



Research Article

The Influence of Social Media Marketing on E-WOM and Intention to Join in Student Organizations

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Abstract: This research seeks to ascertain the impact of Social Media Marketing on Electronic Word of Mouth (e- WOM) and the Intention to Become a Member of Student Activity Units (UKM) among followers of the Instagram account @radiokampusunila. The background of this research is the low participation of Universitas Lampung students in campus organizations, even though promotional strategies through social media have been actively implemented. This study combines a survey method with a quantitative associative approach through online questionnaires distributed to 121 respondents. Purposive sampling with criteria, an active students of Universitas Lampung who follow the @radiokampusunila Instagram account, is the method of sampling that is employed. The variables include Social Media Marketing (X), e-WOM (Y1), also the Intention to Become a Member (Y2). With the use of SPSS, multiple linear regression analysis was performed on the data. . The findings demonstrated the positive and substantial impact of social media marketing on e-WOM, the positive and significant impact of social media marketing on the intention to join, and the positive and significant impact of e-WOM on the intention to join.

Keywords: Social Media Marketing; e-WOM; Intention to Join;UKM; Instagram.

1. Introduction

Social media has ingrained itself into everyday lives in the current digital era, functioning not only as a communication tool but also as a strategic marketing platform, particularly among younger generations. Its ability to foster two-way communication and real-time engagement has made it a powerful medium for promoting brands and sharing information. Instagram, in particular, stands out for its high engagement rate and widespread accessibility across digital devices, positioning it as a dominant platform in digital marketing (Patel, 2024). In 2024, Indonesia reported 204.7 million internet users, with Instagram ranked as the second most-used social media platform after WhatsApp, accounting for 85.3% of users aged 16 to 64. This widespread use highlights Instagram's strategic potential in reaching audiences, especially in educational contexts. In higher education, social media marketing has been increasingly utilized to support institutional visibility and student engagement. According to Suryanto (2023), the quality of universities contributes significantly to national educational outcomes, while government regulations (Government Regulation No. 30, Article 108) emphasize the importance of student organizations in fostering non-academic competencies, pointing to the role of platforms like Instagram in encouraging participation in student activities.

Student Activity Units (UKM) serve as platforms for students to express aspirations and develop their interests and talents, playing a significant role in shaping student character and non-academic competencies such as leadership, communication, and teamwork (Hidayat, 2022). These competencies are increasingly vital for students' future careers. However, according to the Ministry of Research, Technology, and Higher Education (2023), 70% of Indonesian university graduates still lack adequate non-academic skills, while data from Statistics

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Indonesia (BPS, 2023) indicate that only 60% of students participate in student organizations. In response, student organizations have begun to actively adopt social media marketing (SMM) strategies to attract new members. Instagram, TikTok, and WhatsApp are used to promote programs or increase student engagement. Instagram, in particular, has proven effective not only in disseminating information but also in enhancing students' intentions to join, as its visually appealing and trend-oriented content allows organizations to connect with students quickly and widely.

As one of Indonesia's prominent higher education institutions, Universitas Lampung offers various Student Activity Units (UKM) that support student development across fields such as sports, arts, religion, and technology. These organizations are essential in nurturing students' interests, talents, leadership, and interpersonal skills beyond academic learning. UKMs are also platforms for students to express their aspirations and develop soft skills relevant to their future careers. However, despite the diversity of UKMs, student participation remains relatively low. In 2024, only 28.19% of the 10,358 new students joined a UKM, with Radio Kampus Unila recording the highest number of members (254), followed by UKM PIKR RAYA (248). This data highlights a significant challenge in attracting and sustaining student interest in extracurricular activities.

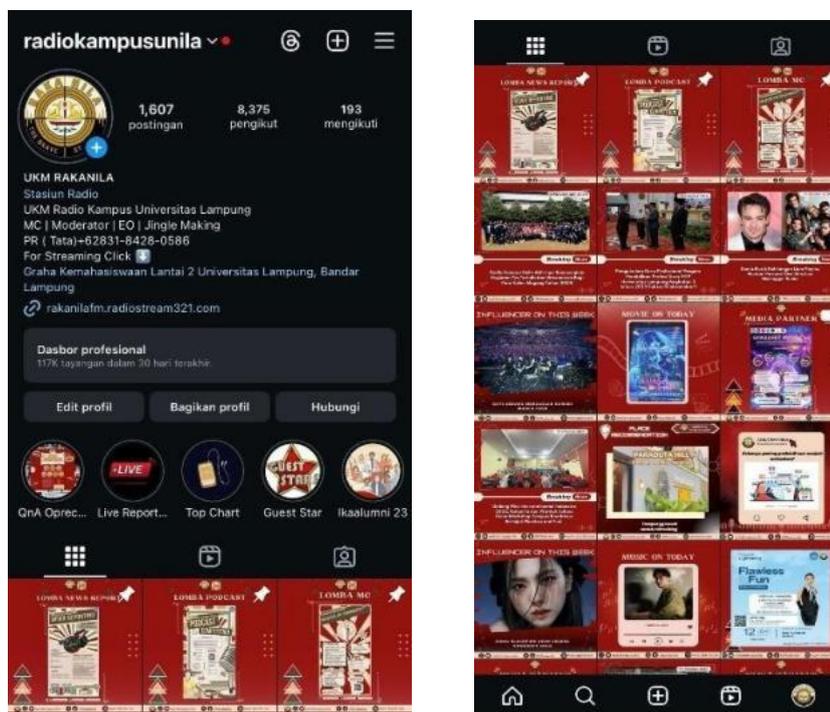


Figure 1. The Instagram Appearance of Radio Kampus Unila

Preliminary research conducted among 30 Universitas Lampung students found that while all respondents were aware of the existence of UKMs and had encountered promotional content on Instagram or WhatsApp, only 53% perceived the content as engaging and informative. Notably, 67% of respondents had seen peers share UKM-related content (electronic word of mouth), and 50% acknowledged that such exposure influenced their intention to join. Despite this, only 40% of the students expressed an actual intention to become members, revealing a gap between UKM visibility and student commitment. This study focuses on the Instagram account @radiokampusunila, as Radio Kampus Unila remains the most popular UKM and actively utilizes Instagram for promotions. The fluctuation in membership over the last three years, from 500 in 2021 to a decline in 2022 and 2023, suggests that factors

beyond mere exposure, such as the quality of interaction and engagement through Instagram, may influence membership interest through the amplification of positive e-WOM.

Regarding the impact of SMM on e-WOM and consumer behavioral intentions, prior research has produced conflicting findings. [6] found that SMM positively significantly affects e-WOM, which in turn promotes e-WOM as a trust-building communication channel. In contrast, [7] reported no significant effect of SMM on e-WOM or purchase intention, suggesting that the presence of e-WOM alone may be insufficient to drive consumer behavior. However, research examining the correlation of SMM, e-WOM, also behavioral intention in the context of student organizations in Indonesian universities remains limited. Given this research gap and the growing relevance of social media, The investigation's subject is investigating the effect of SMM on e-WOM and the intention to become a member of a Student Activity Unit, with a specific case on Instagram followers of @radiokampusunila at Universitas Lampung.

2. Literature Review

Social Media Marketing

Social Media Marketing (SMM) is a promotional strategy which leverages social media platforms to communicate products, services, or specific goals to a broader audience. As defined by Kelly (2010), SMM is a component of digital marketing that aims to foster more personal relationships between organizations and their audiences through interactive online engagement. Social media offers opportunities for brands to connect directly with users, enhance brand awareness, and ultimately influence decisions such as purchases or participation. One of SMM's key advantages is its ability to reach large audiences at relatively low cost. According to Smith (2021), SMM enables organizations to build engaged communities around their brand or purpose, which contributes to increased loyalty and audience involvement. Furthermore, social media facilitates real-time feedback from users, allowing organizations to refine their marketing strategies and tailor content to better align with the preferences of their target audience.

Instagram

Instagram has rapidly evolved into one of the most influential platforms since its launch in 2010, emphasizing visually engaging content such as photos and videos. It allows users to share moments, ideas, and products in a compelling and creative format. The platform is particularly effective for promotional activities due to its interactive features, including Stories, Reels, and Instagram Shopping (Smith, 2021). Social media plays a vital role in digital marketing strategies, with Instagram enabling businesses to reach broad audiences without geographic limitations (Kelly, 2010). Through this platform, organizations can foster more personal interactions with consumers, enhance engagement, and strengthen brand image. Interactive features such as likes, comments, and shares allow users to respond directly to promotional content, ultimately influencing their purchase intentions (Johnson, 2022). Electronic-Word of Mouth

Electronic Word of Mouth (e-WOM)

Positive or negative remarks made by consumers regarding a business or product are referred to as e-WOM, which are accessible to a broad audience via the internet (Hennig-Thurau, Gwinner, Walsh, & Gremler, 2004). On platforms like Instagram, e-WOM significantly influences consumer attitudes, which in turn shape interest and purchase intention (Brown, 2020). Consumers often rely on e-WOM recommendations when making decisions

(Chen, 2019), and the continuous growth of social media has elevated e-WOM's role in shaping perceptions and behaviors (Davis, 2021). Due to its convenience, speed, and accessibility, digital e-WOM exerts a far greater impact than its traditional counterparts (Thompson, 2003).

Intention to Join

Intention is a motivational factor that influences individuals to perform certain behaviors and reflects their willingness to take action (Ajzen, 2005). In the context of organizational participation, the intention to become a member refers to a person's desire or tendency to join a specific group, community, or organization. This intention signifies readiness to engage in real actions such as registering, participating, or committing to organizational activities. According to the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991), intention is shaped by three key components: attitude toward the behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. These factors together influence whether an individual decides to perform a certain action. A positive attitude, perceived social support, and confidence in one's capability to carry out the behavior all contribute to forming a strong behavioral intention (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010; Bandura, 1997).

Hypothesis

Social media facilitates two-way interactions between brands and customers, increasing engagement and trust, based on interactive communication theory. On Instagram, social media marketing (SMM) not only serves promotional purposes but also builds relationships through relevant and appealing content. Positive emotions, such as satisfaction and joy, often lead users to share experiences that influence others' intentions (Park, 2022). Supporting this, Choi (2021) found that social media enhances brand equity and e-WOM, while Nguyen (2020) highlighted that brand–consumer interactions on social media generate positive e-WOM.

H1: Social Media Marketing has a significant effect on e-WOM. Digital and social media marketing can produce both positive and negative outcomes for organizations. Prior studies indicate that SMM positively impacts customer acquisition, brand image, loyalty, and purchase intention across sectors such as hospitality, fashion, and education (Rahman, 2021; Garcia, 2020). Wang (2021) noted that social media content strongly affects perceived value, and Zhao (2022) concluded that digital marketing efforts shape behavioral intentions through trust in the marketing channel. Empirical findings by Ali (2021) and Kumar (2020) confirm that SMM significantly and positively affects consumer intention. H2: Social Media Marketing has a significant effect on Intention to Join.

Electronic Word of Mouth (e-WOM), a key outcome of social media marketing, involves consumers sharing opinions about products or services online. e-WOM on platforms like Instagram influences attitudes and subsequently behavioral intentions (Brown, 2020). Personal experiences shared online significantly shape user behavior (Thompson, 2003), with e-WOM serving as a critical information source about product quality. Studies by Choi (2021) and Nguyen (2020) emphasize that positive e-WOM enhances trust and intention, demonstrating its pivotal role in decision-making. H3: E-WOM has a significant effect on the Intention to Join.

3. Research Methods

Research Design

In this investigation, a quantitative associative approach is used to examine the relationship between variables using numerical data collected and analyzed systematically and objectively (Creswell, 2014). The research object is the followers of the Student Activity Unit (UKM) Radio Kampus at Universitas Lampung, located in Bandar Lampung. Online surveys were used to gather primary data, and they were given to selected Instagram followers of

@radiokampusunila, while secondary data were obtained from organizational archives, online sources, and related studies (Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2019). A five-point Likert scale, with 1 denoting strongly disagree and 5 denoting strongly agree, was used in the questionnaire's design to gauge respondents' opinions (Likert, 1932). The study population includes all active undergraduate and diploma students at Universitas Lampung with Instagram accounts. Sampling was conducted using purposive sampling, targeting respondents who follow @radiokampusunila, are aware of the UKM, and are currently enrolled students. Based on Hair et al.'s formula, with 22 indicators and a multiplier of 5, the final sample size consisted of 110 respondents.

Operational Definition of Variable

Table 1. Operational Definition of Variable.

Variable	Definition	Indicator	Scale
Social Media Marketing (X)	The goal of social media marketing is to directly or indirectly increase brand, product, company, person, or group awareness, recognition, recall, and action, through social web tools such as blogs, microblogs, and social networks (Kelly, 2010).	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It's fun to interact with this brand on Instagram. 2. The Instagram content is engaging. 3. It allows easy sharing of information with others. 4. Expressing my opinions through this Instagram is easy. 5. The shared content is current. 6. Taking part in this Instagram is popular right now. 7. It gives me the information I require. 8. Did not hard to find information through the guidance provided on this Instagram. 	Likert
E-WOM (M)	Positive or negative remarks made by customers about a product are referred to E-WOM, which are accessible to anyone online (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004).	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I talk about this UKM more often than other UKMs. 2. Share UKM's info to many people. 3. I suggest this UKM. 4. Telling others that I follow this UKM makes me proud. 5. I often say a good things. 6. I often say bad things. 7. I've spoken negatively about the UKM. 8. I talk about the benefits it offers. 9. I talk about the various activities it provides. 10. I talk about the quality of its activities. 	Likert
Intention to Join (Y)	Intention is determined by the extent to which an individual holds positive attitudes and perceptions toward a behavior, and is also influenced by support from significant others in their social environment (Ajzen, 2005).	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Before joining the UKM, interacting with this brand's Instagram helps me make wiser judgments. 2. It increases my interest in becoming a UKM member. 3. I am certain I will join the UKM promoted on this Instagram. 4. I aspire to join UKM with all my heart. 	Likert

Instrument Testing

Validity and reliability analyses are part of the instrument testing. By comparing the computed r-count with the critical r-value, validity testing was carried out using SPSS; an item is deemed valid if the r-count > r-table and positive (Ghozali, 2018). Reliability testing was performed using Cronbach’s Alpha to measure the internal consistency of the questionnaire. An instrument is considered reliable if the Cronbach’s Alpha > 0.60, indicating stable and consistent responses over time (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994; Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). Additionally, reliability is confirmed when the Alpha value is higher than the “Alpha if item deleted” score (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016).

Data Analysis Technique

This study's data analysis methodology includes hypothesis testing and multiple linear regression analysis, which determine the regression equation that predicts the dependent variable’s value based on multiple independent variables, both simultaneously and partially. Hypothesis testing includes the coefficient of determination (R²) test and the t-test. The R² test measures how well the independent variables explain the dependent variable, where a low R² indicates limited explanatory power, and a value close to one suggests that the independent variables explain most of the variance (Gujarati & Porter, 2009). The t-test examines the significance of each independent variable’s effect on the dependent variable, where a significance value < 0.05 indicates a statistically significant relationship (Gujarati & Porter, 2009).

4. Results and Discussion

Instrument Testing Result

Table 2. Validity Test Result

Variable	Item	Validitas		Result
		r stat	r table	
Social Media Marketing (X1)	X1.1	0,747	0,1786	Valid
	X1.2	0,789		
	X1.3	0,784		
	X1.4	0,797		
	X1.5	0,805		
	X1.6	0,757		
	X1.7	0,805		
	X1.8	0,818		
e-WOM (Y1)	Y1.1	0,725	0,1786	Valid
	Y1.2	0,741		
	Y1.3	0,803		
	Y1.4	0,823		
	Y1.5	0,731		
	Y1.6	0,830		
	Y1.7	0,806		
	Y1.8	0,799		
	Y1.9	0,778		
	Y1.10	0,788		

	Y2.1	0,781		
Intention to Join (Y2)	Y2.2	0,836	0,1786	Valid
	Y2.3	0,808		
	Y2.4	0,821		

The test show that all variables, the calculated r-values > critical r-value 0.1786. So that, all 22 question indicators across the three variables are declared valid.

Table 3. Reliability Test Result.

Variable	Nilai Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items	Standart	Result
X1 Social Media Marketing	0,907	8		
Y1 e-WOM	0,927	10	> 0.6	Reliable
Y2 Intention to Join	0,825	4		

The results show that the variables SMM (X1), e-WOM (Y1), and Intention to Join (Y2) have Alpha: 0.907, 0.927, and 0.826, all of which are above the threshold of 0.6. Therefore, these variables are considered reliable.

Multiple Linear Regression Result

Table 4. Multiple Linear Regression Result.

Variable	B	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients	T Stat	Sig.
(Constant)	0,671	0,736		0,911	0,364
X1 Social Media Marketing	0,364	0,046	0,682	7,999	0,000
Y1 e-WOM	0,086	0,033	0,224	2,631	0,010

Then, the model obtained is in below:

$$Y2 = 0.671 + 0.364 X1 + 0.086 Y1 + e \tag{1}$$

The multiple linear regression model above indicates both SMM (X1) and e-WOM (Y1) have a positive influence on the Intention to Join (Y2). A one-unit increase in SMM is associated by 0.364 (or 36.4%) increase in the intention to join, while a one-unit increase in e-WOM corresponds to a 0.086 (or 8.6%) increase. This suggests that improvements in both marketing efforts and electronic word of mouth significantly enhance students' willingness to participate in student organizations.

Table 5. Simple Linear Regression Result.

Variable	B	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients	T Stat	Sig.
(Constant)	1,043	2,058		0,507	0,613
X1 Social Media Marketing	1,198	0,065	0,862	18,531	0,000

The simple linear regression model obtained is as follows:

$$Y1 = 1,043 + 1,198 X1 + e \tag{2}$$

SMM's coefficient is positive, indicating that an improvement in Social Media Marketing leads to an increase in e-WOM. Specifically, a one-unit increase in Social Media Marketing give a 1.198-fold increase in e-WOM.

Hypothesis Test Result

Table 6. R Square Result.

R2 (Y2) Analysis				
R	R2	Adj. R2	Std. Error	Explanation
.883a	0,779	0,776	1,053	Strong
R2 (Y1) Analysis				
R	R2	Adj. R2	Std. Error	Explanation
.862a	0,743	0,740	2,945	Strong

Based on Table 6, the Adjusted R Square for Y2 is 0.776, demonstrate 77.6% of the Intention to Become a Member (Y2) is influenced by Social Media Marketing (X1) and e-WOM (Y1), while 22.4% is explained by other factors. Meanwhile, the R2 for Y1 is 0.743, meaning 74.3% of e-WOM (Y1) is influenced by Social Media Marketing (X1), with 25.7% affected by other external factors.

Table 7. T Test Result (Y2).

Variable	B	Std. Error	Standardized Co-efficients	T stat	Sig.	Result
(Constant)	1,043	2,058		0,507	0,613	
X1 Social Media Marketing	1,198	0,065	0,862	18,531	0,000	Significant

The interpretation and hypothesis testing (H1) from Table 7 are as follows: SMM (X1) has a impact on e-WOM (Y1). The table shows a significant relationship, with 18.531 (t-value > t-table = 1.98) and a Sig. 0.000 < 0.05. The positive coefficient value of 1.198 indicates SMM has a positive effect on e-WOM, increasing it by 1.198 times. Therefore, hypothesis H1 is accepted.

Table 8. T Test Result (Y1).

Variable	B	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients	T stat	Sig.	Result
(Constant)	0,671	0,736	0,911	0,364		
X1 Social Media Marketing	0,364	0,046	0,682	7,999	0,000	Significant
Y1 e-WOM	0,086	0,033	0,224	2,631	0,010	Significant

The interpretation and hypothesis testing in Table 8 show that Social Media Marketing (X1) has a significant partial effect on the Intention to Become a Member (Y2), with a t-value of 7.999 > t-table 1.98 and a Sig. 0.000 (< 0.05). The positive coefficient of 0.364 indicates a 36.4% increase in intention for each unit increase in Social Media Marketing, thus supporting H2. Additionally, e-WOM (Y1) has a significant partial effect on the Intention to Join Intention (Y2), with a t-value 2.631 and a Sig. 0.010 (< 0.05). The positive coefficient of 0.086 indicates an 8.6% increase, confirming H3.

Discussion

The Influence of Social Media Marketing on e-WOM

The regression test demonstrates that SMM (X1) has a positive and significant influence on Electronic Word of Mouth (e-WOM) (Y1), with a t-value of 18.531 (t > 1.981) and a Sig.

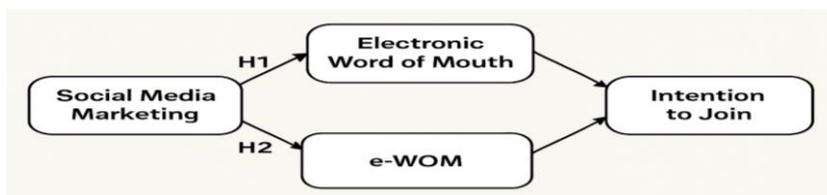
0.000 (< 0.05). This shows that students who perceive social media marketing activities as effective are more prone to participate in e-WOM behavior. This suggests that the quality and engagement level of promotional content on platforms like Instagram can directly encourage users to share information, opinions, or recommendations about a student organization. These findings align with the theory of User Generated Content (UGC), which explains that individuals who feel connected and engaged with content are more inclined to generate and disseminate related messages online. This is further supported by Kaplan and Haenlein (2010), who state that interactive behaviors on social media, such as likes and comments, serve as early forms of engagement that can evolve into e-WOM, and by Choi (2021) and Nguyen (2020), who emphasize that interactive digital marketing significantly increases brand exposure and strengthens word-of-mouth dissemination. Therefore, H1 is supported and accepted.

The Influence of Social Media Marketing on Intention to Join

The multiple regression test reveals that SMM (X1) has a positive and significant effect on the Intention to Join (Y2), with a t-value of 7.999 ($t > 1.981$) and Sig. 0.000 (< 0.05). This indicates that more engaging and active promotional efforts through social media can increase students' willingness to join a student organization. This finding suggests that students respond positively to content that aligns with their personal interests and developmental goals, particularly when social media posts provide relevant information about opportunities, activities, or social environments offered by the organization. This supports the Uses and Gratifications Theory (Katz, Blumler, & Gurevitch, 1973), which posits that individuals engage with media to fulfill personal identity needs. Thus, when students feel represented or connected with the content of an organization, they are more likely to act on that engagement by expressing the intention to join. This is further reinforced by Kumar (2020), who found that consistent and targeted social media marketing significantly enhances audience involvement, ultimately influencing behavioral intentions such as joining decisions. In this study, social media not only raised awareness but also played a key role in shaping students' intentions to take part. Therefore, hypothesis H2 is accepted, affirming that effective and interactive social media marketing strategies have a significant impact on students' intention to become members of the organization.

The Influence of Electronic Word of Mouth (e-WOM) on Intention to Join

The regression analysis indicates that e-WOM significantly and positively affects students' intention to become members of the organization, with a t-value of 2.631 ($t > 1.981$) and Sig. 0.010 (< 0.05). This suggests that students exposed to positive information about the student organization, especially through peer recommendations or digital conversations, are more inclined to develop the intention to join. The findings reveal that students are not only recipients of information but also active contributors to spreading favorable perceptions of the organization, which reflects emotional involvement and trust in its values. This aligns with Litvin, Goldsmith, and Pan (2008), who describe e-WOM as an informal communication channel that shapes user perceptions and decisions. Moreover, Murray (1991) emphasizes that information from peers is often trusted more than direct promotional content, reinforcing the impact of social references in influencing behavioral intentions. Thus, the findings confirm hypothesis H3, indicating that positive and active e-WOM plays a crucial role in encouraging students' intention to join the organization.



5. Conclusions

This study demonstrates that Social Media Marketing (SMM) has a significant and positive influence on both Electronic Word of Mouth (e-WOM) and students' intention to join campus organizations. Furthermore, e-WOM itself positively affects students' willingness to participate, confirming its role as a critical mediator in shaping behavioral intentions. The findings highlight that Instagram, as a highly interactive and visually engaging platform, is not only effective in disseminating information but also in fostering trust, peer influence, and emotional connection that drive student participation. By validating the hypotheses, the research underscores the importance of strategic digital communication in enhancing organizational visibility and engagement within higher education contexts.

While the study provides strong evidence of the effectiveness of SMM and e-WOM, its scope is limited to a single organization at Universitas Lampung. Future research should expand to multiple institutions and platforms to capture broader dynamics and explore additional variables such as brand image, perceived value, or cultural influences.

Managerial Implications

The results of this study offer several actionable insights for student organizations and higher education managers:

Strategic Content Development: Organizations should design Instagram content that is visually appealing, informative, and interactive. Posts that highlight student achievements, upcoming events, and opportunities for skill development can strengthen engagement and stimulate positive e-WOM.

Leverage Peer Influence: Since e-WOM significantly impacts intention to join, managers should encourage current members to share their experiences online. Campaigns that feature testimonials, peer stories, or "member spotlights" can amplify trust and credibility.

Consistency and Frequency: Regular posting schedules and consistent branding across social media platforms help maintain visibility and reinforce organizational identity, increasing the likelihood of sustained student interest.

Interactive Engagement: Features such as polls, Q&A sessions, and live streams can foster two-way communication, making students feel more connected and valued. This interactive approach enhances both e-WOM and intention to join.

Integration with Institutional Goals: Universities should align SMM strategies with broader educational objectives, emphasizing how participation in student organizations contributes to non-academic competencies such as leadership, teamwork, and communication skills.

Monitoring and Analytics: Managers should utilize social media analytics to track engagement metrics, identify successful content types, and adjust strategies accordingly. Data-driven decision-making ensures that promotional efforts remain relevant and effective.

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