

Social Media Marketing Influence on Private University Student Enrollment Decisions in Kenya

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Abstract: The study sought to investigate the influence of digital marketing strategies adopted by private universities on student enrollment decisions in Kenya. The study employed a survey design targeting a population of 69,375 students across three private universities in Kenya. The respondents were the currently enrolled students at the undergraduate and postgraduate levels of study. The study obtained a sample size of 375 respondents. The respondents were selected using a stratified random sampling technique. Data was collected from primary sources using a structured questionnaire and analyzed through descriptive statistics (mean scores, percentages, and standard deviation) and inferential statistics (correlation and regression analysis). The findings indicated that social media marketing improves student enrollment decisions in a significant manner. It was recommended that the private universities in Kenya should consider social media marketing in their education service promotion approach. The process of tailoring the promotional messages through social media must emphasise engaging in Q&A chatbots and short-form educational videos, like Instagram reels, Tik Tok, and YouTube shorts.

Key Words: Private universities, Student enrollemnt decisions,social media marketing , Kenya

I. Introduction

Background

In Kenya, student enrollment in universities exhibits an interesting trend. In 2023, the private university student enrollment accounted for 20% of the total. As of 2024, the university enrollment rate increased from 450,638 to 482586, but the students who enrolled in private universities decreased from 112,287 to 96,640, representing a decline of 14.1% (KNBS, 2024). During this period, the number of government-sponsored students in private universities exhibited a downward trajectory, reducing from 29,000 to 9,622, representing a decline of 67% (Otieno, 2023). These changes are putting private universities at a disadvantage because their survival and sustenance depend on the enrollment rate(Mahajan & Golahit, 2017).. Digital marketing strategies serve as crucial tools for increasing students' enrollment in educational institutions locally and globally. Universities tailor the use of these tools to local preferences, cultures, and technologies (Wijaya, Andri & Rachmawati, 2023).

Statement of the Problem

Digital marketing has significantly transformed product and service promotion, enabling institutions and organizations to improve their brand visibility and value (Murti et al., 2023; Tolstoy et al., 2022). For universities, these tools serve as critical institutional image enhancers to boost student attraction (Rutendo & Lyu, 2020). In Kenya, public and private universities offer significantly similar academic programs, but the rate of enrollment in private universities is declining significantly, as evidenced by the KNBS (2024) report, which shows that the private university student enrolment rate has declined by 67%, currently standing at 14% of the total university student enrollment. The dipping government funding for private university students, public university entry cluster point reduction, public university capacity expansion, and a growing preference for technical and vocational education training (TVET) institutions (Otieno, 2023). If this trend persists, it will put the survival of private universities at stake since their sustenance depends on student numbers (Kinyanjui, 2016). Intensive marketing, including the use of digital marketing, is considered vital to thwarting this enrollment issue.

The influence of digital marketing strategies as a private learning institution enrollment enhancer has been extensively studied by scholars like Labausa, Pinca, and Cruda (2023), Maayah (2024), Kusumawati (2019), Mahajan and Golahit (2017), Biswas (2020), Phillips and Jones (2024), Bungai et al. (2024), Harini et al. (2023), Down et al. (2024), Mathiaka (2023), and Wanjiku and Obuba (2023). At the same time, Kisirkoi and Kamanga (2022) show that access to the internet can influence online content access and utilization, illuminating the influence of personal characteristics on the impact of digital marketing strategies. However, there is no study that comprehensively assesses the unique influence of social media, influencer, and SEO marketing on student enrollment decisions among prospective private university students in Kenya. With this in mind, the relationship between digital marketing strategies and student enrollment decisions is unclear. This research aims to fill this gap by examining the influence of social media and SEO on student enrollment decisions at private universities in Kenya. The study investigated the influence of student characteristics as a moderator of the link between social media marketing on prospective students' decisions to enroll in private universities in Kenya.

II. Literature Review

Theoretical Framework

This section presents the theories that explain the association between digital marketing strategies and student enrolment decisions.

Engagement Theory

Engagement theory is a learning framework that emphasizes the significance of meaningful stakeholder involvement and active participation in the learning process through collaborative and interactive pathways. Developed by Greg Kearsley and Ben Shneiderman in 1998 (Insorio, 2024), the theory posits that peer interaction and collaboration foster stronger social bonds and deeper learning. It encourages shifting participants—such as prospective students, ranging from passive content consumers to active content creators, especially in digital learning environments. Interactive activities that offer real-world relevance are believed to promote a sense of agency and societal contribution.

However, the theory has received criticism for its underlying assumption that all learners prefer social engagement, particularly in digital or collaborative settings. This does not account for more introverted learners or those from cultures that value individualism, who may prefer solitary reflection over group interaction (Smith & Doe, 2022). In contrast, other researchers argue that the theory's strength lies not in universal applicability but in its capacity to structure environments that *can* enhance motivation and engagement when appropriately adapted (Nguyen & Adams, 2021). Thus, while the theory may not capture every learner's preferences, it remains a useful lens for understanding how engagement can drive decision-making, especially when learners feel their actions contribute to a larger social good.

In the context of higher education marketing, this theory supports how private universities engage prospective students online through immersive experiences, social media interaction, and influencer-led campaigns. These efforts are not merely promotional; they aim to demonstrate institutional capacity to solve real-world problems and inspire students to participate as co-creators of educational value. As Goudih, Abdallah, and Benraghda (2018) illustrate in their study at the International Islamic University of Malaysia (IIUM), applying engagement theory can shed light on how students adapt to new environments when institutions foster interactive, meaningful involvement. Therefore, despite its limitations, the theory provides a strong conceptual foundation for exploring how digital engagement influences enrollment decisions in private universities.

Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB)

The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), developed by Icek Ajzen in 1985, posits that behavior is guided by three core components: attitudes toward the behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control (Ajzen, 2020). These components interact to shape behavioral intentions, which are the immediate precursors to action. TPB assumes that behavior is the result of a rational decision-making process aimed at achieving specific outcomes. In this sense, people weigh their internal evaluations of a behavior, their perceptions of social expectations, and their sense of control over performing the behavior before choosing to act.

One of TPB's key strengths is its broad applicability and empirical support across various disciplines, including health, environmental behavior, and education. It offers a structured and measurable approach to predicting human actions, making it particularly useful in strategic decision-making contexts like higher education enrollment. However, its assumption of rationality has been critiqued for underestimating the role of emotions, spontaneous behaviors, and unconscious biases. In the context of digital marketing, for instance, emotional resonance, branding aesthetics, or even algorithm-driven exposure may influence prospective students' decisions, factors not fully accounted for within the traditional TPB model. Critics argue that this could limit the model's explanatory power in dynamic, emotion-driven decision-making environments like social media platforms.

Nevertheless, the model remains relevant, particularly when considering that even emotional or spontaneous decisions often stem from underlying attitudes and perceived norms. Research has begun to extend TPB to integrate affective components and contextual variables, suggesting the theory is adaptable rather than rigid (e.g., Conner & Armitage, 1998). In this research, TPB provides a conceptual lens for examining how prospective students form intentions to enroll in private universities. Social media marketing content—highlighting institutional reputation, academic quality, and student life shapes these students' attitudes and perceptions of social approval, while interactive features like live chats, testimonials, influencer endorsements can enhance their sense of agency and control.

For example, Dewberry and Jackson (2018) applied TPB to explore students' intentions to remain in university, underscoring how the interplay of personal attitudes and perceived expectations influences decision-making. In this study, a similar logic is applied: the theory helps explain how students evaluate digital marketing content not only cognitively but also socially, aligning their choices with perceived career fit and social validation. By acknowledging both the strengths and critiques of TPB, this research adopts a synthesized perspective, recognizing that while TPB may not account for every factor, it remains a robust and adaptable framework for understanding student decision-making in digitally mediated environments.

2.2 Empirical Literature Review

The findings from the studies conducted in other continents indicate that the utilization of digital marketing strategies influences student enrolment in private universities. Kusumawati (2019) used data from a large public university that actively manages digital marketing through its marketing and public relations department to study how students use digital media information to decide on whether to enroll in the university. The scholar employed a qualitative approach comprising semi-structured interviews, observations, and documentation to collect data. Using Creswell's analysis model, the researchers interpreted the results inductively. The findings revealed that social media's interactive and collaborative nature was considered a balanced communication platform, allowing the opinions and experiences of students and other stakeholders to be shared effectively. The findings of Kusumawati (2019) underscore the significance of digital marketing, especially the use of social media in influencing students to join universities. Kusumawati (2019) contributes significantly to this research by demonstrating the positive association between the use of social media by universities and relationship creation with prospective students, which can translate to enhanced enrollments and vice versa. That said, while Kusumawati (2019) offers useful insights into the communicative power of social media, the study's reliance on a single institution may limit generalizability. Furthermore, the study focuses primarily on communication dynamics rather than actual enrollment outcomes, creating a need for examining how this communication translates into measurable enrollment changes, especially in private universities.

Harini et al. (2023) studied the effective marketing strategies that meet contemporary needs, which could impact their enrolment in these institutions. The study used qualitative techniques to collect and analyse data from early childhood institutions, including recording observations, data reduction, and visualization; the researcher drew conclusions related to the subject. The findings of this research highlighted the essence of creating marketing strategies, understanding market characteristics and needs, leveraging social media and online platforms, ensuring data security, highlighting and endorsing educator quality, and addressing the specific needs of students. By considering these elements, schools are empowered to tailor their marketing approaches to enhance their visibility and appeal. The findings reinforce the necessity to have robust digital strategies to boost institutional interests, including increasing the rate of student enrolment. Harini et al. (2023) contribute to this research by illustrating the important role that effective social media use plays in enhancing university and prospective student interactions. It can be deduced that effective use of this strategy can contribute to higher enrollment and vice versa. Harini et al.'s (2023) study is strong in outlining strategy formulation but limited by its early education scope, which differs significantly from higher education in decision-making complexity and stakeholder expectations. There is a lack of empirical evidence linking these strategies directly to enrollment increases in universities, especially private institutions targeting tech-savvy or older student cohorts.

Ogeto et al. (2024) used survey data from 516 students to examine the impact of marketing communication tools on student enrollment in private universities in South Sudan, with a focus on social media marketing and direct marketing strategies. In their findings, the scholars noted that radio advertising effectively reached a wide audience, while Facebook marketing influenced student admissions. Student network interactions also impacted students' university choices. Meeting customer expectations through quality services encouraged referrals, though the impacts of advertising and social media marketing were not statistically significant in influencing student enrollment. Ogeto et al. (2024) findings provide important regional insights, but its mixed results on digital marketing's statistical impact raise concerns about overestimating social media's role in enrollment. More nuanced studies are needed to explore why digital marketing efforts in some regions or institutions fail to translate into actual enrollments—considering cultural, technological, and trust-related barriers.

Isaacs and Moulder (2024) examined the use of social media marketing by South African higher education institutions to recruit students, focusing on students' perceptions of its effectiveness to provide guidelines for developing social media strategies that can better influence students' decisions when selecting an institution. The sample consisted of Grade 11 and 12 students from schools representing the five different quintiles in South Africa. A qualitative approach was used, combining conceptual analysis and focus group discussions. The research identified ten key guidelines, with the most important being increased engagement, relationship-building, and the use of creative visual content to communicate practical information. Isaacs and Moulder's (2024) findings indicate that social media can influence student decision-making. More importantly, they illuminate that social media strategies are seen as essential for improving the effectiveness of social media marketing in reaching and influencing prospective students. The research offers practical, student-centered design insights but is limited by its exclusion of administrative or institutional perspectives on strategy effectiveness. Future research should compare student perceptions with institutional goals and performance data to assess alignment and actual behavioral outcomes, such as application or enrollment rates.

Swart and Shirte (2024) investigated the significance of using effective media and marketing strategies for private higher-learning institutions to increase enrollment in South Africa. The scholars collected data from 23 respondents from three relevant institutions and analyzed it to meet their research goals. The importance of strengthening online presence, improving the quality of websites, and engaging in high school visits and career fairs to attract a broader student base to encourage enrolment was established in the findings. The findings of Swart and Shirte (2024) contribute to this research by illuminating the importance of using social media appropriately to enhance enrollment rates. While valuable, the small sample size (23 respondents) that was used in Isaacs and Moulder's (2024) research raises questions about its representativeness. Also, the focus on multiple outreach methods dilutes the

specific role of digital strategies. The effectiveness of individual digital tools like social media vs. SEO vs. email marketing on enrollment remains underexplored and warrants quantitative validation.

Sikalumbi and Nalumino. (2023) used data from 100 students and staff of two Zambian public universities to examine the effectiveness of marketing strategies in boosting enrollment at public universities in Zambia. From the findings, it was established that a significant relationship exists between the adoption of multiple marketing strategies and student enrollment. The most impactful marketing strategies that enhanced enrollment were the use of university websites and social media, investing in infrastructure, developing market-driven programs, and improving customer service. From the findings of this study, it is evident that implementing diverse marketing strategies enhances enrollment, which is pivotal for improving universities' financial sustainability and service quality. The findings of this research reinforce the significance of using social media tools to popularize learning institutions like private universities to enhance the rates of enrolment. Sikalumbi and Nalumino's (2023) study takes a comprehensive view but does not distinguish between traditional and digital strategies in impact measurement. Also, combining staff and student responses might obscure perspective-specific insights. Further disaggregation of digital against non-digital tools is needed, as well as longitudinal data to assess sustainability of enrollment growth over time.

Oluyemi (2020) surveyed the responses of parents and teachers drawn from 600 high school students to determine the association between social media and education among teenagers in Ogun State, Nigeria. A detailed analysis of the data revealed important insights into the subject. The research established that the use of social media platforms facilitates both learning and interaction, which contribute to overall progress. The findings of Oluyemi (2020) contribute to this subject by shedding light on it. It suggests that social media and teenage education are mutually beneficial, but the most important of these is the contribution to the learning process of youngsters. Though useful for understanding educational dynamics, Oluyemi (2020) does not address higher education or enrollment decisions, limiting its direct applicability to university marketing. More targeted research is needed on how teenagers transition from general educational social media use to making informed university enrollment decisions.

Mathiaka (2023) assessed the significance of digital marketing strategies on student enrollment at KCA University (KCA). The study's sample of 390 respondents was selected using simple random sampling based on a list provided by the university's registrar. The findings of this study revealed that the university prioritized Facebook for institution-to-student interaction. A significant positive link was established between social media marketing and student enrollment, with regression analysis results showing that social media marketing explained 62.8% of the variance in student enrollment. Other impactful marketing strategies were search engine optimization and email marketing. The findings of this study typify the role that digital marketing strategies play in influencing student enrollment in private higher-learning institutions. Mathiaka (2023) offers strong statistical backing but is constrained by its single-institution focus, making cross-institutional comparisons difficult. Broader, multi-university studies are needed to validate whether these findings hold across diverse educational, geographic, and economic contexts.

Kimani and Obwatho (2020) used primary data from 139 respondents and desk review data to examine how social media marketing influences student enrollment in private universities in Kenya. A detailed analysis of the data found that private universities effectively employed social media platforms to enhance student enrollment. A review of respondents' views acknowledged that social media marketing platforms like Facebook, Snapchat, Pinterest, Reddit, YouTube, and Quora aided service delivery, cost reduction, and stakeholder communication, with some preferring it as their main communication channel. The findings of Kimani and Obwatho (2020) illuminate the positive influence of social media platforms on student enrollment at private universities. Effective use of social media by private learning institutions can contribute positively to enrollment goals. While the range of platforms discussed is impressive, the study underplays potential differences in platform effectiveness and fails to address outcome metrics such as actual enrollment changes. There is a need to evaluate which platforms are most cost-effective and impactful in converting engagement into enrollment, particularly in the East African context.

Variable Conceptualization

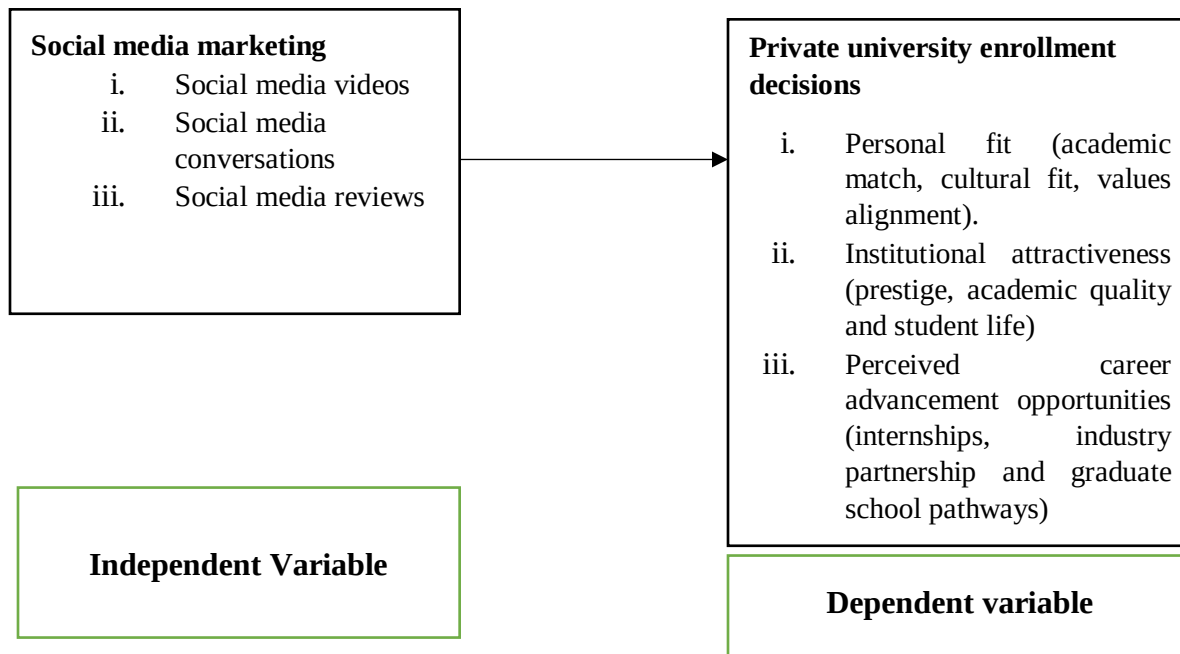
Social media marketing

Social media marketing was conceptualized from the perspective of how the respondents relate to the choices of the media that the universities advertise themselves, the type of content they share, and interactions with prospective students on the various social media platforms. The research looked into how social media content likes, shares, comments, retweets, and direct messaging shaped their decisions to enroll in the current university.

University enrollment decisions

The outcome variable was looked at from the students' previous considerations to enroll based on the digital promotional techniques being used by their universities of choice, depending on the institutional attractiveness, perceived personal fit and opportunity to advance one's career.

Conceptual Framework



III. Research Methodology

A survey research design with an explanatory approach was adopted to conduct an in-depth, real-world examination of the marketing-linked decisions by learners from 3 selected private universities in Kenya. Using Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) formula, a study on this population required a sample of 382 respondents (Chaokromthong & Sintao, 2021).

The formula is as follows;

$$S = \frac{X^2 \cdot N \cdot P \cdot (1-p)}{(E^2 \cdot (N-1) + (X^2 \cdot P \cdot (1-P)))}$$

Where;

S=Required sample size

P=Estimated proportion of the population

E=Expected margin of error

X²=The table value for the desired confidence level (95% or 99%).

In this case

X² = Chi-square value for 1 degree of freedom at the desired confidence level (The study used 3.841 for 95%)

N = population size

P = population proportion (We assume it is 0.5 for maximum sample size)

d = margin of error (usually 0.05)

Stratified random sampling was used to subdivide the sample into two homogenous (undergraduate and post graduate) groups. Proportionate sampling was then used to allot the students sample sizes to each university based on the population (Lohr, 2021). The formula indicated that a sample of 382 was needed in this research. The quota sampling was used to allot samples based on the university population as indicated below;

Selected Private University	University	Student Population	Sample Proportion to be drawn	Actual sample size to be drawn
University A		53,261	76.75%	294
University B		8,000	11.52%	45

University C	5171	7.45%	43
Total	69,375	100%	382

Structured questionnaires were administered to the respondents to collect primary data. Descriptive statistics were derived from the responses. A bivariate regression function was also conducted. The regression model was as follows;

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta X + \epsilon$$

Where Y represented the student enrolment decisions, β_0 represented the y-intercept, or the point where decision making occurs without social media marketing influence, β_1 represented the coefficient of the predictor variable (social media marketing), X represented social media marketing, and ϵ represented the error term, or unexplained enrollment decision-making outside social media marketing.

IV. Research Findings and Discussion

The study distributed a total of 382 structured questionnaires across the three selected universities as per the Krejcie and Morgan 1970 sample threshold. Out of the 382, a total of 375 respondents gave valid responses, signifying a 98.2% rate. Since this exceeded the 70% of the sample threshold, it met the criterion of being 'good' for inferential statistics and generalization (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2012). The high response rate was attributed to the use of appropriate data collection procedures, trained enumerators, prenotification of the respondents about voluntary participation, anonymity, and the safety of the respondents. Additionally, each respondent was given enough time to fill out the questionnaires.

Respondent demographic characteristics

Gender	Female	46.7%
	Male	53.3%
Age Bracket	30 years and below	37.3%
	31-40 years	29.1%
	41-50 years	21.9%
	51 years and above	11.7%
Level of study	Postgraduate	38.9%
	Undergraduate/Bachelor's Degree	61.1%

Among the selected respondents, males constituted the larger percentage; 210(53.0%), while the rest of the respondents, or 185(46.7%) were female. By age bracket, a majority of the respondents were aged 30 and below, while the smallest percentage comprised those aged 51 and above. Precisely, 140(37.3%) of the respondents were aged 30 and below. Those who were aged between 31 and 40 were 109(29.1%), while those who were aged between 41 and 50 were 82(21.9%). The respondents who were aged 51 and above were 44, which was 11.7% of the total sample size. By the level of study, more than half, or 229 (61.1%) of the respondents were taking a bachelor's degree. The remaining 146 students, or 38.9% were taking postgraduate degrees at the time of the study. These findings correspond to Wanjiku and Obuba(2023), Oluyemi (2020), Philips and Jones(2024), and Ogeto et al.(2024), who established that learners at the lower levels of study are easier to access and study.

Descriptive statistics for social media marketing

Statement	Mean	Std. Deviation
Social media videos provided valuable insights into academic programs and student experiences	4.04	0.36
Short-form educational videos, like Instagram reels, TikTok and YouTube Shorts served as effective communication tools	4.76	0.36
Peer conversations on social media platforms provide valuable insights into universities and academic programs	4.06	0.46
Engaging in Q &A chatbots on social media increased my interest in this university	4.78	0.48
Active responses to students reviews on social media was impactful on my decision-making	4.08	0.49

Reviews shared by current and alumni on social media seemed to be more trustworthy than official university advertisement	4.70	0.58
Through social media posts, I learned that this university fitted my academic and career goals	4.14	0.50

The descriptive statistics show that each of the statements had a minimum mean score of 4. The lowest mean was for the statement that social media videos provided valuable insights into academic programs and student experiences” [mean=4.04, SD=0.36]. On the other hand, the highest mean was for the statement “engaging in Q &A chatbots on social media increased my interest in this university” [4.78, SD=0.48]. These findings are consistent with Kusumawati (2019), Oluyemi (2020), and Isaacs and Moulder (2024) by illuminating how social media is viewed as a communication platform that creates balance, allowing effective sharing of opinions and experiences among stakeholders. However, it contradicts the findings of Kimani and Obwatho (2020) by diminishing the significance of Q&A chatbots as key social media features.

Descriptive statistics for student enrollment decisions

Statement	Mean	Std. Deviation
Clearly stated admission requirements and prerequisites make it easier to determine eligibility for a program.	4.44	.51
Information on career opportunities related to a program increases motivation to apply	4.55	.66
Easy access to a university’s contact options (e.g., email, phone, live chat) increases the likelihood of making an inquiry about a program	4.49	.75
Quick and informative responses from university representatives encourage further engagement with the institution	4.46	.69
The availability of step-by-step guidance on the application process makes it easier to complete the application	4.47	.68

The scores for university enrolment decisions statements were significantly close to each other. The statement with the lowest mean score was for the statement “Clearly stated admission requirements and prerequisites make it easier to determine eligibility for a program” [mean=4.44, SD=0.51]. On the other hand, the statement with the highest score was “Information on career opportunities related to a program increases motivation to apply” [mean=4.55, SD=0.66]. The closeness of the mean scores suggest that learners were influenced by availability of information relating to the careers that are linked to the program and least influenced by presence of information relating to course requirements. These findings match Wanjiku and Obuba (2023) which states that features of a university's website, video marketing and display ads considerations, social media presence and accessibility, and SEO significantly support the success of the university's digital marketing strategy and student enrolment.

Correlation analysis

		Social media marketing	University enrolment decision
Social media marketing	Pearson Correlation	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.00	
	N	375	
Student enrollment decisions	Pearson Correlation	.547**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.00	0.00
	N	375	375

The correlation between social media marketing and student enrollment decisions was moderate but positive and statistically significant [$r=0.547$, $P<0.01$]. These findings correspond to Isaacs and Moulder (2024), Sikalumbi and Nalumino. (2023) and Kimani and Obwatho (2020) who indicate that there is a positive association between social media marketing and student enrolment.

Regression analysis

Model summary		R	R Square	Adjusted R Square			Std. Error of the Estimate	
		.545 ^a	.298	.296			1.03140	
ANOVA				Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
	Regression			166.472	1	166.472	156.490	.000 ^b
	Residual			394.665	371	1.064		
	Total			561.137	372			
			Unstandardized Coefficients			Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
			β		Std. Error	β		
Coefficients	Constant		1.863	.140		13.304	.000	
	Social media marketing		.188	.015	.545	12.510	.000	

A linear regression analysis was conducted to examine whether social media marketing significantly predicts student enrollment decisions. The predictor was entered into the model simultaneously. From the model summary, it can be established that the regression model explained approximately 29.8% in student enrollment decisions ($R^2 = .298$) with an adjusted R^2 of .296, which accounts for the number of predictors in the model. The standard error of the estimate was 1.0314, indicating the average distance that the observed values fall from the regression line. The relatively high R^2 value suggests that the model provided a good fit to the data. The ANOVA results indicated that the model is statistically significant [$F(1, 375) = 168.656, p < .005$], indicating that the predictor variable (social media marketing) significantly explains variance in the dependent variable (university enrollment decisions).

The coefficients table indicated that social media marketing was a significant predictor of university enrollment [$\beta = 0.188, t(372) = 13.304, p < .005$].

The resulting regression model for social media marketing influence on university enrolment decisions is as follows;

University student enrollment decision = $1.863 + 0.188 \text{ social media marketing} + \epsilon$

These findings correspond to Down et al. (2024), who advocate for the use of digital media to arouse student interest in enrolling in learning institutions, including private universities. It also illuminates the findings of the positive influence of social media influence in student decisions like enrollment as outlined in Kusumawati(2019), Kimani and Obwatho (2020), Harini et al.(2023), and Isaacs and Moulder(2024)

V. Conclusion

The study concluded that social media marketing has a weak but positive and statistically significant influence on the decisions of prospective learners to enroll in private universities. The weak influence means that other factors, apart from digital marketing, influence private university enrollment decisions.

VI. Recommendations

The private university marketers and other stakeholders who are involved in promoting private universities should consider social media marketing as one of the ways of attracting learners amidst the decline in enrollment in these institutions. Using social media marketing alone while disregarding other forms of marketing can undermine enrollment decisions among prospective learners because the degree to which social media marketing influences enrollment decisions is low. It is vital for these marketers to establish and balance all the factors that influence learner decisions to enroll in their institutions.

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