

Antecedent Brand Image in Fostering Interest in Continuing Studies at Hospitality Training Institutions

Putu Rana Janendra, I Gusti Ayu Wimba & Putu Yudy Wijaya

Abstract:

Executive Hospitality International RTO is a vocational education college engaged in hospitality HR training services. Various marketing strategies carried out by Executive Hospitality International RTO to attract the interest of the target market continue their studies, such as using social media marketing and celebrity endorsers. therefore, this study aims to analyze the role of social media marketing and celebrity endorsers on the interest in continuing their studies at Executive Hospitality International RTO both directly and mediated by brand image. This study uses a quantitative survey research design on prospective students who have been recorded to continue their studies at Executive Hospitality International RTO in 2022 which is the population and sample of this study. Furthermore, the collected data were analyzed with SEM-PLS analysis techniques. The findings of this study demonstrate that each social media marketing variable and celebrity endorsement has a substantial impact on the brand. Brand reputation has a big impact on students' desire to keep learning. Additionally, social media marketing has the potential to significantly affect interest in further investigations through brand image, whether directly or indirectly. Celebrity endorsers' ability to sway consumers' enthusiasm in continuing their education at Executive Hospitality International RTO might be mitigated by a company's brand image.



IJSB

Accepted 16 August 2022
Published 20 August 2022
DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.7011824

Keywords: *Social Media Marketing, Celebrity Endorser, Brand Image, Interest in Continuing Studies.*

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Introduction

Education has become a primary need and an investment that gives social and personal benefits that make the nation dignified and its individuals become human beings of degree (Engkoswara & Aan, 2010). Latifah (2015) explained that the hope of improving the welfare of a better life in the future is a strong reason for people to pursue higher education. Especially in Bali, there are currently so many educational institutions emerging, which gives birth to a competition in the offer of service providers in the field of education. One of them is the Registered Training Organization (RTO). RTO is an educational institution organized for the community to provide knowledge and skills. This RTO plays a significant part in raising the standard of human resources. In accordance with this, job training is structured and directed to equip, improve, and develop work competences in order to improve ability, production, and welfare, according to Law of the Republic of Indonesia No. 13 of 2003 concerning Manpower. According to Mangkunegara (2009), job training is a brief educational activity carried out by an organization utilizing planned and methodical methods to enhance knowledge and skills in carrying out specific duties. Therefore, training participants who have successfully completed the competency-based training program are entitled to a training certificate issued by RTO. Based on the definition of RTO, one of the RTOs in Bali is Executive Hospitality International RTO which is a vocational education college engaged in hospitality HR training services that are professionally prepared and directly have internship placement agents in star-rated hotels abroad. Various marketing strategies carried out by Executive Hospitality International RTO to attract the interest of the target market continue. Any kind of work can be carried out efficiently and effectively due to the presence of technology. One of the technological features that is increasingly becoming the prima donna of society is the digital media feature (Yudhayani et al., 2022). Therefore, this study aims to analyze the role of social media marketing and celebrity endorsers on the interest in continuing their studies at Executive Hospitality International RTO both directly and mediated by Brand Image. This study adopts consumer behavior as a theoretical basis to determine the suitability of marketing using social media and celebrity endorsers both to improve the image of RTO and to attracting the interest of the target market to continue their studies at Executive Hospitality International RTO.

Literature Review

1. Consumer Behavior

According to Schiffman & Kanuk (2000), the study of consumer behavior examines how people decide how to distribute the available resources (time, money, effort, and energy). Kotler & Keller (2016) define consumer behavior as how people, groups, and organizations select, acquire, use, and position products, services, ideas, or experiences to meet their needs and desires. Furthermore, Kotler (2008) also mentioned several factors that influence consumer behavior, namely: (1) psychological factors; (2) cultural factors; (3) personal factors; and (4) social factors. Based on several factors of consumer behavior according to Kotler (2008), it is undeniable that consumer behavior is important for marketers because at a certain time consumers can behave inconsistently which has an impact on the transfer of interest from one product to another product (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2000; Peter & Olson, 2008; Asiegbu et al., 2012).

2. Social Media Marketing

The word "social media" or "social media" refers to a category of media based on online interactions and dialogues between individuals. Social media also encompasses tools like email, image-sharing, blogs, posting on walls, and sharing music, as well as online forums, social blogs, microblogging, photos, and videos (Strauss & Frost, 2009). Participation, openness, dialogue, community, and connectedness are the five features of social media (Mayfield, 2008).

As a result, social media is a type of web-based social networking service that enables users to create public or semi-public profiles within the platform. Social media is also utilized as a platform for online communities, allowing members of one group to communicate with one another online. This social media platform is a brand-new platform for "business-to-consumer" and "consumer-to-consumer" communication that has significant marketing ramifications (Kotler & Armstrong, 2012). Indicators of the success of social media marketing include four components, according to Gunelius (2011): (1) community building; (2) content creation; (3) connecting; and (4) content sharing.

3. Celebrity Endorser

Shimp (2003) explains that endorsers are advertising supporters or commonly referred to as advertising stars who support advertised products. Meanwhile, celebrities are well-known figures or models who are known for their achievements in different fields from the products they support. Wijaya & Suasih (2020) mentioned that celebrity can actually be used as a marketing tool that is quite powerful to attract consumers. Thus, it is undeniable that celebrity endorsers are a very creative way of conveying messages in order to get higher attention and be remembered. Carroll (2009) defines a celebrity endorser as any person with widespread notoriety who uses this notoriety to promote a consumer good or brand by sharing the screen with him in an advertisement. Kotler & Keller (2009) suggest that there are three indicators that celebrity endorsers should have, namely (1) Expertise; (2) Trustworthiness; and (3) Ability to be liked (liability).

4. Brand Image

Brands will distinguish a product/service from competitors' products. A strong brand entity id will create a competitive advantage, a brand known by buyers will encourage repeat purchases. According to Kotler and Keller (2009: 332), a brand's image is an impression that consumers have of a product or service that is created by the message and consumer experience surrounding the product or service. Meanwhile, Tjiptono (2011) added that brand image is a consumer belief in a certain brand. Simamora (2004); Keller (2003) mentions three components included in the brand image component, namely: (1) product image; (2) user image; and (3) corporate image.

5. Interest in Continuing Studies

Slameto (2010) noted that interest is fundamentally acceptance of a relationship between oneself with something that is outside the self. The stronger the relationship or proximity, the greater the interest. According to Sardiman (2011), interest is defined as the tendency of the individual's soul towards an object or desire and interest to do the best thing or activity because it is based on the need for it. Agus (1994) noted that interest in continuing education is the purpose to devote time, energy, and effort to assimilate and combine the knowledge, skills, and information we obtain from a variety of channels. Slameto (2010) emphasized that there are six indicators of interest in continuing studies, including: (1) happiness; (2) desire; (3) attention; (4) needs; (5) hope; and (6) encouragement and will.

6. Framework

The conceptual framework in this research is presented in Figure 1.

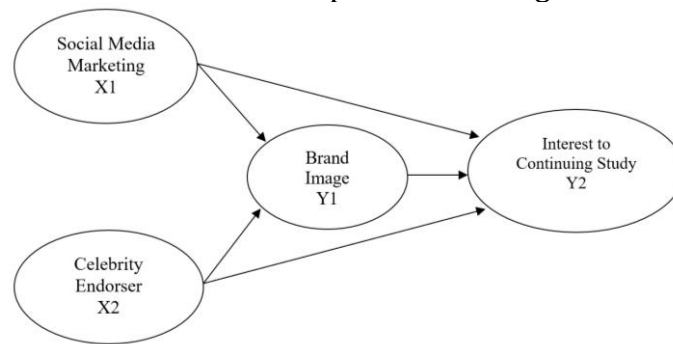


Figure 1. Research Framework

Method

This study uses quantitative explanatory research to demonstrate how several factors are related to one another. The objects studied in this study are prospective students of the class of 2022 at Executive Hospitality International RTO. The number of prospective students who have been recorded is 93 people who are the population of this study. Census sampling was used as the sampling technique for this study, and 93 people made up the sample. Questionnaires that have been validated and reviewed for reliability are used to collect data. Furthermore, the collected data was analyzed with the SEM-PLS technique using SmartPLS tools. Indicators of each research variables described as follow as Table 1.

Table 1. Indicators of Research Variables

No	Variables	Indicators
1.	Social media marketing (X1)	a. Content creation (x1.1) b. Content sharing (x1.2) c. Connecting (x1.3) d. Community building (x1.4)
2.	Celebrity endorser (X2)	a. Expertise (x2.1) b. Trustworthiness (x2.2) c. Liability (x2.3)
3.	Brand image (Y1)	a. Corporate image (y1.1) b. User image (y1.2) c. Product image (y1.3)
4.	Interest to continuing study (Y2)	a. Feeling of pleasure towards RTO or the products provided (y2.1) b. Desire to joint RTO (y2.2) c. The attention given by prospective students to RTO and the products offered by RTO (y2.3) d. There are social and economic here are social and economic needs, both primary and secondary, for the products produced when joining or after joining RTO (y2.4) e. There is hope for continuing education in order to deepen theory and practical experience (y2.5) f. There is encouragement and willingness both internally and externally to join and continue studies at RTO (y2.6)

Results and Discussion

Outer Model Measurement

The evaluation of the outer model, also known as the measurement model, which is a stage to assess the validity and reliability of a construct, is how the initial stage of the PLS computation is carried out. The PLS measuring model includes four construct validity and reliability tests: Convergent Validity, Discriminant Validity, Composite Reliability, and Cronbach's Alpha.

Convergent Validity

Convergent validity is concerned with the indicators of a construct and seeks to determine the reliability of each correlation between the indicators and the latent variables or constructs. Utilizing outer loading, convergent validity is evaluated. The following table is the result of loading factor analysis on each variable indicator in this study.

Table 2. Convergent Validity Test Results

Code of Indicator	Social Media Marketing	Celebrity Endorser	Brand Image	Interest in Continuing Studies
x1.1	0.907			
x1.2	0.938			
x1.3	0.920			
x1.4	0.919			
x2.1		0.947		
x2.2		0.929		
x2.3		0.901		
y1.1			0.927	
y1.2			0.933	
y1.3			0.916	
y2.1				0.872
y2.2				0.880
y2.3				0.886
y2.4				0.783
y2.5				0.845
y2.6				0.845

Source: Primary Data Processing Results, 2022

In line with the value of each construct in Table 2 above shows that each construct in this study, namely social media marketing, celebrity endorsers, brand image, and interest in continuing studies can it is said to be valid with the obtained value being greater than the critical value of validity (> 0.7).

Discriminant Validity

The square root of the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) of each construct is compared to correlations between other constructs in the model to determine the discriminant validity of SmartPLS. The comparison in this instance is presented using cross loading values from the findings of the discriminant validity study.

Table 3. Discriminant Validity Test Results

Code of Indicators	Social Media Marketing	Celebrity Endorser	Brand Image	Interest in Continuing Studies
x1.1	0.907	0.355	0.276	0.478
x1.2	0.938	0.441	0.379	0.546
x1.3	0.920	0.499	0.429	0.521
x1.4	0.919	0.423	0.363	0.538
x2.1	0.440	0.947	0.485	0.496
x2.2	0.409	0.929	0.403	0.420
x2.3	0.460	0.901	0.362	0.401
y1.1	0.352	0.408	0.927	0.674
y1.2	0.395	0.477	0.933	0.659
y1.3	0.354	0.378	0.916	0.714
y2.1	0.499	0.263	0.488	0.827
y2.2	0.544	0.363	0.581	0.880
y2.3	0.531	0.424	0.616	0.886
y2.4	0.472	0.433	0.695	0.783
y2.5	0.376	0.493	0.662	0.845
y2.6	0.442	0.411	0.650	0.845

Source: Primary Data Processing Results, 2022

The discriminant validity value based on the cross-loading results addressed in table 3 above proves that the value of the indicator index coefficient on each construct is greater based on its model on the block which is the same when compared to other constructs. Thus, each construct in this study based on the results of the discriminant validity test was declared valid.

Composite Reliability and Cronbach Alpha

The composite reliability and Cronbach's alpha tests in this study are used to assess a construct's reliability based on the degree of consistency, accuracy, and correctness of the instrument used to measure the construct. The findings of the analysis using Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability are shown in the following table.

Table 4. Composite Reliability and Cronbach's Alpha Test

Variables	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	Composite Reliability
Social Media Marketing	0.940	0.945	0.957
Celebrity Endorser	0.917	0.934	0.947
Brand Image	0.916	0.916	0.947
Interest in Continuing Studies	0.917	0.919	0.936

Source: Primary Data Processing Results, 2022

All constructions have composite reliability values and cronbach's alpha values above 0.70, with the lowest value being 0.916, as seen in the above table of data. As a result, based on the degree of precision, consistency, and accuracy of the instrument in measuring good constructs, all the constructs in this study are dependable.

Inner Model Evaluation

The goal of the inner model evaluation is to determine whether there is a direct or indirect relationship between the measured variables used in hypothesis tests. The route coefficient value, which represents an estimated path relationship value in a structural model that was derived using the bootstrapping method. In this study, the inner model was evaluated in stages, including path analysis, indirect impacts, and R-square evaluation of the structural model, all of which are discussed below.

Structural Model Evaluation through R-Square

By using the R-square test results or the value of the coefficient of determination to explain the ability of some free variables to impact bound variables, the structural receipt model is evaluated. In this instance, the value of the coefficient of determination in the following table explains the ability of social media marketing and celebrity endorsers to spread influence on brand image as well as the influence of social media marketing and celebrity endorsers to spread interest in further research.

Table 5. R-square Test Results

Variables	R Square	R Square Adjusted
Brand Image	0.250	0.234
Interest in Continuing Studies	0.636	0.624

Source: Primary Data Processing Results, 2022

The table of R-square test results above shows that the brand image value is 0.250 which explains that the ability of the social media marketing and celebrity endorser variables in influencing the brand image variable in this study is at 25 percent, while the remaining 75 percent is influenced or explained by variations in other variables outside the analysis model. The effectiveness of the social media marketing and celebrity endorser variables to influence the interest variables to continue studying was further explained by the interest value of continuing studies of 0.636, which was 63.6 percent. While fluctuations in other factors outside the model affect the remaining 36,4%.

Path Analysis and Hypothesis Testing

In this work, the t-statistic value and the original sample were used to perform bootstrapping operations through path coefficients for the purpose of testing the hypotheses. The t-statistical value must be bigger than the value of the t-table distribution in order for the hypothesis criteria to be met. The two-tailed null hypothesis (0.05) in this investigation has a t-table value of 1.661. Meanwhile, the original sample value is used to determine the direction of the hypothesis relationship. The results of the path coefficient test are shown in the table below.

Table 6. Path Coefficient Test Results

Path	Original Sample	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistic (IO/STDEVI)	P Values
Social Media Marketing→ Brand Image	0.235	0.233	0.102	2.306	0.021
Celebrity Endorser→ Brand Image	0.345	0.349	0.107	3.212	0.001
Social Media Marketing→ Interest in Continuing Studies	0.302	0.294	0.102	2.953	0.003
Celebrity Endorser→ Interest in Continuing Studies	0.069	0.069	0.086	0.810	0.418
Brand Image→ Interest in Continuing Studies	0.586	0.589	0.082	7.125	0.000

Source: Primary Data Processing Results, 2022

Based on the path coefficient test results in table 5.13 above, all original sample values in each influence between variables are positive. However, the following is a description of the relationship between each variable presented in the table above.

(1) Based on the original sample value of 0.235 for the brand image, social media marketing had a favorable influence. The connection was deemed to have a significant impact based on a p value of 0.021 (0.05) and a t-count value of 2.306 that is higher than the t-table value of 1.661.

(2) Based on the first sample value of 0.345, there is a favorable influence on the link between celebrity endorser variables on brand image. Furthermore, a p value of 0.001 0.05 and a t-statistical value greater than the value of the t-table, which is 3,212 > 1,661, both indicate that the association between the two variables has a substantial impact.

(3) Based on the original sample value of 0.302 and the reduced p value of 0.003 from 0.05 with a t-statistical value of 2.953 > 1.661, it is evident that the social media marketing variable has a positive and substantial impact on the interest in continuing the study.

(4) As shown by the p-values of 0.418 greater than 0.05 and the t-statistical value of 0.810, which is smaller than the t-table value of 1.661, celebrity endorsers have no impact on interest in further investigations.

(5) Based on the initial sample value of 0.586, there is a positive correlation between the brand image factors and the interest in furthering the study. Furthermore, a p value of 0.000 0.05 and a t-statistical value of 7.125, which is higher than the value of t-table 1,661, show that brand image has a considerable impact on the interest in further research.

Influence of Mediation

The purpose of mediation testing is to determine the indirect relationship between the variables of social media marketing and celebrity endorsers to the variables of interest in continuing studies through brand image addressed in the table following.

Table 7. Indirect Effect Test Results

Path	Original Sample	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistic (IO/STDEVI)	P Values
Social Media Marketing→ Brand Image→ Interest in Continuing Studies	0.138	0.136	0.062	2,228	0.026
Celebrity Endorser→ Brand Image→ Interest in Continuing Studies	0.202	0.207	0.075	2,693	0.007

Source: Primary Data Processing Results, 2022

The results of the mediation test based on the indirect effect value in table 7 above prove that:

- (1) Brand image is able to positively mediate the influence between the free variables of social media marketing on the interest in continuing the study based on the original sample value of 0.138. Furthermore, the indirect influence between the two variables was also expressed significantly through the brand image as evidenced by p values of $0.026 < 0.05$ with t-statistical value that greater than the t-table value, which is $2.228 > 1.661$.
- (2) There is significant positive indirect influence between the celebrity endorser variables on the interest in continuing studies through brand image as evidenced by a p value of 0.007 less than 0.05 with a statistical t-value of 2.693 greater than 1.661.

Discussion

Based on the successful use of social media to achieve marketing goals, the content created by Executive Hospitality International RTO must be attractive and able to represent the personality of the RTO in order to obtain trust of the target market. RTO must also have extensive connections on various social media and be able to form strong online community-based communities so that the content created is more quickly spread to the stratum of society as a target market. Thus, the better the marketing strategy through social media, the more positive the brand image of Executive Hospitality International RTO. Tjiptono (2011) and Kotler & Keller (2016) define social media marketing as online activities and programs that aim to engage customers or potential customers either directly or indirectly by promoting awareness, enhancing images, or driving sales of goods and services. The findings of the descriptive analysis supported the respondents' responses, which indicated that the respondents who predominated agreed with the use of celebrity endorsers by RTO that the endorsers had the qualities of expertise, dependability, and high liabilities in disseminating information related to Executive Hospitality International RTO. Thus, celebrities used to support RTO's brand image must prioritize product mastery and have a good image in the eyes of the public so that marketing goals can be achieved. In this case, the better the value embedded in the mind of the target market for celebrity endorsers, the more positive the brand image value of RTO Executive Hospitality International. This is in line with the results of interviews with several representatives of respondents who agreed that Executive Hospitality International RTO has a good image in the eyes of the public because of the artists nationally also recognizes that this RTO is feasible and good for the target market community to continue their studies at the RTO. The results of this study in line with the research conducted by Cholifah et al. (2016) that celebrity endorsers influence wardah's cosmetic brand image. Putri & Nasution (2021) also proved that celebrity endorsers affect brand image on products offered on Instagram. The use of social media in marketing products or services must be based on the

creativity of content creation and the ability of marketers to spread the content efficiently in order to be able to attract interest the consumers. Regarding consumer behavior, the content created and the way the content is disseminated must be able to create a feeling of excitement and interest in RTO because it can meet both his wants and needs so as to create an internal and external encouragement to join and continue his studies at Executive Hospitality International RTO. In line with Gunelius's (2011) opinion that with the match of information offered by marketers, consumers can pay attention, understand, and respond so as to cause interest in making purchases (Gunelius, 2011). Therefore, Laksamana (2018) mentioned that social media marketing is an essential strategy in influencing individual interests. Thus, the better the content created through social media, the more interest of prospective students to continue their studies at Executive Hospitality International RTO. Some previous research conducted by Kurniasari & Budiarmo (2018); Dahmiri (2020); Wijaya & Suasih (2020) also prove the same thing that there is a significant influence between social media marketing on individual interests. The results of this study showed that celebrity endorsers had no significant effect on continuing studies interest at Executive Hospitality International RTO. Contrary to its definition, celebrity endorsers are supporters of products or services offered by a company or institution (Shimp, 2003). In this case, the knowledge and suitability of the character and popularity of the artist used by RTO only acts as a resource person to introduce products or services to the public so that the public is aware of the existence of the RTO. The expertise, trustworthiness and liability of an artist have no effect on the interest of his target market to continue his studies at Executive Hospitality International RTO. The findings of this study support a previous study by Stephanie, et al. (2008) that found celebrity endorsements do not significantly affect interest. Accordingly, using celebrity endorsements to draw in customers must be more in line with the products being sold. However, the findings of this study are at odds with those of other earlier investigations that found that celebrity endorsers significantly influence people's interests, including Utarsih (2019), Algiffary et al. (2020), and Setyaningsih & Sugiyanto (2021). The result of the study also showed that there was a high interest of prospective students to continue their studies at RTO based on descriptive statistical analysis because the brand image of this RTO matched the target interest his market to continue his studies. In accordance with this, Zohra (2013) argued that the brand image function has evolved into one of the promotional tools that is crucial in piqueing consumer interest in the company's products. Therefore, there is greater interest to continue learning at Executive Hospitality International RTO the more positive the brand image. Regarding the results of this study, several previous studies such as those conducted by Menhard (2018), Perkasa & Putra (2020), proving that the interest in entering the college is influenced by the brand image owned by the college. In addition to having direct influence on the interest in continuing studies, marketing carried out by RTO using social media is able to influence indirectly on the interest in continuing study through brand image. The effective use of social media marketing shown from the creativity of marketing content creation, how to spread the content and the ability to build a large community can increase perceptions target market related to the advantages of RTO, the success of alumni, and positive products and services so that with a good brand image, it is certainly able to make consumers more interested and happy to explore more detailed information related to RTO to adjust the needs and desires of individuals as a basis for individual interest to continue their studies at Executive Hospitality International RTO. Brand image mediates the influence of celebrity endorsers in a significant positive way towards continuing studies at Executive Hospitality International RTO. This shows that the brand image in this study is a type of full mediation because the brand image fully affects the interest in continuing studies without any direct influence from celebrity endorsers. The fundamental responsibility of endorsers is to forge positive associations with the products they are endorsing so that consumers adopt a favorable attitude and advertising

may foster a favorable perception in their minds. In order to promote consumer interest in the advertised product or brand, celebrity credibility plays a critical part in shaping positive consumer perceptions of those products or brands. In this case, with a positive RTO brand image, it can very helpful to promote your products or services by using celebrity endorsers to increase interest in continued his studies at Executive Hospitality International RTO. Consideration of the increasingly positive quality or excellence of RTO, the success of alumni, and products and services will make it easier for RTO to use artists to become resource persons that supports and the products and services offered.

Conclusions

This study's conclusion that social media marketing has a substantial impact on brand image and interest in continuing the study at Executive Hospitality International RTO is based on the results of the data analysis and discussion of the influence between variables. Similarly, celebrity endorsement has a big impact on Executive Hospitality International RTO's brand image. Celebrity endorsers, however, have no discernible impact on the interest in further research. Additionally, it was established that RTO Executive Hospitality International's brand image had a substantial impact on students' interest in pursuing further education. The relationship between social media marketing and interest in further education is moderated by brand image. Significantly, it can be deduced that a favorable perception of the RTO brand in the public's mind can support marketing run through social media to pique the target market's interest in continuing his education at Executive Hospitality International RTO. Celebrity endorsements and interest in further education are influenced by brand image, which mediates this relationship. Significantly, it may be argued that while celebrity endorsers do not directly influence a person's desire in continuing their education, brand image can mediate the effect of celebrity endorsers on that interest at Executive Hospitality International RTO. Executive Hospitality International RTO is advised to focus more on improving quality based on consumer behavior and the current lifestyle needs of the community related to the world of work that matches educational offers so as not to be fully dependent on promotions in increasing interest in continuing studies. In addition, Executive Hospitality International RTO is advised to increase creativity in creating promotional content to a wide community online on social media to spread the promotional content. Celebrity selection needs to be done based on expertise, trustworthiness and good liability in promoting.

Regarding the lack of influence distributed by free variables on bound variables this study, researchers are further on similar topics advised to add other free variables based on consumer behavior theory to find out whether there is a difference in the increase in influence directly or indirectly between free variables and bound variables or not.

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Cite this article:

Putu Rana Janendra, I Gusti Ayu Wimba, & Putu Yudy Wijaya (2022). Antecedent Brand Image in Fostering Interest in Continuing Studies at Hospitality Training Institutions. *International Journal of Science and Business*, 16(1), 01-14. doi: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.7011824>

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