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Perceived Effectiveness Of Social Media As An Advertising And Marketing Tool In Faith-Based Higher Education Institution

Persepsi Efektivitas Media Sosial Sebagai Alat Periklanan Dan Pemasaran Di Lembaga Pendidikan Tinggi Berbasis Agama

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ABSTRACT
In the digital age, social media has emerged as a powerful communication tool for higher education institutions to engage with students and disseminate information. This study aims to examine students' perceptions of the appeal of Instagram advertisements as an informational medium at a faith-based private university. Employing a descriptive research design, primary data were collected through the distribution of questionnaires to students at a faith-based university located in Airmadidi, North Sulawesi. The study involved a purposive sample of 200 respondents, selected based on their active use of Instagram and their following of the university's official Instagram account. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistical techniques. The findings indicate that students' perceptions have a significant positive influence on the perceived appeal of Instagram advertisements as an effective medium for university-related information. These results suggest that faith-based universities can strategically leverage social media platforms like Instagram to enhance their communication and engagement with students.
Keywords: Advertising Appeal, Social Media Marketing, Institutional Branding, Faith-Based Institution

ABSTRAK
Di era digital, media sosial telah muncul sebagai alat komunikasi yang ampuh bagi institusi pendidikan tinggi untuk berinteraksi dengan mahasiswa dan menyebarkan informasi. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menguji persepsi mahasiswa terhadap daya tarik iklan Instagram sebagai media informasi di sebuah universitas swasta berbasis agama. Dengan menggunakan desain penelitian deskriptif, data primer dikumpulkan melalui penyebaran kuesioner kepada mahasiswa di sebuah universitas berbasis agama yang berlokasi di Airmadidi, Sulawesi Utara. Penelitian ini melibatkan sampel purposif sebanyak 200 responden, yang dipilih berdasarkan penggunaan aktif Instagram dan mengikuti akun Instagram resmi universitas. Data dianalisis dengan menggunakan teknik statistik deskriptif. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa persepsi mahasiswa memiliki pengaruh positif yang signifikan terhadap daya tarik iklan Instagram sebagai media yang efektif untuk informasi terkait universitas. Hasil ini menunjukkan bahwa universitas berbasis agama dapat secara strategis memanfaatkan platform media sosial seperti Instagram untuk meningkatkan komunikasi dan keterlibatan mereka dengan mahasiswa.
Kata Kunci: Daya Tarik Iklan, Pemasaran Media Sosial, Branding Institusi, Institusi Berbasis Agama

1. Introduction

Social media has evolved from a simple communication tool to one of the most influential marketing and advertising platforms, fundamentally reshaping how brands interact with consumers. Its growth and diversification have allowed businesses and institutions across various sectors, such as education, local government, beauty clinics, and festivals, to engage with their target audiences in more innovative and interactive ways (Pasuhuk et al., 2023;

Wowor et al., 2022). This trend has been particularly transformative in higher education, where platforms like Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter have reshaped how students access information, engage with content, and communicate with faculty and peers (Kainde et al., 2023; Marhareita et al., 2022). The integration of social media into academic environments has enhanced communication, facilitated real-time engagement, and provided flexible content delivery, significantly improving the learning experience and access to academic resources (Bold & Yadamsuren, 2019; Al-Adwan et al., 2020; Jiang et al., 2023). As these tools continue to evolve, they play an increasingly pivotal role in shaping brand perceptions and consumer behavior across various sectors (Carundeng et al., 2024; Wantah et al., 2024).

Social media marketing has proven effective across various sectors by enhancing engagement, shaping brand perception, and influencing consumer behavior. Sijabat et al. (2022) highlight how influencers drive engagement and purchasing decisions through relatable content. Waworuntu et al. (2022) show that social media boosts Gen Z's intention to buy local products by strengthening brand image and loyalty. In the beauty sector, Warbung et al. (2023) find that platforms like Instagram enhance brand equity and customer loyalty. Poluan et al. (2022) demonstrate that local governments use social media to improve public attitudes, transparency, and satisfaction. In education, Kainde and Mandagi (2023) show that social media strengthens institutional branding and student engagement. Lastly, Siddik et al. (2024) reveal how social media transforms recruitment by offering wider reach and more interactive employer-candidate engagement.

In educational institutions, social media marketing plays a vital role in shaping brand awareness, institutional image, and student attitudes. Kainde and Mandagi (2023) highlight that effective social media strategies can enhance brand loyalty and institutional reputation, particularly among prospective students, by fostering positive brand perceptions and boosting engagement and recruitment. In faith-based universities, however, the integration of social media comes with distinct considerations rooted in religious values and cultural norms, which influence both perception and usage (Alshehri, 2019). While students generally hold favorable views of social media due to its collaborative, enjoyable, and user-friendly nature (Al-Adwan et al., 2020), concerns persist regarding distractions, privacy, ethical issues, and potential misalignment with institutional values (Bold & Yadamsuren, 2019; Nasih & Hamid, 2023). These challenges underscore the need for careful, values-aligned implementation of social media strategies in religious academic settings

Despite the growing body of research on social media in education, studies focusing specifically on how students in faith-based universities perceive the appeal of social media advertisements, especially as a means of institutional communication remain limited. This gap is significant, considering that social media is increasingly used by universities not only for marketing purposes but also as an official channel for delivering academic information and engaging students. Understanding how students in religiously affiliated institutions respond to these advertisements is essential for developing communication strategies that are both effective and aligned with institutional values.

This study aims to contribute to the existing literature by examining the perceptions of students regarding the attractiveness of Instagram advertisements as a medium of information at a faith-based private university. In doing so, it provides insights into how digital engagement strategies can be optimized to enhance student communication and satisfaction in religious educational settings. The findings are expected to support institutional efforts to harness social media more strategically while maintaining alignment with faith-based principles.

2. Literature Review
2.1 Social Media Marketing

Social media marketing (SMM) refers to the use of social media platforms to increase sales, build brand awareness, and drive web traffic by directly engaging with users. It encompasses a wide range of activities, including running targeted advertisements, interacting with followers, collecting and analyzing feedback, and consistently publishing content across various platforms (Zuhdi et al., 2019). Major platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, YouTube, Pinterest, and Snapchat serve as essential tools for businesses to reach and influence their audiences (Zuhdi et al., 2019; Amrita & Mohan, 2016). SMM's interactive nature has transformed the way brands connect with consumers, shifting from one-way messaging to dynamic, two-way engagement.

The evolution of SMM has followed key technological and cultural shifts. In its early days, social media was considered secondary to traditional marketing channels like print and television (Mandagi et al., 2024). However, its cost-effectiveness and ability to reach large, targeted audiences quickly elevated its status. The emergence of Web 2.0 further revolutionized marketing strategies by enabling user-generated content and interactive digital environments (Demircioglu et al., 2021; Mandagi & Aseng, 2021). As mobile technologies advanced, mobile social networks expanded the reach of marketing campaigns, allowing businesses to engage with consumers in real time and on the go (Demircioglu et al., 2021; Warbung et al., 2023). Today, SMM is fully integrated into business strategies, enabling companies to engage audiences dynamically and influence consumer behavior at multiple touchpoints (Mandagi et al., 2024; Wantah & Mandagi, 2024; Warbung et al., 2023).

The importance of SMM in today's business landscape cannot be overstated. It facilitates direct and immediate interaction with customers, which fosters deeper engagement and long-term loyalty (Demircioglu et al., 2021; Waworuntu et al., 2022). Moreover, it plays a vital role in brand building by generating visibility, trust, and emotional connection with target audiences (Warbung et al., 2023; Sijabat et al., 2022). Compared to traditional advertising, SMM is a more cost-efficient option, allowing organizations to achieve broad outreach with lower financial investment (Amrita & Mohan, 2016). Additionally, it significantly shapes consumer behavior and purchasing decisions, especially among younger demographics who are highly active online (Waworuntu et al., 2022; Sijabat et al., 2022; Wantah & Mandagi, 2024). Ultimately, businesses that harness SMM strategically gain a competitive edge by fostering meaningful relationships and acquiring insights into their audiences (Mandagi & Aseng, 2021; Mandagi et al., 2024).

2.2 Social Media Marketing in Higher Education

The use of social media in higher education has grown significantly, not just as a tool for communication and instruction, but also as a strategic channel for marketing and institutional branding. Institutions are increasingly leveraging platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube to promote academic programs, engage with students, and enhance their visibility. Social media marketing (SMM) in this context serves to attract prospective students, improve institutional reputation, and foster a sense of community within and beyond the campus (Kainde & Mandagi, 2023; Marhareita et al., 2022).

Educators and administrators recognize the dual role of social media as both an educational and promotional medium. For instance, Bold and Yadamsuren (2019) highlight how Mongolian university educators view social media as a valuable educational tool, while also acknowledging its role in shaping institutional image. Similarly, Al-Adwan et al. (2020) show that students perceive social media use as having a positive impact on their academic experience, suggesting an opportunity for institutions to market their academic strengths through these channels. Alshehri (2019) adds that instructors find social media tools useful and easy to use, indicating their potential to integrate marketing messages within academic engagement.

The marketing effectiveness of social media in higher education is also linked to how institutions align their content with student expectations and preferences. Research shows that when universities implement strategic and visually engaging social media campaigns, it enhances perceived quality and student satisfaction (Demircioglu et al., 2021). This is especially true for younger generations, such as Gen Z and Millennials, who are highly responsive to digital media. Mandagi and Aseng (2021) and Carundeng et al. (2024) explore this demographic's responsiveness to social media branding efforts, particularly within faith-based institutions, revealing that authenticity and alignment with values are critical to effectiveness.

2.3 Social Media Marketing in Faith-Based Education Institution

Social media marketing (SMM) has increasingly become a pivotal tool for higher education institutions, including faith-based organizations, to attract, engage, and retain students. The effectiveness of SMM in this context is underscored by its ability to reach a vast audience, engage potential students, and promote institutional values. However, despite its growing use, traditional marketing channels still hold more influence in students' decision-making processes, particularly in terms of institutional choice (Juhaidi, 2024). The integration of faith-based elements into these strategies provides a distinct challenge and opportunity for institutions to balance promotional goals with religious identity (Wasif et al., 2024).

Facebook and Instagram stand out as the most effective platforms for SMM in higher education. These platforms offer wide reach and enhanced engagement, making them ideal for disseminating information about programs, student life, and the values central to faith-based institutions. However, despite the reach, the level of interaction with followers remains limited in many institutions, emphasizing the need for more proactive and engaging social media strategies. Faith-based institutions use social media not only for marketing but also for reinforcing identity. For example, Islamic higher education institutions in Indonesia use Facebook and Instagram to promote educational offerings while aligning these promotions with the core values of Islamic teachings (Juhaidi, 2024). Similarly, other religious-based institutions use social media to showcase their commitment to faith, such as through community engagement and advocacy for religious rights. This approach extends beyond mere institutional branding; it becomes a means to advocate for the religious community and attract students who resonate with those values (Wasif et al., 2024).

Faith-based educational institutions are distinct in how they incorporate religious identity into their marketing strategies. Generation Z, for instance, is particularly responsive to institutions that present an authentic narrative, where values align with their own beliefs. This is crucial for faith-based institutions, where promoting a strong religious identity through social media can deepen engagement and enhance the perception of the institution's credibility and mission (Inaray et al., 2024). However, faith-based institutions often face challenges in how they present their faith identity across different platforms (Inaray et al., 2024). While print materials often feature religious elements prominently, online marketing sometimes lacks this emphasis. The challenge lies in ensuring that social media platforms maintain a consistent portrayal of the institution's faith-based mission without alienating non-religious audiences or overemphasizing the faith aspect to the detriment of academic offerings (Carundeng et al., 2024).

Despite the potential benefits, many faith-based institutions still struggle with low engagement rates on social media. This highlights the need for more creative and interactive content that resonates with prospective students. SMM strategies must focus on relationship-building rather than mere promotion, creating content that encourages interaction and fosters a sense of community. Visual content, which appeals more to younger demographics, plays a key role in attracting attention and enhancing engagement. Moreover, institutions must strike

a balance between the various elements of the marketing mix, such as product, price, place, promotion, and people, to maintain a holistic approach that appeals to a diverse audience. Over-representing one aspect—such as promotional content—at the expense of others can lead to disengagement or disinterest among followers. For example, faith-based institutions can combine academic achievements, student stories, and religious practices to create content that resonates with both prospective students and their families (Carundeng et al., 2024).

2.4 Institutional Branding and Communication

Institutional branding and communication play an essential role in how higher education institutions present themselves to prospective students, faculty, and the broader community. Social media has increasingly become a critical component of this branding strategy, offering institutions the ability to engage directly with their target audience and shape their public perception. The effectiveness of social media in shaping an institution's brand, particularly in the context of higher education, is supported by its ability to reach a wide and diverse audience while fostering deeper connections with stakeholders (Carundeng et al., 2024).

Research highlights that SMM activities significantly contribute to shaping students' perceptions of academic performance and institutional reputation. In Jordan, for example, students' perceptions of their academic performance were influenced by social media marketing, indicating that the platform's role goes beyond simple promotion to shaping student attitudes towards academic achievement (Al-Adwan et al., 2020). Similarly, studies focusing on the educational sector suggest that effective use of social media can increase student satisfaction and improve perceptions of institutional quality (Demircioglu et al., 2021). This is important because higher levels of engagement can strengthen the bond between the institution and its audience, creating an environment conducive to positive word-of-mouth, loyalty, and student retention (Walean et al., 2024).

Integrating branding in communications, institutions can shape their brand image through cohesive, well-designed marketing efforts that highlight their academic strengths, campus culture, and unique values (Mandagi & Aseng, 2021). For faith-based institutions, the integration of religious values into the branding process adds an additional layer of complexity. These institutions must balance promoting their academic programs while ensuring that their religious identity remains authentic and resonates with prospective students. Social media platforms provide an ideal space for faith-based institutions to communicate their mission, values, and community-oriented activities. For instance, in the case of Indonesian Islamic universities, social media is used not only for marketing educational offerings but also for demonstrating commitment to religious values, which appeals to students seeking an institution that aligns with their faith (Juhaidi, 2024).

One of the key challenges faced by educational institutions in using social media for branding is maintaining a consistent and engaging presence across multiple platforms. Studies have shown that many institutions struggle with creating meaningful interactions, focusing more on one-way communication rather than building relationships (Bold & Yadamsuren, 2019). Institutions that fail to engage actively with their audience risk losing relevance. Effective communication strategies should, therefore, include regular interaction with followers, responding to inquiries, and fostering community-building activities. This requires institutions to focus on more than just content dissemination—they must focus on creating dialogue, which can be accomplished through personalized responses, live sessions, or even student and faculty-driven content.

The role of social media influencers in institutional branding has also emerged as a significant trend, particularly in shaping public perception and engaging target audiences (Sijabat et al., 2022). Influencers, such as alumni, faculty, and even current students, can lend

credibility to an institution's branding efforts. They can promote the institution's strengths, academic programs, and campus life, reaching their followers in a more personal and trustworthy manner. Moreover, using influencers in marketing strategies helps institutions tap into networks of potential students who may not have otherwise considered the institution.

The communication strategies deployed by educational institutions on social media also play a critical role in shaping their brand awareness, image, and attitudes (Marhareita et al., 2022). These strategies should be designed to reflect the institution's core values and mission while also appealing to the specific needs and interests of prospective students. Faith-based institutions, in particular, can differentiate themselves by clearly communicating their religious foundation, creating an emotional connection with students who share those values. However, they must be careful not to alienate non-religious students or those from diverse backgrounds. This requires a balanced approach to content that speaks to both the academic and spiritual aspects of the institution (Carundeng et al., 2024).

3. Methods

3.1 Research Design

This study adopts a descriptive quantitative research design, which is ideal for providing an accurate and systematic account of phenomena, events, or occurrences, especially in understanding the role of social media in higher education. Descriptive research is particularly suitable for this study, as it allows for the collection of numerical data that can be analyzed statistically to identify patterns and trends within the population (Schindler, 2021). By focusing on a specific group, first-year students at Universitas Klabat, the design aims to generate a clear, objective representation of their perceptions about social media as a tool for educational information. According to Hair et al., (2020), this approach provides a broad understanding of the phenomenon without manipulating variables, making it ideal for studies focused on perception and opinion. Moreover, this design allows the researcher to collect data that can be directly quantified, facilitating statistical analysis for better insights into the subject matter (Saunders et al., 2019).

3.2 Population and Sampling

The study's population comprises students at Universitas Klabat. Universitas Klabat is a private university located in Airmadidi, North Sulawesi. The university began using social media for promotion during the COVID-19 pandemic, as intensive offline promotions became impossible. As a result, Universitas Klabat adapted to the changing market by embracing online promotions via WhatsApp, Instagram, Facebook, Messenger, YouTube, and Twitter. Specifically, this study involves first year students as the respondents. First-year students are in a crucial stage of their educational experience, often relying on social media to navigate and enhance their academic and social lives. According to Ghauri et al., (2020), selecting a sample that accurately reflects the study's context is critical for achieving valid and reliable results. To ensure that every student has an equal opportunity to be selected and to minimize bias, a random sampling technique was employed. This method aligns with the principles of sound sampling procedures outlined by Hair et al. (2020), ensuring representativeness and fairness. The sample size was chosen to be large enough to provide reliable results while being manageable within the study's resource and time constraints. A sufficient sample size is crucial for ensuring the statistical power of the study, as noted by Schindler (2021), ensuring that the findings are both accurate and generalizable.

Based on the data in Table 1, the largest group of respondents is from the Faculty of Economics and Business (Fakultas Ekonomi dan Bisnis), with 73 respondents, accounting for 36.5% of the total sample. The next largest groups are from the Faculty of Nursing (Fakultas Ilmu Keperawatan) with 44 respondents, representing 22%, and the Faculty of Computer

Science (Fakultas Ilmu Komputer) with 42 respondents, representing 21%. Additionally, the Faculty of Philosophy (Fakultas Filsafat) has 18 respondents, accounting for 9% of the sample.

Table 1. Respondents' Demographic Profile

Faculty/College	Frequency	Percent
Faculty of Education	1	0.5
Faculty of Economics and Business	73	36.5
Faculty of Philosophy	18	9
Faculty of Nursing Science	44	22
Faculty of Computer Science	42	21
Faculty of Teacher Training and Education	11	5.5
Faculty of Agriculture	2	1
Philosophy	1	0.5
Computer Science	1	0.5
Nursing Profession	2	1

Source: Processed Primary Data (2024)

3.3 Data and Instrumentation

The data for this study was collected using a structured questionnaire designed in Google Forms. This instrument includes a Likert scale with five response options ranging from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree," allowing the researcher to quantify students' perceptions of social media's role in education. The use of a Likert scale is well-supported in the literature, as it provides a reliable way to measure attitudes and opinions, ensuring consistency across respondents (Saunders et al., 2019). The questionnaire was developed based on insights from previous studies on social media marketing and educational perceptions, ensuring its relevance to the research questions. According to Ghauri et al. (2020), such instruments are effective in capturing complex variables, such as attitudes and perceptions, in a structured manner. The data collected was then processed using simple linear regression to analyze the relationships between variables, further enabling the researcher to explore the predictive power of social media perceptions on students' academic experiences.

3.4 Data Collection Technique

The data collection for this study was conducted through an online survey administered via Google Forms, a tool that allows for efficient data gathering and management. This method is consistent with current research practices, where online surveys have proven effective in reaching a broad audience and facilitating quick responses (Hair et al., 2020). To recruit respondents, the survey was distributed through email and university announcements, ensuring that all first-year students were informed and invited to participate. The recruitment strategy is aligned with best practices for maximizing response rates, as outlined by Schindler (2021). To further increase participation, reminder emails were sent, and incentives were offered, such as entry into a raffle for a prize, which has been shown to encourage higher response rates (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2019). Ethical concerns were thoroughly addressed by ensuring anonymity and confidentiality, as well as obtaining informed consent from all participants. This process adheres to ethical standards in research, safeguarding participants' rights and maintaining trust in the research process, as emphasized by Ghauri et al. (2020).

3.5 Data Analysis and Procedure

Data analysis was conducted using descriptive statistics, which allowed for the summarization of large amounts of data into meaningful patterns and insights. Descriptive statistics, such as means and frequencies, were used to present the overall trends in students' perceptions of social media's role in education (Hair et al., 2020). The data was processed using Microsoft Excel, enabling easy organization and visualization of the results. The analysis also involved the application of simple linear regression to identify the relationship between students' perceptions of social media and their academic experiences. This technique is consistent with best practices in quantitative research, where regression analysis helps identify and quantify the impact of independent variables (Schindler, 2021). According to Saunders et al. (2019), the use of descriptive statistics in this context enables a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon, while regression analysis adds depth by exploring the predictive relationships between variables.

The data analysis and interpretation process involved evaluating respondents' feedback on several key aspects of Universitas Klabat's social media marketing efforts, including promotion attractiveness, the impact of reviews, product uniqueness, trustworthiness, and the likelihood of recommending the university's offerings. Each statement was rated on a scale from 1 to 5, allowing respondents to express their perceptions of these factors. The results were analyzed by calculating the percentage of respondents who selected each score, with particular attention paid to the formula for calculating response percentages:

$$\text{Total Score (response percentage)} = \frac{\text{Actual Score}}{\text{Ideal Score}} \text{ X 100\%}$$

This calculation enabled the comparison of actual responses to the ideal scale, facilitating the categorization of responses based on a predefined rating system (Schindler, 2021). By using response percentages, categories such as "Very Good," "Good," and "Not Good" were assigned, making the data easier to interpret. This approach provided a clear understanding of how participants rated each statement, with corresponding response scores derived for further analysis. The insights gained helped evaluate the effectiveness of the university's social media marketing, identifying both strengths and areas for potential improvement. Combining descriptive statistics with linear regression, this methodology adheres to the best practices for analyzing survey data in business research (Ghauri et al., 2020; Hair et al., 2020), ensuring a comprehensive analysis of the responses.

4. Results And Discussion

4.1 Attractiveness of the Social Media Advertisement

Table 2 presents the respondents' perception of the attractiveness of the University of Klabat's advertisement based on respondents' perceptions. The table includes three key statements regarding the appeal of the advertisement, such as its comparative attractiveness to other university ads, the harmony of colors in the design, and the effectiveness of the storyline in engaging viewers. Each statement is evaluated using a Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The table details the frequency and percentage of responses for each rating, as well as the corresponding response scores. The ideal score represents the theoretical maximum for each statement, allowing for a comparison of actual respondent feedback against this benchmark.

Table 3. Students' Perception of Advertisement Attractiveness

No	Statement	Weight	%	Response Score	Ideal Score

1	The advertisement of Universitas Klabat is more attractive than the advertisements of other universities.	5	17%	170	10000
		4	47%	372	
		3	28%	165	
		2	7%	26	
		1	3%	5	
2	The color harmony in the Universitas Klabat advertisement is artistically appealing (pleasant to look at).	5	23%	230	10000
		4	53%	420	
		3	18%	105	
		2	5%	18	
		1	3%	5	
3	The story in the Universitas Klabat advertisement draws me into the narrative.	5	11%	110	10000
		4	43%	344	
		3	34%	201	
		2	9%	34	
		1	4%	8	
4	The Universitas Klabat advertisement portrays personality.	5	19%	190	10000
		4	41%	324	
		3	30%	180	
		2	8%	30	
		1	3%	6	
5	The message conveyed by the Universitas Klabat advertisement about the university's products is useful.	5	19%	190	10000
		4	39%	308	
		3	30%	177	
		2	8%	30	
		1	3%	6	
6	The music (song) in the Universitas Klabat advertisement is appealing (pleasant to listen to).	5	28%	275	10000
		4	49%	388	
		3	15%	90	
		2	5%	20	
		1	4%	8	
7	The music (song) in the Universitas Klabat advertisement is clear and audible.	5	26%	255	10000
		4	51%	408	
		3	14%	81	
		2	5%	18	
		1	6%	11	
8	The words (voice) in the Universitas Klabat advertisement are easy to understand.	5	23%	230	10000
		4	53%	420	
		3	17%	99	
		2	5%	20	
		1	3%	6	
9	The words (text) in the Universitas Klabat advertisement are clear and easy to read.	5	26%	255	10000
		4	57%	456	
		3	12%	72	
		2	4%	14	
		1	2%	4	
10	I remember the slogan of Universitas Klabat "Pathway to Excellence."	5	34%	335	10000
		4	38%	300	
		3	18%	108	
		2	7%	28	
		1	4%	7	

Source: Data Processed by the Authors (2024)

4.1.1. Attractiveness of the Advertisement

The results in table 2show that 47% of respondents rated the Universitas Klabat advertisement highly (4), with 17% giving it the highest rating (5). This suggests that a significant portion of the audience finds the advertisement to be more attractive than those of other universities. However, 28% rated it a 3, indicating a moderate level of appeal, while only a small percentage (7% and 3%) gave it lower ratings of 2 and 1, respectively.

The results align with the AIDA Model (Attention, Interest, Desire, Action), which highlights that attracting attention is the first step in any advertisement's effectiveness. As Demircioglu et al. (2021**)** assert, the ability of an advertisement to attract attention is key to initiating consumer engagement, especially in the context of digital marketing. Universitas Klabat's advertisement appears successful in capturing attention, a critical factor in the competitive world of university advertising. Additionally, Mandagi & Aseng (2021) emphasize that visual elements, such as the design and structure of an advertisement, play a crucial role in engagement. Therefore, the positive feedback on the advertisement's attractiveness suggests it is well-designed and effective in catching the viewer's eye

4.1.2. Color Harmony and Artistic Appeal

A majority of respondents (53%) found the color harmony in the Universitas Klabat advertisement to be artistically appealing, with 23% rating it the highest (5). Additionally, 18% gave it a moderate rating of 3, and a small percentage gave it a 2 or 1, indicating a high level of satisfaction with the visual appeal of the advertisement's colors. The results confirm the importance of color in advertisement effectiveness. Mandagi & Aseng (2021) argue that color harmony in advertisements contributes significantly to emotional appeal, making the ad more pleasant and memorable for the audience. The Emotional Response Theory suggests that aesthetically pleasing colors trigger positive emotional reactions, which can influence consumer behavior and perceptions. The positive response to color harmony in Universitas Klabat's advertisement supports the notion that thoughtful color choices enhance the viewer's experience, which can drive engagement and improve brand perception.

4.1.3. Storytelling in the Advertisement

The narrative aspect of the advertisement engaged 43% of respondents (rating 4) and 11% gave it the highest rating (5). However, a sizable portion of respondents (34%) rated it a 3, suggesting a moderate level of engagement with the story. Only a few respondents gave it a rating of 2 or 1, indicating that the narrative generally succeeded in drawing interest but could be improved.

Storytelling in advertising plays a key role in creating emotional connections with the audience. According to Al-Adwan et al. (2020), a well-crafted narrative can engage viewers emotionally and foster brand loyalty. Mandagi & Sondakh (2022), further supports this idea, stating that a compelling story can lead to central route processing, where the audience actively engages with the message. While the narrative in this advertisement appears to be moderately engaging, increasing the emotional depth and relatability of the story could enhance its effectiveness (Walean et al., 2024). Similarly Jiang et al. (2023) and Pongoh & Mandagi (2025) suggest that more compelling stories are likely to create stronger viewer connections.

4.1.4. Portrayal of Personality in the Advertisement

The advertisement's portrayal of personality was rated positively, with 41% of respondents rating it 4, and 19% giving it the highest score of 5. While the majority appreciated the advertisement's personality, 30% of respondents gave it a 3, suggesting a

more neutral perception, and 11% rated it lower (2 or 1), indicating that some viewers may not have connected with the brand's personality.

The Brand Personality Theory emphasizes that consumers often engage with brands that have a personality they can relate to, which can increase emotional attachment and brand loyalty. Jiang et al. (2023) argue that portraying a brand's personality in advertisements helps humanize the brand, making it more relatable. Universitas Klabat's advertisement appears successful in projecting a personality that resonates with some viewers, although increasing the distinctiveness and relatability of the personality portrayed could strengthen its emotional appeal and deepen consumer engagement, as suggested by Sijabat et al. (2022).

4.1.5. Clarity and Usefulness of the Message

The advertisement's portrayal of personality was rated positively, with 41% of respondents rating it 4, and 19% giving it the highest score of 5. While the majority appreciated the advertisement's personality, 30% of respondents gave it a 3, suggesting a more neutral perception, and 11% rated it lower (2 or 1), indicating that some viewers may not have connected with the brand's personality. Jiang et al. (2023) argue that portraying a brand's personality in advertisements helps humanize the brand, making it more relatable. Universitas Klabat's advertisement appears successful in projecting a personality that resonates with some viewers, although increasing the distinctiveness and relatability of the personality portrayed could strengthen its emotional appeal and deepen consumer engagement, as suggested by Sijabat et al. (2022)

4.1.6. Music Appeal and Sound Clarity

The music used in the advertisement was highly appreciated, with 49% rating it 4 and 28% rating it 5. Only a small percentage of respondents gave it lower ratings (2 and 1), indicating that the music was generally appealing and contributed positively to the overall advertisement. According to Warbung et al. (2023), the emotional appeal of music is a crucial factor in advertising effectiveness, as it can enhance mood and strengthen the viewer's emotional connection with the brand. The Affective Response Theory suggests that music has the power to evoke emotions that align with the brand's message, improving recall and engagement. The positive response to the music in the Universitas Klabat advertisement demonstrates that the music contributed significantly to its effectiveness, further validating the importance of choosing the right soundtrack to enhance the emotional impact of an ad.

The clarity of the music was rated positively, with 51% of respondents rating it 4, and 26% giving it the highest score (5). The small percentage (5% and 6%) of respondents who rated it lower suggests that the music was generally clear and audible, contributing effectively to the advertisement. As Zuhdi et al. (2019) state, clarity in music is essential for ensuring that the message of the advertisement is not overshadowed or lost. Mandagi & Centeno (2024) suggests that the combination of clear auditory cues (like music) with visual stimuli enhances overall customer perception and experience. The positive response to the clarity of the music indicates that Universitas Klabat's advertisement successfully balanced the auditory and visual elements, making the advertisement both engaging and easy to follow.

4.1.7. Clarity of Verbal and Written Content

The clarity of the text in the advertisement received high ratings, with 57% of respondents giving it a rating of 4 and 26% rating it 5. The small percentage of respondents who rated it lower (2 and 1) indicates that the text was generally perceived as clear and easy to read. Clear and legible text is essential in ensuring that viewers can easily process the information presented in an advertisement. Kainde & Mandagi (2023) note that text clarity is a fundamental element of effective advertising, especially on social media platforms where

attention spans are shorter. Carundeng et al., (2024 suggests that advertisements with clear text reduce cognitive load, making it easier for the audience to absorb and retain information. The positive results in this area indicate that Universitas Klabat's advertisement was successful in delivering its message through clear and accessible text.

4.1.8. Brand Recognition

The recall of the slogan, "Pathway to Excellence," was strong, with 34% of respondents remembering it, and 38% rating it 4. Only a small percentage (7% and 4%) rated it lower, indicating that the slogan was memorable for most viewers. Zuhdi et al. (2019) suggest that memorable slogans are central to building brand awareness and recall. The Brand Recall Theory asserts that slogans are a key tool in creating long-term associations with a brand. The strong recall of the slogan "Pathway to Excellence" indicates that it effectively captured the essence of the university's brand and left a lasting impression on viewers. This aligns with Poluan et al. (2022), who highlight the importance of a catchy, memorable slogan in driving brand recognition and audience engagement.

4.2 Attrractiveness of Social Media Marketing

Table 3 presents the respondents' evaluations of the effectiveness of social media marketing by Universitas Klabat. The table summarizes their responses to five key statements regarding the attractiveness, credibility, uniqueness, and overall recommendation of the university's social media promotions. Each statement is rated on a five-point Likert scale, with scores ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The total response scores and percentage distribution for each statement are shown, offering insight into how well Universitas Klabat's social media marketing efforts are perceived by the respondents.

Table 3. Students' Perception of SMM's Attractiveness

No	Statement	Weight	F	f (%)	Response Score	Ideal Score
1	The promotion conducted by Universitas Klabat through social media is very attractive.	5	43	22%	215	5000
		4	88	44%	352	
		3	54	27%	162	
		2	8	4%	16	
		1	7	4%	7	
2	I believe that positive comments/reviews will change other customers' perceptions about Universitas Klabat.	5	45	23%	225	5000
		4	118	59%	472	
		3	26	13%	78	
		2	5	3%	10	
		1	6	3%	6	
3	Universitas Klabat's products introduce unique new services supported by the best quality, making them trending on social media.	5	34	17%	170	5000
		4	99	50%	396	
		3	51	26%	153	
		2	9	5%	18	
		1	6	3%	6	
4	Universitas Klabat's products through social media provide good and trustworthy service.	5	46	23%	230	5000
		4	101	51%	404	
		3	41	21%	123	

		2	6	3%	12	
		1	6	3%	6	
5	I would recommend Universitas Klabat's products to other customers.	5	53	27%	265	5000
		4	93	47%	372	
		3	31	16%	93	
		2	10	5%	20	
		1	8	4%	8	
Total Score					**3819**	
% of Response Score					**76%**	

Source: Data Processed by the Authors (2024)

The total response score is 3,819 out of a possible 5,000, which represents 76% of the ideal score. This indicates a generally positive reception of Universitas Klabat's social media marketing and product offerings. Respondents showed a strong belief in the attractiveness of the promotion, the influence of positive reviews, the uniqueness of the products, the trustworthiness of the service, and their willingness to recommend the university's products. However, there remains some room for improvement, especially in areas such as product uniqueness and trust.

4.2.1. The Attractiveness of Promotion on Social Media

The promotion conducted by Universitas Klabat through social media was rated positively by a large portion of respondents. Forty-four percent gave it a rating of 4, and 22% rated it 5. This indicates that the majority found the social media promotion to be attractive. However, 27% rated it a 3, suggesting that there is still room for improvement, with a small percentage (4%) rating it lower (2 and 1).

The positive perception of the promotion's attractiveness is consistent with Mandagi et al. (2021), who argue that well-crafted social media campaigns can significantly increase brand visibility and attractiveness. Social Media Marketing Theory suggests that the visual appeal and content quality of a promotion directly impact user engagement and perception. Universitas Klabat's social media campaign appears successful in capturing attention, but enhancing the aesthetic or content strategy could further increase its appeal, as suggested by Demircioglu et al. (2021).

4.2.2. Influence of Positive Comments/Reviews

The impact of positive comments or reviews on changing perceptions was strongly supported, with 59% of respondents rating it 4 and 23% rating it 5. This indicates a widespread belief that positive reviews have a significant influence on consumer perceptions. Only 13% rated it a 3, and a small portion (3% each) rated it lower.

The strong belief in the influence of positive reviews aligns with Al-Adwan et al. (2020), who suggest that consumer reviews on social media play a critical role in shaping brand perceptions and purchasing decisions. Electronic Word of Mouth (eWOM) theory further supports this, indicating that reviews, especially positive ones serve as a powerful tool in altering consumer attitudes and behavior. Given that a majority of respondents agree with this view, Universitas Klabat can leverage positive reviews to boost its reputation on social media platforms.

4.2.3. Product Uniqueness and Trending on Social Media

The product's uniqueness and quality, driving social media trends, received a positive response. Fifty percent rated it 4, and 17% rated it 5. A significant portion (26%) rated it a 3, indicating that while many respondents saw the product as unique and quality-driven, there is still a portion who found the offering less compelling. A smaller percentage (8%) rated it lower.

This response aligns with Jiang et al. (2023), who emphasize that unique products that stand out due to quality and innovation are more likely to trend on social media. The Product Differentiation Theory supports this, stating that distinguishing a product through quality and innovation helps attract attention and drive consumer interest, especially in the competitive space of social media marketing. Universitas Klabat's focus on offering unique services could enhance its trendiness, further bolstered by social media's viral nature.

4.2.4. Trustworthiness of Products Through Social Media

Trust in the service provided through social media by Universitas Klabat was positively rated, with 51% giving it a score of 4 and 23% giving it a 5. While a significant number rated it positively, 21% of respondents gave it a 3, indicating some skepticism or indifference, and a small number gave it lower ratings (3% each for 2 and 1).

The results emphasize the importance of trust in digital marketing, particularly in the context of social media. Demircioglu et al. (2021) argue that trust is a crucial factor in determining the effectiveness of social media marketing. The Trustworthiness Theory suggests that consumers are more likely to engage with brands that they perceive as reliable and honest. As social media is often seen as a platform for transparency, ensuring that Universitas Klabat's services are presented authentically and consistently can enhance trust and strengthen customer loyalty.

4.2.5. Willingness to Recommend the Products

A majority of respondents (47%) would recommend Universitas Klabat's products to others, rating it 4, and 27% gave it a 5, showing a strong level of satisfaction and advocacy. However, 16% rated it a 3, and 9% gave it lower scores (5% for 2 and 4% for 1), indicating that while most are willing to recommend, there is still a portion of the audience who are less enthusiastic.

The willingness to recommend the products reflects a high level of customer satisfaction and loyalty. According to Sijabat et al. (2022), the likelihood of recommending a product is a key indicator of brand advocacy, which is often driven by positive experiences. Customer Satisfaction Theory highlights that when customers are satisfied with a product or service, they are more likely to share their experiences with others, thus amplifying the brand's reputation. The positive responses in this case show that Universitas Klabat's marketing efforts have effectively created customer advocates who are likely to spread positive word-of-mouth.

5. Conclusions

Based on the analysis of the results, it is clear that Universitas Klabat's social media marketing efforts have been largely successful in positively influencing customer perceptions and engagement. The promotion conducted via social media was generally rated as attractive, with a majority of respondents expressing that positive comments and reviews can significantly change perceptions about the university. Additionally, respondents appreciated the uniqueness and quality of the products, perceiving them as both trending and supported by reliable, trustworthy services. The university's social media marketing has also cultivated a strong level of customer advocacy, with a notable proportion of respondents willing to recommend the university's products to others.

However, while the results demonstrate a favorable overall response, there is still room for improvement. A segment of respondents expressed more neutral or lower perceptions, particularly regarding the uniqueness of the products and the trustworthiness of the services. These areas could benefit from more targeted strategies to further enhance customer satisfaction and build stronger brand loyalty.

In light of these findings, Universitas Klabat should continue to refine its social media marketing approach by focusing on increasing product differentiation, enhancing trust-building initiatives, and leveraging customer testimonials to further solidify positive perceptions. The insights gained from these responses can be used to guide future marketing efforts and ensure that the university maintains a competitive edge in the ever-evolving landscape of social media marketing.

While this study provides valuable insights into the effectiveness of Universitas Klabat's social media marketing, it is not without its limitations. First, the study is based on a specific sample of respondents, which may not fully represent the entire population of prospective students or other stakeholders. As a result, the findings may lack generalizability to broader or different demographic groups. Second, the data is cross-sectional, meaning it only captures perceptions at a single point in time. This limits the ability to track changes in attitudes or perceptions over time, which would be important for assessing the long-term impact of social media marketing strategies. Third, the study primarily focuses on quantitative data, and as such, does not explore in-depth qualitative insights into why respondents feel a particular way about the university's social media marketing. A more comprehensive qualitative approach could have added richness to the findings and provided a deeper understanding of the underlying factors driving perceptions.

Future research could address the limitations mentioned above by expanding the sample size to include a broader range of respondents, ensuring greater representativeness across different demographic groups, and perhaps even including international students to understand global perspectives. Longitudinal studies could be conducted to assess changes in perceptions over time and determine the lasting effects of social media marketing on brand loyalty and customer engagement. Furthermore, incorporating qualitative methods, such as interviews or focus groups, would allow for a deeper exploration of participants' attitudes, motivations, and experiences with the university's social media presence. Future studies could also examine the role of specific social media platforms and tools in shaping the effectiveness of marketing strategies, given that different platforms may influence different user groups in unique ways. Lastly, expanding the research to include a comparison with other universities' social media marketing strategies could provide a benchmark for Universitas Klabat and highlight areas for improvement or further innovation.

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