

Determinants of Students' Enrollment Decisions at Prisma Professional Course and Training Institute, Surabaya

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Abstract

This study examines the influence of social media, Word of Mouth (WoM), Brand Image, and Price on students' decision to enroll at LKP Prisma Profesional Surabaya. A quantitative causal approach was applied to 94 respondents selected through purposive sampling. Data were collected using an online questionnaire and analyzed through multiple linear regression with IBM SPSS Statistics. The results show that Social Media has no significant effect on enrollment decisions ($p = 0.837$), while WoM ($p = 0.024$), Brand Image ($p = 0.043$), and Price ($p = 0.000$) have significant positive effects. Price is the strongest predictor ($\beta = 0.427$). Simultaneously, all four variables significantly influence enrollment decisions ($F = 66.376$; $p < 0.001$). These findings highlight the importance of price, recommendations, and institutional reputation in enrollment decisions.

Keywords

Social Media; Word of Mouth; Brand Image; Price; Enrollment Decision

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1. INTRODUCTION

Course and Training Institutions (LKP) are non-formal education providers that develop individuals' knowledge, skills, life competencies, and professional attitudes. The increasing number of LKP programs in Surabaya has intensified competition, requiring institutions to offer relevant training while building attractiveness and trust. LKP Prisma Profesional Surabaya, with more than 35 years of experience and "A" accreditation from BAN-PNF, emphasizes practical training (70%) and theory (30%) to meet workplace demands. Participants' decisions are influenced not only by program quality but also by information, institutional perceptions, others' experiences, costs, and expected benefits.

Digital technology has transformed how prospective participants recognize and evaluate LKP institutions. Social media serves as a channel for promotion, information, branding, and interaction, becoming an initial touchpoint in the Customer Decision Journey. However, its influence may not be direct. Previous research found that social media did not significantly affect decision-making without supporting factors such as brand trust and brand image (Mauliza & Fadhilla, 2025).



After obtaining information through social media, prospective participants may further evaluate an institution by considering the experiences and recommendations of other people. At this stage, *Word of Mouth* (WoM) becomes an important source of information because it is based on the experiences of previous consumers or participants. Recommendations from alumni, participant testimonials, online reviews, comments, and digital conversations can become important considerations in evaluating the quality of educational services offered by an institution. Rosario et al. (2026) found that the volume and valence of *Word of Mouth* significantly influenced service purchase decisions (Texeira-Quiros et al., 2022)(Rosario & others, 2026), whereas Qamari et al. (2021) found that the influence of WoM on consumer interest could operate through intermediary mechanisms such as *brand image*. Thus, WoM functions not only as a means of disseminating information but also as a mechanism that contributes to the formation of perceptions about an institution, which prospective participants may subsequently use when evaluating alternatives (E. M. P. Dewi et al., 2024)(Qamari & others, 2021).

The perceptions formed through social media and WoM are closely related to the *brand image* of an LKP. *Brand image* refers to the representation or set of associations formed in the public's mind regarding an institution based on information, communication, and experiences. Within the *Customer Decision Journey*, brand image becomes relevant during the evaluation stage because prospective participants consider not only factual information but also how an institution is perceived in terms of quality, credibility, professionalism, and expected benefits. Suardana et al. (2024) demonstrated that *brand image* plays an important role in influencing consumer decisions, both directly and through perceived value(Suardana & others, 2024). Hartanto and Isa (2026) also found that *brand image* can strengthen the effect of digital marketing on final purchase decisions (Hartanto & Isa, 2026). Nevertheless, Kurniawan and Tanujaya (2024) reported that the influence of *brand image* on decisions may be associated with other factors, indicating that the relationship between brand image and decision-making requires further investigation in different service contexts, including non-formal education (Kurniawan & Tanujaya, 2024).

In addition to institutional image, price represents an important rational consideration in the evaluation process. The cost of a training program is not necessarily perceived merely as the amount of money that must be paid but is evaluated against the expected benefits, including learning quality, facilities, instructor competence, certification, and opportunities for skills development. From the perspective of Perceived Value Theory, consumer decisions are influenced by the perceived balance between the benefits received and the sacrifices incurred. Ulfa, Bulan, and Ardianti (2025) demonstrated that price perception significantly influenced consumer decisions (Ulfa et al., 2025). Similarly, Anita Sumelvia Dewi (2021) found that price remained an important consideration when combined with Word of Mouth and brand image (A. S. Dewi, 2021). Therefore, in the context of LKP Prisma Profesional

Surabaya, price can be understood as one of the evaluative factors that may influence prospective participants' decisions after they have obtained information and developed perceptions of the institution.

Participants' decisions to select an LKP develop through stages of information exposure, evaluation, perception formation, and consideration of benefits and costs. The *Customer Decision Journey* integrates the roles of social media, *Word of Mouth*, *brand image*, and price in this process. However, previous findings remain inconsistent, and studies examining these variables simultaneously in the context of LKP are limited. Therefore, this study analyzes the influence of social media, *Word of Mouth*, *brand image*, and price on participants' decisions to select LKP Prisma Profesional Surabaya.

2. METHOD

This study employed a quantitative causal research approach to examine the relationships between Social Media, Word of Mouth, Brand Image, and Price as independent variables and participants' Decision-Making as the dependent variable. Primary data were collected through a structured online questionnaire using Google Forms and measured on a four-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 4 = strongly agree). The population consisted of participants of LKP Prisma Profesional Surabaya who had sufficient experience or information about the institution. Respondents were selected through purposive sampling based on the following criteria: participants who had enrolled in or were currently enrolled in a training program, had obtained information about the institution, and were willing to complete the questionnaire voluntarily. Incomplete responses and respondents who did not meet the criteria were excluded. The instrument measured Social Media through information quality, relevance, interaction, accessibility, and content attractiveness; Word of Mouth through communication intensity, positive recommendations, information content, and credibility; Brand Image through recognition, reputation, perceived quality, and institutional associations; Price through affordability, suitability to benefits, competitiveness, and perceived quality; and Decision-Making through need recognition, information consideration, evaluation of alternatives, selection decision, and decision confidence. Before analysis, validity and reliability tests were conducted to ensure that the instrument adequately measured the intended constructs.

Data were analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics version 25. Multiple linear regression was employed to examine the partial and simultaneous relationships between Social Media, Word of Mouth, Brand Image, Price, and Decision-Making. Classical assumption tests were conducted before regression analysis to assess the suitability of the model. Hypothesis testing included the coefficient of determination (R^2), t-test, and F-test. The coefficient of determination was used to determine the proportion of variation in Decision-Making explained by the independent variables, while the t-test

assessed the partial relationship of each independent variable with Decision-Making. The F-test was used to examine the simultaneous relationship of Social Media, Word of Mouth, Brand Image, and Price with Decision-Making.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

Classical Assumption Tests

Normality Test

Table 1. Results of the Normality Test

One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test	Standardized Residual
N	94
Normal Parameters – Mean	0.0000000
Normal Parameters – Std. Deviation	0.97825827
Most Extreme Differences – Absolute	0.097
Most Extreme Differences – Positive	0.097
Most Extreme Differences – Negative	-0.087
Test Statistic	0.097
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	0.031

Source: Processed primary data using SPSS.

Based on the results of the Kolmogorov–Smirnov test presented in Table 1, the standardized residuals have a significance value of 0.031. Since the significance value is below 0.05, the residuals do not meet the normality criterion according to the formal Kolmogorov–Smirnov test.

Nevertheless, the regression analysis was continued by considering the sample size of 94 observations. In applied regression analysis, moderate deviations from normality may have limited effects on coefficient estimation and hypothesis testing, particularly when the sample size is relatively large. The Central Limit Theorem also provides a theoretical basis for the approximate normality of sampling distributions as sample size increases. Therefore, the results of the regression analysis should be interpreted with caution, while recognizing that the formal normality test indicates a deviation from normality.

Multicollinearity Test

Table 2. Results of the Multicollinearity Test

Model	Variable	Tolerance	VIF
1	Media Social (X1)	0.431	2.321
1	Word of Mouth (WoM) (X2)	0.234	4.279
1	Citra Merek (X3)	0.230	4.345
1	Harga (X4)	0.273	3.663

Dependent Variable: Keputusan Memilih (Y)

Source: Processed primary data using SPSS.

The results in Table 2 show that all independent variables have tolerance values above 0.10 and VIF values below 10. Specifically, the tolerance values range from 0.230 to 0.431, while the VIF values range from 2.321 to 4.345. These results indicate that there is no serious multicollinearity among the independent variables in the regression model. Thus, Social Media, Word of Mouth, Brand Image, and Price can be simultaneously included in the regression analysis.

Heteroscedasticity Test

Table 3. Results of the Heteroscedasticity Test

Model	Variable	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	7.232	2.488	—	2.906	0.005
1	Media Social (X1)	0.064	0.071	0.134	0.907	0.367
1	Word of Mouth (WoM) (X2)	0.036	0.076	0.095	0.472	0.638
1	Citra Merek (X3)	-0.064	0.073	-0.178	-0.881	0.381
1	Harga (X4)	-0.120	0.056	-0.398	-2.141	0.035

Dependent Variable: ABS_RES

Source: Processed primary data using SPSS.

The Glejser test shows no heteroscedasticity for Social Media ($p = 0.367$), Word of Mouth ($p = 0.638$), or Brand Image ($p = 0.381$). However, Price shows an indication of heteroscedasticity ($p = 0.035$). Therefore, the regression results should be interpreted cautiously because heteroscedasticity may affect the reliability of conventional standard errors.

Autocorrelation Test

Table 4. Results of the Autocorrelation Test

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	0.865	0.749	0.738	4.78037	1.780

Predictors: Constant, Harga (X4), Media Sosial (X1), Word of Mouth (X2), Citra Merek (X3)

Dependent Variable: Keputusan Memilih (Y)

Source: Processed primary data using SPSS.

Based on Table 4, the Durbin–Watson statistic is 1.780. With 94 observations and four independent variables, this value is within the commonly accepted range indicating no evidence of serious positive or negative autocorrelation. Therefore, the regression model does not show a substantial autocorrelation problem based on the Durbin–Watson statistic.

Multiple Linear Regression Analysis

Table 5. Results of the Multiple Linear Regression Analysis

Model	Variable	Unstandardized B	Std. Error	Standardized Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	6.279	3.856	—	1.629	0.107
1	Media Social (X1)	0.023	0.110	0.017	0.207	0.837
1	Word of Mouth (WoM) (X2)	0.270	0.117	0.252	2.297	0.024
1	Citra Merek (X3)	0.233	0.113	0.228	2.056	0.043
1	Harga (X4)	0.367	0.087	0.427	4.204	0.000

Dependent Variable: Keputusan Memilih (Y)

Source: Processed primary data using SPSS.

The multiple linear regression equation is $Y = 6.279 + 0.023X_1 + 0.270X_2 + 0.233X_3 + 0.367X_4 + e$. The coefficients indicate positive associations between Social Media, Word of Mouth, Brand Image, and Price with Decision to Choose. Among the predictors, Price has the largest regression coefficient (0.367), followed by Word of Mouth (0.270), Brand Image (0.233), and Social Media (0.023).

Hypothesis Testing

T-Test (Partial Test)

Table 6. Results of the T-Test

Variable	B	Std. Error	Beta	t-value	Sig.	Decision at $\alpha = 0.05$
Media Social (X1)	0.023	0.110	0.017	0.207	0.837	Not significant
Word of Mouth (X2)	0.270	0.117	0.252	2.297	0.024	Significant
Citra Merek (X3)	0.233	0.113	0.228	2.056	0.043	Significant
Harga (X4)	0.367	0.087	0.427	4.204	0.000	Significant

Dependent Variable: Keputusan Memilih (Y)

Source: Processed primary data using SPSS.

The t-test results show that Social Media has no significant partial effect on Decision to Choose ($p = 0.837$; $t = 0.207$). In contrast, Word of Mouth ($p = 0.024$; $t = 2.297$), Brand Image ($p = 0.043$; $t = 2.056$), and Price ($p = 0.000$; $t = 4.204$) have significant positive effects. Price has the strongest standardized association ($\beta = 0.427$), followed by Word of Mouth ($\beta = 0.252$), Brand Image ($\beta = 0.228$), and Social Media ($\beta = 0.017$).

F-Test (Simultaneous Test)

Table 7. Results of the F-Test

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F-value	Sig.
Regression	6067.283	4	1516.821	66.376	0.000
Residual	2033.824	89	22.852	—	—
Total	8101.106	93	—	—	—

Dependent Variable: Keputusan Memilih (Y)

Predictors: Constant, Harga (X4), Media Sosial (X1), Word of Mouth (X2), Citra Merek (X3)

Source: Processed primary data using SPSS.

Based on Table 7, the calculated F-value is 66.376 with a significance value of 0.000. Since the significance value is below 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected. The calculated F-value is also greater than the F-table value of approximately 2.474.

These findings indicate that Social Media, Word of Mouth, Brand Image, and Price are jointly associated with Decision to Choose in the regression model. Thus, the four independent variables collectively contribute to explaining variations in the dependent variable.

Correlation and Coefficient of Determination Test

Table 8. Results of the Correlation and Coefficient of Determination Test

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.865	0.749	0.738	4.78037

Predictors: Constant, Harga (X4), Media Sosial (X1), Word of Mouth (X2), Citra Merek (X3)

Dependent Variable: Keputusan Memilih (Y)

Source: Processed primary data using SPSS.

The model shows a strong relationship between Social Media, Word of Mouth, Brand Image, Price, and Decision to Choose ($R = 0.865$). The R^2 of 0.749 indicates that 74.9% of the variation in Decision to Choose is explained by the four predictors, while 25.1% is explained by other factors. The Adjusted R^2 of 0.738 confirms substantial explanatory power, although the findings should be interpreted alongside the detected non-normality and heteroscedasticity.

Discussion

The Influence of Social Media on Students' Decision to Choose

Social Media has a positive but statistically insignificant effect on students' Decision to Choose ($\beta = 0.017$; $t = 0.207$; $p = 0.837$). Therefore, H_1 is not supported. The finding suggests that social media exposure alone is insufficient to influence final enrollment decisions when Word of Mouth, Brand Image, and Price are considered simultaneously. Social media may play a greater role in creating

awareness and providing initial information, while final decisions are more likely influenced by credibility, recommendations, institutional perceptions, and the suitability of price to expected benefits.

This finding is consistent with Mauliza and Fadhilla (2025), who found that social media did not have a direct significant effect on decision-making and suggested the importance of intervening variables such as brand trust and brand image (Mauliza & Fadhilla, 2025). Dermawan et al. (2022) similarly found that social media did not necessarily have a direct effect on purchasing decisions but could operate through purchase intention as a mediating mechanism. These findings affirm the view that digital exposure does not automatically result in a final behavioral decision because consumers may require additional psychological or evaluative processes before converting information into action (Dermawan, 2021).

However, the present finding differs from studies reporting a direct significant influence of social media. (Adiyani et al., 2021), (Rionanda et al., 2022), (Oldisan & others, 2025), (Li et al., 2025), (Ratno et al., 2024)(Aulia et al., 2022), (DailySocial, 2024), (Psotka et al., 2020), (Rizalihadi & Satispi, 2025), and (Novianti et al., 2025) reported significant relationships between social media marketing and outcomes such as brand awareness, brand image, purchase intention, and decision-making. The difference between these findings suggests that the effectiveness of social media may depend on the characteristics of the industry, the nature of the audience, the quality and persuasiveness of the content, the level of engagement, and the stage of the decision-making process.

In the context of LKP Prisma Profesional Surabaya, field observations indicate that social media has been actively used as a promotional and communication medium, but its role has not yet developed into a primary determinant of the final decision. Social media mainly provides prospective students with initial information and awareness, whereas the final decision is more strongly associated with information obtained from other people, institutional perceptions, and financial considerations. The characteristics of the social media content, which are not yet fully conversion-oriented, and the relatively limited engagement may also reduce its ability to transform awareness into enrollment decisions.

An important finding emerges when the partial and simultaneous tests are considered together. Although Social Media is not statistically significant individually, the F-test shows that Social Media, Word of Mouth, Brand Image, and Price collectively have a significant relationship with Decision to Choose, with $F = 66.376$ and $\text{Sig.} = 0.000$. This result does not mean that Social Media becomes individually significant in the simultaneous test. Rather, it indicates that the four predictors, considered as a group, significantly explain variation in students' decisions. Social Media can therefore be positioned as an initial awareness-building factor within a broader decision-making process. Its information may introduce prospective students to the institution, while credibility obtained through Word of Mouth, perceptions formed through Brand Image, and rational evaluation of Price may help

convert initial awareness into a final decision. This provides an integrated explanation of why Social Media is insignificant in the partial test while the overall regression model is significant.

The Influence of Word of Mouth (WoM) on Students' Decision to Choose

Word of Mouth (WoM) has a positive and statistically significant effect on students' Decision to Choose ($\beta = 0.252$; $t = 2.297$; $p = 0.024$), supporting H₂. This indicates that positive recommendations and information from others increase the likelihood of choosing LKP Prisma Profesional Surabaya. The finding highlights the importance of trust and credibility in educational-service decisions, as recommendations from individuals with direct experience can reduce uncertainty. The high validity value for the trust-related WoM item (0.871) further supports the importance of trust in the WoM mechanism.

The result affirms previous research conducted by Novita, Andriani, and Yuliani (2021), which found that Word of Mouth positively influences decisions through increased consumer trust (Novita et al., 2021). Ramadan, Samsir, and Garnasih (2025) also demonstrated the role of WoM in shaping brand image and decisions in the context of elementary school selection (Ramadan et al., 2025), while Arief and Brabo (2025) found an influence of WoM on university selection decisions (Arief & Brabo, 2025). Hilda and Aquinia (2023) further reported that electronic Word of Mouth has a significant effect on purchasing decisions (Hilda & Aquinia, 2023). These findings support the argument that recommendations from other people can become an important source of credibility in decision-making.

Nevertheless, previous research has also produced different findings. Qamari et al. (2021) reported that WoM did not have a direct significant effect on purchase intention and suggested the role of brand image as a mediating variable (Qamari & others, 2021). Wijaya et al. (2022) likewise indicated that the effectiveness of WoM may vary depending on the level of trust in online reviews. The difference between these findings and the present result suggests that the effectiveness of WoM depends on the characteristics of the communication channel, the credibility of the information source, and the characteristics of the service being evaluated (Wijaya et al., 2022).

In the context of LKP Prisma Profesional Surabaya, the significant effect of WoM indicates that prospective students appear to place substantial consideration on experiences and recommendations from other people. Positive information about learning experiences, service quality, and institutional outcomes can strengthen prospective students' confidence when making a choice. Therefore, WoM functions not merely as an additional promotional instrument but as an interpersonal source of information that can contribute directly to the decision-making process.

The Influence of Brand Image on Students' Decision to Choose

Brand Image has a positive and statistically significant effect on students' Decision to Choose ($\beta = 0.228$; $t = 2.056$; $p = 0.043$), supporting H_3 . This indicates that a more positive perception of LKP Prisma Profesional Surabaya is associated with a stronger tendency to choose the institution. A positive brand image can reduce uncertainty by providing an indirect indicator of institutional reputation, service quality, professionalism, and expected learning outcomes.

The present finding affirms Putri, Adnan, and Artino (2025), who found that brand image influences students' decision-making (Putri et al., 2025). Aminah, Afriyani, and Yeni (2025) similarly demonstrated that positive brand image contributes to decisions in choosing higher education (Aminah et al., 2025). Manisa Br Karo, Syahputra, and Madiawati (2025) also reported a relationship between branding strategies and decision-making (Kasor et al., 2017). These findings strengthen the interpretation that institutional image can become an important consideration when prospective students evaluate educational alternatives.

Nevertheless, the finding differs from Putri et al. (2024), who found that brand image had a negative and insignificant effect on purchase decisions when tested together with social media marketing. Kurniawan and Tanujaya (2024) likewise reported that brand image did not have a significant direct effect on purchasing decisions. These differences indicate that the role of brand image cannot necessarily be generalized across all sectors because its influence may depend on the characteristics of the institution, the respondents, the service being evaluated, and the other variables included in the analytical model.

In the context of LKP Prisma Profesional Surabaya, the significant effect of Brand Image suggests that institutional reputation and perceptions of service quality form part of prospective students' evaluation before making a choice. A positive image can provide a basis for confidence when prospective students have limited direct experience with the institution. Therefore, the consistency between the image communicated by the institution and the actual experience received by students becomes an important component in maintaining a favorable institutional perception.

The Influence of Price on Students' Decision to Choose

Price (X_4) has a positive and statistically significant coefficient in the regression model, with $B = 0.367$, $\beta = 0.427$, a t -value of 4.204, and a significance value of 0.000. Based on the conventional OLS regression results, the significance value is below 0.05 and the t -value is greater than 1.987, indicating a statistically significant partial relationship between Price and Decision to Choose. Therefore, H_4 is supported based on the conventional regression estimation. Price also has the largest standardized coefficient among the four predictors, with $\beta = 0.427$.

The finding can be understood through the concept of perceived value. Prospective students may not evaluate price solely according to whether the cost is high or low but may compare the financial cost with the expected benefits of the educational service. These benefits may include program quality, facilities, learning outcomes, service quality, and the relevance of the training program to their needs. When the perceived benefits are considered compatible with the price, prospective students may develop a stronger tendency to choose the institution. The validity results also show a high correlation value of 0.919 for the item related to overall price evaluation, supporting the relevance of price perception in this study.

This finding affirms Dea Dela Piyoh (2024), who found a positive and significant relationship between price and purchasing decisions among Netflix users (Piyoh, 2024). Amin (2025) also reported the relevance of price value, Word of Mouth, and brand image in explaining school enrollment interest. These findings support the argument that price can become an important component of consumers' evaluation when determining whether the expected benefits correspond to the required financial expenditure (Amin, 2025).

However, the present result differs from Ginting and Heryjayanto (2023), who found that price perception had a positive but insignificant relationship with consumer loyalty or decision-making (Ginting & Heryjayanto, 2023). Putri, Kusnawan, and Nella (2024) also found that Price did not have a significant partial effect in the context of selecting an educational institution, with other factors such as location and promotion playing an important role (Ambarwati et al., 2022). These differences indicate that the importance of price may depend on the economic characteristics of respondents, the type of educational service, the alternatives available, and the perceived value associated with the price.

In the context of LKP Prisma Profesional Surabaya, Price appears to function as an important evaluative consideration when prospective students narrow their alternatives. The decision-making process can begin with information obtained through social media, become strengthened through recommendations and institutional perceptions, and then involve an evaluation of whether the required price is appropriate relative to the expected benefits. Therefore, Price can be understood as one of the factors involved in the final evaluation of the alternatives available to prospective students.

However, the interpretation of the Price significance result requires an econometric qualification. The Glejser test produced a significance value of 0.035 for Price, which is below 0.05, indicating an indication of heteroscedasticity. Heteroscedasticity does not automatically make the OLS coefficient estimate biased, but it can affect the conventional standard errors and, consequently, the reliability of the t-statistics and significance values. Therefore, the conventional significance result for Price should be interpreted cautiously. A robust estimation using heteroscedasticity-consistent Robust Standard

Errors (Huber–White) is required to determine whether the statistical significance remains after correcting the standard errors.

The Simultaneous Influence of Social Media, Word of Mouth (WoM), Brand Image, and Price on Students' Decision to Choose

The F-test indicates that Social Media, Word of Mouth, Brand Image, and Price collectively have a statistically significant relationship with students' Decision to Choose. The regression model produces an F-value of 66.376 with a significance value of 0.000. Because the significance value is below 0.05 and the calculated F-value exceeds the F-table value of 2.474, the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, the four independent variables collectively contribute to explaining variation in students' Decision to Choose.

This finding can be understood from an integrated decision-making perspective. Students' decisions to choose an educational institution are not necessarily formed through a single factor. Social Media can provide initial awareness and information about the institution. Word of Mouth can provide interpersonal credibility based on the experiences of others. Brand Image can shape perceptions concerning the quality and reputation of the institution, while Price can be used to evaluate the correspondence between the expected benefits and the financial cost. The simultaneous significance of the model therefore demonstrates the relevance of examining these factors together rather than considering each factor in isolation.

The result also provides an important explanation for the different outcomes of the partial and simultaneous tests. Social Media does not have a significant partial effect, with a significance value of 0.837, whereas the overall regression model is significant. These findings are not contradictory because the two tests address different questions. The partial t-test evaluates the unique statistical contribution of an individual predictor after controlling for the other predictors, whereas the F-test evaluates whether the predictors collectively explain a statistically significant proportion of variation in the dependent variable. Thus, the significant F-test does not mean that every independent variable must individually be significant.

Within the context of this study, the findings suggest a layered decision-making process. Social Media may initiate awareness by introducing the institution and providing basic information. Prospective students may then seek confirmation through Word of Mouth, particularly because recommendations from people with direct experience can provide greater credibility. Brand Image may subsequently influence how prospective students interpret the quality and reputation of the institution. Finally, Price may become an important evaluative consideration when comparing expected benefits

with financial costs. In this mechanism, Social Media can therefore remain relevant as an initial communication channel even though its unique direct coefficient is not statistically significant.

The findings are broadly consistent with previous research cited in this study, including Dea Dela Piyoh (2024), who reported a significant relationship between price and purchasing decisions (Piyoh, 2024), and Putri, Adnan, and Artino (2025), who identified the relevance of brand image, digital marketing, and Word of Mouth in students' decision-making (Putri et al., 2025). At the same time, Julio and Shihab (2024) reported that WoM had a relatively weak and insignificant relationship with parents' decisions in selecting PAUD institutions, while perceived value played a more dominant role (Julio & Shihab, 2024). Tomaszewicz and Barczyk (2024) also indicated that social media is not necessarily the dominant information source at the final stage of educational institution selection. These differences reinforce the importance of considering the institutional and respondent context when interpreting the determinants of educational choice (Tomaszewicz & Barczyk, 2024).

The model shows strong explanatory power, with $R^2 = 0.749$ and Adjusted $R^2 = 0.738$, indicating that 74.9% of the variation in Decision to Choose is explained by Social Media, Word of Mouth, Brand Image, and Price. Multicollinearity and autocorrelation were not problematic, but the tests indicated non-normality and heteroscedasticity related to Price. Therefore, Huber–White robust standard errors are recommended to verify whether the significance of the predictors remains stable.

4. CONCLUSION

The findings show that students' decisions to choose LKP Prisma Profesional Surabaya are influenced by Word of Mouth, Brand Image, and Price, while Social Media alone is not a sufficient determinant. Simultaneously, Social Media, Word of Mouth, Brand Image, and Price contribute to explaining students' decisions. Managerially, the institution should integrate social media with alumni testimonials and referrals, improve price transparency, and maintain a consistent institutional image through service quality and documented achievements. Future research may consider brand trust, perceived value, service quality, and student satisfaction as additional factors.

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