM	0.758	0.631	0.559	0.479	0.703		
WB	0.517	0.425	0.319	0.261	0.382	0.417	

The test results indicate that the HTMT value for the variable pair is less than 0.90, thereby confirming the presence of discriminant validity. This demonstrates that the variable being measured on the item is more robust than dividing the variance across other variable items.

**Table 4. Cross Loading**

	Advertising	Direct Selling	Interest	Public Relation	School Image	Social Media	Website
<b>AD1</b>	<b>0.847</b>	0.437	0.418	0.388	0.478	0.602	0.476
<b>AD2</b>	<b>0.841</b>	0.453	0.448	0.388	0.487	0.570	0.456

<b>AD3</b>	<b>0.794</b>	0.564	0.538	0.564	0.764	0.478	0.209
<b>CS1</b>	0.720	0.603	0.557	0.575	<b>0.798</b>	0.489	0.244
<b>CS2</b>	0.590	0.518	0.473	0.713	<b>0.779</b>	0.395	0.226
<b>CS3</b>	0.658	0.603	0.521	0.701	<b>0.832</b>	0.561	0.291
<b>CS4</b>	0.597	0.605	0.579	0.696	<b>0.805</b>	0.587	0.338
<b>CS5</b>	0.554	0.631	0.481	0.526	<b>0.800</b>	0.571	0.373
<b>CS6</b>	0.596	0.726	0.517	0.550	<b>0.864</b>	0.641	0.317
<b>CS7</b>	0.594	0.730	0.497	0.562	<b>0.866</b>	0.635	0.305
<b>CS8</b>	0.532	0.701	0.479	0.510	<b>0.820</b>	0.495	0.309
<b>DS1</b>	0.501	<b>0.786</b>	0.471	0.442	0.704	0.521	0.402
<b>DS2</b>	0.520	<b>0.866</b>	0.489	0.443	0.732	0.572	0.327
<b>DS3</b>	0.520	<b>0.867</b>	0.474	0.462	0.745	0.565	0.312
<b>DS4</b>	0.464	<b>0.836</b>	0.455	0.412	0.699	0.433	0.335
<b>DS5</b>	0.454	<b>0.737</b>	0.719	0.360	0.467	0.380	0.298
<b>DS6</b>	0.460	<b>0.774</b>	0.789	0.392	0.515	0.421	0.260
<b>DS7</b>	0.422	<b>0.718</b>	0.683	0.330	0.458	0.396	0.257
<b>DS8</b>	0.499	<b>0.739</b>	0.766	0.308	0.474	0.478	0.370
<b>IN1</b>	0.506	0.619	<b>0.841</b>	0.447	0.547	0.426	0.219
<b>IN2</b>	0.478	0.639	<b>0.892</b>	0.454	0.558	0.421	0.206
<b>IN3</b>	0.449	0.564	<b>0.781</b>	0.373	0.495	0.399	0.193
<b>IN4</b>	0.536	0.651	<b>0.867</b>	0.374	0.546	0.507	0.341
<b>IN5</b>	0.494	0.580	<b>0.841</b>	0.352	0.498	0.440	0.315
<b>MS10</b>	0.641	0.505	0.477	0.359	0.556	<b>0.783</b>	0.413
<b>MS4</b>	0.555	0.510	0.458	0.359	0.570	<b>0.908</b>	0.358
<b>MS5</b>	0.602	0.563	0.454	0.408	0.621	<b>0.932</b>	0.360
<b>MS6</b>	0.583	0.517	0.429	0.405	0.589	<b>0.948</b>	0.374
<b>MS7</b>	0.548	0.533	0.469	0.337	0.584	<b>0.927</b>	0.310
<b>MS8</b>	0.632	0.600	0.496	0.475	0.680	<b>0.948</b>	0.346
<b>MS9</b>	0.576	0.565	0.497	0.411	0.610	<b>0.867</b>	0.397
<b>PR1</b>	0.469	0.382	0.373	<b>0.874</b>	0.611	0.265	0.154
<b>PR2</b>	0.530	0.459	0.388	<b>0.897</b>	0.669	0.421	0.204
<b>PR3</b>	0.488	0.479	0.485	<b>0.858</b>	0.655	0.457	0.268
<b>W1</b>	0.356	0.366	0.246	0.188	0.304	0.340	<b>0.840</b>
<b>W10</b>	0.347	0.361	0.295	0.188	0.299	0.340	<b>0.804</b>
<b>W15</b>	0.419	0.363	0.290	0.232	0.369	0.337	<b>0.750</b>
<b>W2</b>	0.427	0.381	0.309	0.226	0.342	0.403	<b>0.837</b>
<b>W3</b>	0.428	0.387	0.293	0.205	0.334	0.414	<b>0.875</b>

<b>W4</b>	0.331	0.309	0.214	0.186	0.293	0.320	<b>0.888</b>
<b>W5</b>	0.345	0.313	0.251	0.220	0.301	0.330	<b>0.886</b>
<b>W6</b>	0.348	0.357	0.227	0.209	0.310	0.345	<b>0.916</b>
<b>W7</b>	0.311	0.290	0.226	0.189	0.273	0.308	0.882
<b>W9</b>	0.279	0.277	0.165	0.172	0.245	0.255	0.826

The results of discriminant validity with cross loadings show that all measurement items have strong correlation values for each variable and are weakly correlated with other variables. This shows that discriminant validity is met.

b. Structural Model Evaluation

Evaluation of the structural model is related to testing the hypothesis of influence between research variables.

**Table 5. Inner VIF**

	Interest	School Image
Advertising		2.325
Direct Selling		1.931
Public Relation		1.575
School Image	1.000	
Social Media		2.014
Website		1.301

The evaluation results of the measurement model using Inner VIF indicate that the Inner VIF value for the variables is less than 5, suggesting the absence of multicollinearity or a low level of multicollinearity between the variables. The results validate the robustness of parameter estimation in SEM PLS, indicating the absence of bias.

**Table 6. Hypothesis Testing**

Relationship	Path Coefficient	P Values	f square	Conclusions
Website -> School Image	-0.030	0.375	0.004	Rejected
Social Media -> School Image	0.146	0.002	0.058	Accepted
Advertising -> School Image	0.213	0.000	0.107	Accepted
Public Relation -> School Image	0.362	0.000	0.454	Accepted
Direct Selling -> School Image	0.392	0.000	0.435	Accepted
School Image -> Interest	0.627	0.000	0.647	Accepted

Based on the results of the hypothesis testing above, it is known as follows:

- 1) The first hypothesis (H1) which states that there is an influence of websites on school image, is rejected. This is shown by the path coefficient value of -0.030 and p value of  $0.375 > 0.05$ . In the 95% confidence interval, the influence of the website in improving the school's image is between -0.097–0.031 with an f square of 0.004. This shows that the website has no influence on the school's image.
- 2) The second hypothesis (H2) which states that there is an influence of social media on school image, is accepted. This is shown by the path coefficient value of 0.146 and p value of  $0.002 < 0.05$ . In the 95% confidence interval, the influence of social media in improving school image is between 0.052–0.237 with an f square of 0.058. This shows that social media has a low influence ( $< 0.15$ ) on school image.
- 3) The third hypothesis (H3) which states that there is an influence of advertising on school image, is accepted. This is shown by the path coefficient value of 0.213 and p value of  $0.000 < 0.05$ . In the 95% confidence interval, the influence of advertising in improving school image is between 0.131–0.310 with an f square of 0.107. This shows that advertising has a low influence ( $< 0.15$ ) on school image.
- 4) The third hypothesis (H4) which states that there is an influence of public relations on school image, is accepted. This is shown by the path coefficient value of 0.362 and p value of  $0.000 < 0.05$ . In the 95% confidence interval, the influence of public relations in improving the school's image is between 0.265–0.470 with an f square of 0.454. This shows that public relations has a high influence ( $> 0.35$ ) on the school's image.
- 5) The third hypothesis (H5) which states that there is an influence of direct selling on the school's image, is accepted. This is shown by the path coefficient value of 0.392 and p value of  $0.000 < 0.05$ . In the 95% confidence interval, the influence of direct selling in improving the school's image is between 0.280–0.518 with an f square of 0.435. This shows that direct selling has a high influence ( $> 0.35$ ) on the school's image.
- 6) The third hypothesis (H6) which states that there is an influence of school image on interest in choosing a school, is accepted. This is shown by the path coefficient value of 0.627 and p value of  $0.000 < 0.05$ . In the 95% confidence interval, the influence of school image in increasing interest in choosing a school is between 0.556–0.709 with an f square of 0.647. This shows that school image has a high influence ( $> 0.35$ ) on school image.

c. Evaluation of Model Goodness and Fit

Partial Least Squares (PLS) is a statistical analysis method that employs variance to test model theory. It is specifically designed for prediction research. Hence, various metrics were devised to affirm the acceptability of the suggested model, including R square, Q square, and SRMR (Hair et al, 2019).

**Table 7. R Square Value**

	R Square
School Image	0,817
Interest in choosing a school	0,393

Based on the processing results above, it can be said that the joint influence of websites, social media, advertising, public relations and direct selling on the school's image is 0.817 or 81.7% (high influence). The magnitude of the influence of school image on interest in choosing a school is 39.3% (moderate influence).

**Table 8. Standardized Root Mean Square (SRMR)**

	Model Estimates
SRMR	0,095

According to Hair et al (2021), an SRMR value below 0.10 indicates a fit model. The model estimation result is 0.095, which means the model has acceptable fit. This means that empirical data can explain the influence between the variables in the model.

d. Mediation Analysis

According to Lachowicz et al (2018), interpreted by Ogbeibu et al (2022), the mediation effect is categorized as low if the coefficient is below 0.02, medium 0.075, and high 0.175. The results of the mediation analysis can be seen in Table 32 below.

**Table 9. Mediation Analysis**

	Original Sample (O)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics ( O/STDEV )	P Values
Advertising -> School Image -> Intention	0.134	0.029	4.663	0.000
Direct Selling -> School Image -> Intention	0.246	0.043	5.711	0.000
Public Relation -> School Image -> Intention	0.227	0.037	6.063	0.000
Social Media -> School Image -> Intention	0.092	0.029	3.131	0.002
Website -> School Image -> Intention	-0.019	0.022	0.868	0.386

- 1) The mediating effect of school image on the relationship between websites and interest in choosing a school is not significant, this is indicated by the p value of  $0.386 > 0.05$ . This shows that school image does not mediate the relationship between website and interest in choosing a school.

- 2) The mediating effect of school image on the relationship between social media and interest in choosing a school is not significant, this is indicated by the p value of  $0.002 < 0.05$ . This shows that school image mediates the relationship between social media and interest in choosing a school. The value of the mediation coefficient is 0.092, this means that the mediation effect is in the medium category.
- 3) The mediating effect of school image on the relationship between advertising and interest in choosing a school is not significant, this is indicated by the p value of  $0.000 < 0.05$ . This shows that school image mediates the relationship between advertising and interest in choosing a school. The value of the mediation coefficient is 0.134, this means that the mediation effect is in the medium category.
- 4) The mediating effect of school image on the relationship between public relations and interest in choosing a school is not significant, this is indicated by the p value of  $0.000 < 0.05$ . This shows that school image mediates the relationship between public relations and interest in choosing a school. The value of the mediation coefficient is 0.227, this means that the mediation influence is in the high category.
- 5) The p value of  $0.000 < 0.05$  indicates that there is no significant mediation influence of school image on the direct association between interest in choosing a school. This demonstrates that the perception of a school plays a role in influencing the direct connection between one's interest in selecting a school. The mediation coefficient has a value of 0.246, indicating a significant level of mediation influence.

## 5. Discussion

### **The Influence of Websites on School Image**

The website is strategically crafted to embody the aspirations and principles of the brand and its operations, and it serves a crucial function in showcasing the brand to both internal and external stakeholders (van den Bosch et al., 2006). Developing and upkeeping a meticulously crafted website is a crucial tactic for a company's triumph in the market (Tarafdar & Zhang, 2007). The results of this study indicate that the website has no effect on the school's image. This can be caused by the school not managing its site well. These results do not support research conducted by Liu and Arnett (2000) discovered that a site that is well-designed will result in positive sentiments about the site and its services/products. An intelligible and user-friendly website has the potential to reduce the probability of consumer errors and enhance their overall satisfaction. Based on the indications on the website, the availability/activity aspect is judged to be the least favorable compared to other variables. However, consumers generally have a positive perception of the other features on the website. Nevertheless, the school's image has not experienced any enhancement, thus necessitating improvements in navigation design, identity/visual design, information design, usability, customization, security, and availability.



### **The Influence of Social Media on School Image**

Social media platforms are very influential areas for social interaction and the exchange of knowledge (Hughes et al., 2012; Kim & Ko, 2012). Mangold & Faulds (2009) assert that social media facilitates open communication between brands and customers, resulting in heightened customer engagement with brands. In their study, Mangold & Faulds (2009) highlighted two interconnected functions of social media in integrated marketing communication (IMC): facilitating enterprises' engagement with customers and enhancing customer-to-customer relationships. The former aligns with the conventional function of IMC, whilst the latter represents a more recent advancement. Social media platforms have the ability to give significant opportunities and wide-ranging possibilities in integrated marketing communication (IMC) programs. They are not only an essential part of IMC strategy but also present marketing practitioners and academics with a completely new set of objectives for marketing. The advent of social media has caused a shift in marketing techniques, moving away from targeting large, general audiences to focusing on personalized and specialized markets (Constantinides and Fountain, 2008). The findings of this study indicate that social media exerts a beneficial and noteworthy impact on the perception and reputation of educational institutions. The correlation between effective social media management implemented by private schools and the enhancement of the school's reputation is evident. The findings of this study corroborate the research conducted by Hughes et al., (2012) that indicates social media is becoming one of the most influential platforms for social interaction and information sharing. Consequently, it is regarded as a crucial tool for higher education institutions to enhance their brand image. Faraudi et al (2017) did research that concluded social media has a beneficial impact on brand identity.

### **Effects of Advertising on School Image**

Advertising is a significant factor in enhancing brand recognition as a part of brand knowledge (Soehardi, 2022). Belch & Belch (2011) state that advertising in business organizations aims to provide consumers with information about the product or service, including its features, availability, and positioning. On the other hand, IMC focuses on maintaining a consistent image and representing the product or service through different channels to both internal and external consumers (Kliatchko, 2008). The findings of this study indicate that advertising has a favorable and substantial impact on the reputation of the school. The positive correlation demonstrates that the higher quality of advertising conducted by the school, the greater the enhancement of the institution's reputation. Additionally, this research demonstrates that respondents have a positive perception of advertising conducted by private schools. The findings of this study corroborate the research conducted by Luck and Moffatt (2009) and Faraudi et al (2017), which concluded that advertising within the integrated marketing communications (IMC) framework has a significant role in shaping the brand image established by the firm. According to Belch & Belch (2011), the primary benefit that advertising contributes to integrated marketing communication (IMC) is the

preservation of the brand's authenticity in the eyes of consumers, independent of the specific communication method used to transmit the message. Hence, it is crucial to ascertain the most suitable forms of advertising inside an Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) strategy, taking into account their significance in fostering the perception of products and services (Ariprayugo & Santoso, 2016; Mihaela, 2015; Mulhern, 2009).

### **Influences of Public Relations on School Image**

Public relations refers to the strategic management of a brand, company, or organization's public image in order to cultivate a positive perception among the general public. The primary objective of the public relations function is to develop and sustain connections with the general public, which serve as the foundation for the legitimacy, achievement, and expansion of an organization. While public relations and media relations are gaining recognition as crucial elements of integrated marketing communications (IMC), there is a notable lack of literature on the function of public relations in marketing communications (Kitchen et al., 2008). Public relations is an essential component of corporate and brand communications. It involves analyzing social trends and developing corporate policies that enable organizations and brands to innovate and adjust to societal changes proactively (Illia & Balmer, 2012; Kitchen & Panopoulos, 2010).

The findings of this study indicate that public relations exerts a favorable and noteworthy impact on the reputation of the school. The correlation between effective public relations efforts and enhanced reputation of private institutions demonstrates a beneficial impact. In addition, the public relations efforts conducted by private schools are favorably viewed by respondents. Therefore, it is crucial to sustain and enhance these efforts in order to further enhance the school's reputation. The research findings corroborate the study conducted by Foroudi et al. (2017), which established that public relations exert a substantial impact on brand identity. The concept of Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) is implemented as a marketing planning process, whereas public relations primarily focuses on communication within the marketing domain (Foroudi et al., 2017). Additionally, public relations serves as a supportive function for marketing (Foroudi et al., 2017; Grunig, 2006).

### **Influences of Direct Selling on School Image**

Direct marketing is a versatile form of advertising that enables firms to directly engage with customers about their brand. This type of advertising can be done using several tactics such as mobile phone text messaging, email, interactive consumer websites, online display advertising, and database marketing. It is not limited to any specific channel. According to Foroudi et al. (2017), there is a noticeable correlation between IMC (Integrated Marketing Communications) and the performance of marketing communications when a business reaches the IMC level. Direct marketing has the ability to generate and enhance brand recognition and awareness through the use of

visual and verbal communication to consumers. It also helps to establish strong connections between the brand and consumers' memories (Foroudi et al., 2017).

The findings of this study indicate that direct marketing (also known as direct selling) has a favorable and substantial impact on the reputation of the institution. The positive impact demonstrates that the more effective the direct marketing conducted by private schools, the greater the enhancement of the school's reputation. The findings of this study corroborate the research carried out by Foroudi et al. (2017), which shown that direct marketing has a favorable and substantial impact on brand identification. Moreover, direct marketing enhances the probability of the brand being taken into account by consumers, thereby enhancing brand performance. Direct marketing enables organizations to establish strategic positions that distinguish their brands from competitors and cultivate positive sentiment among consumers and stakeholders. Direct marketing's favorable advertising has a persuasive impact by influencing the emotional aspect of our brand attitude and image (Barreda et al., 2020; Puriwat & Tripopsakul, 2021; Soehardi, 2022).

### **Influence of School Image on Interest in Choosing a School**

An image refers to the specific mental representation that an individual has of a brand or organization. The aforementioned factors can significantly affect an individual's perception of their affiliation with an organization and are likely to have an effect on their behavior (Foroudi et al., 2014; Granata & Scozzese, 2019). The findings of this study indicate that the image of a school has a favorable and substantial impact on the level of interest in selecting it. The positive influence demonstrates a direct correlation between the school's reputation and the level of interest in acquiring it. The findings of this study corroborate other prior studies indicating that brand image has a significant impact on purchase intention. In this research, buy intention is defined as the level of interest in selecting a school (Agmeka, Wathoni, & Santoso, 2019; Benhardy, Hardiyansyah, Putranto, & Ronadi, 2020; Haitao, 2022; Haro, Oktaviana, Trimulia Dewi, Anisa, & Suangkupon, 2020; Wahyuni, Munthe, Zarkasih, & Mandili, 2022).

Additionally, this study revealed that the respondents evaluate the image favorably. Consequently, it is imperative to uphold and enhance the image in order to enhance its effectiveness in generating interest in selecting a school. The long-term success of a brand relies on a school's capacity to choose a brand meaning prior to entering the market, to embody the meaning through an image, and to sustain the image over time (Granata & Scozzese, 2019).

## **6. Conclusion**

Based on the findings of the research and discussion, it can be inferred that the school website does not exert a substantial influence on the school's image. Concurrently, the factors of social media, advertising, public relations, and direct selling exert a favorable and substantial impact on the school's reputation. The School Image has a

strong and positive impact on the level of interest in selecting a school. The mediation analysis reveals that school image has an impact on the connection between IMC aspects, including social media, advertising, public relations, and direct marketing, and the level of interest in selecting a school. This research has limitations, namely that this study is limited in scope which has an impact on the generalization of the model in condition. Therefore, care is needed to pay attention to the profile of the background variables behind the test in order to avoid problems with the test results which result in errors in formulating the recommended management policies.

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