

Developing an Integrated Digital Marketing Strategy to Increase Purchase Intention Based on Customer Preferences Toward Marketing Mix and Social Media Content: a Case Study of Graduates Online Upskilling Platform

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Abstrak. Increased activity in Indonesia's online learning market has forced companies to compete more fiercely for the attention of recent graduates and young workers. However, many emerging platforms still face challenges in building brand visibility, credibility, and conversion effectiveness, despite the extensive use of social media for information search and learning evaluation. This study aims to develop an integrated digital marketing strategy for Graduates by analyzing customer preferences toward Social Media Marketing Activities (SMMA) and relevant elements of the 7P service marketing mix, as well as how these factors influence purchase intention. A survey-based quantitative method was utilized, focusing on individuals between 18 and 30 years old to align with the primary demographic of Graduates. The findings reveal that social media content significantly influences purchase intention, particularly when it communicates credibility, perceived learning value, and user engagement. Instagram is identified as the most dominant platform for both social interaction and upskilling-related information search. Moreover, the combined influence of entertainment, interactivity, trendiness, and e-WOM explains 81.3% of the variance in purchase intention, emphasizing the strong role of content-driven strategies. Based on these results, this study proposes an integrated digital marketing framework comprising an SMMA-based content strategy and an implementation design using the RACE model. This research provides managerial implications for optimizing social media marketing investments and contributes academically by extending the application of SMMA to Indonesia's online upskilling sector.

Keywords: Online Upskilling, Purchase Intention, Social Media Marketing Activities Content, Service Marketing Mix, Digital Marketing Strategy.

INTRODUCTION

Workforce trends and necessary job competencies have undergone a major shift due to the quickening speed of technological integration across all sectors (Barzaeva & Ilyasov, 2022; Havelka, 2024; Mantulenko et al., 2020; Sarabdeen & Alofaysan, 2023; Tyagi, 2019). The World Economic Forum predicts that automation and AI will transform 44% of work skills within the next few years. Consequently, there is a much higher demand for training in digital literacy and problem-solving. Recent findings from PwC also show that digital-heavy roles are growing at over triple the rate of standard jobs, suggesting that continuous learning is now essential for long-term employability.

For emerging economies such as Indonesia, it is the younger generation and those currently in the workforce who experience the greatest changes brought about by international digital trends (Breza & Kaur, 2025; Muhyiddin et al., 2024; Pertiwi et al., 2025; Rhee et al., 2022; Yuliandari et al., 2024). According to official 2024 statistics from BPS, Indonesia's population is heavily concentrated in the productive age range of 15 to 59. This creates a vast group of people ready for professional development as they navigate the job market, particularly the younger segments like Generation Z and early-career millennials who represent the most dynamic workforce members. A study by Deloitte (2023) indicates that these groups favor functional, career-focused skills and rapid professional growth over conventional, lengthy academic programs. Such preferences clarify the increasing transition

toward digital learning formats that are brief, provide certifications, and focus specifically on employment outcomes.

Matching this transition in student behavior, the Indonesian edtech industry is expanding at a fast pace and facing more intense competition than before (Fitrianto, 2024; Jayadi et al., 2023; Sulisworo & Diningrat, 2025; Wang et al., 2023). Data from Tech in Asia (2021) shows that Indonesia's edtech industry has surpassed 200 active platforms, ranging from international names like Coursera to local competitors. Such a high number of choices has made brand differentiation and digital reach critical for survival, especially for smaller or newer brands. This competitive pressure is intensified by a fragmented market structure where different platforms target a wide variety of educational segments and user needs.

As reported by Trace Data Research (2024), the edtech industry serves a wide range of learners, from children in school to employees in large companies. A particularly fast-growing segment is the online upskilling market, which focuses on providing fresh graduates and early-career workers with the specific, short-term competencies required in today's labor market. Industry analysis from Research and Markets (2025) estimates that Indonesia's digital skilling and education sector was worth about USD 1.5 billion by 2025. This valuation follows half a decade of market tracking, which showed that the shift to digital platforms was significantly sped up by the pandemic. This growth is also supported by better connectivity and higher mobile phone usage across the country, which has allowed more people to participate in online training aimed at career development and technical expertise. This sector includes a variety of offerings such as digital certification programs, online classes, and virtual learning environments that cater to students, employees, and business organizations. Such a wide range of services highlights a general movement toward educational models that emphasize skills directly applicable to the professional world.

Prior studies have analyzed how digital advertising and customer preferences impact the decision to buy within many industries, such as education technology. Research conducted by Bilgin (2018) highlights that interactive and trendy social media content, along with electronic word-of-mouth, are essential for building a strong brand image and driving consumer interest in making a purchase. Similarly, Godey et al. (2016) found that luxury brands that effectively leverage social media content see improvements in brand equity and consumer behavior, suggesting that content-driven engagement is crucial across sectors. In the context of online education, studies by Ashley and Tuten (2015) highlight the importance of creative social media content in driving consumer engagement and brand loyalty. Their research emphasizes that branded social content that is entertaining, interactive, and relevant can significantly enhance user interaction and conversion rates. Additionally, the research of Cheung and Thadani (2012) showed that electronic word-of-mouth is a vital factor in developing consumer confidence and influencing choices, particularly for high-stakes services like education.

Studies centered specifically on the edtech market in Indonesia, such as those conducted by Harvina et al. (2022) and Divananda & Rubiyanti (2025), support the idea that social media outreach is a key factor in building consumer trust and driving buying decisions. Harvina et al. (2022) found that skincare brands using SMMA dimensions effectively increased purchase intention through improved brand image and trust. In a related study, Divananda & Rubiyanti (2025) pointed out that the level of consumer interaction with a

brand acts as a middle factor that connects social media marketing efforts to a person's intention to enroll in educational technology platforms.

However, despite these contributions, there remains a research gap regarding the integration of SMMA dimensions with the service marketing mix (7P) in the context of online upskilling platforms. Most prior studies focus on either social media or the marketing mix independently, without examining how these elements interact to shape customer preferences and purchase intention. Additionally, limited research has been conducted on how emerging platforms like Graduates can leverage content-driven strategies to compete in a saturated market.

This research fills an existing void by combining the social media marketing activities framework which includes interactivity, entertainment, electronic word-of-mouth, and trendiness with the 7P service marketing mix to create a thorough digital marketing approach for an online upskilling provider. Unlike previous studies that examine these constructs separately, this research explores their synergistic effects on purchase intention within Indonesia's dynamic edtech landscape. Furthermore, this study applies the RACE framework (Reach, Act, Convert, Engage) to translate empirical findings into an actionable, stage-based marketing strategy tailored to Graduates' specific challenges and opportunities.

In Indonesia, social media has become the primary tool for younger generations to find and evaluate brands. With over 143 million people active on platforms like X, Facebook, and Instagram, these digital spaces are now the most important channels for users seeking content and information related to their personal and professional development. Previous work shows that interactive and trustworthy social media content builds emotional involvement and encourages people to buy. Consequently, social media should be viewed as a strategic tool for generating engagement and trust rather than just a way to run advertisements.

In this highly competitive, content-heavy market, Graduates an online professional development platform established in 2024 by PT Kreasi Edulab Indonesia struggles with minimal brand recognition, low engagement levels, and poor conversion rates. Even though its parent company, Edulab, possesses extensive experience in educational services, Graduates must navigate a crowded digital learning sector where the reliability of content, perceived benefits, and effective communication are essential for influencing customer choices. The Graduates team expressed a need to better understand customer preferences toward the marketing mix and social media content, particularly regarding how these elements influence perceptions and purchase intention among young adult learners who rely heavily on digital platforms for career-related information.

Addressing these conditions, this study adopts the Social Media Marketing Activities (SMMAs) framework focusing on entertainment, interactivity, trendiness, and electronic word-of-mouth to examine how specific content characteristics influence purchase intention in the online upskilling context. The research integrates SMMA insights with the 7P service marketing mix and applies the RACE framework (Reach, Act, Convert, Engage) to translate findings into actionable digital marketing strategies. This study intends to analyze the market position of Graduates, identify the preferences of potential students, and develop an integrated marketing strategy. The objective is to increase brand awareness and purchase intent specifically for the demographic of young, digitally active professionals in Indonesia.

The research aims to offer both conceptual and applied value. From a theoretical

perspective, it adds to existing knowledge by merging social media marketing activities with the 7P service marketing mix within the online training sector. This provides a comprehensive model for understanding the combined impact of digital content and marketing variables on a consumer's decision to buy. The application of the RACE model also extends the understanding of customer journey mapping in digital education markets. Practically, the findings offer actionable insights for Graduates and similar platforms to design more effective, content-driven marketing strategies that align with customer preferences, enhance engagement, and improve conversion rates. For industry practitioners, the study provides an evidence-based approach to optimize social media investments and strengthen competitive positioning in Indonesia's growing edtech sector. Additionally, the research supports policymakers and educators in recognizing the role of digital marketing in expanding access to relevant, career-oriented learning opportunities.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The research uses a mix of qualitative and quantitative methods, including descriptive and exploratory analysis. This dual approach provides a well-rounded understanding of the strategic difficulties and the tendencies of the target audience. The quantitative component utilizes structured online questionnaires distributed via Google Forms to collect data from a purposively sampled population of 200 respondents who have experience or interest in online upskilling platforms in Indonesia, ensuring relevance through screening questions. The qualitative aspect involves semi-structured interviews with internal management and document analysis to gain contextual insights into Graduates' operational and strategic context. To build a strong digital marketing strategy, this study merges two analytical streams. Quantitative figures undergo SPSS processing for cross-tabulation and regression analysis to determine the impact of social media activities on consumer intentions. At the same time, qualitative factors are organized into a SWOT framework. By incorporating secondary information from various professional and academic sources, the study ensures the findings are verified and comprehensive.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Customer Preferences Toward Marketing Mix 7P in Choosing Online Upskilling Platform

The analysis of consumer preferences within the 7P marketing mix utilizes descriptive statistics, such as mean, standard deviation, and frequency distribution, to identify patterns across various demographic groups. Because each indicator is examined as a standalone attribute rather than as part of a larger latent construct, reliability and validity testing is not applied. Instead, the study emphasizes exploratory and descriptive interpretation to provide practical managerial insights.

a. Product

Based on the data in Figure 1, respondents' preferences in choosing an online upskilling platform show that instructor credibility is the main consideration for 44.0% of respondents (110 people). The next factor that is considered crucial is the practicality of the material, such as case studies, which was chosen by 37.6% of respondents, as well as the relevance of the

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material to their career at 34.8%. In addition, the depth of the material and platform accessibility each received 31.2% of the votes. Other supporting factors include price (28.0%), curriculum structure (26.0%), and time flexibility (24.4%). On the other hand, certificate ownership and platform interface design are the factors with the lowest urgency, at less than 23%.

Based on the 7P product perspective, respondent data confirms that attributes related to learning content and instructor qualifications are the top priorities for users when choosing online skills improvement services.

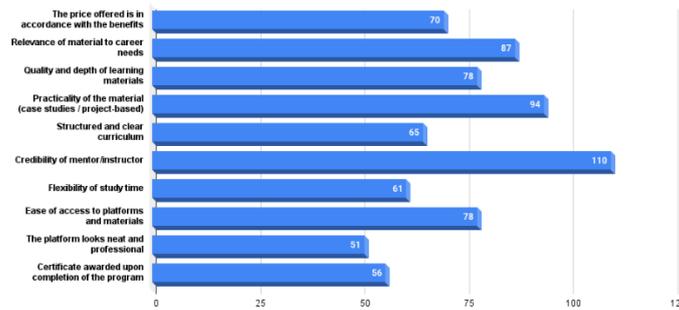


Figure 1. Key Product Factors Considered When Choosing an Online Upskilling Platform
Source: Author’s Analysis, 2025

b. Price

According to the crosstabulation in Figure 2, most participants earn between IDR 5,000,000 and 15,000,000 (48.4%) or less than IDR 5,000,000 (42.4%). Regarding program costs, the largest share of respondents (40.8%) prefers a price point of IDR 100,001–150,000, while 30.0% favor the IDR 150,001–200,000 range.

For those earning less than IDR 5,000,000, the most frequent choice was the IDR 100,001–150,000 price bracket at 16.8%. This same range was also the top pick for the IDR 5,000,000–15,000,000 income group at 20.0%, with the IDR 150,001–200,000 tier following at 17.2%. In contrast, participants with incomes exceeding IDR 15,000,000 split their preferences evenly at 4.0% each between the 100,001–150,000 and 150,001–200,000 categories.

What is your monthly income? * Based on the description of the E-learning & Mini Classes above, what price range do you consider most appropriate for participating in one learning program? Crosstabulation

		Based on the description of the E-learning & Mini Classes above, what price range do you consider most appropriate for participating in one learning program?					Total	
		Less than Rp 50,000	Rp 50.000 - Rp 100.000	Rp 100.001 - Rp 150.000	Rp 150.001 - Rp 200.000	More than Rp 200,000		
What is your monthly income?	< Rp5.000.000	Count	10	29	42	22	3	106
		% of Total	4,0%	11,6%	16,8%	8,8%	1,2%	42,4%
	Rp5.000.000 - Rp15.000.000	Count	2	21	50	43	5	121
		% of Total	0,8%	8,4%	20,0%	17,2%	2,0%	48,4%
	> Rp15.000.000	Count	0	1	10	10	2	23
		% of Total	0,0%	0,4%	4,0%	4,0%	0,8%	9,2%
Total		Count	12	51	102	75	10	250
		% of Total	4,8%	20,4%	40,8%	30,0%	4,0%	100,0%

Figure 2. Price Range Preferences by Monthly Income Level
Source: Author’s Analysis, 2025

According to the survey results, the most popular payment method for online upskilling is purchasing course bundles at a discount, which was favored by 77 participants or 31.0%. The next most common preference is paying for individual courses one at a time, chosen by 68 respondents representing 27.4% of the group.

Alternative pricing models saw a drop in interest, with promotional pricing and monthly memberships receiving nearly equal support at 17.7% (44 respondents) and 17.3% (43 respondents), respectively. Financing options, such as pay-later or installment schemes, sat at the bottom of the list with a 6.5% preference rate from 16 participants.

These results suggest that users lean toward pricing models that provide obvious value and financial efficiency, favoring bundled deals or single payments over recurring subscriptions or delayed billing. Viewed through the Price element of the 7P marketing mix, this indicates that clear and simple cost structures are essential for making programs feel affordable and reducing consumer hesitation during the selection process.

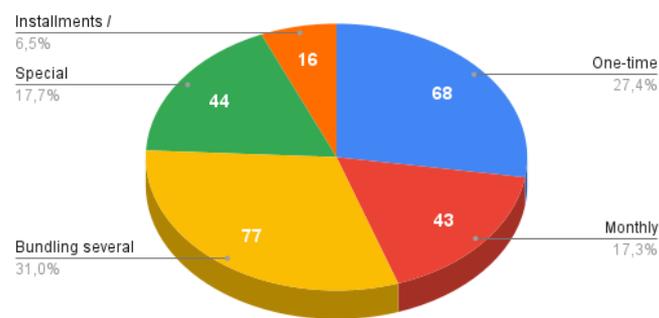


Figure 3. Preferred Pricing Schemes for Online Upskilling Platforms

Source: Author's Analysis, 2025

c. Place

According to Figure 4, the majority of participants prefer using a desktop or laptop to access upskilling services via a website, with 96 individuals (38.4%) selecting this method. A combined approach, where both websites and mobile apps are viewed as equally vital, followed with 81 respondents (32.4%). Meanwhile, 73 people (29.2%) indicated a preference for using mobile applications exclusively.

The results show that while there is a minor lean toward web-based platforms, users highly value having multiple ways to access content. Instead of one primary medium, the data points to the necessity of offering both website and mobile app options to suit different environments, such as focused study on a computer or quick access via a phone. From a Place (7P) standpoint, this suggests that platforms like Graduates must maintain uniform features and quality across all digital touchpoints to successfully engage their audience.

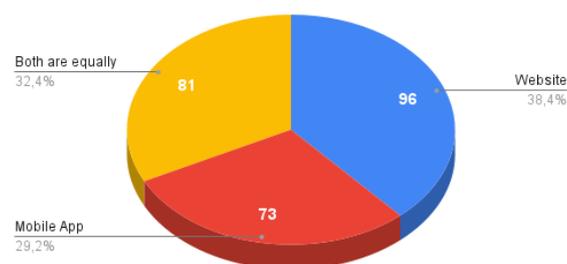


Figure 4. Preferred Media for Accessing Online Upskilling Services

Source: Author’s Analysis, 2025

d. Process

According to Figure 5, the most important process factor for users is the ability to access educational content immediately after completing a transaction, which was favored by 73 individuals (29.2%). This was closely followed by the desire for a logical and sequential learning curriculum, chosen by 69 respondents (27.6%). Additionally, 53 participants (21.2%) highlighted the importance of having a simple and functional payment system.

Compared to immediate access and structured flows, a fast sign-up process (selected by 35 people or 14.0%) and scheduled mentorship (selected by 20 people or 8.0%) were considered less significant. This indicates a strong preference for a learning experience defined by clarity and lack of delay. In terms of the Process (7P) framework, these findings suggest that minimizing technical or administrative hurdles during the checkout and onboarding phases is crucial for user satisfaction, as is maintaining a highly navigable course structure.

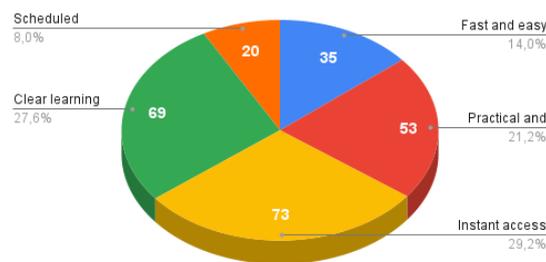


Figure 5. Key Service Process Preferences in Online Upskilling Platforms

Source: Author’s Analysis, 2025

e. People and Physical Evidence

According to the crosstabulation data in Figure 6, which examines the relationship between influential groups and trust-building evidence, the most significant factor in boosting respondent confidence is a platform's social media activity. This specific form of evidence was responsible for 54.8% of the total responses, indicating that a strong digital presence is a primary driver of credibility.

Regarding the most influential groups, industry mentors and instructors hold the most weight at 26.4%, with former students following closely at 24.8% and the support staff at 24.4%. These results show that a platform's credibility is largely determined by people who have professional expertise, personal experience with the courses, or regular contact with the student body.

To be more precise, individuals who most trust industry mentors often look to a platform's social media presence (12.0%) and reviews from former students (6.4%) to confirm its credibility. In a similar way, those who are influenced by alumni also tend to base their confidence on active and visible social media engagement, which accounts for 15.2% of the responses in that category.

From a 7P perspective, this data illustrates that trust is shaped by both human and digital factors. Experts and previous participants offer the expertise and validation needed to

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build confidence, whereas visible activities on social media act as a form of physical evidence that supports a platform's claims. When these elements are used in tandem, they play a critical role in shaping how users view the credibility of online educational programs.

Which individual, group, or party most influences your trust in the quality and credibility of an online upskilling platform? * What evidence most increases your confidence in online upskilling platforms? Crosstabulation

		What evidence most increases your confidence in online upskilling platforms?							Total
		Online upskilling platform activities on social media	Alumni testimonials	Portfolio of participants' work	Collaboration with well-known companies/brands	Industry recognized certificate	Professional website/appearance		
Which individual, group, or party most influences your trust in the quality and credibility of an online upskilling platform?	Brand platform representatives on social media	Count	32	3	4	4	3	3	49
	% of Total		12,8%	1,2%	1,6%	1,6%	1,2%	1,2%	19,6%
Alumni or previous participants	Count		38	8	6	7	2	1	62
	% of Total		15,2%	3,2%	2,4%	2,8%	0,8%	0,4%	24,8%
Learning support team	Count		34	2	8	8	9	0	61
	% of Total		13,6%	0,8%	3,2%	3,2%	3,6%	0,0%	24,4%
Industry practitioner mentor/instructor	Count		30	16	7	13	0	0	66
	% of Total		12,0%	6,4%	2,8%	5,2%	0,0%	0,0%	26,4%
Not too influenced by any particular individual	Count		3	1	1	2	4	1	12
	% of Total		1,2%	0,4%	0,4%	0,8%	1,6%	0,4%	4,8%
Total	Count		137	30	26	34	18	5	250
	% of Total		54,8%	12,0%	10,4%	13,6%	7,2%	2,0%	100,0%

Figure 6. Trust Influencers and Supporting Evidence in Online Upskilling Platforms

Source: Author's Analysis, 2025

f. Promotion

According to the crosstabulation in Figure 7, which relates primary status to promotional interests, providing a free or included certificate is the most effective incentive, representing 29.2% of all responses. This is followed by the offer of extra learning materials or bonus content at 25.2%, and the availability of a free trial or introductory class at 22.4%.

For the largest segment of the survey, early-career professionals at 31.2%, the most persuasive incentive is a free trial or a complimentary class, which made up 13.2% of the total. This suggests that these individuals prefer testing a service before making a financial commitment. On the other hand, undergraduate and master's students, representing 24.0% and 9.6% respectively, place more value on receiving a certificate upon completion. Meanwhile, those who have recently graduated show a balanced interest in both extra study resources and included certifications.

The findings suggest that value-driven promotions are generally more effective than cost-based discounts for encouraging users to try a platform. Whether a respondent prefers a free certificate, a trial class, or bonus materials often depends on their professional status. This variation indicates that a one-size-fits-all approach may be less effective than targeted strategies that align promotional offers with the specific needs of students or professionals.

What best describes your current primary status? * What type of promotion would most encourage you to try an online upskilling platform? Crosstabulation

		What type of promotion would most encourage you to try an online upskilling platform?					Total	
		Price discount or special offer	Free or included certificate upon completion	Referral or recommendation from friends or professional communities	Free trial or complimentary class	Additional learning materials or bonus content		
What best describes your current primary status?	Undergraduate student	Count	13	23	5	7	12	60
	% of Total		5,2%	9,2%	2,0%	2,8%	4,8%	24,0%
Master's student	Count		2	9	1	5	7	24
	% of Total		0,8%	3,6%	0,4%	2,0%	2,8%	9,6%
Fresh graduate	Count		3	16	7	5	17	48
	% of Total		1,2%	6,4%	2,8%	2,0%	6,8%	19,2%
Early-career professional	Count		14	19	3	33	9	78
	% of Total		5,6%	7,6%	1,2%	13,2%	3,6%	31,2%
Freelancer / Gig worker	Count		8	4	0	6	10	28
	% of Total		3,2%	1,6%	0,0%	2,4%	4,0%	11,2%
Job seeker	Count		1	2	1	0	8	12
	% of Total		0,4%	0,8%	0,4%	0,0%	3,2%	4,8%
Total	Count		41	73	17	56	63	250
	% of Total		16,4%	29,2%	6,8%	22,4%	25,2%	100,0%

Figure 7. Promotion Preferences by Primary Occupational Status

Source: Author's Analysis, 2025

Table 1. Respondents' Perceived Influence of Social Media Promotions on Purchase Intention

Likert Scale	Strongly Not Influential	Not Influential	Moderately Influential	Infl uential	Strongly Influential	Me ans	Standard Deviation
Question: <i>How significant was the impact of social media advertisements on your decision to use an online learning platform?</i>	8	12	6	42	182	4,5120	0,9868

Source: Author's Analysis, 2025

According to the Likert scale data, most participants believe that social media promotions play a major role in their decision to try online upskilling services. This is supported by 182 people who chose the strongly influential option and 42 who chose the influential category. A mean score of 4.5120 confirms that the average response aligns with a high level of influence, while a standard deviation of 0.9868 indicates that these views are largely consistent across the group.

Table 2. Respondents' Trust in User Reviews on Social Media Regarding Online Upskilling Platforms

Likert Scale	Strongly Distrust	Distrust	Neutral	Trust	Strongly Trust	Means	Standard Deviation
Question: <i>How would you rate your level of trust in the testimonials and comments posted by users on social media regarding upskilling platforms?</i>	8	13	4	33	192	4,5520	0,9896

Source: Author's Analysis, 2025

The Likert scale data shows that most participants have significant confidence in user reviews found on social media about upskilling platforms. This high trust is evidenced by 192 people who selected the strongly trust option and 33 who chose the trust category. An average score of 4.5520 places the typical response in the strongly trust range, while a standard deviation of 0.9896 indicates that there is a high degree of agreement among the respondents.

Social Media Usage and Preference

According to the findings in Figure 8, Instagram and Twitter/X are the platforms used most often on a day-to-day basis, surpassing YouTube, Facebook, TikTok, and LinkedIn. Notably, Instagram stands out as a primary tool for researching online learning platforms. These results indicate that Instagram plays a double role, acting as both a frequently accessed social network and a primary source for learning-related information.

Instagram and Twitter/X remain the primary channels for respondents seeking details on online learning, reflecting the same high usage patterns seen in their daily habits. This trend mirrors the broader industry, where Instagram serves as the main hub for competitor

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engagement, boasting the highest follower counts for RevoU, MySkill, and Dibimbing. Other platforms represent a much smaller share of where users go to research upskilling opportunities.

These insights show a direct link between the platforms used for daily social interaction and those utilized for researching upskilling programs, as respondents tend to use their preferred networks for both purposes.

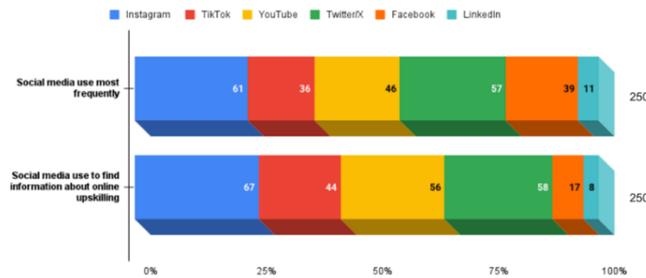


Figure 8. Respondents' Social Media Preference
Source: Author's Analysis, 2025

According to the crosstabulation in Figure 9, most participants spend between 1 and 3 hours daily on social media, with 35.6% using it for 1–2 hours and 34.8% for 2–3 hours. Visual images are the overall favorite content type at 30.4%, especially among those online for 2–3 hours. Short and long-form videos are equally popular at 28.8% each, though their audiences differ; heavy users (over 3 hours) prefer short clips, while those online for 1–2 hours favor longer videos. Written content remains the least popular choice, favored by only 12.0% of the total group.

What type of content do you like most on social media? * How much time do you spend on social media each day? Crosstabulation

		How much time do you spend on social media each day?				Total
		< 1 hour	1-2 hours	2-3 hours	> 3 hours	
What type of content do you like most on social media?	Short Videos	Count	2	18	16	36
	% of Total	0,8%	7,2%	6,4%	14,4%	28,8%
	Long-Form Videos	Count	2	42	24	4
	% of Total	0,8%	16,8%	9,6%	1,6%	28,8%
	Images / visuals	Count	6	21	31	18
	% of Total	2,4%	8,4%	12,4%	7,2%	30,4%
	Writing	Count	2	8	16	4
	% of Total	0,8%	3,2%	6,4%	1,6%	12,0%
Total	Count	12	89	87	62	250
	% of Total	4,8%	35,6%	34,8%	24,8%	100,0%

Figure 9. Respondents' Content Preference and Social Media Daily Spend
Source: Author's Analysis, 2025

Data in Figure 9 reveals that a preference for short-form video is linked to higher daily social media consumption, particularly among those who stay online for more than three hours. This supports the research of Dwivedi et al. (2021), which argues that because short videos are highly engaging and quick to consume, they naturally encourage users to spend more time on social platforms. The data also shows that long-form videos are favored by respondents with lower daily social media usage, specifically those in the 1–2 hour range. This suggests that longer content formats may be part of a more focused consumption habit rather than endless browsing. According to prior studies, such formats are often used when

seeking specific information. As Voorveld et al. (2018) point out, long-form content supports more concentrated engagement, enabling users to explore subjects in detail without the distraction of switching platforms.

The results from Figure 10, which compare primary status with social media sources for upskilling information, show that Instagram is the most popular choice at 26.8%. This is followed by Twitter/X at 23.2% and YouTube at 22.4%. For early-career professionals, who represent the largest segment of the study (31.2%), Instagram is the primary tool for searching for online learning details, accounting for 17.2% of the total. For the undergraduate group, which makes up 24.0% of the sample, TikTok and YouTube are the most common choices at 8.0% and 6.4% respectively. In contrast, the 19.2% of respondents who are fresh graduates use YouTube and Twitter/X at an equal rate of 5.6% each. Notably, LinkedIn has the lowest engagement at just 3.2%, which suggests that participants in this study prefer using mainstream social media rather than professional networks when researching online upskilling.

This cross-tabulation is significant because it breaks down information-seeking habits by segment, showing that social media usage is not a uniform activity. By analyzing platform choices alongside primary status, we can see how different groups behave when looking for upskilling content. For Graduates, this data is useful for pinpointing which social media sites are most relevant for connecting with specific groups, ensuring that marketing efforts are directed at the most effective channels.

What best describes your current primary status? * What social media platforms will you use to find information about online upskilling (such as online courses, bootcamps, webinars, or mini classes)? Crosstabulation

		What social media platforms will you use to find information about online upskilling (such as online courses, bootcamps, webinars, or mini classes)?							Total
		Instagram	TikTok	YouTube	Twitter/X	Facebook	LinkedIn		
Undergraduate student	Count	8	20	16	12	3	1	60	
	% of Total	3,2%	8,0%	6,4%	4,8%	1,2%	0,4%	24,0%	
Master's student	Count	5	3	5	9	1	1	24	
	% of Total	2,0%	1,2%	2,0%	3,6%	0,4%	0,4%	9,6%	
Fresh graduate	Count	5	9	14	14	4	2	48	
	% of Total	2,0%	3,6%	5,6%	5,6%	1,6%	0,8%	19,2%	
Early-career professional	Count	43	6	10	10	5	4	78	
	% of Total	17,2%	2,4%	4,0%	4,0%	2,0%	1,6%	31,2%	
Freelancer / Gig worker	Count	5	5	9	6	3	0	28	
	% of Total	2,0%	2,0%	3,6%	2,4%	1,2%	0,0%	11,2%	
Job seeker	Count	1	1	2	7	1	0	12	
	% of Total	0,4%	0,4%	0,8%	2,8%	0,4%	0,0%	4,8%	
Total	Count	67	44	56	58	17	8	250	
	% of Total	26,8%	17,6%	22,4%	23,2%	6,8%	3,2%	100,0%	

Figure 10. Social Media Platforms Used for Online Upskilling Information by Respondents' Primary Status
Source: Author's Analysis, 2025

Brand Awareness

Figure 11 displays the levels of brand awareness for various Indonesian online upskilling platforms based on which name respondents recall first. RevoU leads in top-of-mind awareness with 45 mentions, closely followed by MySkill with 39, Binar Academy with 37, and Skill Academy with 34. In contrast, platforms like Dibimbing, Purwadhika, Hari Senin, and Tempat Belajar were mentioned less frequently in this spontaneous recall test.

At the same time, Graduates was cited by 11 participants, showing that it currently has less brand recognition than its competitors in this group. This result suggests that the platform needs to focus on better visibility and more frequent brand messaging. By doing so, Graduates can improve its spontaneous recall and stand out more effectively in the highly competitive upskilling industry.

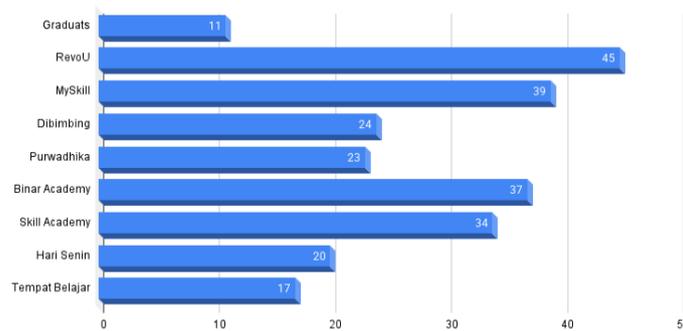


Figure 11. Distribution of Brand Mentions Among Online Upskilling Platforms

Source: Author's Analysis, 2025

Social Media Marketing Activities (SMMA) Content Analysis

The outcomes of the content analysis act as the basis for creating future strategies. This research uses four independent factors to represent the dimensions of social media marketing activities: entertainment, interactivity, trendiness, and electronic word of mouth. Each of these is evaluated using two specific questions, while the dependent variable of purchase intention is measured using four. To ensure clarity, the survey provides precise definitions and examples for every dimension to prevent any confusion among participants.

Entertainment Content	<p>Platform: Instagram - Image Post</p> <p>Source: @revou_id</p>	<p>Platform: Instagram - Image Post</p> <p>Source: @myskill.id</p>	<p>Platform: Instagram - Video Post</p> <p>Source: @graduata.id</p>
Interactivity Content	<p>Platform: Instagram - Image Post</p> <p>Source: @revou_id</p>	<p>Platform: Instagram - Video Post</p> <p>Source: @myskill.id</p>	<p>Platform: Instagram - Image Post</p> <p>Source: @graduata.id</p>
Trendiness Content	<p>Platform: Instagram - Image Post</p> <p>Source: @revou_id</p>	<p>Platform: Instagram - Image Post</p> <p>Source: @myskill.id</p>	<p>Platform: Instagram - Image Post</p> <p>Source: @graduata.id</p>
Electronic Word of Mouth Content	<p>Platform: Instagram - Video Post</p> <p>Source: @revou_id</p>	<p>Platform: Instagram - Image Post</p> <p>Source: @myskill.id</p>	<p>Platform: Instagram - Video Post</p> <p>Source: @graduata.id</p>

Figure 12. Social Media Content Example for Questionnaire

Source: Author's Analysis, 2025

Coefficient of Determination (R²)

According to the multiple linear regression results in Figure 13, the R Square value of 0.813 shows that Electronic Word of Mouth, Trendiness, Interactivity, and Entertainment content together account for 81.3% of the variance in Purchase Intention. While 18.7% of the

variation stems from external factors, the high R Square confirms the model’s robust explanatory power. Consequently, an integrated approach using all content dimensions was adopted. Specific measurement items for purchase intent, organized based on the stages of the RACE framework, are described in detail in the following table:

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	,901 ^a	,813	,809	5,966

a. Predictors: (Constant), Electronic Word Of Mouth Content, Trendiness Content, Interactivity Content, Entertainment Content

Figure 13. Coefficient of Determination
Source: Author’s Analysis, 2025

Coefficient of Linear Regression

Data from Figure 14, regarding multiple linear regression coefficients reveal that all independent variables are statistically significant predictors of Purchase Intention. Because the significance levels for Entertainment Content, Interactivity Content, Trendiness Content, and Electronic Word of Mouth Content are all 0.000 ($p < 0.05$), the null hypothesis for each is rejected. This confirms that every independent variable has a significant partial effect within the model..

The findings from the standardized coefficients indicate that Entertainment Content is the strongest predictor of Purchase Intention, with a Beta value of 0.343. Other contributors include Interactivity Content ($\beta = 0.265$), Electronic Word of Mouth ($\beta = 0.229$), and Trendiness ($\beta = 0.206$). These figures highlight that content designed for entertainment has a more dominant influence on consumer intent than any other characteristic in the model.

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	5,910	1,829		3,231	,001
	Entertainment Content	2,410	,303	,343	7,965	,000
	Interactivity Content	1,750	,278	,265	6,283	,000
	Trendiness Content	1,423	,278	,206	5,122	,000
	Electronic Word Of Mouth Content	1,575	,286	,229	5,508	,000

a. Dependent Variable: Purchase Intention

Figure 14. Coefficient of Linear Regression
(Source: Author’s Analysis, 2025)

Social Media Marketing Activities and Purchase Intention Analysis

Table 3 displays the questionnaire items used to measure purchase intention, which are categorized according to the RACE framework. This classification helps explain how social media marketing efforts move consumers through various stages, specifically focusing on the processes of reaching, engaging, and driving conversions.

Table 3. Purchase Intention Questionnaire Questions

Questionnaire Questions	Category	RACE Interpretation
I find this content engaging because it matches what I like and what I am interested in	Preferential Interest	Reach
I am interested in this content and feel inclined to learn more about what this upskilling platform has to offer	Explorative Interest	Act
I am interested in this content and plan to use or purchase online upskilling services as a result	Transactional Interest	Convert
I find this material compelling enough to recommend these online professional development services to my colleagues and friends	Referential Interest	Engage

Source: Kurniati, A. 2025

The data for Preferential Interest (Reach) shows that all content variables have a significant effect on how respondents engage with content related to their skill interests. Entertainment Content leads with the highest t-value of 7.642, followed by Interactivity (4.694), Trendiness (3.464), and eWOM (2.080). This suggests that during the early stages of the RACE framework, content that is both entertaining and interactive is most effective at capturing attention and building awareness.

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1,005	,657		1,529	,128
	Entertainment Content	,831	,109	,418	7,642	,000
	Interactivity Content	,470	,100	,251	4,694	,000
	Trendiness Content	,346	,100	,177	3,464	,001
	Electronic Word Of Mouth Content	,214	,103	,110	2,080	,039

a. Dependent Variable: I'm interested in this content because it reflects my preferences and interests in skill development

Figure 15. Content Toward Preferential Interest or Reach
(Source: Author's Analysis, 2025)

The results for the Act stage (Explorative Interest) show that all content types have a statistically significant impact on the desire to find out more. Entertainment Content exhibits the highest t-value at 4.891, followed by Interactivity at 4.336, eWOM at 3.338, and Trendiness at 3.033. This highlights the importance of using interactive and socially endorsed content to motivate potential users toward a deeper level of investigation.

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1,914	,695		2,756	,006
	Entertainment Content	,562	,115	,296	4,891	,000
	Interactivity Content	,458	,106	,256	4,336	,000
	Trendiness Content	,320	,105	,172	3,033	,003
	Electronic Word Of Mouth Content	,362	,109	,195	3,338	,001

a. Dependent Variable: I'm interested in this content, and it made me want to find out more about this online upskilling platform

Figure 16. Content Toward Explorative Interest or Act
Source: Author's Analysis, 2025

The results for the Convert stage (Transactional Interest) show that eWOM Content has the strongest effect, with a t-value of 5.040, indicating its importance in driving the decision to use or purchase online training. Entertainment (t = 4.702), Interactivity (t = 4.384), and Trendiness (t = 3.475) also play roles, but the data highlights that socially validated, peer-led content becomes the most dominant factor at the point of transaction.

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1,536	,644		2,384	,018
	Entertainment Content	,501	,107	,263	4,702	,000
	Interactivity Content	,430	,098	,240	4,384	,000
	Trendiness Content	,340	,098	,182	3,475	,001
	Electronic Word Of Mouth Content	,508	,101	,273	5,040	,000

a. Dependent Variable: I'm interested in using or purchasing online upskilling services from this content in the future

Figure 17. Content Toward Transactional Interest or Convert
(Source: Author’s Analysis, 2025)

In the Engage stage of the RACE framework, all studied content types significantly influence the willingness of respondents to refer the platform to others. eWOM Content (t = 4.957) and Entertainment Content (t = 4.923) show a more dominant effect than Trendiness (t = 4.332) and Interactivity (t = 4.055). These findings highlight the critical role that peer-led and entertaining content plays in encouraging users to become brand advocates.

The t-statistic results confirm that social media content is a significant driver of purchase intention across all levels of the RACE model. Notably, entertainment-oriented and eWOM-based materials consistently exhibit the strongest statistical effects, highlighting their importance in the consumer journey.

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1,455	,634		2,296	,023
	Entertainment Content	,516	,105	,269	4,923	,000
	Interactivity Content	,391	,096	,217	4,055	,000
	Trendiness Content	,417	,096	,222	4,332	,000
	Electronic Word Of Mouth Content	,491	,099	,262	4,957	,000

a. Dependent Variable: I'm interested in recommending this online upskilling platform to others based on this content

Figure 18. Content Toward Referential Interest or Engage
(Source: Author’s Analysis, 2025)

The t-test data in Table 4. is utilized to establish content priorities and inform the creation of a targeted digital marketing strategy.

Table 4. Priority Content Based on T-Test Results Across the RACE Framework

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RACE Framework	1st		2nd		3rd		4th	
	Priority Content	T-Score	Priority Content	T-Score	Priority Content	T-Score	Priority Content	T-Score
Reach	Entertainment Content	7,642	Interactivity Content	4,694	Trendiness Content	3,464	Electronic Word of Mouth Content	2,080
Act	Entertainment Content	4,891	Interactivity Content	4,336	Electronic Word of Mouth Content	3,338	Trendiness Content	3,033
Convert	Electronic Word of Mouth Content	5,040	Entertainment Content	4,702	Interactivity Content	4,384	Trendiness Content	3,475
Engage	Electronic Word of Mouth Content	4,957	Entertainment Content	4,923	Trendiness Content	4,332	Interactivity Content	4,055

Source: Author's Analysis, 2025

Business Strategic Solution

1. SWOT Analysis

By synthesizing earlier internal and external research, this SWOT analysis evaluates Graduates' market position. The internal portion uses STP, the 7P service mix, and VRIO to find strengths and weaknesses, while the external portion looks at competitors and customer behavior for opportunities and threats. Findings suggest that Graduates has the infrastructure for digital learning but struggles with low brand recognition and weak marketing execution. Given that customers prioritize social media for building trust, the SWOT analysis suggests prioritizing a cohesive digital strategy that aligns with these habits to boost brand awareness and sales.

Table 5. Graduates SWOT Analysis

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Graduates maintains a precise market segmentation that prioritizes urban dwellers aged 18–30, specifically encompassing those completing their degrees, recent alumni, and entry-level workers. 2) The platform has successfully carved out a niche as an approachable and community-centered partner in professional development. 3) The educational offerings encompass a wide and varied range of materials. 4) The platform utilizes a transparent one-time fee structure that remains affordable for users. 5) Through a hybrid approach, the platform provides flexible learning options across both digital and physical channels. 6) Being part of EduLab Group gives the brand professional legitimacy and helpful supporting assets. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Market penetration is currently restricted as the outreach efforts have not yet extended to include mid-level or senior-level experts. 2) Brand awareness and social media visibility are still low compared to competitors. 3) The website has not yet incorporated effective elements that demonstrate its reliability to visitors. 4) There is a limited amount of content regarding student accomplishments, mentor involvement, and live class events shared across public platforms. 5) Digital marketing and social proof execution capabilities are still underdeveloped. 6) There is no structured mentoring network for alumni and a shortage of credibility signals based on past student experiences. 7) The testing and assessment methods are currently informal and do not follow a

Opportunities	Threats
<p>1) Access to a wide network of practitioners and digital resources makes it easier to build and launch new learning programs.</p> <p>2) Marketing tools like free trials, official certificates, and added bonuses are highly effective at capturing customer interest.</p> <p>3) Customer research shows that a consistent and active social media presence is the primary way the platform demonstrates its reliability and value.</p> <p>4) Customer survey results show Instagram is the most-used social media platform by respondents and their primary channel for searching online upskilling programs. This supports Graduates' current use of Instagram for its main promotion and communication.</p> <p>5) High preference for entertainment, interactive and e-WOM content opens up opportunities for optimizing content strategies.</p> <p>6) The prevailing market inclination toward economical, clear, and packaged pricing models is consistent with the one-time payment strategy adopted by Graduates.</p> <p>7) Given that social media marketing and consumer testimonials are primary drivers of purchase intention, an opportunity exists to prioritize social media marketing activities (SMMA) over substantial advertising investments.</p>	<p>standardized approach across all courses.</p> <p>8) Compared to the competition, social media efforts do not prioritize the engaging and peer-driven content that is essential for guiding customer decisions at every stage.</p> <p>1) Low structural hurdles to market entry result in a high potential for competitive disruption from new startups.</p> <p>2) Consumers possess significant bargaining power because of the extensive selection of alternative professional development platforms.</p> <p>3) The availability of complimentary or inexpensive alternatives, including YouTube, TikTok, and various MOOCs, presents a major competitive challenge.</p> <p>4) Tight competition with RevoU, MySkill, and Dibimbing which have stronger brand equity.</p> <p>5) Competitors demonstrate strong social media execution aligned with entertainment, interactivity, trendiness, and e-WOM dimensions.</p> <p>6) High reliance on alumni testimonials, mentor credibility, and visible social proof increases entry barriers for low-awareness brands.</p> <p>7) Graduates has not yet achieved a high level of top-of-mind awareness when compared to more established rival platforms.</p>

Source: Author's Analysis, 2025

CONCLUSIONS

The findings of this research indicate that Graduates' competitive standing within the Indonesian online upskilling sector is determined by an interplay of internal and external factors. While the platform benefits from robust value propositions and a growing industry, these advantages are offset by significant hurdles such as low brand recognition, limited content uniqueness, and a highly saturated competitive environment. Research reveals that learners prioritize professional expertise and value-driven pricing, often using social media as their primary evaluation tool. This study proposes an integrated marketing model that aligns social media tactics with the Reach, Act, Convert, and Engage stages. The goal is to use trend-relevant content and word-of-mouth to boost conversions and build stronger relationships with the audience. Overall, the results provide a comprehensive and structured foundation for enhancing Graduates' competitiveness and increasing customer purchase intention through more strategic, data-driven, and customer-centric digital marketing execution.

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