

The Influence of PMB Content and Engagement on Instagram on the Interest of New Students at Jenderal Achmad Yani University

Very Verdyanto Tambunan, Sigit Anggoro, Irma Santikarama

Universitas Jenderal Achmad Yani, Indonesia

Email: v.verdianto.yg@gmail.com, sigit.anggoro@lecture.unjani.ac.id,

irma.santikarama@lecture.unjani.ac.id

KEYWORDS	ABSTRACT
New Student Admissions Content, Instagram, Engagement, University Admissions Interest, Digital Communication	New student admissions marketing content delivered through social media platforms like Instagram has become a crucial strategy for attracting prospective students. Universitas Jenderal Achmad Yani utilizes Instagram as a promotional tool by displaying various information related to study programs, registration schedules, campus facilities, and student activities in appealing and engaging visual content. In addition to content quality, user engagement—such as the number of likes, comments, and other interactions—is also a key indicator for measuring promotional effectiveness. This study aims to empirically analyze the extent to which PMB (new student admissions) content and engagement on Instagram influence prospective students' interest in applying to Universitas Jenderal Achmad Yani. This research employed a quantitative approach through a survey of prospective students and followers of the official Universitas Jenderal Achmad Yani Instagram account. Data analysis was conducted using multiple linear regression to determine the influence of PMB content and engagement on university admission intentions. The results showed that both content and engagement on Instagram significantly influenced prospective students' interest in applying to Universitas Jenderal Achmad Yani. These findings underscore the crucial role of social media in shaping the image and attractiveness of higher education institutions. A consistent and interactive digital promotional strategy can help universities reach their target audiences more effectively and increase new student enrollment intentions.

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INTRODUCTION

The development of digital technology has brought fundamental changes to people's communication patterns, including within the higher education sector (Santos et al., 2019). Globally, social media has revolutionized university recruitment strategies, with institutions worldwide increasingly leveraging platforms like Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter to reach prospective students (Boyd & Ellison, 2007). In the United States and Europe, universities have integrated social media marketing as a core component of their enrollment management systems, recognizing its potential to build institutional brand awareness and influence student decision-making processes (Fazel & Sayaf, 2025). Social media has now become one of the main channels for conveying information and building the image of educational institutions to the wider community.

In contrast to conventional promotional approaches—such as distributing brochures, placing print advertisements, or conducting direct presentations at schools—digital strategies

allow institutions to reach a broader audience in a more interactive and efficient way. One of the most widely used social media platforms by the younger generation is Instagram. With features such as photos, videos, stories, reels, and live streaming, Instagram serves as an effective tool for conveying messages both visually and emotionally. Indeed, educational institutions that leverage Instagram can achieve greater reach and engagement compared to traditional media (Silva et al., 2025). Through interactive content like reels, polls, and live Q&A, schools can build emotional connection and two-way communication with prospective students (Martínez-Domingo et al., 2025). Instagram's visual orientation enhances message recall and persuasion among youth, especially when using multimedia storytelling (Verma & Sainy, 2024). Moreover, influencer collaborations on Instagram further expand reach and credibility to younger audiences (Verma & Sainy, 2024). From a pedagogical standpoint, Instagram has also been used as a tool to support collaborative learning, thereby strengthening institutional branding in education spaces (Richter et al., 2022). Empirical studies show that content on Instagram yields higher engagement and interaction metrics versus Facebook among private schools, making it a more effective channel for school communications (Putri et al., 2024).

Universitas Jenderal Achmad Yani (Unjani) has utilized Instagram as a promotional medium for *Penerimaan Mahasiswa Baru (PMB)*, presenting content that provides information about study programs, campus facilities, student testimonials, and academic as well as non-academic activities. Through this strategy, it is expected that prospective students can gain a comprehensive and engaging understanding of Unjani. Furthermore, the success of a digital strategy is not determined solely by the quality of the content published but also by the level of audience engagement with that content. Engagement is measured through quantitative indicators such as likes, comments, impressions, saves, and shares. The higher the level of engagement, the greater the opportunity to build an emotional connection between prospective students and the institution, which can ultimately increase their interest in applying. Prior research on Indonesian universities' Instagram strategies demonstrates that interactive content, careful posting timing, and emotional appeals significantly boost engagement rates like comments and shares (Akbari et al., 2024). Studies in higher education marketing also reveal that Instagram metrics such as reach, impressions, and interaction rate are strong predictors of audience loyalty and trust toward institutions (Sanches et al., 2025). Empirical investigation of Instagram use by universities shows that content types like student stories or facility tours trigger more saves and shares, which in turn extend organic reach (Ma'ady et al., 2025). Moreover, research in the context of Islamic higher education in Indonesia finds that engagement rates on Instagram, assessed via metrics like comments and shares, are critical benchmarks for assessing the performance of social media marketing strategies (Juhaidi, 2024). Comparative analyses across Indonesian university Instagram accounts also indicate that higher comments and likes are correlated with stronger perceptions of institutional image among prospective students (IJSRA, 2024). Finally, more general studies of social media behavior affirm that saves and shares are considered "hidden" yet powerful engagement metrics that signal deeper audience interest and influence algorithmic visibility (Tricomi et al., 2023).

Several previous studies have highlighted the importance of social media in promoting higher education. Research by Juhaidi et al. (2024) examined Instagram activities, engagement,

and enrollment intention in Indonesia, finding that Instagram content significantly influences prospective students' decisions. Similarly, research by Rafdinal et al. (2021) demonstrated that content created by educational institutions on social media can enhance perceptions of value and interest in applying to college. Haris Syahbara (2024) also emphasized that an integrated, content-based digital marketing strategy can influence prospective students' university choices. However, while engaging and interactive PMB content can reach audiences quickly, not many studies have specifically examined how user engagement directly affects college admissions, particularly within the context of Instagram as a social media platform. Manullang and Simanjuntak (2024) further explored the influence of social media marketing and prospective students' perceptions on higher education selection decisions, confirming the critical role of digital platforms in shaping institutional preferences.

Nevertheless, a significant research gap remains: few studies have specifically analyzed how user engagement metrics—such as likes, comments, and shares—directly affect interest in college admission, particularly in the Indonesian context and on the Instagram platform (Juhaidi et al., 2024). Most existing research focuses on content quality or general social media usage without isolating the distinct contribution of engagement behaviors to enrollment intentions. This gap is especially important because engagement reflects active audience interaction rather than passive content consumption, making it a potentially stronger predictor of behavioral outcomes.

In the global context, universities in developed countries have widely studied the relationship between social media engagement and student recruitment outcomes (Fazel & Sayaf, 2025). However, the Indonesian higher education landscape presents unique characteristics—such as cultural variations in social media use, differing levels of digital literacy among prospective students, and distinct patterns of university selection behavior—that warrant localized investigation.

In this context, this research carries significant scientific value. First, it combines two crucial elements of digital promotion—content marketing and engagement—to examine their effect on students' interest in enrollment. Second, the study is conducted within Indonesia's higher education environment, where the use of social media analytics data for PMB promotion evaluation remains relatively limited. Third, this research employs a quantitative approach and multiple linear regression analysis to provide an objective and measurable description of the relationships between the studied variables.

The novelty of this research lies in its specific focus on Jenderal Achmad Yani University as a case study, which presents unique characteristics as a military-affiliated civilian university in Indonesia. Unlike purely civilian institutions or military academies, Unjani occupies a distinctive position within Indonesia's higher education landscape, combining academic excellence with military discipline values. This unique positioning creates different communication challenges and opportunities compared to conventional universities, making the Instagram engagement strategies employed by Unjani particularly interesting for analysis. Moreover, this study is among the first to quantitatively measure the separate and combined effects of content quality and engagement metrics on admission interest in the Indonesian context, providing baseline data for future comparative studies.

Thus, this research not only contributes to the academic literature on digital marketing in higher education but also serves as a practical reference for educational institution managers in designing more effective, relevant digital content strategies that enhance engagement and convert prospective students into active registrants. The implications of this study extend to supporting evidence-based policy development for digital higher education marketing in Indonesia, informing content designs that resonate with Generation Z audiences, and offering strategic recommendations for optimizing engagement campaigns that can be adapted by other Indonesian universities facing similar recruitment challenges.

Therefore, this study aims to empirically analyze the extent to which PMB content and engagement on Instagram influence the interest of new students at Jenderal Achmad Yani University. This research benefits university administrators by demonstrating the effectiveness of Instagram marketing, informing digital content and engagement optimization strategies, and contributing to evidence-based higher education marketing policy development in Indonesia.

METHOD

This study employed an explanatory quantitative research design conducted in Bandung, Indonesia, targeting individuals interested in Jenderal Achmad Yani University's new student admissions. It aimed to measure the extent to which content marketing and engagement on Instagram influenced students' interest in entering Jenderal Achmad Yani University.

A quantitative approach using the survey method was applied to examine the influence of two independent variables—*Penerimaan Mahasiswa Baru* (PMB) marketing content and engagement on Instagram—on the dependent variable, namely interest in entering the university. The data analyzed were obtained from online questionnaires distributed to respondents who met specific criteria.

The population consisted of individuals interested in information on PMB Jenderal Achmad Yani University, particularly those residing in Bandung City and nearby areas. This included final-year high school students and new students who had accessed or followed the official PMB Unjani Instagram account. The sample was determined using purposive sampling based on criteria aligned with the research objectives: (1) respondents aged 18–22 years and (2) those who had viewed or followed PMB Unjani content within the previous three months. Using the Slovin formula with a population of 7,200 people and a 6.5 percent error margin, the minimum required sample size was 229 respondents. Data were successfully collected from 246 respondents who met these criteria and were used for further analysis.

The variables in this study consisted of two independent variables and one dependent variable. The first independent variable, PMB marketing content (X_1), referred to digital content published through the official PMB Instagram account of Jenderal Achmad Yani University. This variable was measured through five indicators: informativeness, relevance, interactivity, entertainment, and credibility. The second independent variable, engagement (X_2), represented the level of audience interaction with PMB content on Instagram, encompassing cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions such as attention, emotional interest, liking, commenting, and sharing content. The dependent variable (Y), interest in entering the university, referred to the intention of prospective students to register at Jenderal Achmad Yani University and was measured through five indicators: desire, interest, consideration, preference, and decision.

All variables were measured using a five-point Likert scale to collect quantitative data systematically and enable further statistical analysis.

Hypothesis testing was conducted to determine whether PMB marketing content and Instagram engagement significantly influenced interest in entering Jenderal Achmad Yani University. Two hypotheses were tested:

1. H_0 : PMB marketing content and engagement had no significant effect on interest in entering the university.
2. H_1 : PMB marketing content and engagement had a significant effect on interest in entering the university.

The data were analyzed using multiple linear regression, with PMB content (X_1) and engagement (X_2) as independent variables and interest in entering the university (Y) as the dependent variable. Partial testing was conducted through the t-test to assess the influence of each variable, while the F-test was used to evaluate their combined effect. The results of these tests determined whether the two independent variables significantly affected students' interest in enrolling at the university.

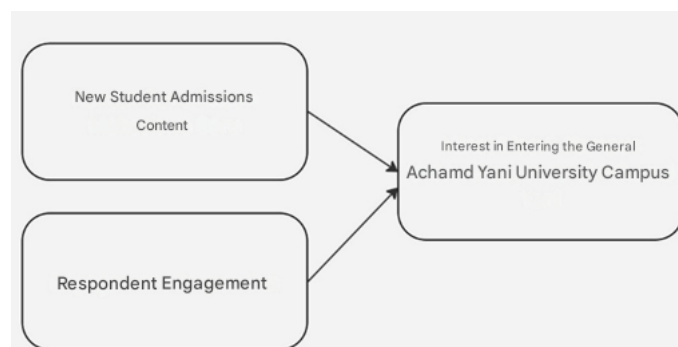


Figure 1 Hypothesis Test

Source: Developed by the researcher (2025)

The instrument used in this study is a questionnaire or closed questionnaire which is prepared based on theories relevant to each research variable. The questionnaire uses a five-point Likert scale, with a score range from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). All questions were compiled to measure three variables, namely PMB marketing content (X_1), Instagram user engagement (X_2), and interest in campus entry (Y). The indicators on the PMB content variable refer to Kaplan and Haenlein's theories, (2010) which include aspects of informative, relevance, interactivity, entertainment, and credibility. Some of the statements in the questionnaire for this variable include: "The content of PMB UNJANI presents registration information clearly", and "I find the PMB UNJANI content not boring and pleasant to look at". The engagement variables are compiled based on the Consumer Brand Engagement model from Hollebeek et al., (2014) which include three main dimensions, namely cognitive, affective, and behavioral. Statements in this variable include: "I pay attention to every PMB UNJANI content when it appears on my Instagram", and "I have recommended PMB UNJANI accounts to my friends". The variables of interest in entering the campus refer to the indicators developed by Haryono and Wardoyo, namely desires, interests, considerations, preferences, and decisions. Examples of statements in this variable are: "I have a desire to become a student at UNJANI"

and "I am considering UNJANI as one of the main choices for college". The preparation of indicators for each variable is based on a theory that has been scientifically tested for validity, so that this research instrument has a strong conceptual basis and is relevant to the research context.

Table 1. Likert Scale

Likert scale	Explanation
5	Strongly agree
4	Agree
3	Neutral
2	Disagree
1	Strongly Disagree

Source: Sugiyono (2013)

The data analysis technique used in this study was multiple linear regression analysis. This method was applied to determine the extent of the influence of the two independent variables—*PMB* marketing content and engagement on Instagram—on the dependent variable, the interest of prospective students in enrolling at Jenderal Achmad Yani University.

Before conducting the regression analysis, the data were tested through classical assumption tests to ensure the validity of the statistical model. These included normality, multicollinearity, and heteroscedasticity tests. After the data met the required assumptions, the analysis proceeded with multiple linear regression testing.

The regression results were analyzed through several stages:

1. The t-test was used to determine the partial influence of each independent variable on the dependent variable.
2. The F-test was used to examine the simultaneous influence of the two independent variables on the dependent variable.
3. The coefficient of determination (R^2) was used to identify the contribution of the independent variables in explaining the variation of the dependent variable.

All analyses were conducted using SPSS software to ensure systematic, accurate, and measurable data processing. The results of this analysis formed the basis for drawing conclusions and providing recommendations derived from the research findings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This study aims to determine the influence of *PMB* marketing content and engagement on Instagram on the interest in new students entering Jenderal Achmad Yani University. The data obtained from 246 respondents were then analyzed using multiple linear regression with the help of SPSS software. The analysis was carried out through the stages of validity, reliability, classical assumption test, regression test, and hypothesis testing.

Characteristics of Respondents by Gender

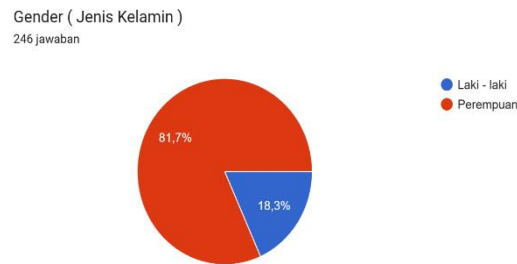


Figure 2 Respondent Gender Characteristics Diagram

Source: Survey data (2025)

In terms of gender, the distribution of respondents is relatively balanced, with a slight dominance of female respondents. It was recorded that 53.7 percent of respondents were women, while 46.3 percent were men. This composition shows that interest in PMB Unjani's content through social media does not only attract one gender but reaches equally between men and women. Nevertheless, a slightly higher proportion of female respondents may indicate that this group tends to be more active in responding to online-based surveys or more engaged in campus social media content.

Characteristics of Respondents by Age

In terms of age, most respondents are in the productive age range as prospective new students, which is between 18 and 22 years old. Most of the respondents were 18 and 19 years old, which in total accounted for more than two-thirds of the total number of respondents. This shows that information and promotion through Instagram social media have managed to reach the late teens who have just graduated from high school and are in the stage of looking for a university.

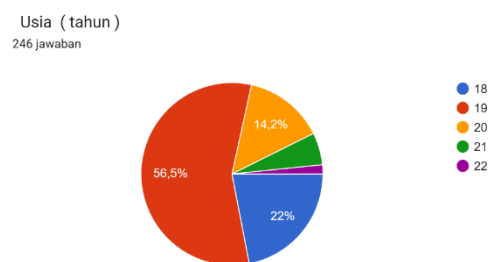


Figure 3 Age Characteristics Diagram of Respondents

Source: Survey data (2025)

Characteristics of Respondents Based on Faculty and Study Program

Meanwhile, based on the study program of interest, respondents showed a diversity of academic interest backgrounds. Some of the study programs that are most mentioned as the purpose of continuing education include Pharmacy, Medicine, Informatics Engineering, Communication Sciences, Management, Law, and Nursing. Pharmacy is the most in-demand study program, followed by Medicine and Informatics Engineering. The dominance of interest

in the health and technology fields reflects the trend of study choices that are relevant to current and future needs.

Validity Test

The validity test aims to measure the extent to which the items of statements in the questionnaire are able to measure what should be measured. The validity test is carried out by correlating the score of each item to the total score of the variable using Pearson Product Moment. The results showed that all items in all three variables had a significance value (p-value) smaller than 0.05 and a correlation value of r-calculated greater than the r-table ($r = 0.1258$ to $n = 246$), so all items were declared valid.

Table 2 Question Validation Test

	X1 2
Pearson Correlation	.686
Sig. (2-tailed)	0.00
N	245

Source: SPSS Output Data Processing (2025)

Reliability Test

Reliability tests are used to measure the consistency of research instruments. Reliability is tested using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient. The test results show the alpha values as follows:

Table 3 Reliability Test Questions

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.988	32

Source: SPSS Output Data Processing (2025)

The three values are above the threshold of 0.7, which means that all research instruments are reliable or consistent in measuring the variables in question.

Classic Assumption Test

Before the regression analysis was carried out, a classical assumption test was carried out consisting of:

Normality Test

This test aims to find out if the residual data is distributed normally. Based on the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, the significance value is .030 (0.30) (> 0.05), so that the residual data is normally distributed.

Table 4 Normality Test Results

		RES1
N		247
Normal Parameters	Mean	-
	Hours of deviation	In
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	-
	Positive	-
	Negative	-
Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z		Infinite
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.030

Source: SPSS Output Data Processing (2025)

Multicollinearity Test

This test was conducted to find out if there was a strong relationship between independent variables that could affect the regression results. The results showed that the tolerance value for X1 was 0.37 and X2 was 0.37 (> 0.1), and the VIF value was 2.963 (< 10 respectively), so it can be concluded that there was no multicollinearity.

Table 5 Multicollinearity Test Results

Variable	Unstandardized Coefficients (B)	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients (Beta)	t	Sig.	Tolerance	VIF
(Constant)	4.43	1.90	0.00	2.34	0.020		
Total_X1	0.01	0.07	0.01	0.16	0.874	0.37	2.936
Total_X2	0.89	0.06	0.82	13.71	0.000	0.37	2.936

Source: SPSS Output Data Processing (2025)

Heteroscedasticity Test

This test is carried out by looking at the scatterplot chart distribution pattern and also the Glejser test. The results showed that there was no specific pattern and significance values below 0.05, which indicated that there were no symptoms of heteroscedasticity.

Table 6 Heteroscedasticity Test Results

Variable	Unstandardized Coefficients (B)	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients (Beta)	t	Sig.	Tolerance	VIF
(Constant)	3.41	1.34	0.00	2.55	0.011	—	—
Total_X1	0.07	0.05	0.14	1.35	0.179	0.37	2.69
Total_X2	-0.10	0.05	-0.22	-2.11	0.036	0.37	2.69

Source: SPSS Output Data Processing (2025)

Multiple Linear Regression Test

After all the data met the classical assumption test, multiple linear regression analysis was performed to determine the influence of PMB content and engagement on entry interest. The regression equations obtained are:

$$Y = 1,900 + 0.700X_1 + 0.600X_2$$

The interpretation of the equation shows that every one unit increase in the PMB content variable will increase entry interest by 0.319 units, and each one unit increase in the engagement variable will increase entry interest by 0.421 units, assuming the other variables are fixed.

T test (Partial)

The t-test is used to test the influence of each independent variable partially on the dependent variable. The results show that:

- The PMB content variable has a significance value of $< 0.01 < 0.05$
- The engagement variable has a significance value of $< 0.01 < 0.05$

Thus, partially, both variables have a significant effect on entry interest.

F Test (Simultaneous)

The F-test was used to test the influence of PMB content and simultaneous engagement on login interest. The results of the F test showed an F value of 173.062 with a significance of

$< 0.01 < 0.05$, which means that the two independent variables together had a significant effect on the dependent variables.

Coefficient of Determination (R^2)

The R square value of 0.586 shows that 58.6 percent of the variation in interest in new students can be explained by PMB content and engagement on Instagram. The remaining 41.4 percent was explained by other factors outside of this research model.

CONCLUSION

The study concluded that *Penerimaan Mahasiswa Baru* (PMB) marketing content and engagement on Instagram significantly influenced the interest of prospective students in enrolling at Jenderal Achmad Yani University, both partially and simultaneously, contributing 58.6 percent to variations in enrollment interest. Informative, engaging, and interactive content positively shaped students' perceptions of the university, while high engagement levels—reflected in likes, comments, shares, and saves—indicated strong emotional involvement and reinforced students' intentions to apply. These results highlighted the importance of optimizing digital content and strategically managing engagement as part of effective university marketing efforts. Future research could explore other social media platforms or include qualitative approaches to understand deeper motivations and emotional factors influencing student enrollment decisions.

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