

Research Article

The Influence of Accreditation, Promotion, and Brand Image on Enrollment Interest, Moderated by Cost, at Universities in Serang City

Iman Hickmatullah ^{1*}, Dhany Isnaeni Dharmawan ²

¹ Master of Management Study Program, Universitas Serang Raya, Indonesia, email: imanhickmatullah@gmail.com

² Master of Management Study Program, Universitas Serang Raya, Indonesia, email: dhanyisnaeni@gmail.com

Address: Jl. Raya Cilegon Drangong Serang - Banten No.Km. 5, Taman, Drangong, Kec. Taktakan, Kota Serang, Banten 42162

*Correspondensi Author: Iman Hickmatullah

Abstract. This study aims to analyze the influence of students' perceptions of Accreditation (X1), Promotion (X2), and Brand Image (X3) on their Interest (Y) in registering, with Cost (Z) serving as a moderating variable. Data were collected from 399 respondents. The validity test results indicate that all research instruments are valid. Meanwhile, the reliability test results show that all variables have Cronbach's Alpha values ranging from "Good" to "Excellent," confirming their reliability. The study's findings reveal that Promotion and Cost are dominant factors with a positive and significant influence on interest in registering. Additionally, Accreditation also has a positive and significant effect on interest. In contrast, the Brand Image variable does not have a significant partial influence on interest. However, when considered simultaneously, Accreditation, Promotion, and Brand Image collectively have a significant impact on interest. The moderation test results demonstrate that Cost significantly moderates the relationship between Brand Image and Interest, indicating that the effect of Brand Image on interest is either strengthened or weakened by cost considerations. In conclusion, to attract prospective students, private universities should prioritize effective promotional strategies and manage perceptions of competitive costs, including the availability of scholarships. While brand image remains important, focusing on tangible benefits reinforced by cost factors will have a greater impact on prospective students' decisions.

Keywords: Accreditation; Brand Image; Cost; Promotion; Student Interest.

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1. Introduction

Education is a crucial foundation for enhancing both the quality and potential of each individual. From an early age, education plays a vital role in shaping a person's personality, mentality, character, and knowledge. In the midst of rapid scientific and technological advancements, society must adapt and evolve to keep pace with the times. Higher education, in particular, is the level of education most closely linked to the world of work and business. (Yuliana & Pravitasari, 2023). This is where the importance of having a strong educational foundation, which will be a valuable asset in facing future challenges. Based on the gross enrollment rate of higher education in 2023, only 39 percent of the total population of young people aged 19-23 years continued their studies at public or private universities. This means that the majority of young people do not attend college because of work or **other activities** (Napitupulu, 2023). Various universities are now striving to continuously improve their quality, with the aim of attracting the attention of prospective students. They do this through various efforts, such as improving accreditation, developing attractive promotional strategies, and providing the best services to create an optimal learning experience. In facing competition and maintaining the existence of universities, it is necessary to have a good

marketing strategy to attract the interest of new students. There are several important factors that significantly influence the interest of new students, including good promotion and university accreditation. (Bakar et al., 2022) Other factors such as the location of the university and affordable tuition fees have been proven to have a real role in raising the intention to choose a private university in Surabaya (Masnawati & Darmawan, 2023). Studies conducted by (Rumangun & Welerubun, 2022) show that accreditation has a significant positive influence on prospective students' decisions in choosing a university. A study conducted by (Ahmed et al., 2024) shows that promotions have a positive and significant influence on interest in studying. A study conducted by (Haryani et al., 2023) shows that brand image has a positive and significant influence on interest in studying at Mahkota Tricom Unggul University, Medan. According to research conducted by, (Masnawati & Darmawan, 2023) tuition fees have a significant influence on prospective students' decisions in choosing a university.

The research questions underlying this study are as follows: How do respondents' perceptions of university accreditation (X1) affect interest? How do respondents' perceptions of university promotion (X2) affect interest? How do respondents' perceptions of university brand image (X3) affect interest? How do respondents' perceptions of university fees (Z) affect interest in registering? How do respondents' perceptions of interest (Y) in registering new students at universities? How do accreditation (X1), promotion (X2), and brand image (X3) affect interest (Y) moderated by fees (Z).

By considering accreditation, promotion, and brand image, as well as tuition fees as moderating factors, this study aims to provide a deeper understanding of how these elements interact and influence enrollment interest at universities in Serang City. The findings are expected to assist university administrators in formulating effective strategies to increase prospective student enrollment.

2. Literature Review

This section discusses theories and concepts relevant to the research topic, along with previous research findings that provide insight into the influence of student perceptions of Accreditation (X1), Promotion (X2), and Brand Image (X3) on Interest (Y) in registering, with Cost (Z) as a moderating variable.

Marketing Management

Marketing management is a series of processes of analysis, planning, implementation, monitoring and control of marketing activities, the goal of which is to achieve company targets efficiently and effectively (Amrudin et al., 2022). There are 5 (five) steps in the marketing process according (Kotler & Armstrong, 2018) to the following: Understanding customer needs, Designing a value-focused marketing strategy, Building an integrated marketing program, Building profitable relationships, and capturing value from customers. Marketers need to understand the needs and desires of customers and the markets in which they operate, there are five core concepts of customers and markets according to (Kotler & Armstrong, 2018) namely Needs, Wants and Demands, Market Offerings (Products, Services and Experiences), Value and Satisfaction, Exchange and Relationships, and Markets.

Interest

Interest is the result of a person's thoughts after understanding the specifications of a product or service, and having the desire to try and be able to fulfill a need, in this case a student (Rumangun & Welerubun, 2022). This interest is important because it can be a driving force to learn more deeply, hone skills, and explore one's potential. In other words, interest is not just a feeling of liking, but also the first step towards a more meaningful and satisfying experience in their educational journey. As quoted by previous researchers, according to (Umami et al., 2023) interest is the attitude or behavior of consumers towards a product where consumers have a desire to buy a product based on experience, trust and product quality. Interest in choosing a college is the behavior of prospective new students who want and determine their own choice based on various existing alternatives and the information they receive (Masnawati & Darmawan, 2023). According to (Saputro & Maisara, 2022) Interest is the tendency to do or choose something that comes from facts and interpretations of what is seen, heard and felt so that a sensation of joy arises and not pleasure as a statement of good deeds in general will be completed consistently intentionally or unintentionally. Meanwhile,

according to (Aulia & Barkah, 2024), buying interest includes a sense of interest and is the initial stage in the purchasing process after consumers obtain the necessary information about the desired product.

Accreditation

Accreditation is a form of assessment (evaluation) of the quality and suitability of a higher education institution or study program carried out by an independent organization or body outside the higher education institution. (Samani, 2023). Meanwhile, according to the Regulation of the Minister of Research, Technology and Higher Education No. 32 of 2016 concerning Accreditation of Study Programs and Higher Education, Article 1, paragraphs 1 and 2 in the quote (Yayuk Zulaikah et al., 2024), states that accreditation is an evaluation process that aims to assess the feasibility of Study Programs and Higher Education. This shows that the university or study program has met the standards set by the National Accreditation Board for Higher Education (BAN-PT). In other words, accreditation ensures that the quality of education and graduates produced meet applicable expectations and standards. According to (BAN-PT, 2019), accreditation has the following goals and benefits: Providing assurance that accredited campuses or study programs have met quality standards, maintaining the quality of education, and accreditation results are also taken into consideration in providing assistance, funding allocation and recognition from other agencies. An integrated and sustainable quality assurance system aims to ensure an increase in the quality of education, with the existence of quality assurance, education will continue to develop towards better quality (Aphar et al., 2024).

Promotion

Promotion is a communication strategy in the marketing field, where marketing communication involves a series of activities to convey information, influence, attract attention, and remind prospective students about the University or Higher Education Institution (Ahmed et al., 2024). The main goal of promotional activities is to get them to accept, register, and be interested in the study program being offered (Kamanda, 2022). Promotional activities in higher education not only function as a means of communication between the institution and prospective new students, but also have a much deeper role. According to (Safitri and Patrikha, 2020) in the quote (Angeline et al., 2023), Promotion is one strategy that is quite effective as a stimulus for companies that want to stimulate consumer purchasing decisions. Promotion is important for a company as the spearhead of target market acceptance of a product. (Astamoen & Hermawan, 2023). This promotion becomes a bridge that connects the hopes and dreams of students with the various options available. In other words, higher education institutions need to develop the ability to communicate effectively with prospective students and the community through promotions, so that the message conveyed can be well received and attract their attention (Asri & Susanto, 2023). There are 4 forms of promotional activities that can be used to attract the attention of prospective students, including Advertising, Personal Selling, Personal Publicity and Sales Promotion (Wardi et al., 2022). So that higher education institutions need to develop the ability to communicate effectively with prospective students and the community through promotions, so that the message conveyed can be well received and attract their attention (Asri & Susanto, 2023).

Brand Image

Brand image is a person's beliefs, ideas and impressions of something, so *brand image* is the impression, feeling or perception that the public has about a company, an object, person or institution (Sari et al., 2024). *Brands* also have several benefits for consumers who own a brand, of course, they can provide information about the quality of goods and services (Syaiullah, 2021) in the quote (Haryani et al., 2023). Meanwhile, according to (Komariah, 2023) *Brand image* is very determining in influencing purchasing decisions. Thus, *brand image* is one of the important factors that influence prospective students' interest in choosing a college. When prospective students see a positive image of a college, they are more likely to feel interested and confident in joining. This opinion is supported by one of the previous researchers who stated (Aditi et al., 2023) that *the brand image* built by business actors with product excellence and product popularity has a positive impact on consumers to be interested in purchasing the product again. Therefore, *Brand Image* plays an important role not only as the identity of a product, service or company identity but also functions as a benchmark for

the company's strategic program as a whole (Anirih et al., 2024). *Brand image* is related to consumer attitudes in the form of beliefs and preferences towards a brand (Ningsih & Pradanawati, 2021).

Cost

According to the Big Indonesian Dictionary, costs can be understood as the money we spend to do or establish something, such as shopping costs and other expenses. Meanwhile, financing refers to everything related to these costs. Cost is defined as the economic sacrifice made to acquire goods or services. (Amri & Yahya, 2021). According to (Togatorop, 2017) in a quote, (Saputro & Maisara, 2022) it states that costs are resources obtained by the government, the community, or parents of students to schools, either in the form of goods or money collected and determined to achieve educational goals. Education costs are all forms of expenses related to the implementation of education, whether in the form of manpower, funds, or goods. (Ervina & Husda, 2023), while according to (Aprillita, 2023) that tuition fees are the costs incurred by students during the process of studying at a university per year including tuition fees and living expenses during the study period. Price is one of the key factors in choosing a person's decision. When someone hears about a relatively expensive price, they may hesitate and consider other options and vice versa. So that prices can give rise to different perceptions for consumers which have been reviewed by previous researchers (Putra et al., 2022), Price perception causes how consumers perceive the highest, lowest and reasonable prices.

3. Methodology

This research uses a quantitative approach with data collected through questionnaires. Quantitative research methods are defined as systematic investigations of phenomena by collecting measurable data using statistical, mathematical, or computational techniques (Abdullah et al., 2022). Researchers will utilize quantitative data obtained from analyzing the subjects' answer scores on the existing scale. Therefore, this study can be categorized as quantitative descriptive research, namely providing an overview of the influence of accreditation, promotion, and *brand image* on enrollment interest, moderated by cost, using an ordinal/Likert scale. An ordinal/Likert scale is a scale based on ranking (Razali et al., 2023). This scale reflects how much respondents agree with the statements proposed by the researcher.

Population and Sample

The population in this study used a homogeneous population, namely 12th-grade high school/vocational high school students. To ensure the population distribution is not too wide, the researcher limited the 12th-grade high school/vocational high school students to be the population in this study, namely high schools/vocational high schools located around Serang Raya. In determining the sample size according to (Machali, 2021), To determine the size of the research sample, you can use the Taro Yamane or Slovin Formula, the Krecjie Table, and the Isaac and Michael Table. However, researchers use the Taro Yamane or Slovin Formula sample by taking samples with a margin error value of 5%. The sample size to be studied is 152,478 people after being calculated using the Taro Yamane or Slovin formula to represent other respondents, 399 respondents were obtained. The following is the calculation using the Taro Yamane or Slovin Formula:

$$n = \frac{N}{N.d^2 + 1} = \frac{152,478}{152,478 \times 0.05^2 + 1} = \frac{152,478}{(152478) \times (0.0025) + 1}$$

$$= \frac{152478}{382} = 398,9534 = 399$$

Sampling Techniques

In this study, the researcher used a proportional cluster random sampling technique by collecting primary data through questionnaires created using Google Forms or questionnaires

distributed directly to respondents. The determination of the sample proportion for each region uses the following formula:

$$\text{this} = \frac{N_i \cdot n}{N}$$

Information:

ni: Number of samples per stratum

Ni: Total population of each stratum

N: Population Size

n: Number of samples

After calculating using the formula above, the distribution of sample proportions can be obtained with the following details: Serang Regency as many as 115, Serang Regency as many as 152, Cilegon City as many as 49, and Serang City as many as 83, so that the total is 399.

Data Analysis Methods

Data analysis was performed using multiple linear regression to assess the relationship between the independent variables, the dependent variable, and the moderating variables. Prior to the regression analysis, a series of classical assumption tests were conducted to ensure model validity. These tests included: (a) Validity Test: For measurements that show the reliability or validity of a measuring instrument. (b) Reliability Test: A research instrument has a high level or value of reliability if the test results from the instrument have consistent results or are consistent with what is being measured. (c) Normality test: To check whether the data follows a normal distribution. (d) Homogeneity Test: to find out whether the variance of two or more groups is the same (homogeneous) (e) Multicollinearity test: To test the correlation between independent variables. (f) Heteroscedasticity test: To verify whether the residual variance is constant across all levels of the independent variable.

After the classical assumption test, the hypothesis is tested using the Moderated Regression Analysis (MRA) test to determine whether the relationship between the independent (X) and dependent (Y) variables is influenced or moderated by a third variable, namely the moderator variable (Z). In addition, the coefficient of determination (R^2) is calculated to measure the proportion of the variable of interest explained by the independent variable. In processing data tabulation, researchers used SPSS version 27.

4. Results And Discussion

Results

In this chapter, the researcher will analyze the data that has been obtained. Data was collected to measure the variables of Accreditation (X1), Promotion (X2), Brand Image (X3), Cost (Z), and Interest (Y). The following is an explanation of each test used.

Descriptive Analysis

To provide an overview of the data used in this study, descriptive statistical analysis was performed. Through this analysis, we can see a summary of each variable, such as the mean, standard deviation, and maximum and minimum values. These descriptive statistics help us understand the distribution of data across the dependent and independent variables. The following presents the results of the descriptive statistical analysis in this study.

Table 1. Description of Research Variables.

No	Variables	Number of Respondents	Average Score
1	Credit (X1)	399	3.90
2	Promotions (X2)	399	3.73
3	Brand Image (X3)	399	3.68
4	Biaya (Z)	399	3.74
5	Minat (Y)	399	4.09

Source: Data Processing Results, 2025

Based on the results of descriptive statistics, the interest variable (Y) obtained the highest average score (4.09), indicating a fairly strong respondent interest. Followed by accreditation (X1) with a score of 3.90, as well as costs (Z) and promotions (X2) which were in the range of 3.74 and 3.73, respectively. Brand image (X3) had the lowest average (3.68), but was still in the positive category. In general, all variables showed a tendency for good perception from respondents.

Based on the results of distributing questionnaires from 399 respondents in various districts/cities in the Serang Raya Region, it shows that there is quite diverse participation from both male and female respondents. Of the total respondents, 127 are male and 272 are female, with the following details:

Table 2. Respondent Data Viewed from Gender.

No	Regency/City	Man	Woman	Amount
1	Pandeglang Regency	29	86	115
2	Serang Regency	35	117	152
3	Cilegon City	32	17	49
4	Serang City	31	52	83
Etc.	Total	127	272	399

Source: Data Processing Results, 2025

Validity and Reliability Test

The validity test was conducted by comparing the calculated r value with the table r ($df = 397$, $\alpha = 0.05$), where the table r value was 0.098. All statement items for each variable (Accreditation, Promotion, Brand Image, Interest, and Cost) had a calculated r value greater than the table r and a 2-tailed Sig. value smaller than 0.05, so all were declared valid.

The reliability test showed the following Cronbach's Alpha values: Accreditation (0.887), Promotion (0.858), Brand Image (0.911), Interest (0.822), and Cost (0.853). All values were in the "Good" to "Excellent" category, so all variables were declared reliable. The following is a table presented by the researcher:

Table 3. Summary of Reliability Test Results for Each Variable.

Variables	Reliability Statistics	
	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
AK	0.887	9
PI	0.858	10
BI	0.911	10
MT	0.822	4
BA	0.853	9

Source: Data Processing Results, 2025

Classical Assumption Test

Normality Test: The results of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test show an Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) value of 0.186, which is greater than 0.05, indicating that the data is normally distributed.

Table 4. Results of Normality Test Using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov Method.

One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test		
		Unstandardized Residual
N		399
Normal Parameters ^{a,b}	Mean	.0000000
	Standard Deviation	1.86839452
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	.038
	Positive	.038
	Negative	-.030
Test Statistic		.038
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) ^c		.186
Monte Carlo Sig. (2-tailed) ^d	Sig.	.188

99% Confidence	Lower Bound	.178
Interval	Upper Bound	.198

a. Test distribution is Normal.

b. Calculated from data.

c. Lilliefors Significance Correction.

d. Lilliefors' method based on 10000 Monte Carlo samples with starting seed 92208573.

Homogeneity Test: Levene's test shows a Sig. value of 0.689, which is greater than 0.05, indicating that the data variance is homogeneous.

Table 5. Results of Homogeneity Test.

Tests of Homogeneity of Variances					
		Levene Statistics	df1	df2	Sig.
MT	Based on Mean	.160	1	397	.689
	Based on Median	.178	1	397	.673
	Based on Median and with adjusted df	.178	1	394,240	.673
	Based on trimmed mean	.170	1	397	.680

Heteroscedasticity Test: This test shows that no variable has a Sig. value of less than 0.05, which indicates that there is no heteroscedasticity problem in the model.

Table 6. Heteroscedasticity Test Results.

Coefficients ^a					
		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	
Model		B	Std. Error	Beta	t
1	(Constant)	7,649	1,725		4,434
	AK	-.022	.016	-.100	-1.367
	PI	.060	.645	.008	.093
	BI	-.490	.653	-.066	-.751
	BA	-1.099	.582	-.149	-1.888

a. Dependent Variabel: ABS_RES

Multicollinearity Test: The tolerance value for all variables is greater than 0.10, and the VIF (Variance Inflation Factor) value is less than 10, indicating the absence of multicollinearity problems.

Table 7. Multicollinearity Test Results.

Coefficients ^a							
		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		Collinearity Statistics	
Model		B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.	Tolerance VIF
1	(Constant)	-25.256	2,988		-8,453	<.001	
	AK	.065	.027	.129	2.378	.018	.438
	PI	5.809	1.116	.338	5.203	<.001	.304
	BI	-2.002	1.131	-.115	-1.769	.078	.302
	BA	7.296	1.008	.422	7.235	.000	.377

a. Dependent Variabel: MT

Moderated Regression Analysis (MRA) Stage 1:

The results of the T-test can be seen in the table below:

Table 8. Partial Test Results (T-Test).

Coefficients ^a					
		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	
Model		B	Std. Error	Beta	T
1	(Constant)	-25.256	2,988		-8,453
	AK	.065	.027	.129	2,378

PI	5,809	1,116	.338	5,203	<.001
BI	-2,002	1,131	-.115	-1,769	.078
BA	7,296	1,008	.422	7,235	<.001

a. Dependent Variable: MT

Accreditation (AK) and Promotion (PI) have a positive and significant effect on Interest (MT), with significance values of 0.018 and <0.001, respectively. Brand Image (BI) does not have a significant effect on Interest (MT), with a significance value of 0.078. Cost (BA) has a positive and significant effect on Interest (MT), with a significance value of <0.001.

The results of the F test can be seen in the table below:

Table 9. Simultaneous Test Results (F Test).

ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1362,653	4	340,663	96,605	<.001 ^b
	Residual	1389,377	394	3,526		
	Total	2752.030	398			

a. Dependent Variable: MT

b. Predictors: (Constant), BA, AK, PI, BI

The table above shows the calculated f value of 96.605 with a sig. value of <.001, which is smaller than 0.05. It can be concluded that the variables of accreditation, promotion, and brand image together have a significant influence on interest.

The results of the Determination Coefficient Test can be seen in the table below:

Table 10. Results of the Determination Coefficient Test.

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Standard Error of the Estimate
1	.704 ^a	.495	.490	1,878

a. Predictors: (Constant), BA, AK, PI, BI

Based on the table above, the R Square value is 0.495, meaning that 49.5% of the variation in the dependent variable can be explained by variations in the independent variable. The remaining 50.5% is explained by factors outside the research model. The adjusted R Square value of 0.490 indicates that if this model were applied to a different population, its explanatory power would be 49.0%.

Moderated Regression Analysis (MRA) Stage 2:

The t-test can be seen in the table below:

Table 11. T-Test Results.

Coefficients ^a					
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	
		B	Std. Error	Beta	T
1	(Constant)	-122,207	61,221		-1.996
	AK	-.035	.703	-.069	-.049
	PI	-16,821	25,710	-.977	-.654
	BI	49,249	21,578	2.835	2.282
	BA	34,503	17,320	1.994	1.992
	AK*BA	.027	.201	.226	.137
	PI*BA	6,546	7,365	2,460	.889
	BI*BA	-14,565	6,169	-5,578	-2,361

a. Dependent Variable: MT

Shows that the interaction of AK*BA and PI*BA does not have a significant effect. However, the interaction of BI*BA has a significant effect with a Sig. value of 0.019, indicating that Cost moderates the relationship between Brand Image and Interest.

The F test can be seen in the table below:

Table 12. F Test Results.

ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1396,309	7	199,473	57,529	<.001 ^b
	Residual	1355,721	391	3,467		
	Total	2752.030	398			

a. Dependent Variable: MT

b. Predictors: (Constant), BI*BA, AK, PI, BA, BI, AK*BA, PI*BA

From the table above, the results are that the calculated f value is 57.529 with a sig. value of <.001 which is smaller than 0.05 and seen from the f table which is 2.39, it can be concluded that the calculated f value of 57.529 is greater than the f table. This indicates that the regression model which includes all independent variables, moderating variables and interaction variables simultaneously has a significant effect on the dependent variable.

The results of the Determination Coefficient Test can be seen in the table below.

Table 13. Results of the Determination Coefficient Test.

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Standard Error of the Estimate
1	.712 ^a	.507	.499	1,862

a. Predictors: (Constant), BI*BA, AK, PI, BA, BI, AK*BA, PI*BA

The Adjusted R Square value of Stage 2 increased to 0.499, indicating that the addition of interactions between variables increased the model's ability to explain variation in Interest.

Discussion

Respondents' perception of higher education accreditation is classified as very good with an average value of 3.90 on a scale of 5, respondents generally agree that accreditation is an important factor that reflects the quality of education, management quality and relevance of graduates and is supported by a significant value of 0.018 with a beta coefficient value of 0.129. Respondents' perceptions of promotions are of good value given by respondents. Where respondents feel that promotions carried out by universities are effective in conveying information and influencing their decisions and promotions are proven to have a very significant and strong positive influence on prospective students' interest. This is supported by a very small significance value <0.001 and a high positive beta coefficient of 0.338. Compared to other variables, promotions are one of the dominant factors in influencing registration decisions. Respondents' perceptions of the university's brand image influence registration interests. From the results of the regression analysis, it shows that brand image does not have a significant influence on registration interests with a significance value of 0.078 above 0.05, the research hypothesis stating a positive influence is rejected. Although respondents' perceptions of brand image are classified as good with an average value of 3.68, the influence is not statistically strong enough to significantly influence registration decisions. Respondents' perceptions of costs are proven to have a positive and significant influence on interest with a significance value (Sig.) <0.001 and a positive beta coefficient of 0.422 indicating that costs have the most dominant influence on prospective students' interest compared to other variables. This underscores the importance of perceptions of affordable costs, scholarship facilitation, and value for money. Respondents' perceptions of their own interest in enrolling in college show a very positive trend. The average score for the interest variable is 4.09, indicating that respondents have a strong tendency and intention to continue their studies at college (Aboramadan et al., 2021; Agrawal & Dhamija, 2024; Ajani, 2024; Rains, 2024).

The influence of accreditation, promotion, and brand image on interest is moderated by costs. The results of the regression analysis show that after the interaction variable, namely costs as a moderating variable, is entered, shows a Sig. value for the accreditation variable. 0.891 is greater than 0.05. This indicates that the cost variable does not moderate the relationship between accreditation and interest. This means that costs do not strengthen or

weaken the influence of accreditation on interest. This means that the interest in registering that is influenced by accreditation will remain the same, both in high and low cost conditions. The promotion variable has a sig. value of 0.375, which is greater than 0.05, indicating that the cost variable does not moderate the relationship between the promotion variable and interest. This means that costs do not play a role in strengthening or weakening the influence of promotion on interest. The relationship between promotion and interest is independent of cost. The brand image variable has a significant value of 0.019, which is less than 0.05. This indicates that the cost variable moderates the relationship between brand image and interest. This suggests that the influence of brand image on interest in enrolling is not constant but is influenced by perceptions of cost. This means that the level of cost perceived by prospective students can strengthen or weaken the influence of brand image on interest in enrolling (Benamen et al., 2024; Hao et al., 2025; Kananen, 2024; Rehman & Elahi, 2024; Zulfikar, 2024).

5. Conclusion

Based on the data analysis, it can be concluded that accreditation, promotion, and fees have a positive and significant influence on prospective student interest. However, brand image does not have a direct significant effect. The role of fees as a moderating variable is evident in its relationship with brand image, where the interaction between the two significantly influences interest. This research provides important insights for higher education management in formulating effective marketing and communication strategies.

Suggestion

Universities must continue to strengthen and innovate their promotional strategies, particularly through digital and social media, which have proven highly effective. Promotional programs should highlight tangible advantages such as scholarship opportunities, leading study programs, and graduate career prospects. Given that cost is a significant factor, universities need to design competitive and transparent fee schemes. Scholarship availability and outreach must be increased to convince prospective students that cost is not a major barrier. University management must consider pricing strategies when building and cultivating their brand image, as perceived cost can directly impact the effectiveness of a brand image in attracting new students.

Limitations

This study used a sample of respondents limited to the Greater Serang area. Therefore, the findings and conclusions cannot be generalized to other regions in Indonesia, which may have different demographic, economic, or cultural characteristics.

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