



## Promotion Strategy for Higher Education Business Based on Customer Path 5A and Product Performance using Instagram Content Types

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
<p><b>Published Online:</b> 08 March 2025</p> <p><b>Corresponding Author:</b> Wildan Guretno Prasetyo</p>	<p>The competition for recruiting students in higher education institutions is intensifying, particularly in West Java, due to the large amount of higher education institutions in the region. The capacity of state higher education institutions (SHEIs) in this area remains limited, offering only 19,943 seats in 2023, which is insufficient to meet the high demand from prospective students. This situation creates opportunities to develop higher education institution businesses through effective recruitment strategies. According to We Are Social (2024), social media usage continues to rise, with Instagram being the most popular platform, making it an effective medium for higher education institution promotion. This study aims to analyze the effectiveness of Instagram content types and themes in supporting higher education institution promotion. The research objects are divided into five models: (1) Model I (organic hard selling); (2) Model II (organic soft selling with educational comic themes); (3) Model III (organic soft selling with quiz themes); (4) Model IV (organic soft selling with achievement information themes); and (5) Model V (paid hard selling). The research employs an exploratory quantitative method using 5A analysis and Product Performance analysis. Data were collected from Instagram activities during the marketing campaign from January 2024 to September 2024, student admission data, and interviews conducted at XYZ Private University in Bandung. The results indicate that Model II, Model IV, and Model V are effective in supporting higher education institution promotion.</p>
<p><b>KEYWORDS:</b> higher education, promotion, customer path 5A, product performance, content types.</p>	

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Meltareza & Tawaqal (2023) state that private higher education institutions (HEIs) are currently facing intense competition in recruiting and retaining students. According to the Central Bureau of Statistics in Indonesia (BPS, 2023), there were 4,004 HEIs in Indonesia in 2022, marking a 0.73% increase from the previous year's total of 3,975. Of these, 2,982 were private HEIs (PHEIs), and 125 were state HEIs (SHEIs). West Java leads as the province with the highest number of HEIs, totaling 376. Meanwhile, data from the Higher Education Database (PDDikti, 2023) cited by Zulfikar (2024) shows that the number of HEIs in Indonesia has further increased to 4,523, a 12.96% rise from the 2022 figure reported by BPS. With the annual growth in the number of HEIs, particularly PHEIs, in-depth research and understanding of effective marketing communication strategies have become crucial for recruiting and retaining students. In 2023, the number of active students reached 859,997, with 23% enrolled in SHEIs and 77% in PHEIs.

According to Sidata PTN (2024), 288,807 applicants registered for the SNBT pathway to SHEIs in West Java, while the available capacity was only 19,943 seats, leaving 268,864 applicants unable to secure a place. These factors highlight a promising opportunity for PHEIs to attract more students, necessitating specialized strategies to promote PHEIs and build trust among prospective students.

Promotion, one of the 4P marketing mix strategies introduced by D. Perreault Jr. & McCarthy (2002), is integral to marketing practices. Kotler & Keller (2016) link promotion to the Response Hierarchy Model, which consists of three stages: Cognitive, Affective, and Behavioral. One of the most widely used models is AIDA (Attention, Interest, Desire, Action), later expanded by Dereck Rucker into the 4A model (Aware, Attitude, Act, Act Again). With the shift from conventional to digital media, Kotler et al. (2017) further developed the 4A model into the 5A model (Aware, Appeal, Ask, Act, Advocate), which integrates seamlessly with social media features. We Are Social (2024) reports that

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social media usage continues to grow annually, reaching 5.037 billion users in 2024, a 5.6% increase from the previous year's 4.77 billion. Instagram, with an average usage of 347.8 hours per month, ranks third in social media engagement, surpassing TikTok (343.7 hours). Instagram's advantage lies in its complex features compared to WhatsApp and Line, which focus primarily on communication. Additionally, 16.5% of internet users aged 16–64 consider Instagram their favorite social media platform, making it a strategic choice for promoting products and services, including PHEIs. In Instagram advertising, content is the primary component shared with the public, whether in the form of images or videos. Content pillars, including themes and formats, significantly influence the promotion of products or services. Initially, Instagram ads emphasized hard selling, focusing directly on product features. However, recent trends have shifted toward soft selling, which prioritizes storytelling, emotional engagement, education, and long-term customer relationships.

Research by Okazaki et al. (2010) indicates that the effectiveness of hard selling and soft selling depends on cultural context. In collectivist cultures, soft selling is more effective due to its emphasis on relationships and community, while in individualistic cultures, hard selling excels by focusing on personal benefits and achievements. Dewi et al. (2022) demonstrate that storytelling in animated advertisements fosters soft selling communication, creating emotional and psychological connections with audiences. Similarly, Ikhsan et al. (2024) found that video content is more suitable for hard selling, while image-based content aligns better with soft selling. Landa (2010) identifies 19 advertising approaches that can serve as content themes, including demonstration, comparison, spokesperson, endorsement, problem-solution, slice of life, storytelling, and animation. Martin (2023) highlights four common content pillar themes: promotional, entertainment, educational, and conversational. In practice, content often combines multiple themes.

Based on the above, research on content types (hard selling and soft selling) and themes (educational comics, quizzes, achievement information, etc.) is essential to maximize the effectiveness of HEI promotion on Instagram. Insights into the effectiveness of Instagram content types and themes can inform strategies for promoting higher education institutions and recruiting students effectively.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Promotion

Stanton (1971) describes promotion as the process of delivering information to consumers, aiming to influence and attract the broader public. Similarly, Tjiptono (2015) explains promotion as a method of direct persuasion that employs various adaptable incentives to encourage immediate product purchases and boost the volume of goods

customers buy. Landa (2010) categorizes promotional approaches into 19 types, namely: demonstration, comparison, spokesperson, endorsement, testimonial, problem/solution, slice of life, storytelling, cartoon, musical, misdirection, adoption, documentary, mockumentary, montage, animation, consumer-generated creative content, pod-buster, and entertainment. The objectives of promotion can be achieved in practice by utilizing marketing communication models known as Response Hierarchy Models. According to Kotler & Keller (2016), Response Hierarchy Models are divided into three stages: Cognitive Stage, Affective Stage, and Behavioral Stage. Kotler & Keller (2016) summarize five models used in Response Hierarchy Models, namely: the AIDA Model, the Hierarchy-of-Effects Model, the Innovation-Adoption Model, and the Communications Model.

### 2.2 Customer Path 5A

Kotler et al. (2017) introduced the 5A model, which consists of the stages: Aware, Appeal, Ask, Act, and Advocate. This model is an evolution of the 4A model proposed by Dereck Rucker from the School of Management, which itself is a direct modification of the AIDA model. A comparison of the AIDA, 4A, and 5A models is presented in Table 1 below.

**Table 1: AIDA, 4A, and 5A Models.**

Stage	AIDA Model	4A Model	5A Model
Cognitive Stage	Attention ↓	Aware ↓	Aware ↓
Affective Stage	Interest ↓ Desire ↓	Attitude ↓	Appeal ↓ Ask ↓
Behaviour Stage	Action	Act ↓ Act again	Act ↓ Advocate

*Source: Kotler et al. (2017).*

During the Aware stage, potential customers are introduced to a wide range of brands passively, whether through previous experiences, marketing efforts, or suggestions from others. In the Appeal stage, they evaluate these messages, forming short-term memories or reinforcing existing long-term ones, which narrows their focus to a smaller selection of brands that capture their interest. During the Ask stage, curiosity drives them to actively research the brands that appeal to them, either through media or directly from the brand. At this point, the customer journey shifts from

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individual to social, as decisions are influenced by conversations with others. In the Act stage, customers or potential customers take action after confirming the information gathered during the Ask stage. Finally, in the Advocate stage, customers develop strong brand loyalty, reflected in repeat purchases and recommendations to others. Notably, customers may not always proceed through the Act stage before reaching Advocate. Some active advocates may recommend products they have not personally purchased, creating a feedback loop in the customer journey.

The 5A model excels in its flexibility, allowing direct implementation in digital media platforms such as social media and websites. On social media, Aware can be measured through video views or the reach of image posts. Appeal is reflected in video replays or the number of likes on image posts. Ask is indicated by the volume of comments on posts, while Act is measured by product purchases, whether goods or services. Lastly, Advocate is quantified by the number of shares a post receives. This adaptability makes the 5A model highly practical for analyzing and optimizing digital marketing strategies.

Kotler et al. (2017) propose metrics to measure the productivity of the 5A marketing model, including PAR (Purchase Action Ratio), BAR (Brand Advocacy Ratio), Attractiveness, Curiosity, Commitment, and Affinity. These metrics provide a comprehensive framework for evaluating marketing effectiveness across the 5A stages.

$$PAR = \frac{Act}{Aware} \dots\dots\dots (1)$$

$$BAR = \frac{Advocate}{Aware} \dots\dots\dots (2)$$

$$Attractiveness = \frac{Appeal}{Aware} \dots\dots\dots (3)$$

$$Curiosity = \frac{Ask}{Appeal} \dots\dots\dots (4)$$

$$Commitment = \frac{Act}{Ask} \dots\dots\dots (5)$$

$$Affinity = \frac{Advocate}{Act} \dots\dots\dots (6)$$

Kotler et al. (2017) categorize the implementation patterns of the 5A model into four basic frameworks based on industry characteristics: Doorknob, Goldfish, Trumpet, and Funnel. These frameworks serve as tools to map the characteristics of companies or industries, enabling further analysis and refinement of marketing strategies.

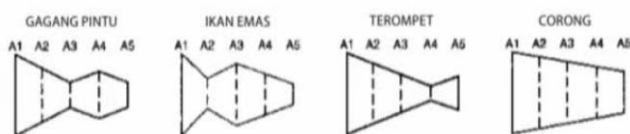


Figure 1: Four 5A Pattern. Source: Kotler et al. (2017).

Description:

A1 = Aware

A2 = Appeal

A3 = Ask

A4 = Act

A5 = Advocate

The relationship between the four patterns and customer behavior, along with industry characteristics and long-term marketing strategy solutions for the relevant company or industry, is presented in Table 2 below.

Table 2: The Relationship of the Four Fundamental 5A Patterns with Customer Behavior and Industry.

	Pattern Form			
	Doorknob	Goldfish	Trumpet	Funnel
Customer Behavior	-Possesses prior expectations and preferences. Exhibits brand attachment.	-Engages in a lengthy and comprehensive evaluation. Involves multiple stakeholders.	-Demonstrates high involvement in purchasing decisions. Places trust in brand quality.	-Makes predominantly planned purchases. Relies on actual experiences rather than claims.
Industry Characteristics	-Aggressive brand image building and marketing communications. -High brand competition.	-Specialized offerings. Similar positioning among competing brands.	-Prestigious image associated with quality. Strong influence of word-of-mouth.	-Competing brands are easily comparable. Products are paired with strong customer experiences.
Marketing Strategy Solutions	Enhancing Affinity	Enhancing Commitment	Enhancing Both Affinity and Commitment	Optimizing Curiosity

Source: Kotler et al. (2017).

2.3 Product Performance

According to Parmenter (2010), Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) are measurable values, whether financial or non-financial, that help organizations evaluate and track their progress in achieving strategic goals. A literature review conducted by Sawang (2011) reveals that KPIs are generally categorized into fourteen aspects: return on investment,

various profit margin measures, sales and sales growth, payback and payback period, cash flow, customer satisfaction, customer retention rate, labor productivity, quality of products and/or services, lead time, delivery time, employee development, and employee knowledge. Prijambada et al. (2019) classify KPIs into twelve aspects: production aspect, good manufacturing practices aspect, Ahmad quality control aspect, branding, labeling, packaging, and intellectual property rights (IPR) aspect, financial management aspect, capital and financial literacy aspect, marketing aspect, human resources aspect, character and behavior aspect, institutional aspect, licensing aspect, and village-owned enterprises (BUMDesa) governance aspect. Furthermore, Lastri, as cited in Prijambada et al. (2019), divides the marketing KPI aspects for micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) into five key objectives and eight measurement indicators.

Product performance is a KPI metric that measures how a product is received and utilized in the market. This metric encompasses the product adoption rate, product satisfaction score, feature adoption rate, product return rate, and product usage habits. By understanding these indicators, companies can continuously improve their products to better align with customer needs and preferences. The product adoption rate is a KPI that measures the percentage of new customers or users who begin using a product within a specific timeframe. This metric indicates the extent to which a product successfully attracts new users relative to the total target audience. Additionally, the product adoption rate reflects the speed of market penetration and the level of product acceptance. A higher adoption rate suggests the effectiveness of marketing strategies, the product's suitability to market needs, or the timing of its launch.

$$\text{Product Adoption Rate} = \left( \frac{\text{Total New Users}}{\text{Total Targeted Users}} \right) \times 100\% \quad \dots \dots \quad (7)$$

Product adoption rates can vary significantly across industries. For instance, in the Software as a Service (SaaS) industry, an adoption rate ranging from 15% to 40% can be considered strong.

The product return rate is a key indicator that calculates the proportion of goods sent back by customers relative to total sales. It assesses the proportion of sold products that are returned due to dissatisfaction, defects, or unmet expectations. A high return rate indicates potential issues with product quality or alignment with customer needs. Elevated return rates may signify customer dissatisfaction or inherent product flaws.

$$\text{Product Return Rate} = \left( \frac{\text{Total Returned Products}}{\text{Total Products Sold}} \right) \times 100\% \quad \dots \dots \quad (8)$$

A return rate of less than 5% is often considered acceptable for consumer goods, whereas rates exceeding 10% may indicate underlying problems with the product or marketing strategy.

## 2.4 Content Pillar

Roudhotun (2023) defines a content pillar as the main topic that serves as the foundation for an overall content strategy before developing a content plan. Rebecca & Revinzky (2024) describe content pillars as building elements designed to ensure content is targeted and receives better responses. There are at least four common themes in content pillars: promotional, which focuses on promoting products or services; entertainment, which includes content like memes, funny videos, and quizzes; educational, which delivers informative and instructive content; and conversational, which involves dialogues between two or more people. Beyond these four themes, there is no fixed standard for content pillars, as themes depend on the company's situation and needs. Other possible themes include agile, informational, inspirational, and motivational content. In practice, a single piece of content may incorporate multiple themes, such as combining conversational, educational, and promotional elements to softly promote a product through an educational discussion. These content themes can be related to Landa's (2010) nineteen promotional approaches.

## 2.5 Instagram

Leaver et al. (2020) describe Instagram as a complex system of software and algorithms, supported by an extensive database that stores diverse content such as images, videos, text, comments, location tags, likes, emojis, and other interactive features. Acquired by Facebook, Instagram operates with an API and offers features such as posts, stories, reels, and its latest addition, threads. Users can choose between personal, public, or business accounts. Business accounts provide additional features under the insights menu, which serves as a social media analysis tool. Key features include accounts reached, content interactions—displaying total interactions like likes, comments, shares, and saves—and profile activities, which show user actions after viewing posts, stories, or reels. A sub-feature of profile activities is following, indicating how many users follow the account after engaging with its content. A. R. Zulfikar & Mikhriani (2017) describe Instagram marketing as a form of digital marketing through the Instagram platform. Effective Instagram marketing often involves Instagram ads, which include various formats such as image ads, video ads, carousel image ads, carousel video ads, and story ads.

## 2.6 The relationship between Customer Path 5A, Product Performance, and Higher Education Promotion

Azman & Elsandra (2018) studied public perceptions in selecting universities in Padang City. The method used in this study was quantitative with linear regression and exploratory descriptive analysis to explore new ideas or relationships between the 7 marketing mix model and other factors influencing community decisions in choosing



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universities in Padang City. The research object was the Padang City community with a sample size of 100 respondents. The results of this study show that the factors of product, physical evidence, price, process, promotion, place, and people have a positive and significant influence on the decision-making process, whereas the service factor does not affect the decision to choose a university.

Prasetyaningrum & Marlina (2020) investigated the impact of university characteristics, quality and facilities, external factors, and marketing/communication on university selection decisions. The method used in this study was quantitative with linear regression. Primary data were collected through questionnaires from 344 first-semester students across various programs at Muria Kudus University. The sampling technique employed probability sampling with proportional random sampling. The results of this study indicate that university characteristics and external factors have a positive but insignificant relationship with the decision to select a university, while campus quality and facilities, along with marketing/communication factors, have a positive and significant relationship.

Yasar & Korkusuz Polat (2022) developed a fuzzy logic model using the 5A customer path to understand and improve brand perception during the COVID-19 pandemic. The method used in this study was the application of fuzzy logic to the 5A customer path with a sample size of 300 respondents in Turkey. The results of this study include the creation of a fuzzy model based on the 5A customer path and recommendations to transition from the "Goldfish" pattern to the "Bow Tie" pattern by strengthening emotional connections with customers. The managerial implication suggests that marketing strategies should be adjusted to foster stronger emotional bonds with customers.

Purnomo (2022) examined the influence of social actors and social media usage activities on the continuity of the 5A customer path in the context of e-marketing communication for a restaurant. The method used in this study was a significance test using ANOVA with questionnaire data collected from 400 Instagram followers of Restaurant X in Bogor. The results of this study show that among the various social factors, occupation significantly affects the 5A customer path. The managerial implication recommends that marketers and restaurant managers consider customers' social factors, such as occupation and social media activity, to enhance the effectiveness of e-marketing communication and understand customer journeys on social media.

Hung et al. (2023) developed a system model to increase patient engagement and foster long-term relationships between healthcare services and patients via social media. The method used in this study was Design Science Research Methodology (DSRM) to develop a Social Media Marketing Methodology (SMMM) by integrating the 5A framework with the IDEA process (Identify, Develop, Engage, Assess). The results of this study include the creation of a system

model that improves patient engagement with healthcare brands and interaction through social media. The managerial implication suggests that healthcare organizations can use SMMM to design systematic and effective social media marketing strategies to enhance long-term patient relationships and brand engagement.

Rohman et al. (2023) explored the impact of product quality and price on consumers' purchase intentions. The method used in this study was quantitative with linear regression analysis involving 100 respondents. The results of this study show that both product quality and price have a significant effect on purchase intention.

Wiryaningrum et al. (2023) developed a digital marketing communication model for a private university in Bandung City. The method used in this study was the Digital Marketing Mix with variables including Electronic Word-of-Mouth (E-WoM), persuasive communication, and Social Media Marketing Activities (SMMAs). The results of this study include the creation of a digital marketing communication model tailored to the private university. The managerial implication highlights the importance of aligning university policies with the developed digital marketing communication model.

Esmaili et al. (2024) created a model to identify customer touchpoints using the 5A customer path to explore the experiences of foreign tourists visiting Iran. The method used in this study was qualitative abductive reasoning with the 5A customer path, involving 23 sub-themes categorized into five main stages with positive recommendations regarding tourist experiences. The results of this study suggest that destination managers and marketers should focus on creating authentic and engaging digital and social media content to enhance tourist experiences and attract more visitors.

Febrianti & Ali (2024) investigated the effect of product quality, brand image, and price on purchasing decisions. The method used in this study was multiple linear regression analysis with a 95% confidence level and a sample of 100 Downy consumers at Borma Dago. The results of this study show that product quality, brand image, and price individually and collectively influence purchasing decisions.

Ikhsan et al. (2024) examined the comparison of soft selling, hard selling, and promotional content strategies for creating Instagram video content for Ad-Sources, a digital company. The method used in this study was a quasi-experimental design to compare different content approaches and the Chi-Square method for significance testing. The results of this study show that different marketing treatments and content formats significantly affect consumer awareness. Discount promotions using video content generated the highest account reach, while soft selling with photo content yielded the highest total interactions, highlighting the importance of non-intrusive, visually appealing content. Conversely, hard selling with video content was more effective in driving

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digital engagement through likes, comments, and shares. The managerial implication emphasizes the importance of flexibility in digital marketing strategies.

Rahardi et al. (2024) explored how price, location, and service quality affect student satisfaction. The method used in this study was multiple regression analysis involving 96 student respondents. The results of this study indicate that price, location, and service quality collectively have a positive and significant effect on student satisfaction.

Rebecca & Revinzky (2024) developed brand guidelines, content pillars, and a content calendar to enhance the digital marketing communication of Anne Klappertaart MSME. The method used in this study was the Design Thinking Method. The results of this study include the creation of these tools, which increased account reach by 126 new accounts, account engagement by 577%, and content interactions by 2,916% over 27 days. The managerial implication suggests the need for clear brand guidelines to ensure consistent messaging.

Salsabila & Ali (2024) explored consumer perceptions and preferences when choosing a university. The method used in this study was qualitative with interviews focusing on Universitas Indonesia Membangun (INABA) in Bandung. The results of this study reveal that both internal factors (motivation, personal interests, psychological traits) and external factors (university reputation, study program quality, location, tuition fees, course flexibility) significantly influence students' decisions to choose INABA as their preferred university.

## 2.7 Research Model

This study was conducted in response to the increasing competition faced by private higher education institutions in Indonesia in their efforts to recruit and retain students by examining the influence and analyzing Instagram content. Data related to Instagram content were collected from the channel of a XYZ Private University, in Bandung, and models were developed based on the content types. The models, serving as variables, were divided into five types: (1) Model I, organic hard-selling Instagram content; (2) Model II, organic soft-selling Instagram content with an educational comic theme; (3) Model III, organic soft-selling Instagram content with a quiz theme; (4) Model IV, organic soft-selling Instagram content with an achievement information theme; and (5) Model V, paid hard-selling Instagram content. Consequently, five hypotheses were formulated:

- H1: Model I is effective in promoting XYZ Private University.
- H2: Model II is effective in promoting XYZ Private University.
- H3: Model III is effective in promoting XYZ Private University.

- H4: Model IV is effective in promoting XYZ Private University.
- H5: Model V is effective in promoting XYZ Private University.

The analysis employed the Customer Path 5A and Product Performance frameworks to derive the final research outcomes. The results determined whether these models influenced the promotion of Private University XYZ, with conclusions drawn based on the collected data. The findings are intended to assist the university in developing promotional strategies via Instagram. The variables in this study were divided into two categories: independent and dependent. The independent variable was the Instagram content model of Private University XYZ, while the dependent variable was the promotion of Private University XYZ. The research paradigm adopted a quantitative approach, focusing on statistical analysis of Instagram features (account reach, likes, comments, and shares), marketing data of Private University XYZ, and statistical data on the number of registrants at the university.

## 3. METHODS

This study utilizes a quantitative research approach, utilizing numerical data measurement and statistical analysis through the 5A analysis and Product Performance analysis. The study was conducted at the Public Relations and Marketing Bureau of a private university in Bandung City. The research spanned one campaign period, lasting nine months from January 2024 to September 2024. The data utilized in this research comprised both primary and secondary sources. Primary data was collected by documenting Instagram Image Ads observed during the study period at the designated location, with the support of Instagram Ads (organic/unpaid). The primary data represented the implementation of the 5A indicators (Aware, Appeal, Ask, Act, and Advocate) on Instagram insights features (Reach and Impressions), with details presented in Table 3.

**Table 3: Conversion of the 5A Customer Path to Instagram Insight Features.**

5A Model	Instagram Feature
Aware	Reach
Appeal	Likes
Ask	Comments
Act	-
Advocate	Shares

*Source: own research.*

The Act indicator is represented by the number of new student registrants during the research period. Other primary data include information related to the implementation of XYZ Private University's marketing campaigns, such as marketing costs. Secondary data was gathered from various

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sources, including articles, journals, books, and earlier research.

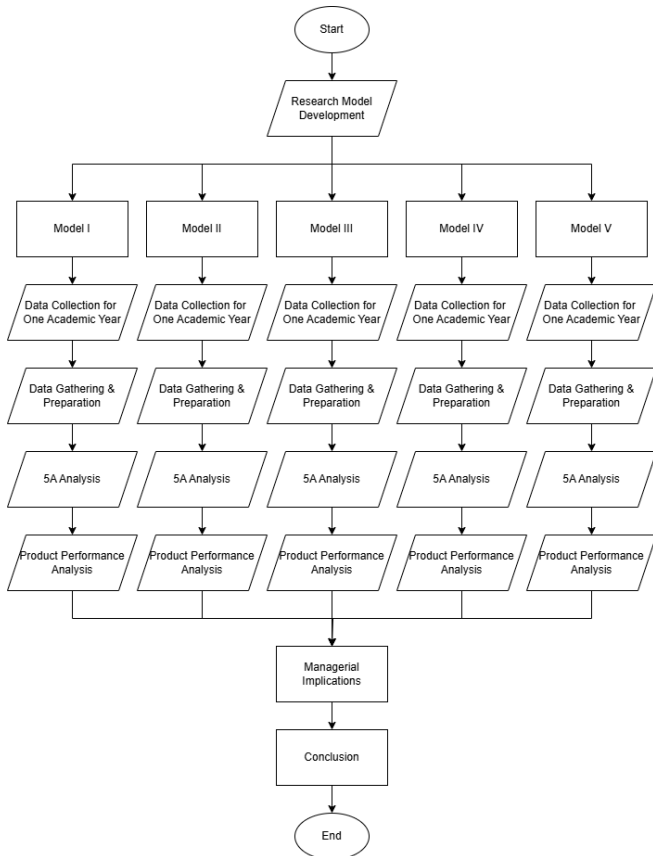


Figure 2: Flow Chart of this Research.

Source: own research.

The models analyzed in this study are presented in Table 4 below.

Table 4: Research Models.

Category	Model I	Model II	Model III	Model IV	Model V
Description	Direct promotion	Promotion through educational comics	Promotion through quiz	Promotion through achievement information	Direct promotion
Content Pillar	Promotional	Conversational-Educational-Promotional	Entertainment-Educational-Promotional	Informational-Promotional	Promotional
Public Relations Advertising types	Hard selling	Soft selling	Soft selling	Soft selling	Hard selling

Category	Model I	Model II	Model III	Model IV	Model V
Instagram Ads types	Image Ads	Carousel Image Ads	Image Ads	Image Ads	Image Ads
Organic/Paid	Organic	Organic	Organic	Organic	Paid

Source: own research.

The data from the 5A analysis is recorded to be included in Table 5 below.

Table 5: 5A Analysis.

Metrics	Model I	Model II	Model III	Model IV	Model V
Purchase Action Ratio (PAR)	<u>Act</u> Aware	<u>Act</u> Aware	<u>Act</u> Aware	<u>Act</u> Aware	<u>Act</u> Aware
Brand Advocacy Ratio (BAR)	<u>Advocate</u> Aware	<u>Advocate</u> Aware	<u>Advocate</u> Aware	<u>Advocate</u> Aware	<u>Advocate</u> Aware
Attractiveness	<u>Appeal</u> Aware	<u>Appeal</u> Aware	<u>Appeal</u> Aware	<u>Appeal</u> Aware	<u>Appeal</u> Aware
Curiosity	<u>Ask</u> Appeal	<u>Ask</u> Appeal	<u>Ask</u> Appeal	<u>Ask</u> Appeal	<u>Ask</u> Appeal
Commitment	<u>Act</u> Ask	<u>Act</u> Ask	<u>Act</u> Ask	<u>Act</u> Ask	<u>Act</u> Ask
Affinity	<u>Advocate</u> Act	<u>Advocate</u> Act	<u>Advocate</u> Act	<u>Advocate</u> Act	<u>Advocate</u> Act
Pattern Form	Doorknob / Goldfish / Trumpet / Funnel	Doorknob / Goldfish / Trumpet / Funnel	Doorknob / Goldfish / Trumpet / Funnel	Doorknob / Goldfish / Trumpet / Funnel	Doorknob / Goldfish / Trumpet / Funnel

Source: own research.

The conversion of Product Performance measurement metrics into data for XYZ Private University is presented in Table 6 below.

Table 6: Product Performance Analysis.

Metrics	Equation
Product Adoption Rate	$Product\ Adoption\ Rate = \left( \frac{Total\ Applicants\ at\ XYZ\ Private\ University}{Total\ Targeted\ Applicants} \right) \times 100\%$
Product Return Rate	$Product\ Return\ Rate = \left( \frac{Total\ Withdrawn\ Applicants}{Total\ Applicants\ at\ XYZ\ Private\ University} \right) \times 100\%$

Source: own research.

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This study has certain limitations to ensure focus and measurable outcomes, specifically by restricting the content type to Instagram image posts. Additionally, the scope is concentrated on the Public Relations and Marketing Bureaus of XYZ Private Universities in Bandung, allowing for a more in-depth analysis within a well-defined context. In terms of time constraints, the study is conducted over a single campaign period spanning nine months, from January to September 2024.

## 4. RESULTS

### 4.1 Segmentation

The segmentation of applicants at XYZ Private University during a single campaign period (January 2024 – September 2024) is categorized into demographic and geographic segments. The demographic segmentation is further divided into Gender, Generation, and Last Educational Attainment.

#### 1. Gender

From the total 363 applicants to XYZ Private University during the campaign period from January 2024 to September 2024, recorded through Instagram ads, 37% were male and the remaining 63% were female. This indicates that female applicants dominated the applicant distribution.

#### 2. Generation

The generational classification in this study follows Benczik et al. in Kopperschmidt (2000), which categorizes generations based on birth years. From the total 363 applicants to XYZ Private University during the campaign period from January 2024 to September 2024, recorded through Instagram ads, the majority belonged to Generation Z (Gen Z) at 86.2%, followed by Generation Y (Millennials) at 12.4%, and Generation X at 1.4%. This indicates that applicants during the campaign period were predominantly from Generation Z.

#### 3. Last Level of Education

From the total 363 applicants to XYZ Private University during the campaign period from January 2024 to September 2024, recorded through Instagram ads, the majority (74.1%) held a high school diploma or equivalent (HS/VHS or equivalent). Only 2.8% had a bachelor's degree (S1) as their highest educational attainment, 0.3% completed junior high school (JHS/MTs or equivalent), and the remaining 22.9% did not disclose their educational background. It can be concluded that most applicants during the campaign period graduated from high school or its equivalent.

The geographic segmentation of applicants to XYZ Private University during the single campaign period (January 2024 – September 2024) is categorized by district. Of the total 363 applicants recorded through Instagram ads, the highest percentage came from Baleendah with 29 applicants (7.99%), followed by Bojongsong with 12 applicants

(3.31%), and Bojongloa Kidul, Margahayu, and Regol with 11 applicants each (3.03%).

### 4.2 Targeting

The target market was selected from the previously identified segmentation based on the following criteria:

#### a) Demographic Segmentation

##### 1. Gender

Based on the number of applicants during the January 2024 to September 2024 campaign, the target market includes both female and male applicants.

##### 2. Generation

The target market focuses on Generation Z (Gen-Z) and Generation Y (Millennials), as indicated by the number of applicants during the campaign period.

##### 3. Last Level of Education

The target market comprises individuals whose highest education level is vocational high school (VHS) or senior high school (HS).

#### b) Geographic Segmentation

Based on the number of applicants during the January 2024 to September 2024 campaign, the target market is concentrated in the southern Bandung area, including Baleendah, Bojongsoang, Bojongloa Kidul, Margahayu, Regol, Katapang, Banjaran, Batununggal, Pameungpeuk, Bandung Kidul, Bandung Kulon, Buahbatu, Sukajadi, and surrounding regions.

### 4.3 Positioning

#### 4.3.1 5A Analysis

From the Instagram Ads data, the analysis results of the Customer Path 5A for each Instagram content model of XYZ Private University are presented in Table 7 below.

**Table 7: Customer Path 5A Analysis of Instagram Content for XYZ Private University.**

	Analysis					
	PAR	BAR	Attractiveness	Curiosity	Commitment	Affinity
Model I	0,0209	0,0094	0,1082	0,0560	3,4562	0,4499
Model II	0,2045	0,0133	0,3272	0,0221	28,2488	0,0651
Model III	0,0190	0,0044	0,2577	0,1788	0,4118	0,2321
Model IV	0,0126	0,0204	0,5623	0,0322	0,6957	1,6250
Model V	0,0330	0,0136	0,5467	0,3160	0,1911	0,4109

Source: own research.



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From Table 7, the results indicate that the highest PAR (Purchase Action Ratio) is derived from Model II (Soft-selling Promotion through Organic Educational Comics), while the highest BAR (Brand Advocate Ratio) comes from Model IV (Soft-selling Promotion through Organic Achievement Information). Other metric analyses show that the highest Attraction is found in Models IV and V, the highest Curiosity in Model V (Paid Hard-selling Promotion), the highest Commitment in Model II, and the highest Affinity in Model IV. Overall, Model IV leads with the highest scores in three of the 5A metrics, followed by Models II and V with the highest scores in two 5A metrics each. In contrast, Model I (Organic Hard-selling Promotion) and Model III do not exhibit significant figures in the 5A metrics.

**Table 8: Average Customer Path 5A of Instagram Content for XYZ Private University.**

	Average				
	Aware	Appeal	Ask	Act	Advocate
Model I	122	13	1	3	1
Model II	163	53	1	33	2
Model III	82	21	4	2	0
Model IV	212	119	4	3	4
Model V	1195	653	206	39	16

Source: Research Result.

In Table 8, it is shown that the total Act, representing the number of registrants for XYZ Private University during the campaign period from January 2024 to September 2024, amounts to 80 individuals based on the average registrant count. However, the actual number of registrants is 363, as previously explained in the Market Segmentation and Targeting section, with the following breakdown: (1) Model I with 12 registrants; (2) Model II with 40 registrants; (3) Model III with 7 registrants; (4) Model IV with 12 registrants; and (5) Model V with 180 registrants. Based on Table 10, an overview of the 5A customer path was obtained, and a solution for customer path development was formulated in accordance with the theory proposed by Kotler et al. (2017), as shown in Table 9.

**Table 9: Form of Customer Path 5A of Instagram Content for XYZ Private University.**

	Customer Path 5A Form	Solution
Model I	Doorknob	Enhancing Affinity
Model II	Doorknob	Enhancing Affinity
Model III	Funnel	Optimizing Curiosity
Model IV	Trumpet	Enhancing Affinity and Commitment
Model V	Funnel	Optimizing Curiosity

Source: Research Result.

From Table 9, it is identified that enhancing Affinity is the highest priority solution, covering three models (Model I, Model II, and Model IV). Therefore, improving Affinity will simultaneously enhance and/or optimize these three models. Subsequently, to increase the Brand Advocate Ratio (BAR), the priority is to improve Model IV by strengthening Commitment. Lastly, to enhance Model III, optimizing Curiosity is recommended.

**4.3.2 Product Performance Analysis**

Based on the marketing data of XYZ Private University, the Product Performance analysis for each Instagram content model of XYZ Private University is presented in Table 10.

**Table 10: Product Performance Analysis of XYZ Private University.**

Metrics	Model I	Model II	Model III	Model IV	Model V
Product Adoption Rate	1,8%	23,4%	1,1%	1,8%	27,7%
Product Return Rate	16,7%	26,3%	100,0%	16,7%	7,8%

Source: Research Result.

Based on interviews with the Head of Marketing and the Head of Public Relations at XYZ Private University, the total target set to attract registrants during the marketing campaign period from January 2024 to September 2024 was 650 registrants. Therefore, the recorded total of 363 registrants through Instagram Ads has not yet met the target, achieving only 56%. Referring to Table 10, the Product Adoption Rate metric indicates that Model II and Model V have the most significant influence on student recruitment for XYZ Private University. Data on individuals who ultimately did not enroll at XYZ Private University were obtained from the university’s marketing data, showing that 65 out of the 363 registrants recorded via Instagram Ads did not proceed with enrollment. According to Table 10, the Product Return Rate metric reveals that all seven registrants obtained through Model III discontinued before enrollment, indicating that Model III is highly ineffective for university promotion. Interviews with the Head of Marketing and the Head of Public Relations further revealed that various complex factors contribute to non-enrollment, including personal financial constraints, acceptance at other universities, or successful selection in the civil servant recruitment process (CPNS). Overall, Table 10 shows that, considering the high contribution to the Product Adoption Rate metric and the goal of minimizing the Product Return Rate metric, Model V is deemed effective for promoting the university in terms of Product Performance metrics. Additionally, while Model II demonstrates a high Product

Adoption Rate, its relatively high Product Return Rate suggests it is moderately effective.

## 5. DISCUSSION

### 5.1 Strategy Based on 5A Analysis

The solutions derived from the five models yield the following priorities:

1. Enhancing Affinity (Model I, Model II, and Model IV).

Affinity is calculated by dividing the number of advocates by the number of acts (Advocate/Act), which in practice is the total number of content shares divided by product purchases, or in this case, the number of student enrollments at XYZ Private University  $((\text{Total Shares})/(\text{Total Student Enrollments}))$ . To increase affinity, there are two possible approaches: (1) increase the number of Instagram content shares; or (2) decrease the number of student enrollments at XYZ Private University. The latter is a negative and disadvantageous option; therefore, the only viable solution is to enhance the number of shares on Instagram content.

Several strategies can be employed to boost content shares. Improving content quality—such as color schemes, layouts, and word choices—can be achieved through research on visually appealing colors and layouts for the general audience, as well as using popular phrases identified through Search Engine Optimization (SEO) techniques Artanto & Nurdianyansyah (2017). Additionally, implementing prize-driven promotions that require participants to share XYZ Private University's posts can increase content shares. This second approach aligns with Customer Engagement Strategies (Desthiani & Wahidah, 2024) and Marketing Gamification principles (Sipone et al., 2025).

2. Optimizing Curiosity (Model III and Model V).

Curiosity is calculated by dividing the number of asks by the number of appeals (Ask/Appeal), which in practice refers to the total number of Instagram post comments divided by the number of Instagram post likes  $((\text{Total Comments})/(\text{Total Likes}))$ . To enhance curiosity, two approaches can be taken: (1) increase the number of comments on Instagram posts or (2) decrease the number of likes on Instagram posts. Although the second option has minimal impact on the Purchase Action Ratio (PAR) or Brand Advocate Ratio (BAR), reducing the number of likes could negatively affect the public perception of XYZ Private University. Therefore, the recommended approach is to increase the number of comments on the university's Instagram posts. One strategy involves organizing prize-based quizzes (Model III) to attract more engagement in the comments section, aligning with the concept of

gamification in marketing (Sipone et al., 2025). Additionally, fostering conversations in the comments can be supported by applying the concepts of Social Proof and the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB).

Social proof refers to the phenomenon where individuals mimic the actions of others in uncertain situations. According to Sprout Social (Nikmah & Zaidah, 2022), 91% of Shopee marketplace buyers read online reviews before making purchases. Moreover, endorsements from celebrities or influencers significantly impact marketing promotions, purchasing behavior, and consumer repurchase decisions (Nikmah & Zaidah, 2022). To apply social proof in Instagram comments, XYZ Private University can encourage testimonials from students or alumni, fostering positive interactions in the comment section. The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) posits that an individual's actions are driven by their behavioral intentions, which are determined by their attitudes toward the behavior, subjective norms, and their sense of perceived behavioral control (Ajzen, 1991). Research by (Darsono et al., 2020) highlights that positive consumer attitudes, strong subjective norms, and sufficient behavioral control strengthen intentions in e-commerce marketing. Applying TPB to Instagram comments can be achieved by asking users for personal opinions that touch on social norms or their beliefs regarding the content, thereby stimulating meaningful discussions.

3. Enhancing Commitment (Model IV).

Commitment is calculated by dividing the number of acts by the number of asks (Act/Ask), which in practice is the total number of student enrollments at XYZ Private University divided by the number of Instagram post comments  $((\text{Total Student Enrollments})/(\text{Total Comments}))$ . To increase commitment, there are two possible approaches: (1) increase the number of student enrollments at XYZ Private University; or (2) decrease the number of comments on Instagram content. Although the second option has minimal impact on the Purchase Action Ratio (PAR) or Brand Advocate Ratio (BAR), reducing comments may lower curiosity. Therefore, the recommended strategy is to increase student enrollments at XYZ Private University.

Efforts to boost student enrollments should focus on strategically allocating resources to both traditional and digital marketing based on the Segmentation-Targeting-Positioning (STP) framework, targeting prospective students from Generation Z (Gen-Z), high school (HS) graduates, and residents of South Bandung (including Baleendah, Bojongsoang, Bojongloa Kidul, Margahayu, Regol, Katapang, Banjaran, Batununggal, Pameungpeuk, Bandung Kidul, Bandung Kulon,

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Buahbatu, Sukajadi, and surrounding areas). In digital marketing, enhancing content quality through improved color schemes, layouts, and word choices is crucial. From a policy perspective, XYZ Private University can strengthen its brand equity by increasing scholarship offerings (Petersen, 2025).

### 5.2 Strategy Based on Product Performance Analysis

Based on Table 10, the solutions for developing the Instagram content of XYZ Private University are prioritized as follows:

1. **Optimizing Model V.**  
Optimization of Model V can be achieved by increasing the frequency of its posts within a month. Based on interviews with the Head of Marketing and the Head of Public Relations at XYZ Private University, it was revealed that Model V is currently posted two to three times per month. To enhance its effectiveness, the posting frequency can be increased to four times per month (once a week). However, this adjustment will impact the associated costs, as Model V involves paid content. Therefore, a further metric analysis is necessary to assess the cost-benefit ratio of the increased expenditure on Model V.
2. **Optimizing Model II.**  
Optimization of Model II can be achieved by shifting from organic content to paid content. This strategy aims to increase reach, thereby enhancing user awareness of Model II on social media platforms. The goal is to improve the Product Adoption Rate, which has already reached 23.4% of the target without paid promotion. Considering that Model V, a paid version of Model I, experienced a fifteenfold increase in the Product Adoption Rate (from 1.8% to 27.7%), it is estimated that implementing a paid strategy for Model II could similarly achieve the target rate.
3. **Eliminating Model III.**  
Elimination of Model III is recommended due to its high Product Return Rate, which reaches 100%, indicating complete ineffectiveness in promoting XYZ Private University. By discontinuing Model III, content creation efforts can be redirected toward more effective models, such as Model II and Model V, to optimize promotional outcomes. Alternatively, rather than complete removal, the frequency of Model III uploads could be reduced, allowing marketing personnel to allocate more resources to the development and enhancement of more successful models.
4. **Minimizing the Product Return Rate.**  
According to research by (Janakiraman et al., 2016), the Product Return Rate can be reduced by implementing customer-friendly return policies. The more accommodating the return policy, the higher the

sales rate and the lower the product return rate. To decrease the Product Return Rate at XYZ Private University, it is recommended to develop and enforce a policy establishing a minimum re-registration fee that is considerate and affordable for prospective students.

### 6. CONCLUSION

Based on the results and discussion, and referring to the problem formulation, it can be concluded that Model I (Hard-selling Content Type through Organic Methods) is ineffective for promoting the university through Instagram, while Model II (Soft-selling Content Type with an Educational Comic Theme through Organic Methods), Model IV (Soft-selling Content Type with an Achievement Information Theme through Organic Methods), and Model V (Hard-selling Content Type through Paid Methods) are effective. Model III (Soft-selling Content Type with a Quiz Theme through Organic Methods) is ineffective. Effective strategies for promoting the university through Instagram include: (1) increasing the number of shares on promotional Instagram posts; (2) increasing the number of comments on promotional Instagram posts; (3) focusing resource allocation on digital marketing aligned with the university's STP (Segmentation-Targeting-Positioning); (4) optimizing Model V; (5) optimizing Model II; (6) eliminating Model III; and (7) minimizing the Product Return Rate. For future research development, the following suggestions are provided: (1) conducting studies using non-organic (paid) Instagram Ads for Model II to determine the impact of soft-selling content with an educational comic theme on university promotion; (2) conducting studies with one or more other universities to assess the effectiveness of Instagram content types and themes in promoting higher education institutions; and (3) employing other Response Hierarchy Models such as the AIDA Model, Hierarchy-of-Effects Model, Innovation-Adoption Model, or Communications Model to evaluate the effectiveness of Instagram content types and themes in university promotion.

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