



The Influence of Content Marketing and Brand Awareness on New Student Registration Interest at the Keling Kumang Sekadau Institute

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to determine the influence of content marketing and brand awareness on the interest in new student registration at the Keling Kumang Institute. The research uses a quantitative method with the Structural Equation Modeling-Partial Least Square (SEM-PLS) approach. The research data was obtained through the distribution of questionnaires to respondents who met the characteristics of the study. Data analysis was carried out using the SmartPLS application with outer model and inner model testing. The results of the study show that content marketing and brand awareness have a positive and significant influence on the interest of new student registration. The outer loading value indicates that all indicators are declared valid because they are above the specified minimum limit. In addition, the results of the reliability test showed that Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability values on all variables were above 0.70 so that they were declared reliable. The R-square value of 0.652 shows that the content marketing and brand awareness variables are able to explain the variable of student enrollment interest by 65.2%, while the rest is influenced by other variables outside the study. Thus, this study proves that a good content marketing strategy and high brand awareness can increase the interest of prospective students to register at the Keling Institute Kumang Sekadau.

INTRODUCTION

In the increasingly growing digital era, competition between higher education institutions is becoming increasingly fierce. Colleges not only compete in academic quality, but also in marketing strategies to attract the interest of prospective freshmen. One of the most widely used strategies today is content marketing, which is a marketing approach that focuses on

creating and distributing relevant, valuable, and consistent content to attract and retain targeted audiences. Based on various studies, content marketing has been proven to have a positive influence on consumer interest. Content that is informative, interesting, and according to the needs of the audience is able to increase engagement and build a positive perception of a brand (Adelia & Cahya, 2023; Huda, 2022). In the context of higher education, content marketing can be in the form of study program information, alumni testimonials, campus activities, and social media content that describes academic life.

In addition to content marketing, another factor that is no less important is brand awareness. Brand awareness is the ability of potential consumers to recognize and remember a brand. In the context of higher education, brand awareness is related to the extent to which prospective students know the institution, including its reputation, image, and excellence. Research shows that brand awareness has a significant influence on buying interest or interest in choosing a product or service (Taolin et al., 2025; Niswah & Cokrohadisumarto, 2026). Furthermore, several studies state that content marketing not only has a direct effect on interest, but also indirectly through increasing brand awareness (Ditania & Susilowati, 2025; Ramadhan, 2024). This means that the better the content marketing strategy is carried out, the higher the level of brand awareness which ultimately encourages an increase in interest of prospective students. In the context of higher education institutions, interest in new student registration is an important indicator of the success of a marketing strategy. This interest reflects the desire and readiness of prospective students to choose a university as a place to continue their education. Previous research has shown that digital marketing factors, brand awareness, and perception of institutions play an important role in increasing enrollment interest (Tresna & Sijabat, 2023).

The Keling Kumang Sekadau Institute as one of the higher education institutions in the region has its own challenges in increasing the number of new student registrants. Limited promotional reach and competition with other universities require an effective marketing strategy, especially through digital media. Therefore, it is important to examine how content marketing and brand awareness affect the interest in new student enrollment at the institution. Based on the description above, this research is important to be conducted to find out the extent of the role of content marketing and brand awareness in increasing interest in new student registration, especially at the Keling Kumang Sekadau Institute

LITERATURE REVIEW

Content Marketing

Content marketing is a modern marketing strategy that focuses on creating relevant, informative, and valuable content to capture the audience's attention and build long-term relationships. According to Kotler et al. (2017), content marketing not only functions as a promotional tool, but also as a means of communication that is able to shape consumer perception and experience of a brand. In the digital context, content marketing is very important because consumers tend to look for information first before making a decision, including in choosing a university. Research shows that content marketing has a significant influence on consumer behavior, especially in shaping interest. A study by Subasinghe & Weerasisri (2019) found that quality digital content can increase purchase intention through increased consumer understanding and trust. In addition, research by Jafarova & Tolon (2022) also shows that content marketing on social media contributes greatly to increasing engagement and interest. In the context of higher education, content such as campus profiles, alumni testimonials, and student activities is able to provide a real picture to prospective students, thus influencing the interest in enrollment.

Content Marketing Indicators, Based on various studies, content marketing indicators include:

1. Content Relevance
Content should be appropriate to the needs and interests of the audience. Research by Martha et al. (2024) shows that relevance is the main indicator that affects consumer perception of content quality.
2. Quality of Information
Content should be informative, accurate, and trustworthy. A study by Riyadini & Krisnawati (2022) confirms that the quality of information has a direct effect on interest.
3. Content Consistency
The frequency and regularity of content delivery is important to maintain audience engagement.
4. Content Appeal
Includes visuals, design, and creativity. Engaging content increases attention and interaction.
5. Value Content
Content must provide benefits to the audience (education, entertainment, solutions). Research by Azqia & Nora (2025) shows that these indicators are simultaneously able to explain content marketing variables with a high level of validity in influencing interest.

Brand Awareness

Brand awareness is the ability of consumers to recognize and remember a brand in a certain category. According to Aaker (1996), brand awareness is the main foundation in building brand equity because it determines whether a brand is included in the consideration of consumers when making decisions. Keller (2013) also emphasized that brand awareness plays an important role in forming strong brand associations in consumer memory. In the context of higher education, brand awareness is very crucial because the decision to choose a campus includes decisions with a high level of involvement. Research by Suardana et al. (2024) shows that brand awareness has a significant influence on consumer decisions because it is able to reduce uncertainty. In addition, a study by Rachman & Eddyono (2024) found that brand awareness acts as a mediator between content marketing and purchase decisions, suggesting that brand awareness is an important psychological factor in influencing interest.

Brand Awareness Indicators, Commonly used brand awareness indicators:

1. Brand Recognition. The ability of consumers to recognize a brand when they see or hear a specific stimulus.
2. Brand Recall. The ability of consumers to remember brands without assistance.
3. Top of Mind. The first brand that comes to the minds of consumers.
4. Brand Familiarity. The level of proximity or familiarity of consumers to the brand.

Research by Theresia et al. (2018) shows that indicators such as recognition and recall have a major contribution in influencing interest. In addition, a study by Chen et al. (2024) confirms that high brand awareness will increase trust and speed up the consumer decision-making process.

Purchase/Enrollment Intention

Interest is a person's behavioral tendency to perform certain actions in the future. In consumer behavior theory, interest is considered to be the primary predictor of actual behavior. According to Ajzen (Theory of Planned Behavior), intention is influenced by attitudes, social norms, and perceptions of control. In the context of education, student registration interest reflects the readiness and desire of prospective students to choose a university. Research by Novianty & Faruqi (2025) shows that purchase intention is an important indicator in predicting actual decisions. In addition, a study by Rahardjo et al. (2023) found that interest is influenced by various factors such as information (content marketing), brand awareness, and digital experience. This suggests that interest does not arise suddenly, but is the result of complex cognitive and affective processes.

Enrollment Interest Indicator, Some indicators used:

1. Interest. Feeling attracted to a product or institution.
2. Desire. A desire to know more or have.
3. Intent to Act. The desire to take real action (register).
4. Preferences. The tendency to choose over other alternatives.

Research by Theresia et al. (2018) states that indicators such as buying intent, interest, and desire are strong predictors of actual behavior. Meanwhile, a study by Melghagh & Ouahi (2024) shows that interest is strongly influenced by the quality of information and brand perception.

Empirical Studies

Some of the findings of previous researchers that are the basis for reference the relationship between variables in this study are as follows:

Table 1 Empirical Studies

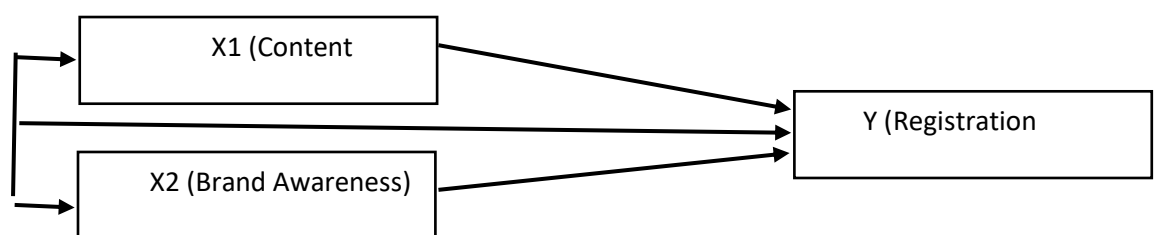
Yes	Researcher	Year	Research Title	Variable	Method	Research Results
1	Subasinghe & Weerasisri	2019	The Impact of Digital Content Marketing on Purchase Intention	Content Marketing → Purchase Intention	Quantitative	Content marketing has a positive and significant effect on buying interest
2	Ansari et al.	2019	Impact of Brand Awareness and Content Marketing on Purchase Decision	Content Marketing, Brand Awareness → Decisions	Quantitative	Brand awareness and content marketing have a positive effect on decisions
3	Jafarova & Tolon	2022	The Effect of Content Marketing in Social Media on Purchase Intention	Content Marketing → Brand Loyalty → Purchase Intention	SEM	Content marketing increases brand awareness and buying interest
4	Riyadini & Krisnawati	2022	Content Marketing, Brand Awareness and Purchase Intention	Content Marketing, Brand Awareness → Interest	Regression	Both variables have a significant effect on interest
5	Li et al.	2022	Digital Content Marketing and Purchase Intention	Content Marketing → Interest	SEM	Content marketing increases interest through digital experiences
6	Rahardjo et al.	2023	Content Marketing, Brand Awareness, E-WOM on Purchase Intention	CM, BA, E-WOM → Interest	SEM	All variables have a significant effect

7	Mulianto & Qomariyah	2023	Content Marketing, Brand Awareness, Purchase Intention	CM, BA → Interest	Quantitative	Content marketing and brand awareness have a positive effect
8	Shalsabilah & Firmansyah	2023	Content Marketing on Purchase Intention	CM → Interest	Regression	Content marketing has a significant impact
9	Pektas & Hassan	2020	Digital Content Marketing and Purchase Intention	CM → Interest	Regression	Content marketing increases tourist interest
10	Kajtazi & Zeqiri	2020	Content Marketing and e-WOM on Purchase Intention	CM, e-WOM → Interest	Quantitative	Content marketing has a significant influence

Researcher's Conceptual Framework and Researcher's Hypothesis

The conceptual framework of the research is a description of how the relationship between one variable and another is used in the research. The conceptual framework in this study is stated as follows:

Figure 1 Researcher's Hypothesis



Researcher's Hypothesis

H1: The Influence of Content Marketing on Student Enrollment Interest

Content marketing has an important role in influencing student enrollment interest because it serves as the main source of information for prospective students in getting to know educational institutions. Relevant, informative, and interesting content is able to form positive perceptions and increase interest in a university. In consumer behavior theory, the information received by individuals will influence attitudes and ultimately form intentions. Thus, the better the quality of content marketing presented, the more likely prospective students are to have an interest in applying. This is supported by various empirical studies that show that content marketing has a significant effect on interest. Research by Subasinghe & Weerasisri (2019) found that digital content marketing has a positive influence on purchase intention because it is able to increase consumer understanding and trust. In addition, Wei (2025) in the Asia Pacific Journal of Marketing and Logistics shows that content marketing, especially through social media such as TikTok, significantly increases interest through the emotional aspects and information conveyed. Another study by Melghagh & Ouahi (2024) also confirms that high-quality content is capable of

directly influencing consumers' decisions and interests. Therefore, in the context of higher education, effective content marketing is believed to increase the interest of new student registration.

H1: Content marketing has a positive and significant effect on the interest of new student registration.

H2: The Effect of Brand Awareness on Student Enrollment Interest

Brand awareness is a very important psychological factor in influencing interest because it is related to the level of recognition and memory of potential consumers for a brand. In the context of education, prospective students tend to choose universities that are familiar, reputable, and easy to remember. This is in line with the Customer-Based Brand Equity (Keller) theory which states that brand awareness is the initial stage in the consumer decision-making process. The higher the level of brand awareness, the more likely an institution is to be considered by prospective students. Empirically, many studies support this relationship. Research by Dabbous & Barakat (2020) shows that brand awareness has a significant influence on purchase intent because it can increase trust and reduce the risk of perception. In addition, research by Wardhani & Fitriyah (2026) found that consumers tend to choose products or services that they are already familiar with, because familiarity provides a sense of security in decision-making. Research by Nafi et al. (2025) also shows that brand awareness is one of the dominant factors in increasing interest, especially in the digital era. Thus, the higher the level of brand awareness of a university, the higher the interest of prospective students to register.

H2: Brand awareness has a positive and significant effect on the interest of new student registration.

H3: The Simultaneous Effect of Content Marketing and Brand Awareness on Student Enrollment Interest

Content marketing and brand awareness have complementary relationships in influencing interests. Content marketing acts as an initial stimulus that provides information and builds perception, while brand awareness serves as a reinforcement in consumer memory that influences final decisions. In the consumer behavior model, these two variables work simultaneously in forming intent, where the information received through the content will strengthen brand awareness and ultimately drive interest. This is supported by empirical research that shows the simultaneous influence of the two variables. Research by Rahardjo et al. (2023) shows that content marketing and brand awareness together have a significant influence on purchase intent. In addition, research by Syakdiyah & Bhirawa (2025) found that content marketing and brand awareness simultaneously influence the decisions of Generation Z consumers. Thus, in the context of higher education, these two variables together are believed to be able to significantly increase the interest in new student registration.

H3: Content marketing and brand awareness simultaneously have a positive and significant effect on the interest of new student registration.

METHODS

This study uses a quantitative research method with the Structural Equation Modeling-Partial Least Square (SEM-PLS) approach. According to Sugiyono (2022), quantitative research is a research method used to research a specific population or sample with the aim of testing hypotheses that have been established through the collection of data in the form of numbers. The quantitative approach was chosen because it was able to provide objective, systematic, and measurable research results.

According to Ghozali and Latan (2020), SEM-PLS is a multivariate analysis method that can be used to test complex relationships between latent variables, both direct and indirect relationships. The SEM-PLS approach is also considered effective in studies that have a relatively small sample size and do not require normal distribution of data

Hair et al. (2021) explained that SEM-PLS has advantages in predicting relationships between constructs and is able to develop theories in exploratory and confirmatory research. In addition, Abdillah and Jogiyanto (2019) stated that the use of SEM-PLS is very suitable for use in management, marketing, and consumer behavior research because it is able to measure reflective and formative indicators simultaneously.

The research was conducted by distributing questionnaires to respondents who met the characteristics of the study. The data obtained was then processed using the SmartPLS application to determine the validity, reliability, and influence between variables in the research model. Explain how the research was conducted, by justifying each methodological choice. Research must allow for reproducibility and demonstrate thoroughness.

RESULTS

Analysis – Partial Least Square (PLS).

In research Here, data analysis is carried out using the Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) method based on Partial Least Square (PLS). SEMPLS selected Because of its abilities in testing complex relationships between latent variables with relatively small sample and assumptions flexible normality (Ghozali, 2021). SEM -PLS analysis in study This uses SmartPLS 4 software and consists of two sub-models , namely the Measurement Model (Outer Model) to specify connection between latent variables with the indicators . The outer model defines How each indicator is related to its latent variables and Structural Model (Inner Model) to describe connections between latent variables based on substantive research theory. The inner model describes the connection between latent variables based on hypothesis study.

Measurement Model or Outer Model

Convergent validity aims to test correlation between items/indicators in measuring construct . Convergent validity from the measurement model with reflective indicators can be seen from correlation between score indicators with score the calculated construct (loading factor) with PLS.

Convergent Validity (Convergent Validity)

According to Ghozali (2021), the usual rule of thumb used For evaluating validity convergent that is loading factor value must be more than 0.7 for confirmatory research and loading factor values between 0.6-0.7 for exploratory research is still ongoing can be accepted as well as Average Variance Extracted (AVE) value must be greater than 0.5. However, for study stage beginning from development scale measurement, loading value 0.5-0.6 is still considered sufficient (Chin, 1998 in Ghozali 2021) The outer loading value for convergent validity test.

Table 2. Outer Loading Value

Indicator	X1	X2	Y
X1.1	0.593		
X1.2	0.579		
X1.3	0.740		
X1.4	0.607		
X2.1		0.538	
X2.2		0.625	

X2.3		0.587	
X2.4		0.652	
X2.5		0.716	
Y1			0.519
Y2			0.552
Y3			0.613
Y4			0.464
Y5			0.708

Source: SEM PLS 4.2026

Based on the results of the outer loading test, all indicators in the variables BA, CM, and MP were declared valid and had an influence on their respective constructs. The outer loading value indicates that most indicators are above the minimum limit of 0.50 so that they are able to represent the latent variable well. The indicators with the highest values are X1.3 at 0.740, X2.5 at 0.716, and Y5 at 0.708 which shows the strongest relationship to its constructs. Meanwhile, indicators with values close to 0.50 are still acceptable because they still meet the criteria for convergent validity in the PLS-SEM analysis. Thus, all indicators in this study are suitable for further analysis because they have shown the ability to explain the variables measured.

Discriminant Validity

Discriminant validity test in SmartPLS is method For evaluating to what extent the construct in the measurement model can be clearly differentiated from other constructs . If the discriminant validity is fulfilled, this shows that the constructs are measuring their own characteristics unique and different from other existing constructs in the model. One of the methods evaluate validity This is by comparing mark correlation between construct with root AVE (average extracted) squared . Discriminant validity considered Good If mark root squared AVE of each construct is bigger compared to mark correlation between construct . In addition, the cross loading factor value of the reflective indicator is also important, where ideally more than 0.70, although the value of 0.6 can still be accepted (Ghozali, 2021).

Table 3.discriminant validity

Variable	TO	CM	MP
TO	–	–	–
CM	0.607	–	–
MP	0.650	0.783	–

Source: SEM PLS 4.2026

Based on the table above, it can be seen that all variables have a positive and good relationship. The correlation value between CM and BA of 0.607 indicates a strong relationship, meaning that the better the CM, the BA will also increase. Furthermore, the relationship between MP and BA of 0.650 indicates a strong positive relationship, so an increase in MP will be followed by an increase in BA. Meanwhile, the relationship between MP and CM of 0.783 shows a strong and mutually supportive relationship between variables. Overall, these results explain that each variable in the study has a good relationship so that it can support the research model used.

In addition to looking at the loading factor, construct validity can also be evaluated through AVE (Average Variance Extracted) value. The AVE value indicates the extent to which latent variables are able to explain variation from indicators that measure it. The higher the AVE value, the more Good his abilities in explaining variability indicators said. For fulfilling criteria validity construct, the AVE value must be more than 0.5. Here is the resulting AVE value from SEM-PLS data processing.

Table 4. Construct Reliability and Validity

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability (rho_a)	Composite Reliability (rho_c)	AVE
Content Marketing	0.795	0.845	0.905	0.705
Brand Awareness	0.839	0.835	0.858	0.760
Student Registration	0.816	0.847	0.928	0.710

Source: SEM PLS 4.2026

The results of the SEM-PLS analysis in the table show testing reliability and validity construct through Cronbach's Alpha, Composite Reliability, and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values. Variable Variable Meanwhile, The Y variable has a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.827, a Composite Reliability of 0.829 and 0.885, and an AVE of 0.659. Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability values are above 0.70, which indicates that each construct has good internal reliability . In addition, all the AVE values are above 0.50 which indicates that the construct is capable of explaining more than 50% variance of the indicators, so that fulfil criterion validity converges.

Inner (Structural) Model

In this inner model section contains a goodness-of-fit model coefficient determination or R-Square and t-test or hypothesis test Good influence direct and No direct .

R-square

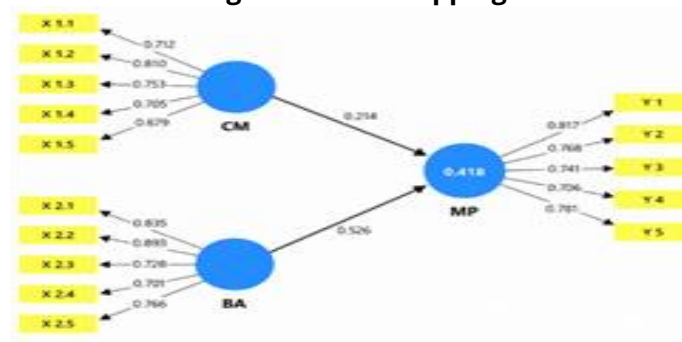
R-Square is assessed based on criteria each of which indicates that the model is classified as strong , medium , or weak . A good R-Square value is generally approach numbers 1 to 100%.

Table 5. Coefficient Determination (R-Square)

Variable	R-square	R-square Adjusted
Student Registration	0.652	0.636

Source: SEM PLS 4.2026

Based on the table above, the R-square value in the MP variable is 0.652 or 65.2%. This shows that the MP variable can be explained by independent variables in the study by 65.2%, while the remaining 34.8% is explained by other variables outside the research model. Furthermore, the R-square adjusted value of 0.636 or 63.6% showed that after adjusting for the number of variables and research samples, the model still had a good ability to explain the MP variable. Thus, the results of this study show that independent variables have a positive and strong influence on MP so that the research model is considered good and feasible to be used in research analysis.

Figure 1 Bootstrapping

Source : SmartPLS 4 output , processed data author (2026)

Based on the results of the outer loading test, all indicators in the variables BA, CM, and MP were declared valid and had an influence on their respective constructs. The outer loading value indicates that most indicators are above the minimum limit of 0.50 so that they are able to represent the latent variable well. The indicators with the highest values are X1.3 at 0.740, X2.5 at 0.716, and Y5 at 0.708 which shows the strongest relationship to its constructs. Meanwhile, indicators with values close to 0.50 are still acceptable because they still meet the criteria for convergent validity in the PLS-SEM analysis. Thus, all indicators in this study are suitable for further analysis because they have shown the ability to explain the variables measured

DISCUSSION

Based on the results of research and data analysis using the SEM-PLS method, it can be concluded that content marketing has a positive and significant influence on the interest of new student registration at the Keling Kumang Institute. This shows that relevant, informative, interesting, and consistent content is able to increase the interest of prospective students in educational institutions. The better the content marketing strategy is carried out, the higher the interest of prospective students to register. In addition, brand awareness also has a positive and significant influence on the interest of new student registration. The level of introduction and memory of prospective students to the institution is an important factor in shaping the decision to choose a university. The higher the brand awareness of an institution, the greater the chance that the institution will become the main choice of prospective students.

Simultaneously, content marketing and brand awareness have a positive and significant influence on the interest of new student registration. This is evidenced by an R-square value of 0.652 which shows that both variables are able to explain student enrollment interest of 65.2%, while the rest is influenced by other factors outside the research. Thus, the research model is stated to be good and feasible to use in explaining the relationship between research variables. This research makes a theoretical contribution to the development of digital marketing science, especially regarding content marketing and brand awareness in the context of higher education. Practically, the results of the research can be considered for the campus in developing a more effective digital marketing strategy to increase the number of new student registrants. This research still has limitations, such as a limited number of samples and the use of variables that only focus on content marketing and brand awareness. Therefore, further research is recommended to add other variables such as electronic word of mouth, service quality, institutional image, or social media so that the results of the research become broader and more in-depth. Summarize key findings, reflect on their significance, and suggest implications for theory, policy, or practice. Limitations and directions of future research are also included

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the study and data analysis using the SEM-PLS method, it can be concluded that content marketing has a positive and significant effect on new student registration interest at the Keling Kumang Institute Sekadau. Relevant, informative, attractive, and consistent content can increase prospective students' interest and encourage their intention to register. Effective content marketing enables institutions to communicate value and provide information that influences students' decision-making processes. Furthermore, brand awareness also has a positive and significant influence on new student registration interest. A higher level of recognition and familiarity with the institution can strengthen prospective students' trust and confidence in choosing the institution. Therefore, institutions with stronger brand awareness are more likely to become the preferred choice among prospective students.

Simultaneously, content marketing and brand awareness significantly influence new student registration interest. The R-square value of 0.652 indicates that these two variables explain 65.2% of the variation in student registration interest, while the remaining 34.8% is influenced by other variables outside the research model. These findings suggest that improving digital marketing strategies and strengthening institutional branding can contribute to increasing student enrollment interest. The findings of this research contribute theoretically to the development of digital marketing and consumer behavior studies in the higher education sector. Practically, the findings can serve as a reference for educational institutions in developing more effective marketing strategies to attract prospective students

SUGGESTION

This study has several limitations that should be considered. First, the research was conducted only at the Keling Kumang Institute Sekadau; therefore, the results may not fully represent other higher education institutions with different characteristics and environments. Second, this study only focused on two independent variables, namely content marketing and brand awareness, while other factors that may influence student registration interest, such as electronic word of mouth (e-WOM), institutional image, service quality, social media engagement, and promotional strategies, were not included.

Third, the research used a quantitative approach based on questionnaire data, which relies on respondents' perceptions and may contain subjective bias. Lastly, the sample size used in this study was relatively limited, which may affect the generalizability of the findings. Future research is recommended to include additional variables, expand the sample size, involve different institutions, and consider mixed-method approaches to obtain more comprehensive and in-depth results.

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