

The Influence of Institutional Branding and Generation Z Lifestyle on the Decision to Choose a Private University: A Case Study of Generation Z in Greater Tangerang

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Article Info

Keywords:

Institutional branding, Generation Z lifestyle, university selection decision, private universities, higher education marketing

ABSTRACT

Private universities face increasing challenges in attracting Generation Z students to pursue higher education. As individuals born between 1997 and 2012, Generation Z is characterized by digital literacy, critical thinking, and dynamic lifestyles. Consequently, their university selection decisions are influenced not only by academic quality but also by institutional image and the extent to which a university aligns with their lifestyle preferences. This study aims to examine the influence of institutional branding and Generation Z lifestyle on the decision to choose private universities in the Greater Tangerang area, including Tangerang City, Tangerang Regency, and South Tangerang City. A quantitative survey approach was employed involving 155 Generation Z respondents. The collected data were analyzed using multiple linear regression following validity, reliability, and classical assumption tests. The results indicate that institutional branding and Generation Z lifestyle simultaneously have a positive and significant effect on university selection decisions ($F = 956.753$; $p < 0.001$), with a coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 0.926$). Partially, institutional branding exerts a stronger influence ($\beta = 0.589$; $p < 0.001$) than Generation Z lifestyle ($\beta = 0.382$; $p < 0.001$). These findings suggest that a strong institutional reputation and image, supported by marketing strategies that align with Generation Z characteristics, are key factors in enhancing the attractiveness of private universities. The study provides practical implications for university administrators in developing more effective branding and educational marketing strategies to improve competitiveness in attracting prospective students.

Informasi Artikel

Kata Kunci:

Branding institusi, gaya hidup Generasi Z, keputusan memilih universitas, perguruan tinggi swasta, pemasaran pendidikan tinggi

ABSTRAK

Universitas swasta menghadapi tantangan dalam menarik minat Generasi Z untuk melanjutkan pendidikan tinggi. Sebagai generasi yang lahir pada tahun 1997–2012, Generasi Z memiliki karakteristik digital, kritis, dan gaya hidup yang dinamis sehingga keputusan memilih universitas tidak hanya didasarkan pada kualitas akademik, tetapi juga pada citra institusi dan kesesuaian dengan preferensi gaya hidup mereka. Penelitian ini bertujuan menganalisis pengaruh branding institusi dan gaya hidup Generasi Z terhadap keputusan memilih universitas swasta di Tangerang Raya yang meliputi Kota Tangerang, Kabupaten Tangerang, dan Kota Tangerang Selatan. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kuantitatif dengan metode survei terhadap 155 responden. Data dianalisis menggunakan regresi linier berganda yang didahului dengan uji validitas, reliabilitas, dan uji asumsi klasik. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa branding institusi dan gaya hidup Generasi Z secara simultan berpengaruh positif dan signifikan terhadap keputusan memilih universitas swasta ($F = 956.753$; $p < 0.001$) dengan nilai koefisien determinasi (R^2) sebesar 0.926. Secara parsial, branding institusi memberikan pengaruh yang lebih dominan ($\beta = 0.589$; $p < 0.001$) dibandingkan gaya hidup Generasi Z ($\beta = 0.382$; $p < 0.001$). Temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa reputasi dan citra institusi yang kuat, didukung oleh strategi pemasaran yang sesuai dengan karakteristik Generasi Z, menjadi faktor utama dalam meningkatkan daya tarik universitas swasta. Penelitian ini memberikan implikasi praktis bagi pengelola perguruan tinggi dalam menyusun strategi branding dan pemasaran yang lebih efektif untuk meningkatkan daya saing dalam memperoleh calon mahasiswa baru.

Received : 29/07/2026

Revised : 06/08/2026

Accepted : 21/08/2026

Article History

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1. Introduction

The development of higher education in Indonesia has become increasingly competitive, particularly among private universities. According to the Ministry of Higher Education, Science, and Technology through the Higher Education Database (PDDikti), Indonesia has more than 4,000 higher education institutions, approximately 90% of which are private universities. This large number of institutions creates intense competition for attracting prospective students, especially as the number of high school and vocational school graduates entering higher education each year remains relatively limited. Consequently, private universities are required not only to provide high-quality academic programs but also to establish a strong institutional identity capable of differentiating themselves from competitors. This competitive environment has become even more challenging due to rapid technological advancement, which has fundamentally transformed how prospective students search for information, evaluate educational options, and make enrollment decisions [1], [2].

The majority of prospective university students today belong to Generation Z, a generation born between 1997 and 2012 that has grown up in an environment dominated by digital technology, the internet, and social media. Data from the Indonesian Internet Service Providers Association (APJII) indicate that internet penetration in Indonesia has exceeded 79% of the population, with individuals aged 13–34 years representing the most active internet users [3]. Furthermore, the We Are Social Digital Report reveals that Indonesians spend more than three hours per day on social media platforms. These trends have made digital media the primary source of information for Generation Z when exploring higher education institutions. Prospective students increasingly rely on online information regarding university reputation, academic quality, campus facilities, student experiences, graduate employability, and institutional achievements before making enrollment decisions. Therefore, conventional promotional approaches are no longer sufficient, and universities must develop effective digital branding strategies to reach prospective students [4], [5].

Institutional branding has become one of the most important strategic assets in strengthening a university's competitive advantage. Branding extends beyond visual identity, logos, or slogans; it encompasses the overall perception, reputation, values, and image of an institution in the minds of stakeholders. Effective branding enables universities to establish credibility, communicate their distinctive strengths, and build long-term relationships with prospective students. A strong institutional brand enhances public trust, increases institutional visibility, and positively influences prospective students' preferences when selecting a university [6], [7].

Institutional branding is also closely associated with various elements, including visual identity, communication design, digital marketing activities, academic reputation, faculty quality, student achievements, industry partnerships, and the overall

learning experience provided by the university. These factors collectively shape public perceptions regarding the quality and credibility of a higher education institution. For private universities operating in an increasingly competitive educational market, institutional branding is no longer merely a promotional tool but has become a long-term strategic investment for achieving sustainable competitive advantage [8], [9].

In addition to institutional branding, the lifestyle characteristics of Generation Z significantly influence university selection decisions. As digital natives, Generation Z demonstrates behavioral patterns that differ substantially from previous generations [10]. They tend to seek information independently through online platforms, compare multiple alternatives, read reviews from current students and alumni, consider peer recommendations, and evaluate universities based on digital content available on social media. Rather than focusing solely on tuition fees, this generation places greater emphasis on educational quality, learning experiences, career opportunities, personal development, and institutional reputation [11], [12].

Generation Z also exhibits unique consumer behavior characterized by intensive social media usage, high digital literacy, active participation in online communities, openness in expressing opinions, and rapid adaptation to technological innovation. However, they generally possess relatively short attention spans and quickly lose interest when presented with unengaging content. Consequently, higher education institutions must design innovative, interactive, and personalized communication strategies that align with the preferences and digital lifestyles of Generation Z to effectively attract and engage prospective students [13], [14].

Previous studies have demonstrated that institutional branding positively influences prospective students' decisions when selecting higher education institutions. Similarly, research on Generation Z has shown that lifestyle and consumer behavior significantly affect educational preferences and purchasing decisions [15]. Nevertheless, existing studies have generally examined institutional branding and Generation Z lifestyle as separate variables. Limited research has investigated their simultaneous influence on university selection decisions, particularly within the context of private universities in Greater Tangerang. As one of Indonesia's rapidly developing metropolitan regions, Greater Tangerang is characterized by a high concentration of private universities, strong digital infrastructure, and a large Generation Z population. These characteristics make the region an appropriate setting for examining university selection behavior in the digital era [16], [17].

This study addresses the existing research gap by investigating the simultaneous influence of institutional branding and Generation Z lifestyle on students' decisions to choose private universities in Greater Tangerang. Specifically, this research aims to analyze the influence of institutional

branding on university selection decisions, examine the influence of Generation Z lifestyle on university selection decisions, and evaluate the combined effect of these two variables on the decision to enroll in private universities in Greater Tangerang.

This research employs a quantitative approach to examine the causal relationships among institutional branding, Generation Z lifestyle, and university selection decisions. Quantitative methods are considered appropriate because they facilitate objective measurement of the influence of each independent variable through statistical analysis. The findings are expected to contribute theoretically to the development of higher education marketing literature while providing practical recommendations for private university administrators in developing branding strategies that effectively address the characteristics and expectations of Generation Z within the Society 5.0 era.

The study is also aligned with the research roadmap of the Management Study Program and the researcher's individual research roadmap. Within the program's roadmap, this research represents the fourth stage, focusing on integrative research that combines academic research and community engagement through digital industry initiatives within the Society 5.0 framework using interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary approaches. According to the researcher's individual roadmap, this study represents the third stage of continuous research in the field of marketing within the Society 5.0 perspective. The outcomes of this research are expected to contribute not only to scholarly publications but also to the development of teaching materials and the enhancement of Semester Learning Plans (RPS) for marketing-related courses.

2. Method

This study employed a descriptive quantitative research design using a survey approach and statistical analysis to examine the influence of institutional branding and Generation Z lifestyle on the decision to choose private universities. The research was conducted in the Greater Tangerang area, which includes Tangerang City, South Tangerang City, and Tangerang Regency. The objectives of this study were to determine: (1) the influence of institutional branding on Generation Z's decision to choose a private university in Greater Tangerang; (2) the influence of Generation Z lifestyle on the decision to choose a private university; and (3) the simultaneous influence of institutional branding and Generation Z lifestyle on the decision to choose a private university in Greater Tangerang. Theoretically, this study is expected to enrich the literature on consumer behavior in higher education selection, particularly in the Greater Tangerang region. Practically, the findings are expected to provide strategic recommendations for private universities and serve as a reference for developing more effective higher education marketing policies.

The study utilized a structured questionnaire as the primary

instrument for data collection. Prior to hypothesis testing, the instrument was subjected to validity and reliability testing to ensure the quality of the measurements. Validity testing was conducted to determine whether each questionnaire item accurately measured the intended construct, whereas reliability testing was performed to assess the consistency of the measurement results. The reliability of each construct was evaluated using Cronbach's Alpha, with a coefficient greater than 0.60 indicating that the instrument was considered reliable [18], [19].

Based on the theoretical framework proposed in this study, three research hypotheses were formulated. According to [20], a hypothesis is a logically predicted relationship between two or more variables that can be empirically tested. Accordingly, the hypotheses of this study are as follows: H1: Institutional branding has a positive effect on the decision to choose a private university. H2: Generation Z lifestyle has a positive effect on the decision to choose a private university. H3: Institutional branding and Generation Z lifestyle simultaneously have a positive effect on the decision to choose a private university.

The sample size was determined based on the recommendation of [21], which suggests that the minimum sample size should be at least ten times the number of indicators associated with the latent construct containing the largest number of measurement items. The required sample size was therefore calculated using the following formula:

$$n \geq k \times \max(k)$$

where k represents the largest number of indicators among all latent variables included in the research model.

The collected data were analyzed using several statistical procedures. First, a normality test was conducted using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test to determine whether the data were normally distributed. A significance value greater than 0.05 indicated that the data followed a normal distribution, whereas a significance value below 0.05 suggested non-normality. Second, a multicollinearity test was performed by examining the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) and Tolerance values. Multicollinearity was considered absent when the VIF value was less than 10 and the Tolerance value exceeded 0.10.

Third, a heteroscedasticity test was conducted to examine whether the residual variances remained constant across observations. Heteroscedasticity was evaluated through scatterplot analysis and the Glejser test. Fourth, multiple linear regression analysis was employed to investigate the influence of the independent variables namely institutional branding and Generation Z lifestyle on the dependent variable, namely the decision to choose a private university. Subsequently, a t-test was used to determine the partial effect of each independent variable on the dependent variable, while an F-test was applied to examine the simultaneous effect of all independent variables on the dependent variable. These statistical analyses were performed to test the proposed hypotheses and evaluate the significance of the relationships among the study variables.

3. Result and Discussion

Validity Test

Table 1. Validity Test of the Institutional Branding Variable (X1)

Item	r-value	Significance	Description
X1_1	0.709	0.000	Valid
X1_2	0.645	0.000	Valid
X1_3	0.687	0.000	Valid
X1_4	0.630	0.000	Valid
X1_5	0.524	0.000	Valid
X1_6	0.548	0.000	Valid
X1_7	0.670	0.000	Valid
X1_8	0.598	0.000	Valid
X1_9	0.663	0.000	Valid
X1_10	0.575	0.000	Valid
X1_11	0.622	0.000	Valid
X1_12	0.564	0.000	Valid
X1_13	0.669	0.000	Valid
X1_14	0.636	0.000	Valid
X1_15	0.580	0.000	Valid
X1_16	0.599	0.000	Valid
X1_17	0.546	0.000	Valid
X1_18	0.627	0.000	Valid
X1_19	0.570	0.000	Valid
X1_20	0.740	0.000	Valid

The results of the indicator analysis show that all indicators of the Institutional Branding variable are valid because the calculated correlation coefficient (r-calculated) is greater than the critical correlation coefficient (r-table). Therefore, each indicator is considered valid.

Table 2. Validity Test of the Generation Z Lifestyle Variable (X2)

Item	r-value	Significance	Description
X1_1	0.707	0.000	Valid
X1_2	0.608	0.000	Valid
X1_3	0.712	0.000	Valid
X1_4	0.601	0.000	Valid
X1_5	0.487	0.000	Valid
X1_6	0.676	0.000	Valid
X1_7	0.711	0.000	Valid
X1_8	0.633	0.000	Valid
X1_9	0.604	0.000	Valid
X1_10	0.632	0.000	Valid
X1_11	0.644	0.000	Valid
X1_12	0.578	0.000	Valid
X1_13	0.589	0.000	Valid
X1_14	0.576	0.000	Valid
X1_15	0.657	0.000	Valid
X1_16	0.642	0.000	Valid

The results indicate that all indicators of the Generation Z Lifestyle variable are valid because the calculated correlation coefficients (r-calculated) are greater than the critical correlation coefficient (r-table). Therefore, each indicator is declared valid.

Table 3. Validity Test of the University Selection Decision Variable (Y)

Item	r-value	Significance	Description
Y_1	0.729	0.000	Valid
Y_2	0.626	0.000	Valid
Y_3	0.630	0.000	Valid
Y_4	0.641	0.000	Valid
Y_5	0.513	0.000	Valid
Y_6	0.639	0.000	Valid
Y_7	0.645	0.000	Valid
Y_8	0.746	0.000	Valid
Y_9	0.655	0.000	Valid

The analysis results demonstrate that all indicators of the University Selection Decision variable are valid because the calculated correlation coefficients (r-calculated) exceed the critical correlation coefficient (r-table). Therefore, each indicator is considered valid.

Reliability Test

According to the reliability criteria proposed by [22], a Cronbach's Alpha value greater than 0.70 indicates good reliability. All three variables meet the reliability criterion, as their Cronbach's Alpha values exceed 0.70, indicating a high level of internal consistency.

Table 4. Reliability Test

Variable	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha	Criterion
X1	20	0.916	Highly Reliable
X2	16	0.897	Highly Reliable
Y	9	0.827	Reliable

Classical Assumption Tests

a. Normality Test

1. Kolmogorov–Smirnov Test
 - Test Statistic = 0.038
 - Significance = 0.200 (> 0.05)

The normality test was conducted using three approaches:

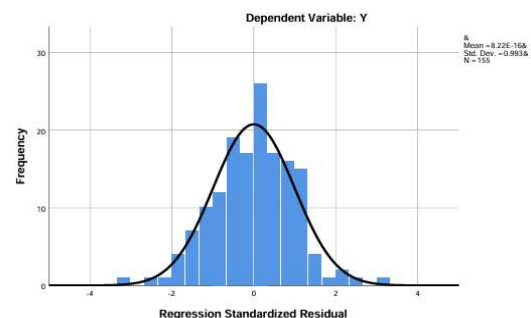


Figure 1. Normal Curve

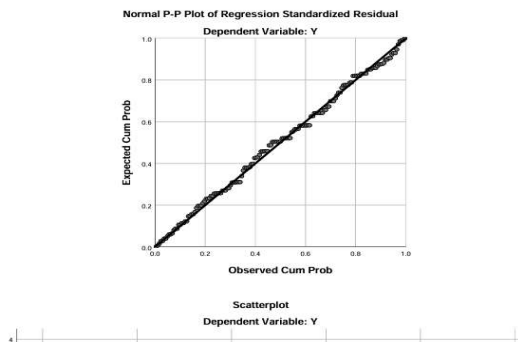


Figure 2. P-P plot

The data analysis results indicate that the residuals are normally distributed (Ghozali, 2018), as evidenced by the following:

- Normal P-P Plot: The data points are distributed closely around the diagonal line, indicating a normal distribution.
- Residual Histogram: The histogram exhibits a symmetric bell-shaped distribution, further confirming that the residuals are normally distributed.

Table 5. Heteroscedasticity Test Results

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	25.476	2	12.738	1.818	0.166
Residual	1065.324	152	7.009		
Total	1090.800	154			

The heteroscedasticity test was performed by regressing the absolute residual values (ABS_RES) on the independent variables. The analysis produced an F-value of 1.818 with a significance value ($p = 0.166$), which is greater than the significance level of 0.05. Therefore, there is no statistically significant relationship between the absolute residuals and the independent variables (Hair et al., 2019). These findings indicate that the regression model does not suffer from heteroscedasticity.

In addition, the scatterplot demonstrates that the residuals are randomly distributed around the zero line without forming any discernible pattern. This random distribution confirms that the assumption of homoscedasticity has been satisfied, indicating constant error variance across all levels of the predictor variables.

Table 6. Multicollinearity Test Results

Variable	Tolerance	VIF	Interpretation
Institutional Branding (X1)	0.079	12.631	Multicollinearity Detected
Generation Z Lifestyle (X2)	0.079	12.631	Multicollinearity Detected

The multicollinearity test results indicate that both independent variables have a Tolerance value of 0.079, which is

below the recommended threshold of 0.10. Furthermore, the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values are 12.631, exceeding the recommended maximum value of 10.00. These findings confirm the presence of multicollinearity between the two independent variables.

The occurrence of multicollinearity suggests that Institutional Branding and Generation Z Lifestyle are highly correlated. Consequently, it becomes difficult to isolate and estimate the unique contribution of each variable to the dependent variable (University Selection Decision) because the predictors share a substantial amount of common variance.

Table 7. Multiple Linear Regression Analysis

Variable	(B)	Standard Error	Standardized Coefficients (Beta)	t	Sig.
(Constant)	.638	.857	–	-.744	.458
X1	.280	.037	.589	7.538	.000
X2	.221	.045	.382	4.891	.000

Multiple linear regression analysis was conducted to examine the simultaneous effects of Institutional Branding (X1) and Generation Z Lifestyle (X2) on University Selection Decision (Y) using data collected from 155 respondents. The regression model estimates the extent to which changes in the independent variables influence the dependent variable while controlling for the effects of the other predictor. The regression equation is expressed as:

$$[Y = a + b_1X_1 + b_2X_2 + e]$$

where:

- Y = University Selection Decision
- a = Constant (intercept)
- b_1 = Regression coefficient of Institutional Branding
- b_2 = Regression coefficient of Generation Z Lifestyle
- e = Error term

The significance of the regression model is evaluated using the ANOVA F-test, while the individual effects of each independent variable are assessed using the t-test. The explanatory power of the model is measured by the coefficient of determination (R^2), which indicates the proportion of variance in the dependent variable explained jointly by the independent variables.

Table 8. Coefficient of Determination Test

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	0.963	0.926	0.925	1.417	2.128

The coefficient of determination (R^2) indicates that 92.6% of the variation in University Selection Decision can be jointly explained by the independent variables, namely Institutional Branding and Generation Z Lifestyle. The remaining 7.4% is explained by other factors that are not included in this research model, such as tuition fees, campus location, parental

recommendations, scholarship availability, academic reputation, and other relevant considerations.

Furthermore, the autocorrelation test shows a Durbin–Watson statistic of 2.128, which falls within the acceptable range of 1.5 to 2.5. This result indicates that there is no autocorrelation among the residuals, meaning that the assumption of error independence is satisfied and the regression model can be considered reliable.

Hypothesis Testing

t-Test (Partial Test)

The partial hypothesis test was conducted using data collected from 155 respondents to examine the individual effects of Institutional Branding (X1) and Generation Z Lifestyle (X2) on University Selection Decision (Y).

Table 9. Partial t-Test Results

Model	Variable	(B)	Std. Error	(Beta)	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	0.638	0.857	–	0.744	0.458
	Institutional Branding (X1)	0.280	0.037	0.589	7.538	0.000
	Generation Z Lifestyle (X2)	0.221	0.045	0.382	4.891	0.000

Interpretation

1. The results show that the Institutional Branding (X1) variable has a significance value of 0.000, which is lower than the significance level of 0.05. In addition, the calculated t-value (7.538) is greater than the critical t-table value (1.976) with $df = 152$ ($155 - 3$). Therefore, H_0 is rejected and H_1 is accepted, indicating that Institutional Branding has a positive and statistically significant effect on Generation Z's decision to choose a private university.
2. Similarly, the Generation Z Lifestyle (X2) variable has a significance value of 0.000, which is below 0.05, while the calculated t-value (4.891) exceeds the critical t-table value (1.976). Consequently, H_0 is rejected and H_1 is accepted, demonstrating that Generation Z Lifestyle has a positive and statistically significant effect on Generation Z's decision to choose a private university.

F-Test (Simultaneous Test)

Table 10. Simultaneous F-Test Results

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	3843.372	2	1921.686	956.753	0.000
Residual	305.299	152	2.009		
Total	4148.671	154			

The simultaneous hypothesis test results indicate that the Institutional Branding (X1) and Generation Z Lifestyle (X2) variables jointly have a statistically significant effect on the University Selection Decision (Y). The ANOVA results show a significance value of 0.000, which is lower than the significance level of 0.05, indicating that the regression model is statistically significant. The critical F-table value was determined using the following degrees of freedom:

- $df_1 = k - 1 = 3 - 1 = 2$
- $df_2 = N - k = 155 - 3 = 152$

Based on these degrees of freedom, the F-table value is approximately 3.02, where:

- df_1 represents the numerator degrees of freedom.
- df_2 represents the denominator degrees of freedom.
- k represents the total number of variables in the model (including the dependent variable).
- N represents the total sample size.

The calculated F-value is 956.753, which is substantially greater than the F-table value of 3.02 ($956.753 > 3.02$). Therefore, the null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected, and the alternative hypothesis (H_1) is accepted. These findings indicate that Institutional Branding (X1) and Generation Z Lifestyle (X2), when considered simultaneously, have a positive and statistically significant influence on Generation Z's decision to choose a private university.

The exceptionally high F-value further demonstrates that the regression model provides an excellent overall fit and that the independent variables collectively explain a substantial proportion of the variation in the dependent variable. This finding is consistent with the coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 0.926$), indicating that the model has strong explanatory power.

Discussion

The findings of this study provide substantial empirical evidence that Institutional Branding and Generation Z Lifestyle play important roles in shaping students' decisions when selecting a private university. Prior to hypothesis testing, the measurement instruments demonstrated satisfactory psychometric properties through validity and reliability assessments, indicating that the collected data were appropriate for further statistical analysis.

The validity test revealed that all indicators measuring Institutional Branding, Generation Z Lifestyle, and University Selection Decision were statistically valid, as evidenced by correlation coefficients exceeding the critical r-table values and significance levels below 0.05. The Institutional Branding construct consisted of twenty valid indicators with correlation coefficients ranging from 0.524 to 0.740, indicating that every item effectively represented the intended construct. Likewise, the Generation Z Lifestyle variable comprised sixteen valid indicators with correlation coefficients between 0.487 and 0.712, while the University Selection Decision variable demonstrated strong validity across all nine indicators. These findings suggest that the questionnaire successfully captured

respondents' perceptions regarding institutional reputation, lifestyle characteristics, and university selection behavior. Strong measurement validity enhances the credibility of the subsequent regression analysis because the observed relationships are unlikely to result from measurement error.

The reliability analysis further confirmed the consistency of the research instrument. Cronbach's Alpha values reached 0.916 for Institutional Branding, 0.897 for Generation Z Lifestyle, and 0.827 for University Selection Decision. According to Nunnally (1978) and Sekaran (2016), reliability coefficients above 0.70 indicate satisfactory internal consistency. Therefore, the measurement instrument consistently assessed respondents' perceptions and attitudes. High reliability is particularly important in behavioral research because students' university selection decisions are influenced by subjective evaluations that require stable and dependable measurement scales. The excellent reliability coefficients obtained in this study strengthen confidence in the empirical findings.

The regression model also satisfied most of the classical assumptions required for multiple linear regression analysis. The normality test showed that residuals followed a normal distribution, supported by a Kolmogorov–Smirnov significance value of 0.200, which exceeded the minimum threshold of 0.05. Additionally, both the histogram and the Normal P–P Plot illustrated residuals distributed symmetrically around the diagonal line. These results indicate that the regression estimates are unbiased and statistically appropriate for hypothesis testing.

Similarly, the heteroscedasticity test demonstrated that the regression model fulfilled the homoscedasticity assumption. The significance value of 0.166 exceeded the critical significance level of 0.05, indicating that the variance of residuals remained constant across different levels of the independent variables. Furthermore, the random distribution of points observed in the scatterplot confirmed the absence of systematic variance patterns. Consequently, the regression coefficients may be considered efficient and reliable, reducing the possibility of biased standard errors.

One interesting finding concerns the multicollinearity test. Both Institutional Branding and Generation Z Lifestyle exhibited tolerance values of 0.079 and Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values of 12.631, indicating the presence of multicollinearity. Although multicollinearity generally complicates the interpretation of individual regression coefficients, its occurrence in this study is theoretically understandable. Institutional branding and Generation Z lifestyle are conceptually interconnected because today's students increasingly evaluate universities not only based on academic quality but also according to whether institutional images align with their personal identities, digital habits, and lifestyle preferences. Generation Z tends to perceive a university's brand as part of its social identity, making these variables naturally correlated. Therefore, rather than indicating a flaw in the conceptual framework, the multicollinearity observed may reflect the reality that institutional branding and lifestyle simultaneously influence students' educational choices.

The multiple regression analysis demonstrated that Institutional Branding positively influences university selection decisions. The standardized regression coefficient ($\beta = 0.589$) and t-value of 7.538 indicate that Institutional Branding represents the strongest predictor in the regression model. This finding suggests that students place considerable importance on institutional reputation, credibility, academic image, accreditation status, and public perception when choosing a private university. In an increasingly competitive higher education market, branding functions as a strategic asset that reduces uncertainty and increases prospective students' confidence in educational quality. A strong institutional brand creates trust among prospective students by communicating quality, professionalism, and future career opportunities.

This finding is consistent with branding theory, which argues that organizational reputation significantly influences consumer decision-making processes. Within higher education, universities function as service organizations whose intangible characteristics make branding even more critical than in many commercial industries. Students cannot directly evaluate educational quality before enrollment; consequently, institutional branding serves as a signal of expected academic excellence and future employability. Therefore, strengthening institutional branding through academic achievements, accreditation, digital marketing, alumni success stories, and partnerships with industry may substantially increase university attractiveness.

Generation Z Lifestyle also demonstrated a positive and statistically significant influence on university selection decisions, as reflected by its standardized coefficient ($\beta = 0.382$) and t-value of 4.891. Although its influence is weaker than Institutional Branding, lifestyle remains an important determinant of educational preferences. Generation Z has grown up in a highly digital environment characterized by rapid information access, intensive social media use, and strong exposure to online communities. Consequently, this generation often evaluates universities according to their compatibility with personal values, technological readiness, campus culture, innovation, flexibility, and digital learning environments.

Unlike previous generations that primarily considered academic prestige, Generation Z tends to seek educational institutions capable of supporting both professional development and personal identity. Universities with modern facilities, active social media engagement, international collaborations, entrepreneurial ecosystems, and innovative learning approaches are generally perceived more favorably. This explains why lifestyle significantly contributes to students' university selection behavior, complementing the influence of institutional branding.

Another notable finding is the exceptionally high explanatory power of the regression model. The coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 0.926$) indicates that Institutional Branding and Generation Z Lifestyle collectively explain 92.6% of the variation in university selection decisions. Such a high coefficient suggests that these two variables capture most of the important

considerations influencing respondents' decisions. Only 7.4% of the variance remains attributable to factors outside the research model, including tuition fees, scholarship opportunities, parental influence, geographical accessibility, academic programs, campus facilities, and labor market expectations.

The simultaneous hypothesis test further supports these conclusions. The ANOVA results yielded an F-value of 956.753 with a significance level below 0.001, confirming that Institutional Branding and Generation Z Lifestyle jointly have a statistically significant influence on university selection decisions. The remarkably large F-value indicates that the regression model possesses excellent predictive capability. Moreover, the Durbin–Watson statistic of 2.128 confirms the absence of autocorrelation, suggesting that the regression residuals are independent and that the model estimates are statistically reliable.

From a practical perspective, these findings have important implications for private universities operating in increasingly competitive educational markets. First, universities should recognize that branding extends beyond visual identity or promotional activities. Effective institutional branding should integrate academic quality, research productivity, graduate employability, institutional credibility, and stakeholder trust. Building a strong institutional image requires consistent communication strategies across both traditional and digital platforms.

Second, universities should develop marketing strategies that resonate with Generation Z characteristics. Since this generation actively consumes digital content and frequently relies on online information before making educational decisions, institutions should strengthen their digital presence through interactive websites, social media engagement, virtual campus tours, student-generated content, and authentic storytelling. Digital communication should not merely promote university programs but also emphasize student experiences, innovation, inclusivity, sustainability, and opportunities for personal growth.

Finally, the presence of multicollinearity suggests that institutional branding and Generation Z lifestyle should not be treated as completely independent strategic dimensions. Instead, universities should integrate branding initiatives with an understanding of contemporary student lifestyles. Branding strategies that reflect Generation Z values including technological innovation, flexibility, social responsibility, entrepreneurship, global perspectives, and digital connectivity are likely to generate stronger competitive advantages than traditional promotional approaches.

Overall, this study demonstrates that students' decisions to select private universities are influenced by both institutional characteristics and generational behavioral patterns. Institutional Branding emerges as the strongest predictor, while Generation Z Lifestyle provides an important complementary influence. Together, these variables explain the vast majority of variation in university selection decisions, emphasizing that successful higher education marketing requires both a strong institutional

reputation and a deep understanding of the expectations, values, and lifestyles of today's Generation Z students.

4. Conclusion

Based on the analysis of data collected from 155 Generation Z respondents, it can be concluded that Institutional Branding (X1) and Generation Z Lifestyle (X2) simultaneously have a positive and statistically significant effect on the University Selection Decision (Y). This conclusion is supported by the F-statistic of 956.753 ($p < 0.001$) and a coefficient of determination (R^2) of 0.926, indicating that 92.6% of the variation in university selection decisions can be explained by the two independent variables included in the regression model.

Partially, Institutional Branding emerged as the more influential predictor ($\beta = 0.589$; $p < 0.001$) compared with Generation Z Lifestyle ($\beta = 0.382$; $p < 0.001$). These findings reinforce the arguments of Putra et al. (2022) and Neswardi and Yuanita (2022), who emphasize that academic reputation, accreditation, and institutional image are among the primary considerations for Generation Z when selecting a private university. At the same time, the significant effect of Generation Z Lifestyle supports the findings of Dewi and Budiwati (2024), which suggest that universities' ability to adapt to the digital characteristics and lifestyle preferences of Generation Z remains a critical factor influencing students' higher education choices.

The quality of the research instrument was confirmed by Cronbach's Alpha values exceeding 0.80 for all variables, demonstrating excellent internal consistency. In addition, the regression model satisfied the classical assumptions of normality and homoscedasticity, confirming the robustness of the statistical analysis. Although multicollinearity was detected ($VIF = 12.631$), this finding may reflect the practical reality that institutional branding and lifestyle-oriented communication strategies are closely interconnected in higher education marketing. Rather than representing entirely separate constructs, these variables appear to complement and reinforce one another in influencing prospective students' university selection decisions.

This study makes several important contributions. First, it provides empirical evidence that can assist private university administrators in designing data-driven student recruitment and marketing strategies. Second, it enriches the literature on higher education marketing in Indonesia by integrating the perspective of Generation Z, a demographic group that increasingly dominates the higher education market. Third, the proposed regression model offers a predictive framework that may be adapted as a decision-support tool for monitoring strategic marketing indicators and evaluating institutional branding initiatives over time.

Despite these contributions, several limitations should be acknowledged. The study focused exclusively on respondents from Generation Z and was limited to private universities within a specific geographical context. Consequently, the generalizability of the findings to other populations and institutional settings should be interpreted with caution.

Future research is therefore recommended in several directions. First, researchers should examine the mediating or moderating roles of variables such as trust, perceived value, university reputation, or student satisfaction to obtain a deeper understanding of the mechanisms through which institutional branding and lifestyle influence university selection decisions. Second, future studies should involve more diverse samples, including students from public and private universities across different geographical regions, to enhance the external validity and generalizability of the findings. Finally, employing a mixed-methods approach that combines quantitative and qualitative techniques would provide richer insights into the complex decision-making processes of Generation Z, capturing dimensions that may not be fully explained through structured questionnaires alone. Such approaches would contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of how contemporary students evaluate higher education institutions in an increasingly competitive and digitally driven educational environment.

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