

Instagram activities, engagement and enrollment intention in Indonesia: A case in the third largest island in the world

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: This study investigates the influence of diverse Instagram activities (entertainment, interaction, trendiness, advertisement and customization) on engagement levels and enrollment intention. Additionally, it aims to determine the impact of engagement on enrollment intention by exploring the mediating role of engagement in the relationship between social media activities and enrollment intention.

Design/Methodology/Approach: The research involved 627 followers of the Antasari State Islamic University Banjarmasin Indonesia Instagram account. This study uses path analysis to better understand the impact of Instagram activities on enrollment intention and multiple linear regression to evaluate the influence of Instagram activities on enrollment intention with an emphasis on engagement as a mediating element in this relationship.

Findings: The study found that Ig activity affects followers' engagement from all backgrounds. Entertainment and interaction elements have an impact on high school students' tendency to engage with followers. Furthermore, engagement affects enrollment intention. Advertisement affects enrollment intention with engagement as a mediator.

Conclusion: This study validates previous research on Instagram (Ig) marketing's impact on engagement in education. It underscores the greater complexity of Ig marketing in education than in business where enrollment decisions involve intricate considerations resulting in a generally lower influence of social media marketing on enrollment outcomes.

Research Limitations: This study only focused on the Ig account of one university and was limited to Islamic higher education.

Practical Implications: Higher education marketing administrators recommended combining social media marketing variables with other factors influencing university choice.

Contribution to the Literature: This study finding has a conceptual contribution to higher education especially in social media marketing.

Keywords: *Advertisement, Customization, Engagement, Enrollment intention, Entertainment, Interaction, Trendiness.*

1. INTRODUCTION

The trend towards using social media is not only in the business sector but also in higher education. Around 88% of companies use social media as a marketing medium in the business sector. In the education sector, the top 25 higher education (HE) institutions in Asia and Africa use social media as a promotional channel (Paladan, 2018). All universities in the United States have used social media as their marketing channel (Barnes, 2012). Social media is an effective tool to attract new students by providing information about universities, registration procedures and other things related to universities (Assimakopoulos, Antoniadis, Kayas, & Dvizac, 2017).

The relationship between social media's popularity and its impact on behavioural patterns is complex. There is concern about the possibility that people might be manipulated or even controlled by these platforms (Adhikari, 2022; Samy, 2022). Notably, social media addiction and excessive internet use have been connected with adverse mental health outcomes such as loneliness, anxiety and desperation (Abdullah, Bajwa, Jaafar, & Samah, 2023; Hammad & Awed, 2023). Social media has an impact on purchasing decisions, brand awareness, profits, customer service, loyalty and competitive dynamics from a marketing standpoint in the business sector (Zhao, 2022). It also

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shapes brand image (Albert, Nusair, Wang, Okumus, & Bilgihan, 2020) and builds brand equity (Koay, Ong, Khoo, & Yeoh, 2020). Additionally, social media marketing plays a crucial role in influencing purchase intentions, customer satisfaction and brand loyalty (Emini & Zeqiri, 2021; Shah et al., 2022; Wijayaa et al., 2021; Yasa, 2021).

The two most prominent social media platforms are Facebook (Fb) and Instagram (Ig) which boast a global user base that reached 60.6% of the total population in July 2023. Facebook (Fb) has approximately 2.989 billion users while Instagram (Ig) had 1.628 billion (Global Social Media Statistics, 2023). Notably, in Indonesia, Facebook (Fb) had 194,300,000 users and Instagram (Ig) had 111,187,100 users in September 2023. Despite Facebook's (Fb) more extensive user base, Instagram (Ig) is a more suitable channel for higher education social media marketing as it is dominated by users aged 18 to 24 aligning with the target demographic for college marketing (Sharma, 2023). Instagram (Ig) is more effective at connecting and engaging with young people because of its emphasis on visual material such as images and videos (Manthanam, Sanghvi, Saini, Patel, & Agarwal, 2022; Yew, Suhaidi, Seewoosurn, & Sevamalai, 2018). Additionally, Instagram's (Ig) focus on visual content fosters higher follower engagement compared to text-centric platforms (Li & Xie, 2020; Schreiner, Fischer, & Riedl, 2021; Stuart, Stuart, & Thelwall, 2017) contributing to its rapid expansion (Al-Qaysi, Mohamad-Nordin, & Al-Emran, 2020). Qualitative research conducted by Wiryany, Poedjadi, and Rahmawati (2023) concluded that leveraging social media platforms such as Instagram (Ig), Facebook (Fb) and Google Ad coupled with reduced tuition fees positively impacted student enrollment. Noteworthy topics like events, campus life, COVID-19 information and overall information dominate the content on university Instagram (Ig) accounts (Ramadanty & Syafganti, 2021). Furthermore, social media marketing activities, encompassing entertainment, information, interactivity, personalization, trendiness and word-of-mouth (WOM) significantly influence higher education engagement (Ruangkanjanases, Sivarak, Wibowo, & Chen, 2022). The connection between students and their university's social media accounts often cultivates a perception of a high-quality relationship with the institution (Clark, Fine, & Scheuer, 2017). Social media marketing also plays a crucial role in shaping higher education brands (Bharti, 2016; Garza & Vela, 2019; Ibrahim & Aljarah, 2023; Perera, Nayak, & Nguyen, 2023). Social media is a useful tool to interact with young people but it may not always promote academic or scientific endeavors (Mazurek, Korzyński, & Górska, 2019). Additionally, the number of Facebook fans at prestigious universities may not necessarily correlate positively with individual social media engagement (Brech, Messer, Vander Schee, Rauschnabel, & Ivens, 2017).

These studies have not focused on Ig, engagement or enrollment intention in universities. These three things are critical in the context of higher education marketing. Studies on social media especially Ig related to engagement and engagement intention in the education sector still need to be conducted. In general, the study of Ig focuses more on the business world in the context of buying and selling goods or services. Therefore, this research will fill the gap in studies on social media activities particularly Ig, engagement and enrollment intention in Indonesia's higher education context.

Furthermore, this study aims to verify the effect of Ig activity on the engagement of university Ig followers and its effect on the enrollment intention of followers with student status. Therefore, this study aims to verify the effect of Ig activity on enrollment intention through engagement. In particular, the study considers five research questions.

RQ_1: Do Instagram (Ig) activity elements directly influence the engagement intentions of all followers?

RQ_2: Do Ig activity elements directly influence the engagement and enrollment intentions of followers who are high school students?

RQ_3: Does engagement intention influence the enrollment intentions of Ig followers who are high school students?

RQ_4: Do Ig activity elements directly influence the enrollment intentions of followers who are high school students?

RQ_5: Do Ig activity elements influence the enrollment intentions through the engagement intentions of followers who are high school students?

There is a great prospect for this study in terms of its prospective contributions to researchers and real-world applications. Conceptually, it addresses a critical gap in comprehending the intricacies of Instagram (Ig) dynamics, engagement patterns and enrollment intentions within the educational sphere specifically in higher education contexts. Furthermore, its practical implications transcend theoretical realms by providing actionable insights that can inform and shape university management's social media marketing strategies.

The ultimate aim of this study is to enrich the marketing field within higher education by furnishing valuable insights into the impact of Ig on engagement and enrollment intentions. These observations are likely to be extremely important in helping college administrators make thoughtful choices about their social media marketing strategies. This makes the research significantly more valuable in terms of improving strategic ways of applying Ig for efficient enrollment and engagement procedures in the context of higher education.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Social Media Activities

Social media marketing is reflected in the activities on social media. Social media activity is social media content such as text, photos, audio or video that can be accessed and the interaction of that content with the public or their followers. Social media can be regarded pragmatically as an additional facet of digital marketing channels that marketers leverage to engage consumers through advertising (Appel, Grewal, Hadi, & Stephen, 2020). Therefore, social media activities are critical to marketing. Yadav and Rahman (2017) propose four elements to measure social media activity: interactivity, informativeness, personalization, trendiness and word-of-mouth (Koay et al., 2020; Yadav & Rahman, 2017). Other studies stated that social media marketing activities include entertainment, engagement, trendiness, customization and word-of-mouth which is consistent with earlier research (Kim & Ko, 2012; Wibowo, Chen, Wiangin, Ma, & Ruangkanjanases, 2020; Zollo, Filieri, Rialti, & Yoon, 2020). Ismail (2017) sees social media activities in terms of content attractiveness, ease of expressing opinions, trendiness and word-of-mouth (Ismail, 2017). Another opinion states that social media activities include trendiness, customization and word-of-mouth (Ebrahim, 2020). Shareef, Mukerji, Dwivedi, Rana, and Islam (2019) delineate social media content as a fusion of entertainment, informativeness and irritation. This multifaceted nature is further explored through rationality, emotionality and transactional aspects (Hamidreza, Dolan, & Rashidirad, 2021) offering a comprehensive framework for evaluating and understanding the diverse dimensions inherent in social media content. Social media posts can also be viewed based on their "eye-catching presentation". "Social media content can be assessed through its "visually striking display" "compelling message" and "clarity of communication"(Cheng, Lam, & Chiu, 2020). In contrast, Dolega, Rowe, and Branagan (2021) consider social media activities in terms of the expenses that brands experience (Dolega et al., 2021). The evaluation of social media content can extend to an analysis of content structure explicitly focusing on formats such as images and videos (Hamidreza et al., 2021). Soares, Limongi, and Cohen (2022) conducted an assessment of Facebook content encompassing three key dimensions: (1) attributes associated with the nature of the media such as interactivity and liveliness. (2) Content-specific factors include compensation, emotional appeal, entertainment value and informational content. (3) Posting-related factors comprising the day of the week and the time of day for posting. The activity element mentioned above contains a word-of-mouth element. This element is one indicator of brand loyalty (Garanti & Kissi, 2019; Lau & Lee, 1999). Therefore, word-of-mouth must be appropriately referred to as an element of social media activity. Bilgin's (2018) uses five elements of social media activities: entertainment, interaction, trendiness, advertisement and customization (Bilgin, 2018). Bilgin's (2018) opinion is detailed and comprehensive because it contains aspects of entertainment and advertisement. These two aspects are permanently attached to social media content. Various studies have proven the effects of social media activities. Perceptions of enjoyment and usefulness of Ig accounts affect satisfaction, affecting intent to follow and account recommendations (Casaló, Flavián, & Ibáñez-Sánchez, 2017). Ig activities affect brand equity and loyalty (Park & Namkung, 2022). Social media marketing affects brand engagement (Onuorah, Ojiaku, & Olise, 2022). Informative element of Ig activities impact engagement (Hazzam, 2022). Social media activity can be seen from content and it affects engagement (Hamidreza et al., 2021). Higher education's social media marketing initiatives have an impact on social media account engagement despite the fact that the research is conducted in the context of manufacturing and service enterprises.

Furthermore, this study proposes hypothetical statements which are as follows:

H₁: There is a significant influence of entertainment elements on the engagement intentions of followers of higher education institutions' Instagram accounts.

H₂: There is a significant influence of interaction elements on the engagement intentions of followers of higher education institutions' Instagram accounts.

H₃: There is a significant influence of trendiness elements on the engagement intentions of followers of higher education institutions' Instagram accounts.

H₄: There is a significant influence of the advertisement element on the engagement intentions of followers of higher education institutions' Instagram accounts.

H₅: Customization elements significantly influence the engagement intentions of higher education institution Instagram account followers.

2.2. Engagement and Enrollment Intention

Enrollment intention is based on the theory of planned behavior (TPB). The theory of planned behavior (TPB) is the individual's intention to carry out a particular behavior. It is expected that the aim will be to provide a representation of motivation that will impact behaviour demonstrating the efficacy of the effort and the amount of work required to complete the task (Ajzen, 1991; Sun, 2020). The intention represents a plan of action encompassing behavior and the resolve to act determined by behavioral attitudes, subjective norms and perceived behavioral control (Lavuri, 2022; Shijing Yang, Su, Wang, & Hua, 2019). Furthermore, the mediator of the influence of intention on behavior is actual behavior control. According to him, the factors that actually determine behaviour are internal and include knowledge, abilities, intelligence and physical stamina. External factors include collaboration, resources, money and equipment (Ajzen, 2020). According to Bosnjak, Ajzen, and Schmidt (2020), the inclination to undertake a particular action often serves as a precursor to subsequent behavioral manifestations. Intention acts as a significant antecedent to behavior. Students harbouring the intention to enroll are inclined to endeavor towards applying for college admission. Individuals harboring intentions to actively participate in social media interactions and pursue enrollment exhibit a greater propensity to translate these intentions into observable behaviors. Cultivating a competitive edge in higher education faces significant challenges due to the profound impact of social media's pervasive influence (Mohamed Hashim, Tlemsani, & Matthews, 2022). The influence of social media also occurs in higher education marketing. Studies of engagement and enrollment intention show that the two variables are related. Brand engagement on social media is a behavior that reflects closeness to the brand. Social media engagement can be seen from following, commenting, liking, tagging and mentioning friends about products or services as well as other positive activities on the company's social media account pages (Hughes, Swaminathan, & Brooks, 2019; Pentina, Guilloux, & Micu, 2018). Engagement fosters strong connections and trust between parties demonstrating emotional bonds (Agnihotri, 2020) consequently boosting enrollment intention. When the number of people involved in social media content increases, the number of people affected by social media will also increase (Singh, Kumar, Rawat, Khosla, & Mehendale, 2020). Consumers with high brand engagement reflected greater brand loyalty (Kevin, King, Sparks, & Wang, 2016; Rasmus, 2021) and word-of-mouth (Vivek, Beatty, & Morgan, 2012). Engaging with customers through social media platforms signifies a sense of proximity with the clientele (students), thereby amplifying brand awareness, fostering trust and cultivating loyalty (Santos, Cheung, Coelho, & Rita, 2022). Word-of-mouth and loyalty are indicators that people have used the service before as well as in the case of higher education institutions have actually attended the university.

Previous research in the business sector supports the idea that increased participation increases the influence social media accounts have over the audience (Arora, Bansal, Kandpal, Aswani, & Dwivedi, 2019). The higher the level of customer engagement on social media impacts on increasing the intention to purchase (Majeed, Asare, Fatawu, & Abubakari, 2022; Tandy, Jesselin, & Sari, 2023; Yoong & Lian, 2019). The cohesiveness with consumers or potential customers is represented by the engagement noticed in Ig which influences the propensity to purchase (Kim, Leung, & McKneely, 2023). Communication with customers through Ig will increase brand trust, equity and loyalty (Samarah, Bayram, Aljuhmani, & Elrehail, 2022) and they influence purchase decisions (Chavadi, Sirothiya, Menon, & MR, 2023). Other findings show that Ig marketing directly and indirectly affects loyalty through social media engagement, e.g., liking, commenting and sharing (Ferliansyah, Pradana, Kartawinata, Wasono, & Wijaksana, 2022). The relationship between Ig content, engagement and desire to visit the university is evidenced by Effendy and Keitaro. They concluded that the university's Ig content will affect engagement on the account which affects the desire to visit the university (Effendy & Keitaro, 2022).

However, social media engagement is not only influenced by social media itself but also by brands. Telepresence, social presence, involvement, cognitive processing, affection and activation with brands correlate with

engagement on Ig (Eizan & Zahar, 2021). In other words, attachment to universities in the real world affects students' attachment to Ig. Research investigating social media marketing indicates a noticeable correlation between engagement and the inclination to make purchasing decisions. Social media activities exert a demonstrable influence on consumer behavior throughout the purchasing process (Saboo, Kumar, & Ramani, 2016). Furthermore, analogous implications extend to tourism wherein social media engagements significantly shape decisions concerning selecting a tourist destination (Liu, Wang, Zhang, & Qiao, 2023). Family activity on social media influences their desire to buy a brand (Xie & Lee, 2015). Ig posts that affect the desire to buy (1) the recreational message, (2) the involvement in the recreational message, (3) commercial advertising, (4) the group to which people aspire to belong, (5) perceived ease of use (Amornpashara, Rompho, & Phadoongsitthi, 2015). Ig can affect behavior and involve feelings (Alim, 2021). It is possible to conclude that social media marketing affects enrollment in higher education despite the fact that the study did not specifically examine how social media marketing affects the purchase of educational services. Starnes and Atkins' research indicated that university Ig content can raise awareness of universities in the context of higher education (Starnes & Atkins, 2020). Diverse outcomes manifest among higher education institutions, physical photos of universities and university location cities, acknowledgment, people, achievements, news and advertisements on university Ig affect engagement. However, their study did not verify the effect of awareness on increased enrollment. According to the findings of Farhat, Mokhtar, and Salleh (2021) there is a clear and significant relationship between social media engagement and interactivity in higher education. This suggests that interaction plays a critical role in encouraging and enhancing user involvement on digital platforms. Social media users are more likely to support educational institutions that are non-profit than for-profit ones (Bernritter, Verlegh, & Smit, 2016). Friendships on Facebook correlate with students' social capital (Ellison, Steinfield, & Lampe, 2007). Brand names of higher-ranking universities on social media affect students' behavioral intentions (Lee, 2023). Wahab, Aqif, and Bint-e-shehzad (2023) found that among e-marketing students, it affects student loyalty with mediator enrolment intention (Wahab et al., 2023). The findings of Wahab et al. (2023) cannot be used as the basis for the influence of e-marketing on enrollment intention because the research participants are students who are already enrolled as college customers. Furthermore, the significance of social media arises prominently due to its cost-effectiveness and efficacy in engaging with the demographic of digital natives, a cohort considered prospective customers in the context of higher education marketing (Wong, Tan, Hew, Ooi, & Leong, 2022). The favorable impact of this phenomenon fosters the widespread adoption of internet marketing strategies encompassing platforms such as social media in higher education across diverse global contexts. This trend is observed as a catalyst for enhancing communication channels and facilitating the recruitment of prospective students universally across nations worldwide (Kisiotek, Karyy, & Halkiv, 2021). The literature review validates that study on social media and enrollment intention in high school students as potential customers have yet to be verified. The study was limited to business and did not predict enrollment intention in senior high school students. The above theoretical review became the basis for establishing the hypothesis of this study. They are

H₆: There is a significant influence of entertainment elements on the engagement intentions of followers of higher education institution Instagram accounts with high school student status.

H₇: There is a significant influence of the interaction element on the engagement intentions of followers of higher education institution Instagram accounts with high school student status.

H₈: There is a significant influence of trendiness elements on the engagement intentions of followers of Instagram accounts of higher education institutions with high school student status.

H₉: There is a significant influence of the advertisement element on the engagement intentions of followers of higher education institution Instagram accounts with high school student status.

H₁₀: There is a significant influence of customization elements on the engagement intentions of followers of Instagram accounts of higher education institutions with high school student status.

H₁₁: There is a significant influence of entertainment elements on the enrollment intentions of followers of higher education institution Instagram accounts with high school student status.

H₁₂: There is a significant influence of interaction elements on the enrollment intentions of followers of higher education institution Instagram accounts with high school student status.

H₁₃: There is a significant influence of trendiness elements on the enrollment intentions of followers of Instagram accounts of higher education institutions with high school student status.

H₁₄: There is a significant influence of the advertisement element on the enrollment intentions of followers of higher education institution Instagram accounts with high school student status.

H₁₅: There is a significant influence of customization elements on the enrollment intentions of followers of higher education institution Instagram accounts with high school student status.

H₁₆: There is a significant effect of engagement intention on the enrollment intentions of followers of higher education institution Instagram accounts with high school student status.

Previous studies have also explained that social media activity does not affect enrollment intentions directly. Social media involvement has been shown in the business sector to have an impact on purchase intentions through social media marketing (Mudassir & Toor, 2017). With a focus on Ig, Ghiffari and Millanyani (2022) found that Ig marketing affects purchasing intention through engagement (Ghiffari & Millanyani, 2022). Not much different, W. H. Haji et al. concluded that involvement acts as a mediator between purchase intention and the intensity of Ig content (Haji, Shandy, Afifa, & Islam, 2023). Therefore, the engagement intention variable is a mediator variable of the influence of Ig activity on enrollment intention. Our studies enable us to offer the following hypotheses:

H₁₇: There is a significant influence of entertainment elements on enrollment intention through engagement intention among followers of higher education institution Instagram accounts who are high school students.

H₁₈: There is a significant influence of interaction elements on enrollment intention through engagement intention among followers of higher education institution Instagram accounts who are high school students.

H₁₉: There is a significant influence of trendiness elements on enrollment intention through engagement intention among followers of higher education institution Instagram accounts who are high school students.

H₂₀: There is a significant influence of the advertisement element on enrollment intention through engagement intention among followers of higher education institution Instagram accounts who are high school students.

H₂₁: Customization elements significantly influence enrollment intention through engagement intention among followers of higher education institution Instagram accounts who are high school students.

A framework based on the reviewed literature above describes the relationship between this study's variables. The framework guides answering the proposed hypotheses. The research framework can be seen in Figure 1.

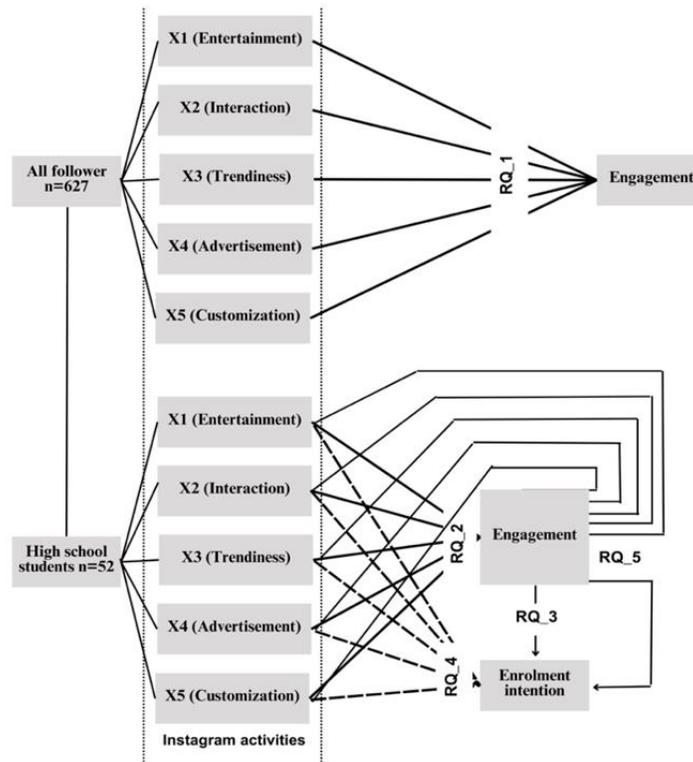


Figure 1. Research framework.

3. METHOD

3.1. Study Design

This research is field research with a quantitative approach. This research is an online survey. Surveys conducted online are faster, less expensive and functionally identical to paper-based surveys (Nayak & Narayan, 2019). However, online surveys have the disadvantage of low responses and the possibility of bias (Arafa, Anzengruber, Mostafa, & Navarini, 2019). The questionnaire link and request are sent through direct message to followers of the Antasari State Islamic University Instagram account. The response rate will rise if the invitation is sent to possible participants directly (Sammut, Griscti, & Norman, 2021).

3.2. Participants

The participants of this study were followers of the Instagram account (lg) of Antasari State Islamic University (@uinantasariibjm), the most prominent Islamic higher education (IHE) institution on the third largest island in the world. The @uinantasariibjm was chosen for two reasons. The first reason is that @uinantasariibjm has the most posts among universities in Kalimantan Island, Indonesia. The second reason is that @uinantasariibjm became the lg account of IHE with the most followers among Islamic higher education on Kalimantan Island, the third largest island in the world.

Researchers used convenience sampling with snowballing and non-opportunity sampling methods to determine which participants to sample. Convenience sampling is appropriate since it is challenging to locate and identify this research sample. This method allows data to be collected from anyone in the population who is willing to participate (Scholtz, 2021). The weakness of the convenience sampling method is that the sample needs to be more representative. However, it can be reduced by the clarity of the sample selection process and participant information (McEwan, 2020). We use the non-opportunity sampling method because we do not know the specifics of the population and participants are subjectively selected (Berndt, 2020).

Researchers send followers of the @uinantasariibjm questionnaires and the followers voluntarily respond. 627 responses to the post were received out of 30.6 thousand followers (August 2022). Of the 627 participants, only 8% were students. The number of high school students who become lg followers will be discussed in the discussion section. The participants' backgrounds can be seen in Figure 2.

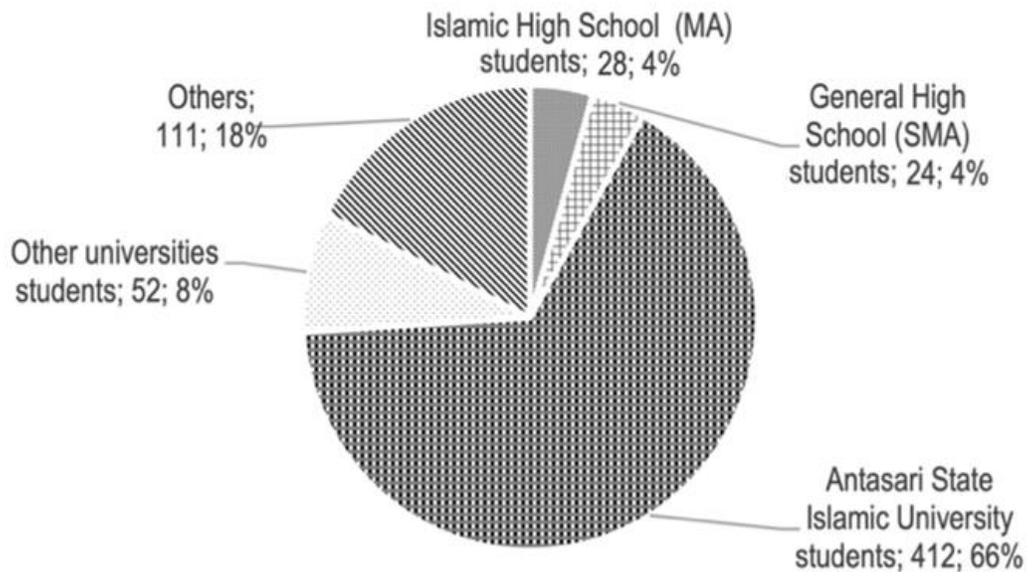


Figure 2. Research participants.

Note: MA= Madrasah Aliyah; SMA= Sekolah Menengah Atas

3.3. Measurement

Social media activities are measured by five activities namely social media marketing, including entertainment activities, interaction, trends, advertising and customization. Participants' answers were on a four-scale scale (1 = strongly disagree, 4 = strongly agree). The item consists of three parts: the participant's identity, social media activities, the intention to respond or engagement intention and enrollment intention. Question items have been tested for validity (sig.<0.005) and reliability (Cronbach alpha > 0.6) to be considered suitable for data collection. Social media activity question items were adopted from the Berndt questionnaire (Berndt, 2020). The question items are:

Social media activities

X1 Entertainment (Cronbach alpha = 0.805).

X1_1 The content shared by the @uinantasariibjm account is fun.

X1_2 The @uinantasariibjm account is interesting.

X2 Interaction (Cronbach alpha = 0.738).

X2_1 I can share information on the @uinantasariibjm account.

X2_2 Discussions and exchanges of opinions were carried out on the @uinantasariibjm account.

X2_3 I can easily express my opinion on the @uinantasariibjm account.

X3 Trendiness (Cronbach alpha = 0.724).

X3_1 The information shared by @uinantasariibjm account is updated.

X3_2 How to use Instagram by @uinantasariibjm according to current trends.

X4 Advertisement (Cronbach alpha = 0.660).

X4_1 The upload and content on the @uinantasariibjm account promoting UIN Antasari caught my attention.

X4_2 I like the upload content on the @uinantasariibjm account that promotes Antasari State Islamic University.

X4_3 The posts and content on the @uinantasariibjm account promoting Antasari State Islamic University influenced my attention to UIN Antasari.

X5 Customization (Cronbach alpha = 0.802).

X5_1 The information I need can be found on the @uinantasariibjm account.

X5_2 I was able to quickly get the information I needed after getting directions on the @uinantasariibjm account.

Z Engagement intention (Cronbach alpha = 0.857).

Z_1 I intend to like, comment on or share the content of the @uinantasariibjm account.

Z_2 I intend to like, comment on or share the content of the @uinantasariibjm account more than other university accounts.

Z_3 I intend to like, comment on or share the posts of the @uinantasariibjm account frequently in the future.

Y Enrolment intention (Cronbach's alpha = 0.865).

Y_1 I intend to register as a student at Antasari State Islamic University Banjarmasin.

Y_2 I intend to continue my education at Antasari State Islamic University Banjarmasin instead of continuing at other universities.

Y_3 I intend to attend lectures at Antasari State Islamic University Banjarmasin earnestly.

The participants were divided into two groups: participants and followers from all backgrounds and high school students' backgrounds. All participants and followers answered items X1, X2, X3, X4, X5, and Z (n=627). In addition, participants who are high school students (n = 52) must answer item Y. The research was conducted through a process as shown in Figure 3.

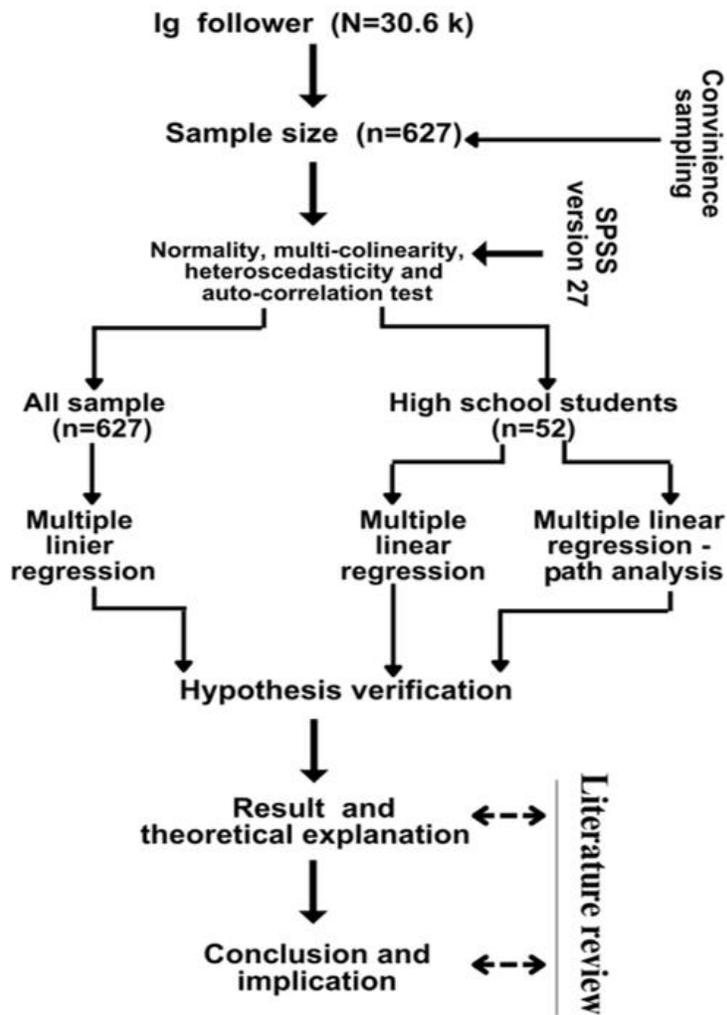


Figure 3. Research process.

4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Result

4.1.1. The Direct Effect of Ig Activities on Engagement (from all followers' perspectives)

Multiple linear regression tests verified the effect of social media activity and proved the effect of Ig activity on follower engagement from all backgrounds of participants. In general, all elements of Instagram (Ig) activity have a significant effect ($\text{sig.} < 0.05$) on the engagement intention of followers of higher education Ig accounts as can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1. Regression analysis results.

| Model | | Unstandardized coefficients | | Standardized coefficients | T | Sig. |
|-------|---------------|-----------------------------|------------|---------------------------|-------|-------|
| | | B | Std. error | Beta | | |
| 1 | (Constant) | 0.978 | 0.372 | | 2.632 | 0.009 |
| | Entertainment | 0.266 | 0.069 | 0.168 | 3.881 | 0.000 |
| | Interaction | 0.147 | 0.039 | 0.150 | 3.818 | 0.000 |
| | Trendiness | 0.156 | 0.069 | 0.102 | 2.275 | 0.023 |
| | Advertisement | 0.214 | 0.051 | 0.183 | 4.232 | 0.000 |
| | Customization | 0.327 | 0.061 | 0.226 | 5.327 | 0.000 |

Dependent variable: engagement

The findings proved that the H1, H2, H3, H4 and H5 hypotheses are acceptable. In other words, all Ig activity factors have a significant effect on Ig engagement. It shows that the better the activity element in the Ig content, the higher the follower engagement on the higher education (HE) institution's Ig account. The test results can be seen in Figure 4.

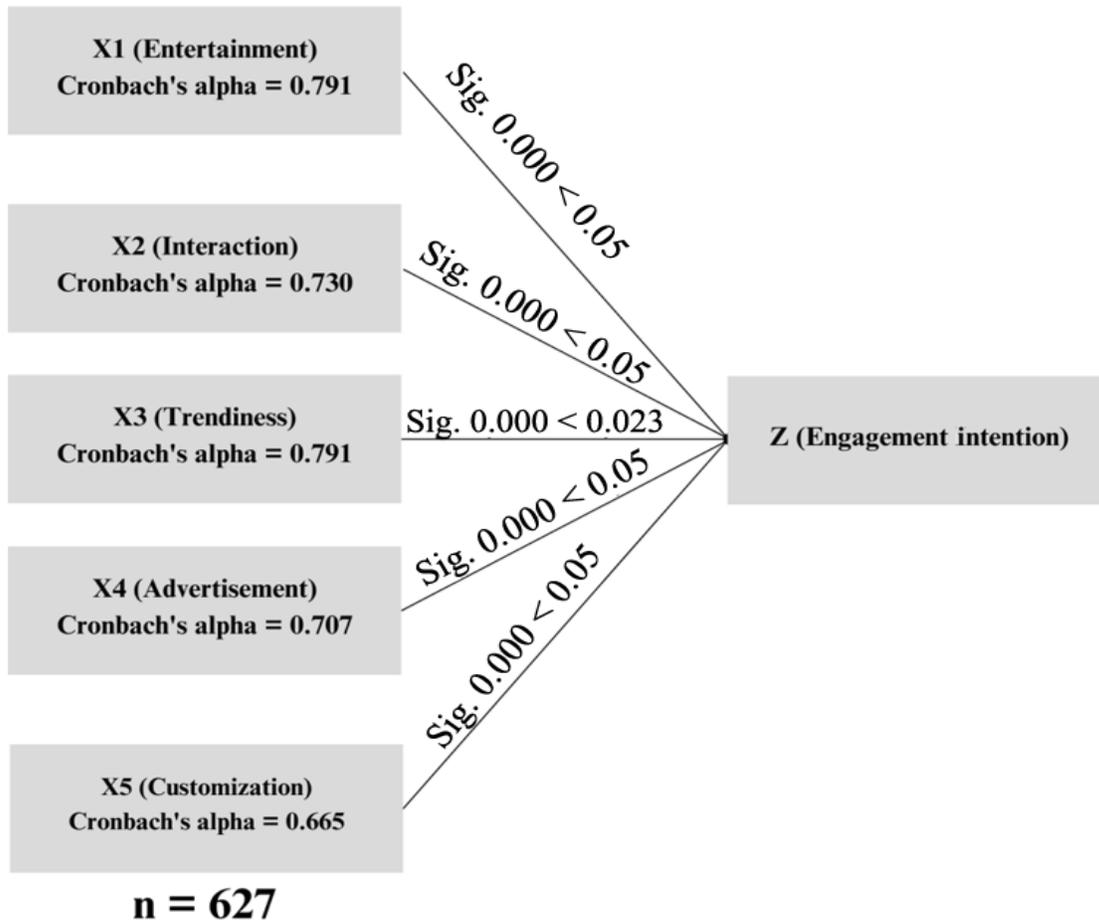


Figure 4. Effect of Instagram activities on engagement intention.

The coefficient of determination shows an adjusted R squared value of 0.455. There is evidence that entertainment, interaction, trendiness, advertisement and customization together influence 45.5% of engagement intention and the remaining 54.5% are influenced by other variables not mentioned in this study. The results of the calculation can be seen in Table 2.

Table 2. Coefficient of determination (R²).

| Model | R | R square | Adjusted R square | Std. error of the estimate |
|-------|--------------------|----------|-------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 | 0.678 ^a | 0.459 | 0.455 | 1.280 |

Note: a. Predictors: constant, customization, entertainment, interaction, advertisement, trendiness.

4.1.2. The Direct Effect of Ig Activities on Engagement and Enrollment Intention

The predictive capacity concerning the impact of engagement on enrollment intention relies on data collected exclusively from high school (HS) students who follow higher education (HE) institution Instagram accounts. The multiple linear regression analysis findings reveal a nuanced influence of elements within social media activity on engagement intention. The t-value score for entertainment exceeds the critical t-table value (2.013 > 2.0129) while the interaction sig score is 0.047 (sig < 0.05). This result proved that entertainment and interaction elements

on HE institution Instagram accounts significantly affect the engagement intentions of followers with backgrounds as high school students. It indicates that heightened levels of entertainment and interaction perceived by students who follow HER institutions' Instagram accounts correspond to increased engagement intentions. Consequently, in terms of statistics, both H6 and H7 are valid.

On the other hand, trendiness, advertisement and customization elements do not affect engagement intention. The findings are based on a sig value of more than 0.05 (sig. > 0.05). It shows that higher student engagement intentions will not accompany high trending, advertisement and customization activities on Ig accounts. The study verifies that H8, H9 and H10 are rejected. The calculation results can be seen in [Table 3](#).

Table 3. Effects of Ig activities on engagement intentions.

| Model | | Unstandardized coefficients | | Standardized coefficients | t | Sig. |
|-------|------------|-----------------------------|------------|---------------------------|--------|--------|
| | | B | Std. error | Beta | | |
| 1 | (Constant) | 1.096 | 1.797 | | 0.610 | 0.545 |
| | X1 | 0.618 | 0.307 | 0.348 | 2.013* | 0.050 |
| | X2 | 0.405 | 0.198 | 0.325 | 2.039 | 0.047* |
| | X3 | 0.022 | 0.341 | 0.011 | 0.065 | 0.948 |
| | X4 | -0.386 | 0.313 | -0.264 | -1.234 | 0.223 |
| | X5 | 0.566 | 0.343 | 0.325 | 1.651 | 0.106 |

Note: Dependent variable: engagement intention.
*The correlation is significant at the 0.05 level.

The direct effect of social media activity on enrollment intention was also verified in this study. Statistically, all Ig activity did not affect the enrollment intention. It shows that Ig content will not impact students' desire to enroll as university students (see [Table 4](#)).

Table 4. Effects of Ig activities and engagement on enrollment intention.

| Model | | Unstandardized coefficients | | Standardized coefficients | t | Sig. |
|------------|------------|-----------------------------|------------|---------------------------|--------|-------|
| | | B | Std. error | Beta | | |
| 1 | (Constant) | 2.623 | 1.939 | | 1.353 | 0.183 |
| | X1 | 0.362 | 0.331 | 0.215 | 1.092 | 0.280 |
| | X2 | -0.011 | 0.214 | -0.010 | -0.054 | 0.958 |
| | X3 | 0.366 | 0.368 | 0.198 | 0.996 | 0.325 |
| | X4 | -0.022 | 0.338 | -0.016 | -0.064 | 0.949 |
| | X5 | 0.402 | 0.370 | 0.243 | 1.086 | 0.283 |
| Engagement | | 0.379 | 0.123 | 0.399 | 3.079 | 0.003 |

Note: Dependent variable: Enrollment intention.

4.1.3. The Direct Effect of Engagement on Enrollment Intention

This study proves that all elements of social media activity do not directly affect enrollment intention (sig.>0.05). Thus, H11, H12, H13, H14 and H15 are not supported. The influence of social media activity on engagement is more varied. Entertainment (2.013>t-table) and interaction (0.047<0.05) elements have a significant and positive effect on engagement. The findings indicate that the higher the level of entertainment and interactivity, the higher the level of engagement. It proves that H6 and H7 are supported. However, other elements have yet to be shown to affect engagement. Thus, H8, H9 and H10 are rejected. The direct effect of Ig activities on engagement and enrollment intention is seen in [Figure 5](#).

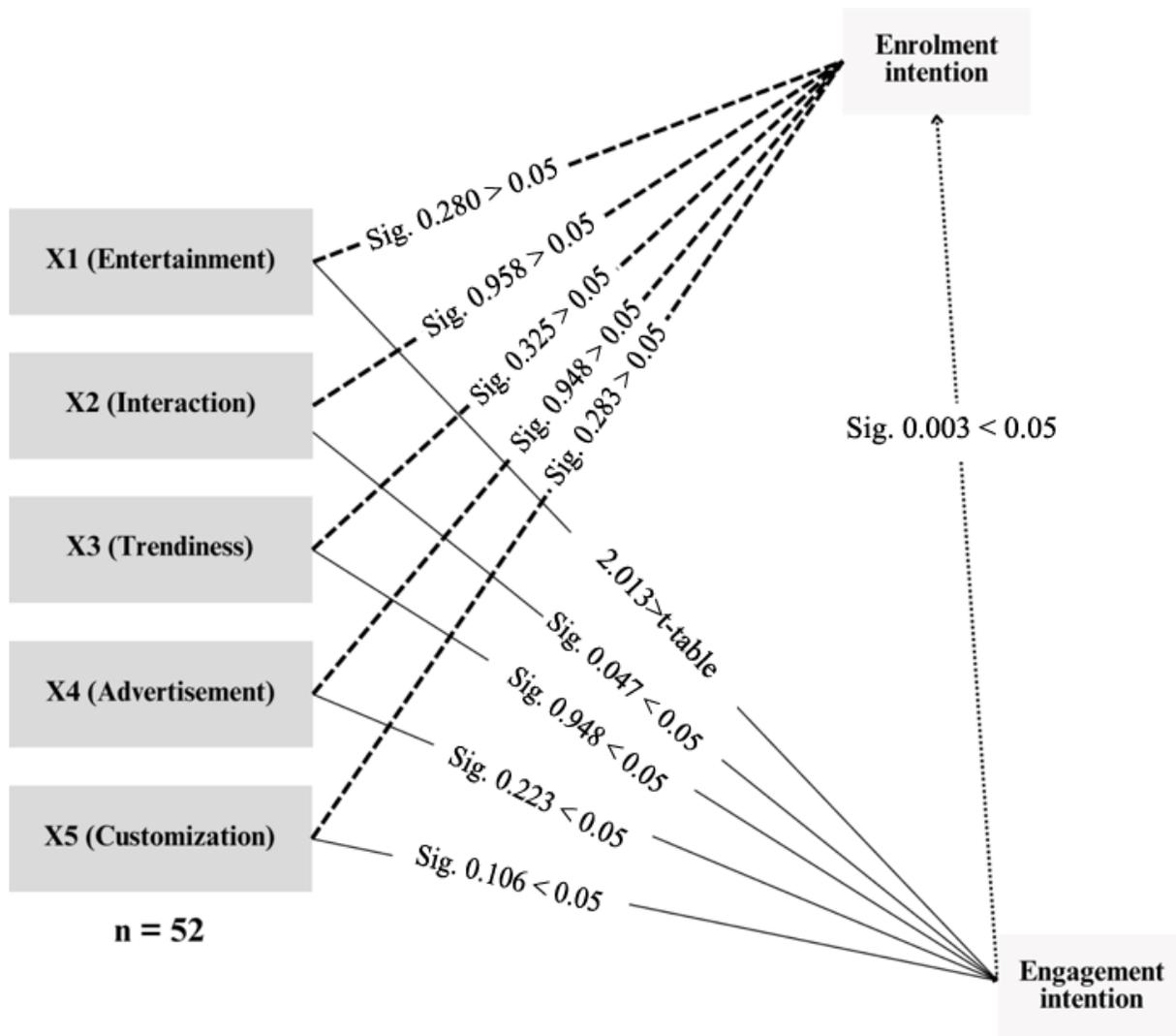


Figure 5. The direct effect of Ig activities and engagement.

Furthermore, this study proves that engagement intention affects enrollment intention ($0.003 < 0.05$). The findings predict that a higher level of engagement will impact the enrollment intentions of students who become followers of the Ig higher education institution account. Such evidence forms the basis for accepting H16.

4.1.4. Indirect Effect of Ig Activities on Enrollment Intention

Path analysis was used to verify the indirect influence of social media activities on enrollment intention through the engagement intention of followers who are HS students. The calculation results of the path analysis model can be seen in [Figure 6](#).

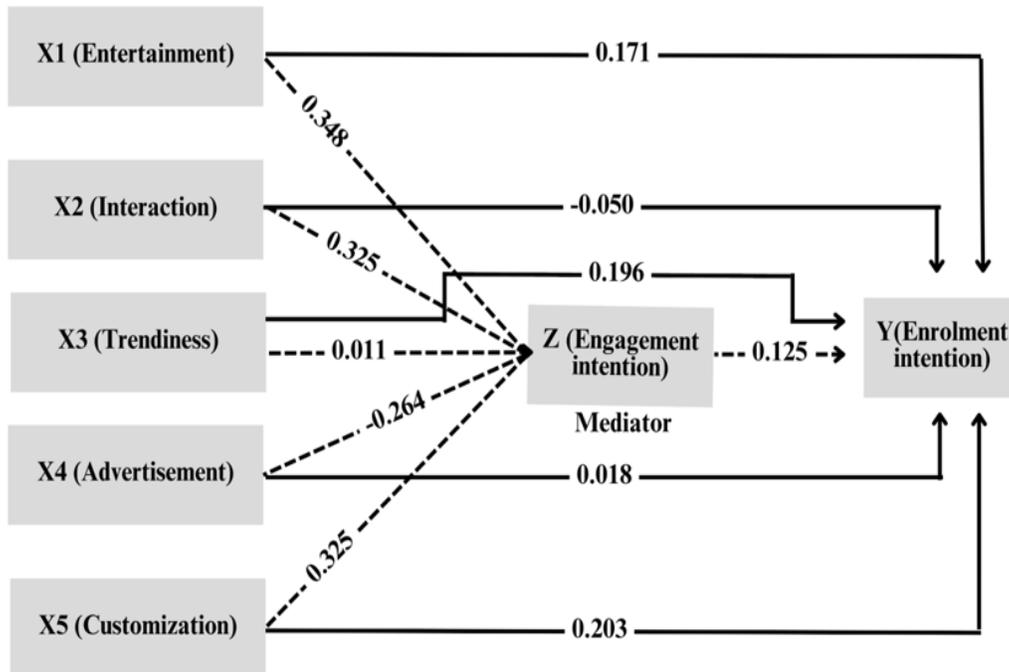


Figure 6. Engagement as a mediator.

Entertainment activities have a direct effect on enrollment intention of 0.171 based on the value of the standardized coefficient beta. This element has an indirect effect through an engagement intention of 0.0435 (0.348×0.125). The calculation results show that the standardized coefficients of the beta direct effect is $0.171 > 0.0435$. It proves statistically that engagement as a mediator in entertainment activities does not significantly affect enrollment intention. Thus, this study became evidence that H18 was rejected.

The following variable is interaction. This variable has a direct influence score on enrollment intention of -0.050. The indirect influence on enrollment intention through engagement intention is 0.041. These results show that interaction does not affect engagement intention through engagement intention. Thus, H19 is rejected.

The findings also occurred in the trendiness variable. Engagement intention cannot mediate the influence of trendiness activity on the enrollment of intention. It can be seen that the direct influence is more significant (0.196) than the indirect influence (0.00138) which became the basis for rejecting H20.

The last two elements are advertisement and customization. The direct effect of advertising on enrollment intention is 0.018. The influence is smaller than the indirect influence (0.033). Thus, engagement mediates the influence of advertising activities on engagement intentions. Thus, H21 is accepted.

The direct effect of element customization reflected in the standardized coefficient beta is 0.203. On the other hand, the indirect influence through engagement intention is 0.041. Comparing the two results of the calculation of standardized coefficients beta shows that engagement cannot mediate the influence of element customization on enrollment intention. According to these findings, it can be concluded that H22 is rejected.

4.2. Discussion

The findings of this study show that all elements of social media activity have a significant effect on the engagement of followers from all backgrounds. These findings complement previous research that explains the factors influencing social media marketing engagement. Cuevas-Molano et al. concluded that videos with sound, lg carousel (multiple photos) and posts with hashtags would increase the number of likes. They also concluded that graphics and interactive content that involved voting, contests and questions would increase the number of comments on the lg account (Cuevas-Molano, Matosas-López, & Bernal-Bravo, 2021). University posts frequently decrease overall engagement (Peruta & Shields, 2017). The increase in comments is determined by lg content

that provides information about universities, interactive channels and feedback (Del Rocío Bonilla, Perea, del Olmo, & Corrons, 2020).

Engagement is not only determined by Ig content but also by Ig influencers. Informing prospective students about the institution's brand is not entirely under the marketing administrators' control on social media. Consequently, influencers play a pivotal role in fostering brand engagement (Delbaere, Michael, & Phillips, 2021). Ig influencer activities are essential in increasing engagement (Jaakonmäki, Muller, & Brocke, 2017; Rahman, Mutum, & Ghazali, 2022) and the purchasing intentions of students (Blažević & Babić, 2023). Duh and Thabethe (2021) explained that likability, familiarity and trustworthiness of influencers were important factors that influenced brand engagement (Duh & Thabethe, 2021) and the close relationship between influencers and followers (Bentley, Chu, Nistor, Pehlivan, & Yalcin, 2021).

Social media has demonstrated its significance as a pivotal marketing tool within the business realm (Cartwright, Liu, & Raddats, 2021). Its application to marketing in higher education may not necessarily reflect the same impact. The behavior of followers of university Ig accounts is different from that of followers of other brands. The behavior of followers of the higher education (HE) institution Ig account is more complex than that of the business account. Enrollment intention is different from purchasing. Followers, not high school students (e.g. university students and other professionals) are unlikely to have enrollment intentions. The effect of social media marketing is limited to social media engagement. However, it will impact the e-word-of-mouth of these followers. E-word-of-mouth marketing in the business sector can boost intention to purchase (Ahmad, Ilyas, Reza, Lestari, & Putra, 2021; Chevalier & Mayzlin, 2006; Tri, Sigit, & Vicky, 2022).

The findings of this study show that entertainment and interactive activities affect the engagement of followers with high school student status. Engagement is also proven to affect engagement intention. The effect of engagement on enrollment intention is similar to the findings of studies in the hospitality sector (Shuai Yang, Liu, & Wu, 2021). Our findings support Beyari's (2023) findings which prove that the entertainment aspect is the most influential aspect of social media (Beyari, 2023). In addition to influencer support, short content containing elements of music and humor impacts social media marketing positively (Munsch, 2021). Utomo et al. proved that Ig interactivity is more influential than Fb (Utomo, Naraphorn, & Ramidayu, 2022). The results suggest that amusement and interaction are the most important factors influencing Instagram followers' behaviour despite the study's focus on social media, mental health and contribution intentions.

However, the percentage of high school students that follow is approximately 8%. They follow because they already have the desire or plan to enroll in college and get an Instagram account. Therefore, the desire of students who become followers to register as students is unexpected. Ig marketing will only affect enrollment intention if high school students become followers. Ig influencers can help increase the number of followers who have experience in education. Ig Influencers influence awareness and purchasing intention (Konstantopoulou, Rizomyliotis, Konstantoulaki, & Badahdah, 2019). Trusted influencers increase the number of potential customers (Catarina, Marques, & Dias, 2022). However, higher education institutions should also be aware that potential students will be more trustworthy if they directly recommend someone they know (Cooley & Parks-Yancy, 2019).

The recent findings of this study demonstrate that the only variable influencing enrollment intention with mediator participation is the advertisement aspect. These findings support the findings of Shayegan and Keshavarzian (2023) who suggest that the response to advertising on social media correlates with the social impact of brands on the public (Shayegan & Keshavarzian, 2023). The relationship between social media advertising and increased desire to participate as well as increased ad engagement highlights an important impact. Our research findings align with Wahab et al.'s (2023) observations demonstrating the influence of e-marketing on student loyalty mediated through enrollment intention (Wahab et al., 2023). Furthermore, Shuai Yang et al. (2021) have substantiated this relationship by elucidating how social media advertisements directly impact the valuation of companies within the hospitality sector. These research findings demonstrate how social media advertising has a significant impact on a variety of different sectors highlighting its complex influence on different aspects of engagement and commercial value.

5. CONCLUSION

This study confirms previous research on the effects of Ig marketing on engagement. It makes a conceptual contribution by demonstrating that Ig marketing is more complex in the educational sector than in the business

sector. Enrollment in the education sector can partially be equated with purchasing and selling. In the business sector, consumers can buy and then not buy anymore. However, customer decisions in the field of education are difficult to reverse. Thus, more considerations need to be taken into account and they are more complicated. Therefore, the influence of social media marketing on enrollment tends to be low.

Ig activities can increase engagement. The further effects of Ig marketing are unpredictable. The impact of Ig activation on enrollment intention is therefore negligible. Additional research is required to determine the impact of Ig marketing on enrollment since we feel its influence is more restricted to engagement. Students' desire to become Ig followers has a relationship with engagement even though engagement influences engagement intention. Students who become followers of the Ig HE institution account already have the desire to enroll when they follow the account. When they decide to become followers, they show that they intend to continue their studies at the university.

6. LIMITATION AND IMPLICATION

The study had two limitations. First, it was limited to one university Ig account so its generalization ability needs to be adequate. However, the findings of this study are open to examining comprehensively the effects of social media marketing on enrollment intention. Second, this research only focused on Islamic higher education, so the findings do not show that Ig activities account for other types of university Ig.

Furthermore, this study suggests conducting research with a sample of universities globally for broader generalization. Research is also recommended to combine social media marketing variables with factors influencing university choice (Chen & Hsiao, 2009; Cristancho, Cancino, Palacios, & Manjarrez, 2019; Ürer Erdil, Tümer, Nadiri, & Aghaei, 2021). Thus, student behavior when choosing a college will be more precise.

Practically, this study recommends that higher education institutions not over trust social media marketing. Students do not choose colleges because of social media content. Marketing administrators must combine social media with other aspects that factor into choosing a university.

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INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD STATEMENT

The Ethical Committee of the Antasari State Islamic University, Indonesia has granted approval for this study on 15 May 2023 (Ref. No. 150A /Un.14/III.1.h/PP.00.9/5/2023).

TRANSPARENCY

The authors confirm that the manuscript is an honest, accurate, and transparent account of the study; that no vital features of the study have been omitted; and that any discrepancies from the study as planned have been explained. This study followed all ethical practices during writing.

COMPETING INTERESTS

The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

All authors contributed equally to the conception and design of the study. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

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