

## A Model of Marketing Strategies to Increase New Student Admissions

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### Abstract

This study aims to formulate an effective marketing strategy to increase the number of new student enrollments at the Institute of Technology and Business (ITB) Widya Gama Lumajang. Despite having competitive advantages such as affordable tuition fees, a strategic location, and a strong entrepreneurial vision, the institution has experienced a decline in enrollment over the past five years. Using a descriptive qualitative approach, this research employs SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) and QSPM (Quantitative Strategic Planning Matrix) analyses to identify internal and external strategic factors. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, observations, and documentation involving university leaders, faculty members, current students, prospective students, and parents. The findings indicate that establishing a dedicated digital content team is a top strategic priority, as social media has become the main channel through which prospective students obtain information. Additional recommended strategies include strengthening alumni and parent networks, conducting open-campus promotional events, and transforming the institution into a university to broaden academic offerings. This study concludes that market-oriented and digitally-driven marketing strategies are essential to enhancing the competitiveness of private higher education institutions amid intense educational competition.

**Keywords:** Marketing Strategy, SWOT, QSPM

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### 1. Introduction

Higher education plays a crucial role in national development, particularly in producing superior and competitive human capital. Universities have evolved beyond their traditional function as centers of learning and are now strategic institutions that shape individuals' competencies, perspectives, and integrity (Amri & Yahya, 2021). In an increasingly competitive global landscape, higher education institutions are expected not only to deliver high-quality academic programs but also to implement innovative marketing strategies to attract prospective students. These institutions must navigate significant challenges in positioning themselves effectively within a rapidly changing and complex educational market (Onsardi et al., 2021). In the digital era, effective marketing efforts must extend beyond showcasing physical infrastructure or academic excellence. Institutions need to develop a deeper understanding of the needs, preferences, and expectations of prospective students (Khotimah, 2012).

This study is motivated by a continuous decline in new student enrollment at Institut Teknologi dan Bisnis (ITB) Widya Gama Lumajang over the past five years, despite the institution's competitive advantages, including affordable tuition, adequate facilities, and a strong entrepreneurial vision. This situation suggests that the current marketing strategies have not sufficiently addressed the specific demands and preferences of potential students, particularly in the face of intense competition from other universities in the Tapal Kuda region. The purpose of this study is to analyze and formulate effective marketing strategies to increase student enrollment. In the strategic formulation phase, an organization articulates its vision and mission, assesses its internal capabilities and limitations, and evaluates external factors that may present opportunities or pose threats. A commonly applied framework in this process is SWOT analysis, which enables organizations to gain a clearer

perspective on their strategic stance and to explore viable strategic options. This phase ultimately yields a series of structured plans aimed at achieving the institution's overarching goals (David, 2011).

## 2. Methods

This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach, utilizing SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis and the Quantitative Strategic Planning Matrix (QSPM) as analytical tools. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, direct observations, and document analysis involving various key informants, including university executives, current students, prospective students, and parents.

Data collection was conducted using a triangulation technique, integrating multiple methods to ensure data credibility. The data analysis followed an inductive approach, emphasizing the interpretation of meaning over generalization (Ferdinand, 2014). This methodological choice aims to identify and deeply understand various phenomena and challenges faced by the institution, thereby enabling the formulation of relevant and effective marketing strategies. Consequently, the findings of this research are expected to contribute significantly to the advancement of both theoretical and practical knowledge in the field of educational marketing.

Primary data were obtained from two main sources: direct observation and interviews. Observations were conducted through on-site monitoring of the student admission process and the implementation of marketing management strategies at the Institute of Technology and Business Widya Gama Lumajang. To ensure the accuracy and depth of the information gathered, observations were carried out comprehensively at the research site, allowing for the capture of various relevant aspects.

## 3. Results and Discussion

The results of interviews with various stakeholders led to key conclusions regarding the internal factors, specifically the strengths and weaknesses of ITB Widya Gama Lumajang. The findings from the IFE matrix indicate that the institution's strengths can be effectively leveraged to manage its existing weaknesses :

**Table 1.** IFE Matrix

Key Internal Factor	Weight	Rating	Weighted Score
<b>Strengths</b>			
1. Has a strong vision as an "Entrepreneurial Campus."	0.13	4	0.52
2. Offers a variety of student activities	0.14	4	0.55
3. Owns a Lembaga Sertifikasi Profesi (LSP) accredited by BNSP	0.13	3	0.39
4. Strategically located on National Road III.	0.13	3	0.39
5. Provides a regular B class program or "employee class."	0.13	3	0.39
6. Affordable tuition fees.	0.12	3	0.35
7. Flexible payment system.	0.13	3	0.40
<b>Weaknesses</b>			
1. Offers a limited number of study programs.	0.05	1	0.05
2. Does not have a dedicated team for digital promotion.	0.04	2	0.09
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1.00</b>		<b>3.13</b>

Source: processed data

Meanwhile, the evaluation of external factors using the External Factor Evaluation (EFE) matrix concludes that ITB Widya Gama Lumajang is in a moderate position in responding to opportunities and threats. The results of the EFE matrix :

**Table 2.** EFE Matrix

Key External Factor	Weight	Rating	Weighted Score
<b>Opportunities</b>			
1. Extensive networking	0.19	3	0.57
2. Parental preferences	0.16	3	0.48
3. Increasing use of social media	0.20	3	0.59
<b>Threats</b>			
1. UNEJ as the largest public university in the Tapal Kuda region	0.14	2	0.29
2. Study Program Outside the Main Campus in Lumajang	0.14	3	0.41
3. Declining interest trend in the Accounting study program	0.17	3	0.52
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1.00</b>		<b>2.86</b>

Source: processed data

After identifying the key internal and external factors, the next step is to analyze and formulate strategic alternatives using a SWOT analysis. The SWOT analysis results in four strategic alternatives that can be implemented by ITB Widya Gama Lumajang. *First*, activate and expand the campus network, including the number and distribution of students, alumni, and campus partners such as companies and village governments that already have established collaborations with ITB Widya Gama Lumajang. *Second*, establish a dedicated team responsible for managing digital media and handling digital promotion through ITB Widya Gama Lumajang's social media platforms. *Third*, increase student activities by organizing "open house" events or other programs that involve the general public, either by inviting communities to campus or by holding outreach activities in villages to build a positive image among the public. *Fourth*, as a long-term strategy, expand the number of study programs offered to prospective students. To determine the strategic priorities for ITB Widya Gama Lumajang, the Quantitative Strategic Planning Matrix (QSPM) method is used. The results of the QSPM :

**Table 2.** Quantitative Strategic Planning Matrix

KEY FACTOR	Weight	Strategic 2		Strategic 3	
		Formation of a Content Team		Increasing the 'Open House' Events.	
		AS	TAS	AS	TAS
<b>Strengths</b>					
1. Has a strong vision as an "Entrepreneurial Campus."	0.13	4	0.52	4	0.52
2. Offers a variety of student activities	0.14	4	0.55	4	0.55
3. Owns a Lembaga Sertifikasi Profesi (LSP) accredited by BNSP	0.13	4	0.52	3	0.39
4. Strategically located on National Road III.	0.13	-	-	-	-
5. Provides a regular B class program or "employee class."	0.13	4	0.52	2	0.26
6. Affordable tuition fees.	0.12	-	-	-	-
7. Flexible payment system.	0.13	-	-	-	-
<b>Weaknesses</b>					
1. Offers a limited number of study programs.	0.05	2	0.10	1	0.05
2. Does not have a dedicated team for digital promotion.	0.04	4	0.18	1	0.04
<b>Opportunities</b>					
1. Extensive networking	0.19	2	0.38	3	0.57
2. Parental preferences	0.16	2	0.32	3	0.48
3. Increasing use of social media	0.20	4	0.78	3	0.59
<b>Threats</b>					
1. UNEJ as the largest public university in the Tapal Kuda region	0.14	3	0.43	2	0.29
2. Study Program Outside the Main Campus in Lumajang	0.14	3	0.41	4	0.55
3. Declining interest trend in the Accounting study program	0.17	-	-	-	-
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>4.71</b>		<b>4.28</b>

Source: processed data

Through QSPM analysis, the most prioritized recommended strategy is to establish a dedicated and professional digital content team, as social media has proven to be the main source of information for new student admissions. Other relevant strategies include strengthening alumni and parent networks, organizing open house campus events, and transforming the institution into a university to expand study program options.

## 4. Conclusion

This study concludes that the right marketing strategy plays a crucial role in increasing the number of new students at the ITB Widya Gama Lumajang. SWOT and QSPM analyses indicate that the campus's main strengths lie in its entrepreneurial vision, adequate facilities, strategic location, and flexible payment system. However, weaknesses such as limited program variety and the absence of a digital promotion team have resulted in campus information not being effectively conveyed to prospective students. The recommended priority strategies are the establishment of a digital marketing team, strengthening alumni and parent networks, and interactive promotional activities such as open house events. In the long term, transforming the institution from an institute into a university is also a strategic step to enhance competitiveness.

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