

The Influence of Promotion Through Instagram @dehasen on New Students' Decisions in Choosing Dehasen University Bengkulu (A Quantitative Study on Communication Science Students of the Class of 2024)

Ade Putri*, Sapta Sari, Maryaningsih

Department of Communication Science, Faculty of Social Sciences, Dehasen University Bengkulu, Indonesia

*Correspondence: Ade Putri
adeputri16916@gmail.com

Received: 03-11-2025

Accepted: 16-12-2025

Published: 28-01-2026

Copyright © 2024 by author(s) and Scientific Research Publishing Inc. This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution International License (CC BY 4.0).
<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>



Abstract

This study examines the influence of promotion through Instagram @dehasen on new students' decisions in choosing Dehasen University Bengkulu. The research employed a quantitative explanatory approach using a survey method. The sample consisted of 76 students from the Communication Science Class of 2024, selected using probability sampling with a total sampling technique. Data were collected through questionnaires measured on a Likert scale and analyzed using IBM SPSS version 26. The study was grounded in the Social Media Promotion theory (4C concept: Context, Communication, Collaboration, and Connection) proposed by Chris Heuer and the Consumer Decision-Making theory by Kotler and Keller. The results indicate that promotion through Instagram has a positive and significant effect on students' decisions to choose Dehasen University Bengkulu, with a significance value of 0.000 (< 0.05) and a t -value of 4.166 greater than the t -table value of 1.992. The coefficient of determination shows that Instagram promotion contributes 80.1% to students' decision-making, while 19.9% is influenced by other factors. Among the promotional indicators, context has the strongest influence, while in the decision-making process, university recognition and information search are the most dominant factors. These findings suggest that Instagram serves as an effective digital promotional tool in influencing prospective students' university selection decisions.

Keywords

Promotion, Instagram, Student Decision-Making, Digital Marketing, Higher Education

Introduction

The rapid advancement of digital technology has significantly transformed communication patterns and information dissemination across various sectors, including higher education. Social media has emerged as a dominant platform that enables institutions to interact directly with their audiences, shape public perception, and strengthen institutional branding. In Indonesia, the number of active social media users continues to grow, making digital platforms an essential medium for communication and marketing strategies (We Are Social, 2023). This development encourages higher education institutions to adopt digital promotional approaches to remain competitive. Promotion is an integral element of the marketing mix that functions to inform, persuade, and remind consumers about products or services offered by an organization (Kotler & Keller, 2016). In the digital era, promotional strategies have shifted toward social media platforms due to their broad reach, interactive features, and cost efficiency. Social media enables

organizations not only to disseminate information but also to build engagement and relationships with their audiences (Hanna et al., 2011). Therefore, digital promotion plays a strategic role in influencing consumer attitudes and decision-making processes.

Instagram, as a visually oriented social media platform, has become one of the most effective digital marketing tools. Its features—such as photo and video sharing, stories, reels, live streaming, hashtags, and direct messaging—allow institutions to present content creatively and interactively. Instagram’s visual characteristics make it particularly effective in attracting the attention of younger generations, especially prospective university students. Research indicates that social media significantly influences consumer perceptions and behavioral intentions (Alalwan et al., 2017). In the context of higher education, social media serves as a primary source of information for prospective students when exploring universities. The effectiveness of social media promotion can be analyzed through the 4C concept introduced by Chris Heuer, which includes Context, Communication, Collaboration, and Connection (Solis, 2010). Context refers to how messages are packaged and presented meaningfully; Communication emphasizes clarity and interaction; Collaboration highlights audience participation; and Connection focuses on maintaining long-term relationships with followers. These elements collectively determine how well promotional messages are received and interpreted by the target audience.

In addition, the decision-making process of choosing a university can be explained using consumer behavior theory. Kotler and Keller (2016) describe five stages in the decision-making process: problem recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase decision, and post-purchase behavior. Applied to higher education, prospective students first recognize the need to pursue further education, then seek information from various sources, compare alternatives, make enrollment decisions, and finally evaluate their satisfaction after enrollment. Dehasen University Bengkulu utilizes its official Instagram account (@dehasen) as a digital promotional medium to provide information about academic programs, campus facilities, student achievements, and institutional activities. As competition among universities becomes increasingly intense, digital platforms such as Instagram play a crucial role in influencing prospective students’ perceptions and decisions. However, fluctuations in student enrollment numbers indicate the need to evaluate the effectiveness of such promotional strategies.

Although previous studies have examined the influence of social media marketing on consumer and student decision-making, the magnitude and significance of its impact vary depending on context and research approach. Therefore, empirical research is necessary to measure how far Instagram promotion contributes to students’ decisions in selecting a university. Based on this background, this study aims to analyze the influence of promotion through Instagram @dehasen on new students’ decisions in choosing Dehasen University Bengkulu. This research is expected to contribute to the development of digital marketing communication studies in higher education and provide practical recommendations for optimizing social media promotion strategies.

Methods

This study employed a quantitative explanatory research design to analyze the influence of promotion through Instagram @dehasen on new students’ decisions in choosing Dehasen

University Bengkulu. The explanatory approach was used to examine the causal relationship between the independent variable, namely Instagram promotion, and the dependent variable, students' decision-making. Data were collected using a survey method through a structured questionnaire distributed to respondents. The population of this study consisted of all new students of the Communication Science Department, Faculty of Social Sciences, Dehasen University Bengkulu, Class of 2024. Based on academic records, the total active population was 94 students. The sample size was determined using the Slovin formula with a 5% margin of error, resulting in 76 respondents. Probability sampling was applied to ensure that each member of the population had an equal opportunity to be selected as a respondent.

The independent variable in this study was promotion through Instagram @dehasen, measured using the 4C concept of social media promotion proposed by Chris Heuer, which includes context, communication, collaboration, and connection (Solis, 2010). The dependent variable was students' decision in choosing a university, measured based on the consumer decision-making process theory by Kotler and Keller (2016), which consists of university recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, decision-making, and post-decision behavior. The research instrument consisted of 19 statements measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Instrument validity was tested using the Pearson Product-Moment correlation technique, and all items showed correlation coefficients higher than the r -table value (0.225), indicating that they were valid. Reliability testing was conducted using Cronbach's Alpha, resulting in values of 0.960 for the promotion variable and 0.951 for the decision-making variable, both exceeding the minimum threshold of 0.60 and therefore considered reliable.

Data were analyzed using IBM SPSS version 26. The analysis included a normality test using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov method, Pearson correlation analysis to measure the strength of the relationship between variables, a linearity test to confirm the linear relationship, the coefficient of determination (R^2) to assess the contribution of Instagram promotion to students' decision-making, and a t -test to examine the significance of the influence at a 0.05 significance level.

Results and Discussion

The analysis was conducted on data collected from 76 respondents using IBM SPSS version 26. The results begin with descriptive statistics, followed by inferential statistical testing to examine the relationship and influence between variables. Based on respondent characteristics, female students dominated the sample (73.7%), while male students accounted for 26.3%. The majority of respondents were aged 18–20 years (82.9%). Regarding the primary source of information about Dehasen University Bengkulu, 60.5% of respondents reported Instagram as their main source, followed by friends or family (31.6%), the official website (6.6%), and brochures or banners (1.3%). These findings indicate that Instagram functions as the dominant information channel among respondents.

Before hypothesis testing, the normality of the data was examined using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test. The result showed an Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) value of 0.071, which is greater than the significance level of 0.05. Therefore, the data were normally distributed and suitable for parametric analysis.

Table 1. Normality Test (Kolmogorov-Smirnov)

| N | Test Statistic | Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) |
|----|----------------|------------------------|
| 76 | 0.098 | 0.071 |

The Pearson correlation test was conducted to measure the strength of the relationship between Instagram promotion and students' decision-making. The results showed a correlation coefficient (r) of 0.895 with a significance value of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$). This indicates a very strong and statistically significant positive relationship between the two variables.

Table 2. Pearson Correlation Analysis

| Variables | r | Sig. (2-tailed) | N |
|--|-------|-----------------|----|
| Instagram Promotion – Student Decision | 0.895 | 0.000 | 76 |

To determine the magnitude of influence, the coefficient of determination (R^2) was calculated. The R Square value was 0.802, meaning that 80.1% of the variance in students' decision-making is explained by Instagram promotion, while 19.9% is influenced by other variables not examined in this study.

Table 3. Model Summary (Coefficient of Determination)

| R | R Square | Adjusted R Square |
|-------|----------|-------------------|
| 0.895 | 0.802 | 0.799 |

Hypothesis testing was performed using a t-test with a significance level of 0.05 and degrees of freedom (df) = 74. The calculated t-value was 4.166, which exceeded the t-table value of 1.992. The significance value was 0.000 (< 0.05), indicating that the effect of Instagram promotion on students' decisions is statistically significant.

Table 4. t-test Results

| Variable | t-value | t-table | Sig. |
|---------------------|---------|---------|-------|
| Instagram Promotion | 4.166 | 1.992 | 0.000 |

In addition to inferential testing, descriptive analysis was conducted to examine the achievement level of each indicator. For the Instagram promotion variable, the Context indicator obtained the highest percentage score (80.26%), followed by Communication (79.07%), Connection (78.94%), and Collaboration (78.02%). Meanwhile, for the decision-making variable, the highest percentage was found in Information Search (87.89%), followed by Decision to Choose the University (82.5%), Post-Decision Behavior (82.5%), University Recognition (82.23%), and Evaluation of Alternatives (80.26%).

Table 5. Percentage Achievement of Promotion Indicators

| Indicator | Percentage (%) |
|---------------|----------------|
| Context | 80.26 |
| Communication | 79.07 |
| Collaboration | 78.02 |
| Connection | 78.94 |

Table 6. Percentage Achievement of Decision-Making Indicators

| Indicator | Percentage (%) |
|------------------------|----------------|
| University Recognition | 82.23 |

| | |
|-----------------------------------|-------|
| Information Search | 87.89 |
| Evaluation of Alternatives | 80.26 |
| Decision to Choose | 82.50 |
| Post-Decision Behavior | 82.50 |

Overall, the statistical findings consistently demonstrate that promotion through Instagram @dehasen has a strong, positive, and statistically significant influence on students' decisions in choosing Dehasen University Bengkulu. The correlation coefficient of 0.895 indicates a very strong relationship between Instagram promotional activities and students' decision-making processes. Furthermore, the coefficient of determination (80.1%) shows that Instagram promotion explains a substantial proportion of the variance in students' decisions, confirming its strategic and influential role as a digital marketing tool in the context of higher education.

The dominance of the Context indicator (80.26%) suggests that the way promotional messages are packaged, visually presented, and linguistically structured significantly affects audience perception. This finding aligns with Chris Heuer's 4C concept, which emphasizes that relevant and meaningful content is the foundation of effective social media engagement (Solis, 2010). In this study, respondents perceived that the information provided through Instagram was clear, visually appealing, and aligned with their needs as prospective students. This indicates that content quality plays a critical role in shaping institutional image and influencing initial interest.

The Communication indicator also showed a high percentage (79.07%), indicating that clarity and accessibility of information contribute to students' understanding of the university profile. Social media platforms function not only as promotional tools but also as communication channels that facilitate information exchange and interaction (Hanna et al., 2011). Clear and structured information reduces uncertainty and supports prospective students in evaluating educational options.

The Collaboration and Connection indicators, although slightly lower than Context, still demonstrated high levels of effectiveness. These findings suggest that engagement and interaction between the institution and its audience help strengthen relational bonds and trust. The Connection indicator (78.94%) indicates that Instagram helps maintain students' sense of attachment and ongoing interaction with the institution. This supports the notion that social media enables organizations to build long-term relationships rather than merely delivering one-way promotional messages. Regarding the decision-making variable, the highest percentage was found in the Information Search stage (87.89%). This result reflects the importance of digital platforms as primary sources of information during the decision-making process. According to Kotler and Keller (2016), information search is a crucial stage in consumer decision-making, as individuals actively seek data to reduce uncertainty before making a choice. In this context, Instagram functions effectively as an accessible and comprehensive source of institutional information.

The high percentages in University Recognition (82.23%) and Decision to Choose the University (82.5%) further confirm that promotional exposure contributes to strengthening students' confidence in their final decisions. These findings are consistent with consumer behavior theory, which explains that exposure to relevant and persuasive information influences attitudes and behavioral intentions (Kotler & Keller, 2016). The positive post-decision behavior (82.5%) also indicates satisfaction and willingness to recommend the university, suggesting that digital

promotion may indirectly support word-of-mouth communication. The strong influence identified in this study is consistent with previous research indicating that social media marketing significantly affects consumer perceptions and behavioral intentions (Alalwan et al., 2017). In the higher education context, digital platforms are not only informational tools but also persuasive mechanisms that shape brand image and institutional credibility.

However, although Instagram promotion explains 80.1% of the variance in decision-making, the remaining 19.9% suggests that other factors also contribute to students' choices. These factors may include academic reputation, tuition fees, family influence, peer recommendations, and campus facilities. Therefore, while digital promotion plays a dominant role, it should be integrated with broader institutional strategies to ensure sustainable enrollment growth. Overall, the discussion confirms that Instagram promotion when implemented with strong contextual relevance, clear communication, collaborative engagement, and relational connection serves as an effective strategy in influencing prospective students' university selection decisions.

Conclusion

This study concludes that promotion through Instagram @dehasen has a strong, positive, and statistically significant influence on students' decisions in choosing Dehasen University Bengkulu. The correlation coefficient of 0.895 indicates a very strong relationship between Instagram promotional activities and students' decision-making processes. Furthermore, the coefficient of determination (80.1%) demonstrates that Instagram promotion explains a substantial proportion of the variance in students' decisions, while 19.9% is influenced by other factors not examined in this study.

Among the promotional dimensions, the Context indicator shows the highest contribution, indicating that content relevance, clarity of message, and visual presentation are key factors in influencing prospective students. On the decision-making side, the Information Search and University Recognition stages emerge as the most dominant, highlighting the importance of accessible and comprehensive digital information in shaping students' choices.

These findings confirm that Instagram functions not only as an information-sharing platform but also as an effective strategic communication tool capable of influencing prospective students' perceptions and enrollment decisions. Therefore, optimizing digital promotional strategies through engaging, clear, and relevant content can significantly enhance institutional competitiveness in the higher education sector.

References

- Agung Anugerah, H. A. T. A. (2019). *Pengaruh Promosi Melalui Media Sosial Terhadap Keputusan Tamu Untuk Menginap Di Capoalaga Adventure Camp Subang*.
- Alalwan, A. A., Rana, N. P., Dwivedi, Y. K., & Algharabat, R. (2017). Social media in marketing: A review and analysis of the existing literature. *Telematics and informatics*, 34(7), 1177-1190.
- Aliyah, K. A. (2017). *Pengaruh Promosi Melalui Media Sosial Terhadap Keputusan Pembelian Dengan Viral Marketing Sebagai Variabel Intervening (Studi Kasus Pada Konsumen Sfa Steak & Resto Karanganyar)*. Insitut Agama Islam Negeri Surakarta.
- Arikunto, S. (2010). *Prosedur penelitian suatu pendekatan praktek*. Rineka Cipta

- Azwar, S. (2015). *Reliabilitas dan Validitas*. Pustaka Pelajar
- Badri, S. (2018). *Metode statistika untuk penelitian kuantitatif*. Yogyakarta: Penerbit Ombak.
- Bungin, B. (2013). *Penelitian kuantitatif*. Jakarta: Kencana Media Predana Group.
- Dharmawansyah, S., Cangara, H., & Sultan, M. I. (2014). Strategi promosi dalam meningkatkan jumlah mahasiswa pada politeknik negeri media kreatif makassar. *KAREBA: Jurnal Ilmu Komunikasi*, 256-263.
- Hanna, R., Rohm, A., & Crittenden, V. L. (2011). We're all connected: The power of the social media ecosystem. *Business horizons*, 54(3), 265-273.
- Hurriyaturrohmah, H., & Maulani, D. (2020). Pemanfaatan Media Sosial *Instagram* Untuk Meningkatkan Promosi Dan Nilai Jual Produk Umkm Tas Di Kota Bogor. *Neraca Keuangan: Jurnal Ilmiah Akuntansi dan Keuangan*, 15(2), 72-80.
- Kasim, M. (2010). *Metode Penelitian Kuantitatif*. Yogyakarta: UIN Maliki Press.
- Kotler, P., & Keller, K. L. (2016). *Marketing Management, 15th Edition* (15th ed.). Pearson.
- Mafulla, D., Hestianah, S., & Kholik, A. (2021). Efektifitas Media Sosial *Instagram* Sebagai Strategi Promosi Online Kawasan Wisata Pacet Mojokerto. *Jurnal el-Idaarah*, 1(2).
- Nurhidayat, M., & Maulidan, M. R. (2023). Pemanfaatan Digital Marketing Sebagai Sarana Optimalisasi Pemasaran Produk Hepsu. Ind. *Prosiding Simposium Nasional Multidisiplin (SinaMu)*, 4, 102-113.
- Prasetyaningrum, I. D., & Marliana, E. (2020). Faktor yang Mempengaruhi Keputusan Pemilihan Perguruan Tinggi Swasta (Studi pada Universitas Muria Kudus). *Jembatan: Jurnal Ilmiah Manajemen*, 17(1), 61-72.
- Sigit, S. (2002). *Pemasaran Praktis (Practical Marketing)*. Cet. Ke-dua. Yogyakarta: BPFE.
- Solis, B. (2010). *Engege: The Complete Guide for Brands and Businesses to Build, Cultivate, and Measure Success in the New Web*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Sugiyono, M. (2014). *Penelitian Pendidikan Pendekatan Kuantitatif Kualitatif R&D cet. Ke-19, Bandung: Alfabeta*.
- Sugiyono. (2016). *Metode Penelitian Kuantitatif* (23rd ed). Alfabeta.
- Sugiyono. (2022). *Metode Kuantitatif* (Setiyawami, Ed.; 3rd ed). Alfabeta.
- Sunyoto, D. (2014). *Dasar-dasar Manajemen Pemasaran, konsep, strategi, dan kasus*. Yogyakarta: CPNS.
- Tjiptono, F. 2008. *Strategi Pemasaran, Ed III*. Yogyakarta: ANDI
- Tria, N. (2022). *Strategi Pemanfaatan Media Sosial Instagram Sebagai Sarana Pemasaran Pada Dsho Doughnuts Tebing Tinggi* (Doctoral dissertation, STIE Bina Karya Tebing Tinggi).
- Alalwan, A. A., Rana, N. P., Dwivedi, Y. K., & Algharabat, R. (2017). Social media in marketing: A review and analysis of the existing literature. *Telematics and Informatics*, 34(7), 1177-1190.
- Hanna, R., Rohm, A., & Crittenden, V. L. (2011). We're all connected: The power of the social media ecosystem. *Business Horizons*, 54(3), 265-273.
- Hartatik, S., Haryanto, J. T., & Putri, A. N. (2023). Peran media sosial dalam menarik minat calon mahasiswa. *Jurnal Komunikasi dan Pemasaran Pendidikan*, 5(1), 45-56.
- We Are Social. (2023). *Digital 2023: Indonesia*. <https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2023-indonesia>