THE POWER OF INFLUENCE: EXAMINING KEY FACTORS DRIVING INDONESIAN HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS' ENROLLMENT INTENTIONS IN PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to investigate how social media marketing, electronic service quality, word of mouth, emotional value, and energizing value affect the enrollment intentions of high school students in Indonesia who are considering higher education. The findings of this study offer important insights into the ways in which factors like social media marketing, electronic service quality, word of mouth, along with emotional and energizing value, can affect students' intentions to pursue further education at the university level. This study offers significant insights for higher education institutions seeking to enhance marketing methods to attract potential students using social media and elevate the quality of electronic services. Higher education institutions must prioritize the stability and durability of their digital platforms, cultivate good connection with the student body, and consistently update tactics and features to meet the expectations of potential students. This approach is promising for attracting prospective students and increasing their engagement and dedication to the university. The findings demonstrate that social media marketing and the quality of online services positively influence emotional value and motivation, subsequently enhancing the intention to enroll. Additionally, recommendations from family, friends, and alumni play a significant role in influencing students' decisions to enroll. The results indicate that higher education institutions ought to enhance their social media approaches, bolster their digital services, and foster impactful emotional and motivational experiences.

Keywords: *social media marketing, emotional value, energizing value, enrollment intention, higher education*

INTRODUCTION

Higher education in Indonesia reflects a diverse range of institutions, including universities, institutes, colleges, polytechnics, and academies. Each institution has distinct characteristics and focuses, such as universities offering various academic and vocational fields, while polytechnics emphasize practical skills to prepare graduates for the workforce. Higher education institutions are also categorized based on their management structure: Public Universities (PTN) managed by the government, Private Universities (PTS) managed by legal foundation bodies, and State-Owned Universities (PTK) focused on training future civil servants. This diversity aims to meet the educational and skill needs of society. However, significant challenges remain in improving quality and ensuring equitable access to education, which require serious attention in national education policies (Rahmawati, 2022).

The higher education landscape in Indonesia demonstrates significant diversity, with 4,004 institutions recorded in 2022, marking a 0.73% increase from 3,975 in the previous year. Among these, 3,107 institutions operate under the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology (Kemendikbudristek), while 897 institutions are managed by the Ministry of Religious Affairs. Private universities (PTS) dominate with 3,820 institutions, whereas public

universities (PTN) account for only 184 units. West Java leads with 557 institutions, followed by East Java with 522, while North Kalimantan has the fewest, with only 12. This data highlights both the diversity and the unequal distribution of higher education, calling for strategic efforts to improve access and quality (Sdya, 2023).

The higher education sector is facing intense competition, particularly between Private Teaching Schools (PTS) and Public Teaching Networks (PTN) (Napitulu, 2023). Private universities must adopt effective marketing strategies to attract students, emphasizing their competitive advantages (Edu, 2024). Gen Z, who values authenticity and transparency, prefers strong online engagement, comprehensive websites, and virtual campus tours. To attract this generation, PTS must enhance program quality, showcase unique strengths, and establish partnerships with industries (Erwin et al., 2023).

In response to these trends, PTS must adapt strategies to student preferences, focusing on e-service quality and epistemic value. Improving digital services and enhancing learning experiences is crucial to influence enrollment intentions (Achmadi & Sutawidjaya, 2022a). Social media influences students' enrollment intentions, with universities using official and user-generated content to promote academic excellence, facilities, and career prospects, enhancing credibility and encouraging engagement and enrollment. (Nagoya, Bernarto, & Antonio, 2021). Universities are utilizing digital strategies to attract high school graduates, including word-of-mouth marketing and structured content on social media platforms, according to a 2023 study by RevoU (Dwi & Chairunnisa, 2023).

Public universities like UGM, UI, and ITB dominate social media platforms like Instagram and LinkedIn, while private universities like Binus excel on TikTok (Dwi & Chairunnisa, 2023). This reliance on social media highlights a need for universities to adopt balanced digital strategies to maintain competitiveness and attract students. Emotional factors, such as comfort and confidence, have a stronger influence on enrollment decisions than cognitive assessments, emphasizing the importance of enhancing academic performance and fostering emotional connections with prospective students (Nagoya, Bernarto, & Antonio, 2021).

Achmadi (2023a) study highlights the importance of social media marketing, e-service quality, word of mouth (WOM), emotional value, and energizing value in influencing students' enrollment intentions. Social media marketing provides interactive content, while e-service quality enhances institutional credibility. WOM from trusted sources significantly influences students' choices. Emotional value, reflected in happiness and pride, positively affects enrollment intentions. Energizing value, involving enthusiasm and optimism, has a more substantial impact. Universities must prioritize content that generates excitement and anticipation. Achmadi (2023a) study on student decision-making in Indonesia has limitations due to its geographical focus and its COVID-19 pandemic-era relevance. The present study aims to revisit the phenomenon and understand how factors like e-service quality, word of mouth, emotional value, and energizing value influence enrollment intention. This research is crucial for private universities to develop effective marketing strategies and contribute to academic literature on digital marketing in the post-pandemic context.

As a continuation of the previous discussion (Achmadi, 2023a), this study aims to examine and analyze the relationships between key variables that influence students' enrollment intentions, particularly in the context of private universities in Indonesia. Specifically, the research investigates whether social media marketing has a positive effect on emotional value and energizing value, and whether word of mouth positively influences intention to enroll and e-service quality. Furthermore, this study explores the potential positive impact of e-service quality on emotional value and energizing value, as well as the influence of both emotional value and energizing value on intention to enroll. By testing these eight hypothesized

relationships, the research seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of the key determinants shaping prospective students' enrollment intentions and to offer strategic insights for the development of more effective digital marketing approaches in the post-pandemic era.

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Foundation

Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB)

The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), an extension of the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA), has been widely utilized to explain and predict human behavior, particularly in contexts involving decision-making and technology adoption (Ajzen, 1991; Ajzen & Albarracin, 2007). TPB posits that behavioral intention—an immediate antecedent of behavior—is influenced by three key constructs: attitude toward the behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control (Bosnjak et al., 2020). Attitude reflects an individual's positive or negative evaluation of performing the behavior, subjective norms relate to perceived social pressure, and perceived behavioral control captures the perceived ease or difficulty of performing the behavior.

In the context of higher education marketing, these constructions have been employed to explain students' intention to enroll. Social media marketing, for instance, is suggested to shape favorable attitudes toward educational institutions by presenting emotionally resonant and engaging content, which may foster emotional and energizing value (Achmadi, 2023b) E-service quality, encompassing elements such as efficiency, system availability, and privacy, aligns with perceived behavioral control, as it determines the extent to which prospective students feel confident in navigating digital platforms for enrollment (Achmadi & Sutawidjaya, 2023a). Moreover, emotional and energizing values representing the affective responses to institutional interactions are closely associated with the attitudinal component of TPB, reinforcing the emotional underpinnings of behavioral intentions.

Subjective norms are operationalized through word of mouth (WOM), which serves as a form of social influence. Positive WOM from peers, alumni, or family can validate students' choices and create a normative environment conducive to enrollment decisions (Puspasari et al., 2024). However, debates persist regarding the comparative impact of traditional WOM versus electronic WOM (e-WOM). While e-WOM is often used in digital commerce, several scholars argue that traditional WOM holds greater credibility and influence in educational contexts, where trust and personal interactions are pivotal (Achmadi & Sutawidjaya, 2024; Cheung & Thadani, 2012; Sweeney et al., 2014)

2.2 Conceptualization of Variables.

Social Media Marketing. Social media marketing is defined as a strategic digital marketing activity that leverages social platforms to engage audiences, promote products or services, and build brand relationships (Chen & Lin, 2019a). It includes interactive elements that enable personalized engagement and emotional resonance, thereby fostering positive attitudes Appel et al., (2020). Moreover, the use of analytics allows institutions to tailor content and enhance campaign effectiveness (Chaffey &Ellis-Chadwick, 2019). **E-Service Quality**. E-service quality represents the quality of digital services offered via ICT platforms, such as websites and mobile applications. It includes dimensions such as efficiency, system availability, fulfillment, privacy, responsiveness, compensation, and customer support (Achmadi & Sutawidjaya, 2023a). Prior research emphasizes that high-quality digital services enhance user confidence and satisfaction, directly influencing perceived behavioral control and indirectly shaping emotional responses (Achmadi & Vatolkina et al., 2020a; Pratama et al., 2024). **Word**

of Mouth (WOM). WOM is described as interpersonal communication, either verbal, written, or electronic—through which individuals share experiences and opinions about products or services (Rachbini et al., 2021). Traditional WOM, often perceived as more credible than paid promotions or e-WOM, plays a crucial role in shaping prospective students' subjective norms, particularly in cultures where trust and community influence are significant (Fakhrudin et al., 2021). However, some scholars argue that e-WOM should be considered in digitally oriented contexts, despite concerns of redundancy with e-service quality (Zeithaml et al., 2002a). **Energizing Value**. Energizing value refers to emotional constructs such as enthusiasm, excitement, and motivational states that inspire future-oriented action (Achmadi & Sutawidjaya, 2022b; Król & Zdonek, 2021). It contributes to positive attitudes by stimulating proactive decision-making and reinforcing emotional alignment with institutional branding. **Emotional Value.** Emotional value is defined as the positive emotional response—such as happiness, pride, or tranquility—derived from engaging with a service or brand (Zhang et al., 2020; Ruiz-Roqueñi, 2022). In the educational context, emotional value enhances affective commitment and has been linked to stronger enrollment intentions (Achmadi & Sutawidjaya, 2023a). **Intention to Enroll.** Intention to enroll is conceptualized as a prospective student's motivation and willingness to register at a particular university. It reflects perceived alignment with institutional reputation, offerings, and personal preferences (Simiyu et al., 2020; Zheng et al., 2024). Factors such as emotional engagement, perceived service quality, and peer influence have been consistently associated with higher enrollment intentions (Misron et al., 2023).

2.3 Influence Among Variables.

In the current study, eight hypotheses are proposed to investigate the interrelationships between constructs relevant to student enrollment decisions in the context of private higher education. These hypotheses are grounded in the Theory of Planned Behavior and supported by existing empirical literature**. The first hypothesis (H1)** posits that social media marketing positively influences emotional value. Social media platforms serve as a tool for educational institutions to deliver engaging, personalized, and emotionally resonant content that stimulates positive consumer emotions. Prior studies have demonstrated that interactive and relevant social media campaigns enhance users' emotional connection with brands (Ajina, 2019; Chen & Lin, 2019) and significantly influence perceived emotional value in educational contexts (Yap, 2022; Auliarahman, 2020; Achmadi & Sutawidjaya, 2023). **The second hypothesis (H2)** suggests that social media marketing has a positive effect on energizing values. Social media campaigns that emphasize empowerment, motivation, and aspirational messaging have been shown to evoke enthusiasm and drive future-oriented behaviors (Król & Zdonek, 2021; Barton et al., 2021). Research by Achmadi et al. (2021), Achmadi and Sutawidjaya (2023) further supports the positive impact of social media marketing on energizing value among high school students. **The third hypothesis (H3)** proposes a positive relationship between word of mouth (WOM) and intention to enroll. WOM, particularly when coming from credible sources such as teachers, peers, or alumni, fosters trust and reduces uncertainty in decision-making processes. Empirical evidence confirms the significance of WOM in enhancing enrollment intentions in various educational settings (Khoa & Khanh, 2020); Le et al. 2020; (Pradhan & Piriyapada, 2023; Achmadi and Sutawidjaya, 2023). **The fourth hypothesis (H4**) examines the influence of WOM on e-service quality. Positive WOM—centered on efficient service, trust, and system reliability—can shape favorable perceptions of digital service quality. Studies affirm that WOM about institutional capabilities strengthens perceived e-service quality by reinforcing service expectations (Evgeniy et al., 2019; Rasheed & Rashid, 2024; Achmadi & Sutawidjaya, 2023). **The fifth hypothesis (H5)** addresses the impact of e-service quality on emotional value.

Well-designed digital platforms that ensure efficiency, responsiveness, and data privacy enhance user satisfaction and emotional security. Prior findings validate a positive link between high e-service quality and emotional value, particularly in online learning environments and private universities (Alzoubi et al., 2019; Lionello et al., 2020; Demir et al., 2020; Achmadi & Sutawidjaya. 2023). **The sixth hypothesis (H6)** posits a positive relationship between e-service quality and energizing value. High-quality digital educational services facilitate positive learning experiences, which, in turn, inspire motivation and engagement. Several studies confirm that reliable and user-friendly digital environments contribute significantly to energizing value (Koyongian et al., 2022; Alzoubi et al. 2019; Achmadi & Sutawidjaya. 2023; Achmadi, 2023b). **The seventh hypothesis (H7**) suggests that emotional value positively influences intention to enroll. Emotional value—derived from feelings of satisfaction, pride, and alignment with institutional identity—plays a pivotal role in reducing uncertainty and enhancing enrollment decisions (Ong, 2022; Yu dan Lee, 2019; Achmadi et al., 2021; Achmadi & Sutawidjaya. 2023). Strong emotional bonds between prospective students and institutions foster commitment and intention to engage. **The eighth hypothesis (H8)** proposes that energizing value has a positive effect on intention to enroll. Energizing value reflects emotional states such as excitement and optimism, which are crucial in motivating students to act and commit to their educational aspirations. Prior research highlights the influence of energizing value in shaping behavioral intentions (Shang et al., 2021; Sohn et al., 2019; Achmadi & Sutawidjaya, 2023).

RESEARCH METHOD

3.1 Sampling.

This study uses purposive sampling as the data collection technique. This non-probability sampling method was chosen because it allows the researcher to select respondents based on specific characteristics and perspectives relevant to the research objectives. Several criteria were established in selecting participants: (1) the respondents are senior high school students (or equivalent); (2) they intend to pursue higher education after graduation; and (3) they have actively searched for information about universities in Indonesia within the past year through digital platforms such as social media, websites, YouTube, or TikTok. To obtain appropriate data, the questionnaire was distributed online via Google Forms.

The survey was disseminated through various social media platforms commonly used by high school students in Indonesia, such as Instagram, WhatsApp, and Facebook. Data collection was conducted over a two-week period in February 2025. From a total of 220 responses received, 191 were found to be valid and suitable for further analysis after the data screening process. In determining the minimum required sample size, power analysis was performed using G*Power 3.1.9.7 software (Cohen, 1988; Faul et al., 2007; Russo, 2021). Since there is no specific population data available for high school students actively seeking university information through digital media, the sample size was calculated based on a statistical power value of 0.95, an effect size (f^2) of 0.15, and a significance level of 0.05 (Hair et al., 2018; Hair et al., 2017; Hair et al., 2019; Kline, 2016; Ringle et al., 2018; Uttley, 2019). The analysis indicated that a minimum of 153 responses was required. The final sample of 191 respondents exceeded this threshold, confirming that the sample size meets the acceptable standards of statistical power (Hair et al., 2019; Memon et al., 2020). Therefore, the data collected were considered sufficient and appropriate for the subsequent structural model analysis using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) (Hair et al., 2017, 2019a, 2020; Hair, Sarstedt, Pieper, et al., 2022).

This study utilized the disjoint two-stage approach in PLS-SEM to assess hierarchical constructs. In the first stage, low-order constructs (LOCs) were evaluated for reliability and validity. The resulting latent variable scores were then used to assess high-order constructs (HOCs) in the second stage.This method provided a robust analysis of factors influencing enrollment intention in higher education.

The demographic results show that the respondents are predominantly male (51.3%), with female respondents comprising 48.7%, indicating a relatively balanced gender distribution. Most of the respondents were in Grade 12 (71.2%), followed by Grade 11 (18.3%) and Grade 10 (10.5%), representing students who are actively preparing for higher education. In terms of school category, the majority attended private high schools (80.1%), while the remainder came from public schools (19.9%). All respondents were in the Greater Jakarta area (Jabodetabek), highlighting the concentration of participants in Indonesia's urban education hubs. All respondents expressed interest in pursuing higher education at private universities. Regarding information-seeking behavior, respondents reported using digital media as their primary source when searching for university-related information, with official university websites (28.3%), educational portals (22.6%), YouTube (13.4%), and social media platforms (11.6%) being the most frequently accessed. Respondents also used traditional media, such as campus visits (21.6%) and family or peer recommendations (20.4%), though to a lesser extent. When asked about their preferred source of information, the vast majority (89.5%) favored digital media over conventional methods. Furthermore, respondents showed a strong interest in practical and relevant information such as tuition fees and scholarships (22.6%), academic programs (10.4%), admission procedures (10.7%), and campus facilities (9.3%). These findings indicate that the respondents are digitally engaged, academically motivated, and financially conscious students, with a high interest in pursuing tertiary education at private institutions.

3.2 Research instruments and measurements.

The questionnaire in this study is structured into three key sections. The first section gathers behavioral screening data to ensure respondents are senior high school students who intend to pursue higher education and have actively sought university information via digital platforms within the past year. The second section consists of measurement items for each research variable using a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree." The third section collects demographic data including gender, grade level, school type, and school location. The construction of **social media marketing** is measured using ten items that capture the user's perception of university promotional content on social media platforms, interactivity, responsiveness, and information-sharing features (Achmadi & Sutawidjaya, 2023a; Simiyu et al., 2020). **E-service quality** is assessed through seven dimensions—efficiency, system availability, fulfillment, privacy, responsiveness, compensation, and customer service access measured by a total of 45 indicators adapted from Achmadi and Sutawidjaya (2023a); Li and Suomi (2009) Each dimension examines how digital services support prospective students in accessing, evaluating, and engaging with university-related information online. **Word of mouth** is evaluated using five items measuring interpersonal influence from family, friends, and guidance counselors during university decision-making (Achmadi & Sutawidjaya, 2023a; Nsuworks & Sessa, 2017). **Emotional value** is measured with seven indicators focusing on feelings of satisfaction, surprise, trust, and emotional alignment with the university's offerings (Achmadi & Sutawidjaya, 2023a; Sheth et al., 1991; Ruiz-Roqueñi, 2022). **Energizing value**, a future-oriented emotional construct, is measured with four items capturing motivational responses such as enthusiasm, confidence, and readiness to act (Achmadi et al., 2020; Achmadi

& Sutawidjaya, 2023a). **Intention to enroll** is assessed through nine items evaluating a student's behavioral intention to apply to a promoted university based on its reputation, uniqueness, innovation, and perceived academic quality (Achmadi & Sutawidjaya, 2023a; Fazal-e-Hasan et al., 2018; Zheng et al., 2024) All questionnaire items (see Table A1) were measured using a 5-point Likert scale, and items were adapted to reflect the context of prospective students evaluating private universities in Indonesia. Prior to full data collection, a pretest was conducted with 83 respondents to ensure the clarity, reliability, and validity of the instrument.

3.3 Data Analysis.

The data analysis in this study was conducted using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM), a technique that allows for simultaneous evaluation of all relationships among constructs within the conceptual framework (Hair et al., 2022). A two-stage analytical process was implemented, beginning with the assessment of the measurement model to ensure reliability and validity, followed by the examination of structural model relationships between latent variables (Hair et al., 2022). In addition, an Importance-Performance Map Analysis (IPMA) was carried out to evaluate the performance levels of each independent construct and (identify those with the greatest influence on the dependent variable (Martilla & James, 1977; Ringle & Sarstedt, 2016). IPMA serves as a strategic tool to highlight areas requiring improvement, prioritize interventions, and enhance decision-making processes. It offers practical insights for organizations to optimize resource allocation and strengthen overall effectiveness (Martilla & James, 1977; Ringle & Sarstedt, 2016).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Measurement Model

The measurement model in this study was evaluated for reliability and validity, including both convergent and discriminant validity, using SmartPLS 4. Convergent validity was assessed through outer loading and Average Variance Extracted (AVE). All indicators showed outer loading values above the threshold of 0.708, which confirms that each item is a reliable reflective indicator of its respective construct (Hair et al., 2022). In addition, all AVE values exceeded 0.50, indicating that more than 50% of the variance in each construct is explained by its indicators, thereby confirming convergent validity. Construct reliability was evaluated using Cronbach's alpha and Composite Reliability (CR). All constructs achieved Cronbach's alpha values above 0.898 and CR values above 0.929 surpassing the commonly accepted minimum threshold of 0.70 (Hair et al., 2022). These results confirm the internal consistency and reliability of all constructs in both low-order constructs (LOC) and high-order constructs (HOC). For HOC indicators, all outer loadings of the dimensions of e-service quality were above 0.884, confirming high reliability at the second-order construct level. Similarly, AVE values for all HOCs were also above 0.50, with e-service quality showing the highest AVE at 0.815, followed by social media marketing (0.764), word of mouth (0.786), emotional value (0.785), energizing value (0.766), and intention to enroll (0.774). These values reflect strong convergent validity across the model. Discriminant validity was assessed using the Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio. All HTMT values were below the recommended cut-off of 0.90, demonstrating satisfactory discriminant validity and confirming that the constructs are empirically distinct from one another. For example, the HTMT value between e-service quality

and social media marketing was 0.815, while the value between intention to enroll and emotional value was 0.784. Overall, the results indicate that the measurement model in this study satisfies all criteria for indicator reliability, construct reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity, providing a solid foundation for further structural model analysis.

4.2 Structure Model

Before analyzing the structural relationships, collinearity was assessed to ensure the accuracy of regression results by examining the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF). According to Hair et al. (2022), VIF values should be less than 3, although values under 5 are still considered acceptable. The results showed that all VIF values in this study ranged between 3.610 and 4.547, indicating no severe multicollinearity issues. These values confirm that each independent variable contributes uniquely to the model without causing redundancy. The structural model was further evaluated using R-square (R^2), effect size (f^2), predictive relevance (Q^2), and path coefficients. The R^2 results indicate that the model explains 40.5% of the variance in E-service Quality, 55.4% in Emotional Value, 49.5% in Energizing Value, and 67.0% in Intention to Enroll. Based on the guidelines by Hair et al. (2019), the R^2 values for Emotional Value and Intention to Enroll are considered moderate, while the others are categorized as weak. The effect size (f^2) was used to determine the practical significance of the relationships between constructs. Values above 0.35 are considered large, between 0.15–0.35 moderate, and between 0.02–0.15 small. The path from Word of Mouth to E-service Quality demonstrated a large effect size ($f^2 = 0.680$), while Emotional Value to Intention to Enroll ($f^2 = 0.238$) and Social Media Marketing to Emotional Value ($f^2 = 0.203$) showed moderate effects. Other paths exhibited small effect sizes, such as E-service Quality to Emotional Value ($f^2 = 0.076$), and Energizing Value to Intention to Enroll ($f^2 = 0.117$). Predictive relevance (Q^2) was assessed to evaluate the model's predictive accuracy. Values above 0 indicate predictive relevance. The Q^2 values for each construct were as follows: E-service Quality (0.393 – moderate), Emotional Value (0.540 – large), Energizing Value (0.498 – moderate), and Intention to Enroll (0.593 – large). These results indicate the model has moderate to strong predictive power for most endogenous constructs. To further assess out-of-sample predictive performance, the study employed PLS Predict using Mean Absolute Error (MAE) comparison between PLS-SEM and linear regression models. According to Shmueli et al. (2019), when most PLS MAE values are lower than those from linear models, the model demonstrates moderate predictive power. In this study, many indicators showed lower MAE in the PLS model, indicating that the structural model has a reliable, though not maximal, predictive capability.

Table 1. Hypotheses

Hypotheses		β	*T Value*	P Value	Supported
H1	*Social Media Marketing > Emotional Value*	0.487	4.246	0.000	yes
H2	*Social Media Marketing > Energizing Value*	0.469	4.268	0.000	yes
H3	*Word of Mouth > Intention to Roll*	0.217	3.040	0.001	yes
H4	*Word of Mouth > E-Service Quality*	0.636	10.994	0.000	yes
H5	*E-Service Quality > Emotional Value*	0.298	2.571	0.005	yes
H6	*E-service Quality > Energing Value*	0.272	2.385	0.009	yes
H7	*Emotional value > Intention to Enroll*	0.413	5.243	0.000	yes
H8	*Energizing value > Intention to Enroll*	0.293	3.803	0.000	yes

Source(s): Table created by authors

4.3 Path Coefficients

Path coefficient analysis was conducted using the bootstrapping procedure with 10,000 subsamples at a 95% confidence interval, ensuring t-values exceeded the threshold of 1.65 and p-values were below 0.05 (Hair et al., 2022). All eight hypotheses tested in this study were supported, indicating statistically significant relationships between constructs. The results show that Social Media Marketing has a significant positive effect on both Emotional Value (β = 0.487, t = 4.246, p = 0.000) and Energizing Value (β = 0.469, t = 4.268, p = 0.000), supporting H1 and H2. Word of Mouth positively influences Intention to Enroll (β = 0.217, t = 3.040, p = 0.001) and E-service Quality (β = 0.636, t = 10.994, p = 0.000), providing support for H3 and H4. Furthermore, E-service Quality has a significant effect on both Emotional Value (β = 0.298, t = 2.571, p = 0.005) and Energizing Value (β = 0.272, t = 2.385, p = 0.009), confirming H5 and H6. In addition, Emotional Value (β = 0.413, t = 5.243, p = 0.000) and Energizing Value (β = 0.293, t = 3.803, p = 0.000) both significantly influence Intention to Enroll, thus supporting H7 and H8. These results validate the proposed structural model and demonstrate that emotional and energizing factors, as influenced by marketing efforts and service quality, play a critical role in shaping students' enrollment intentions in the higher education context.

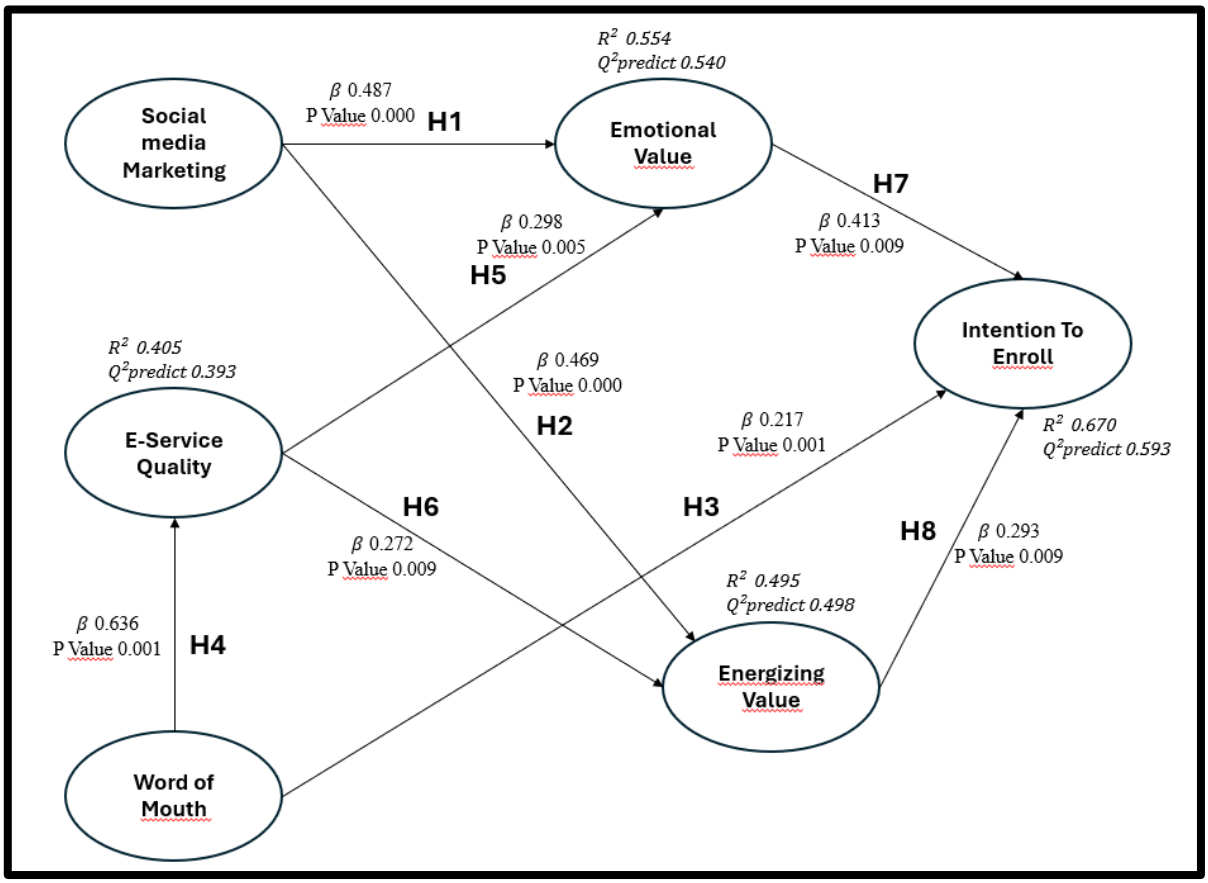

Figure 1. Research model
Source (s): (Achmadi & Sutawidjaya, 2023b)

4.4 IPMA Analysis Results

The results of the IPMA analysis identify several critical areas that fall into the "concentrate here" quadrant, constructs with high importance but relatively low performance. These areas represent strategic priorities for improvement. The findings highlight that students highly value information and support from family when deciding on a university, yet this aspect is currently

under-supported by institutions. Additionally, students seek clear, easy-to-navigate, and engaging information through social media platforms; however, the performance of these digital channels remains suboptimal. Comments and feedback from other users on social media also play an important role in influencing students' emotions and motivation, yet universities have not fully leveraged this opportunity. Lastly, many students report that while receiving university information does influence their motivation to enroll, the delivery and content of that information are not yet compelling enough. To improve enrollment intention, institutions must focus on enhancing family engagement, strengthening digital communication strategies, and providing more emotionally engaging and motivating content across their digital platforms.

4.5 Discussion

This study contributes to advancing the theoretical application of the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) (Ajzen, 1991) by exploring how social media marketing, word of mouth, and e-service quality affect emotional and energizing value, which in turn influence students' intention to enroll in private universities. The TPB framework, comprising attitudes (emotional and energizing value), subjective norms (word of mouth), and perceived behavioral control (e-service quality), is well-reflected in the post-pandemic context and offers predictive validity in explaining enrollment decision-making behavior among Gen Z students.

The results confirm that social media marketing significantly influences both emotional and energizing value, consistent with prior studies (Achmadi & Sutawidjaya, 2023a) (see Table 2. Interestingly, when compared to previous research during the COVID-19 period, the path coefficient for emotional value has slightly decreased ($\beta = 0.598$ to $\beta = 0.487$), yet the relationship remains strong and significant ($p = 0.000$). This indicates that while social media marketing continues to play a vital role, students' emotional connections post-pandemic may be shaped by more factors, such as physical interaction and on-campus experiences returning. For energizing value, the impact also declined marginally ($\beta = 0.522$ to $\beta = 0.469$), but its significance persists, underlining the consistent motivational effect of social media across periods.

The effect of word of mouth on intention to enroll increased from $\beta = 0.157$ (COVID-19) to $\beta = 0.217$ (post-COVID), highlighting that interpersonal influence has become more relevant as students resume face-to-face interactions. This validates TPB's subjective norms dimension and aligns with studies that emphasize trust in close networks when making significant educational decisions (Pradhan & Piriyapada, 2023). However, a major shift is observed in the path from word of mouth to e-service quality. While previously insignificant ($\beta = 0.052$, $p = 0.216$), it now shows a strong and significant influence ($\beta = 0.636$, $p = 0.000$). This suggests that positive offline word-of-mouth increases students' trust in institutions' digital service quality, reflecting a more integrated evaluation of online and offline experiences post-pandemic.

Conversely, e-service quality's influence on emotional value and energizing value, though statistically significant, remains weaker compared to social media marketing and word of mouth. The path to emotional value ($\beta = 0.298$) and energizing value ($\beta = 0.272$) showed moderate improvement from their COVID-19 counterparts ($\beta = 0.066$ and $\beta = 0.093$, respectively), suggesting a growing role for digital service platforms—but still not the dominant factor. Notably, during the COVID-19 period, these paths were insignificant, likely due to the reactive use of online platforms rather than proactive, value-creating digital experiences.

Both emotional and energizing values have significant effects on intention to enroll, supporting the attitude component of TPB. Emotional value shows a stronger impact ($\beta = 0.413$) than

energizing value (β = 0.293), and both have increased from their COVID-19-era coefficients (β = 0.243 for both). This indicates a renewed emphasis on emotional connection and inspiration in post-pandemic educational choices, as students seek institutions that align with their identity and future aspirations.

These findings reflect a shift in student behavior: from pragmatic, risk-averse decisions during the pandemic to more emotionally driven, motivational, and socially influenced decisions in the post-pandemic era. The evolution of significant paths, especially the rising role of word of mouth in shaping service expectations and the consistently strong influence of social media—highlights how digital and interpersonal strategies must be combined to effectively attract prospective students.

Table 2. Comparison Results

Hypotheses		*β (now) Post Covid*	*β (past) Covid-19*	*T Value Post Covid*	*T Value Covid-19*	P Value Post Covid	Supported	P Value Covid - 19	Supported
H1	*Social Media Marketing > Emotional Value*	0.487	0.598	4.246	13.386	0.000	yes	0.000	yes
H2	*Social Media Marketing > Energizing Value*	0.469	0.522	4.268	11.901	0.000	yes	0.000	yes
H3	*Word of Mouth > Intention to Roll*	0.217	0.157	3.040	2.827	0.001	yes	0.002	yes
H4	*Word of Mouth > E-Service Quality*	0.636	0.052	10.994	0.787	0.000	yes	0.216	No
H5	*E-Service Quality > Emotional Value*	0.298	0.066	2.571	1.447	0.005	yes	0.074	No
H6	*E-service Quality > Energing Value*	0.272	0.093	2.385	1.718	0.009	yes	0.043	yes
H7	*Emotional value > Intention to Enroll*	0.413	0.243	5.243	2.685	0.000	yes	0.004	yes
H8	*Energizing value > Intention to Enroll*	0.293	0.243	3.803	2.956	0.000	Yes	0.002	Yes

Source(s): Table created by authors

CONCLUSION

5.1 Conclusion and Practical Marketing Implications

Although social media marketing and word of mouth are shown to be highly influential, their execution is not yet fully optimized. Emotional and motivational engagement through these channels remains underutilized, especially regarding the influence of family and peer narratives. In practical terms, marketing teams in universities should focus on strengthening visually engaging and interactive social media content that fosters emotional connection and excitement. Collaborating with current students and alumni to share authentic stories, testimonials, and personal experiences can amplify trust and credibility through word of mouth. Institutions should also develop family-inclusive marketing strategies that acknowledge the

significant role of parents in enrollment decisions, such as through targeted webinars, campus events, or brochures directed toward parents. Improving digital service delivery by implementing fast-response systems, intuitive interfaces, and AI-powered assistance will also enhance students' perception of service quality and institutional reliability. Furthermore, emotionally resonant messaging that emphasizes belonging, personal growth, and aspiration should be integrated across all communication platforms, as emotional value remains the strongest driver of enrollment intention.

Overall, this study enhances the theoretical application of TPB within the field of higher education marketing by identifying the evolving interplay between digital engagement, emotional value, and decision-making among prospective students. It underscores the growing importance of emotional connection, authentic social influence, and strategic digital communication in encouraging high school students to apply. By effectively addressing both the emotional and rational dimensions of the enrollment journey, universities can increase their appeal and conversion rates in a highly competitive, post-pandemic educational environment.

5.2 Research Limitation and Future Research

Although this study provides meaningful insights into the factors influencing students' intention to enroll in private universities, several limitations should be acknowledged. First, while the model demonstrates acceptable explanatory power, the R^2 value for intention to enroll suggests that other important variables may influence student decision-making beyond those captured in this study. Future research could incorporate additional constructs such as institutional reputation, financial support, or career readiness to enhance the model's predictive capability. Second, this study used a cross-sectional design, limiting its ability to capture changes in student preferences over time. Given the dynamic nature of digital behavior among Generation Z, longitudinal studies are recommended to observe how the influence of social media, digital service quality, and emotional value evolves as students' progress through their decision-making journey. Third, the use of a self-reported online survey may introduce potential biases such as social desirability or limited interpretation of questions. Future studies could incorporate mixed methods, such as in-depth interviews or focus groups, to complement quantitative findings and provide richer contextual understanding. Fourth, the study employed a 5-point Likert scale, which may constrain the variability and sensitivity of responses. Future research should consider adopting a 7-point or even 10-point scale to allow for greater nuance and improve the robustness of statistical analyses. Finally, the sample was limited to high school students located in the Jabodetabek area of Indonesia who expressed interest in private universities. These results may not generalize to students from other regions or those considering public universities, vocational institutions, or international study options. Future research could expand the sample geographically and demographically to explore differences across educational aspirations, school types, and socioeconomic backgrounds.

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