


THE INFLUENCE OF LOCAL SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION STRATEGIES ON REGISTRATION INTEREST IN SMART EKELENSIA INDONESIA

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Article Info	ABSTRACT
<p>Article history: Received April 29 , 2026 Revised May 16 , 2026 Accepted May 18 , 2026</p> <hr/> <p>Keywords: <i>Local SEO, Registration Interest, Digital Marketing</i></p>	<p>This study aims to examine the role of local Search Engine Optimization (SEO) in increasing prospective students' registration interest at Smart Ekselensia Indonesia. A quantitative approach was employed using a survey method involving 100 respondents selected through purposive sampling. The collected data were analyzed using simple linear regression with the assistance of IBM SPSS Statistics software. The results indicate that local SEO has a positive and statistically significant effect on registration interest. The coefficient of determination (R Square) value of 0.680 shows that 68% of the variation in registration interest can be explained by local SEO, while the remaining 32% is influenced by other factors beyond the scope of this study. These findings confirm that local search-based digital strategies play an important role in increasing prospective students' interest in the digital era.</p> <p><i>This is an open access article under the CC BY-SA license.</i></p> 
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INTRODUCTION

The increasing development of communication and information technology has changed the interaction patterns between educational institutions and the wider community (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2019). In a marketing context , visibility is a crucial factor influencing consumer interest (Kotler et al ., 2022). This also applies in the education sector , where digital marketing strategies are now spearheading the development of institutional brand awareness (Lestari & Pratama, 2023). This phenomenon has created a shift in consumer behavior , where information searches are no longer conducted conventionally , but rather through the optimization of digital devices that offer speed and data accuracy .

For educational institutions like Smart Ekselensia Indonesia, building strong visibility on search engine results pages is no longer just a creative idea , but a necessity *to* maintain relevance amidst fierce competition . One digital marketing instrument that is starting to gain significant attention is *Local Search Engine Optimization (SEO)*. Unlike conventional SEO strategies , Local SEO specifically focuses on optimizing the presence of entities based on specific geographic locations . Recent research shows that search engine optimization plays a crucial role in significantly influencing psychological factors and consumer decision-making processes (Hanny et al . , 2025).

However, despite the enormous potential for SEO, the reality on the ground shows that many educational institutions have not been able to maximize location-based digital features to convert public attention into real enrollment interest. There is often a gap between the availability of digital information and the search preferences of potential consumers. This statement is supported by previous studies that revealed that SEO effectiveness and website engagement have a direct impact on consumer purchasing behavior and interest (Al-Haraizah et al., 2024). Low visibility in local search results can have a direct impact on declining enrollment interest because it is difficult for potential applicants to find credible and accurate information (Wardana et al., 2024).

This research is urgently needed to examine in depth the extent to which the effectiveness of Local SEO strategies can influence the psychological aspects of potential consumers, namely registration interest. Interest is the initial determining stage before a final decision is taken, as confirmed in research that SEO has a strong influence in shaping consumer purchasing intentions (Erawan et al., 2025). By understanding this empirical relationship, Smart Ekselensia Indonesia can determine sharper priorities in allocating their digital marketing budget. Consequently, this study aims to examine and test the influence of Local SEO on registration interest at Smart Ekselensia Indonesia.

LIBRARY REVIEW

Registration Interest

Enrollment interest is a psychological phase in the customer decision-making process, where people show a tendency to choose a particular educational institution after evaluating information. According to Kotler and Keller, interest is a form of behavioral intention before actual action is taken (Kotler et al., 2022). In the educational context, this interest does not arise instantly, but rather through stages of information search and alternative evaluation (Rahmadhana & Ekowati, 2022). For service institutions such as Smart Ekselensia, prospective consumers require very comprehensive information because educational services have a high risk of uncertainty. Therefore, the availability of credible digital data is a key determining factor (Sakti, 2026). Indicators of enrollment interest in this study include: interest in seeking information, intention to visit the institution, and willingness to recommend the institution to others (Sakti, 2024).

Local Search Engine Optimization (SEO)

Search Engine Optimization (SEO) is a digital approach used to strengthen an entity's visibility in location-based search results. Optimizing the visibility of digital assets to appear at the top of search results based on a specific geographic location. This strategy is crucial for institutions that rely on proximity to potential audiences (Lema et al., 2025). Local SEO serves as a primary reference for prospective applicants in quickly assessing an institution's accessibility and credibility.

High visibility in local searches builds a perception of trust in the eyes of the public. Institutions that are easily found in search engines tend to be viewed as professional and exhibit a lower level of risk (Tito et al., 2025). Local SEO indicators in this study include: ease of finding in local search results, accuracy of location information, and superior visibility compared to competing institutions (Igo & Sakti, nd).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study was conducted with an associative quantitative study to empirically measure the strength of the relationship and influence between variables . Local SEO on Registration Interest . The subjects in this study consisted of individuals or prospective registrants within the reach of Smart Ekselensia services. The number of samples determined was one hundred people who answered . The sampling technique was carried out purposively which is included in the non-probability sampling category , namely the selection of respondents based on the criteria of having searched for school information online (Sugiyono , 2014).

Data Collection and Analysis Procedures

Data were obtained through an electronic questionnaire , called Google Form, with a five- level Likert scale . Data analysis was carried out in several stages using the SPSS statistical program . Testing , including :

1. Instrument testing includes validity and reliability testing .
2. Classical assumption testing includes normality testing .
3. Simple linear regression analysis is used to assess the influence of independent variables .
4. Hypothesis testing is carried out using the t-test (partial) and the coefficient of determination (R²).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Characteristics Respondent Penelitian

Data relating to the characteristics of the respondents , including the research subjects , were collected to provide a demographic profile of the research subjects . A total of 100 questionnaires were successfully collected from residents residing in the Bogor Regency area .

Table 1. Identity of research subjects

No	Hearing	Choice	Frequency	Percent
1	Gender	Man	50	50%
		Women	50	50%
Total			100	100%
4	Criteria Response	Ever Searched for Smart Ekselensia Indonesia School	100	100%
		Understanding Smart Excellence in Indonesia	100	100%
Total			100	100%

Source: Processed data for 2026

The research findings show that the research subjects were classified into two categories based on gender , namely male and female . Based on the composition , the research participants came from diverse gender backgrounds . It is hoped that this diversity will provide a more comprehensive understanding of educational information search behavior through search engines , especially in relation to interest in registering for Smart Ekselensia Indonesia .

Validity Testing on Variable X

Validity testing is used to measure the accuracy of each statement item in representing the variables studied . This analysis is carried out by comparing the correlation coefficient value of each indicator against the minimum limit *value* at a predetermined significance level . With 100 participants , the reference value used in this study is 0.196.

Table 2. Validity Test Results

Variables	component question	Correlation Coefficient	Minimum Limit	Status
SEO Local (X1)	Indicator	Correlation Coefficient	Minimum Limit	Status
	Indicator 1	0,196	0,196	Meet the criteria
	Indicator 2	0,196	0,196	Meet the criteria
	Indicator 3	0,196	0,196	Meet the criteria
	Indicator 4	0,196	0,196	Meet the criteria
	Indicator 5	0,196	0,196	Meet the criteria
	Indicator 6	0,196	0,196	Meet the criteria
	Indicator 7	0,196	0,196	Meet the criteria
	Indicator 8	0,196	0,196	Meet the criteria
	Indicator 9	0,196	0,196	Meet the criteria
Indicator 10	0,196	0,196	Meet the criteria	
Registration Interest (Y)	Indicator 1	0,771	0,191	Meet the criteria
	Indicator 2	0,833	0,191	Meet the criteria
	Indicator 3	0,766	0,191	Meet the criteria
	Indicator 4	0,713	0,191	Meet the criteria
	Indicator 5	0,793	0,191	Meet the criteria
	Indicator 6	0,721	0,191	Meet the criteria
	Indicator 7	0,718	0,191	Meet the criteria
	Indicator 8	0,731	0,191	Meet the criteria
	Indicator 9	0,872	0,191	Meet the criteria
	Indicator 10	0,776	0,191	Meet the criteria

The empirical results show that the results of the data processing of the test results show that all indicators have correlation coefficient values that exceed the minimum limit that has been set . This indicates that each statement item has been able to represent the research variables well , so that it can be used in the next analysis stage .

Reliable Test

Reliability testing is used to assess the level of stability of an instrument in measuring research variables . An instrument is declared reliable if the measurement results show a high level of stability .

Table 3. Reliability Test Results

component	Cronbach's Alpha coefficient	Explanation
Local SEO (X1)	0,94	Realistic
Registration Interest (Y)	0,93	Realistic

Source: Processed data for 2026

Reliability testing is performed to evaluate how consistent a research instrument is . Based on the reliability coefficient value obtained, the test results indicate that the instrument exhibits a good level of internal consistency . Therefore , all statement items can be used repeatedly without reducing the level of reliability of the measurement results .

Normality Testing

Normality testing is performed to ensure that the data in the study are distributed according to statistical assumptions . This testing is important as a basis for determining the feasibility of further analysis .

Table 4. Normality Test Results

Amount of data		100
track -track ^a	Mean	.0000000
	Std. Deviation	4.21035218
maximum difference	standard deviation	0,072
	positive value	0,061
	tends to be negative	-0,072
test statistics		0,072
as well as the test statistic value and significance		0,200 ^{c,d}

Source: Processed data for 2026

The test results show that the residuals have a distribution pattern that is in accordance with the assumption that normality has been fulfilled , indicated by a significance value that exceeds the established limit , so it is suitable for use in subsequent analysis .

Testing the Coefficient of Determination

The coefficient of determination is used to measure the extent to which the independent variable is able to explain variations in the dependent variable .

Table 5. Summary of Determination Coefficient Results

Research model	correlation coefficient (R)	R Square value	Adjusted R ² Value	standard error of the estimate
Model 1	0.825 ^a	0.680	0.676	4.21

Source : Data processed by SPSS for Windows v.25 (2026)

The determination value obtained from these results indicates that the independent variable provides a significant contribution in explaining variations in the dependent variable, while the rest is influenced by other factors outside the research model. Furthermore, the standard error value of the estimate is 4.21, this regression model is considered quite precise in predicting because the level of data distribution is small. registration interest.

Simple Regression Testing

Linear regression analysis is used to evaluate the relationship between independent variables and dependent variables, as well as to determine the direction of the influence that occurs.

Estimation Components						
Analysis Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficient	T-value	Significant Value
		Coefficient Value	Standard Error	Relative Coefficient		
Model 1	Permanent	4.040	3.324		2.52	0.013
	Local SEO	0.83	0.064	0.825	13.06	.000
Source : Data processed by SPSS for Windows v.25 (2026)						

Empirical findings show that the results of data processing using the following regression equation can be obtained using SPSS:

$$Y = 4,040 + 0,830X$$

The resulting regression model illustrates a positive relationship between the variables studied. This indicates that an increase in the independent variable will be followed by an increase in the dependent variable.

1. Constant 4,040: The constant value indicates that if the Local SEO indicator is assumed to remain constant or not change, then the basic score of Registration Interest on Smart Ekselensia Indonesia already has a positive value of 4,040.
2. Regression Coefficient (0.830): A positive and unidirectional relationship is indicated by the regression coefficient of 0.830. This means that every unit increase in effectiveness in the Local SEO strategy will be followed by an increase in Registration Interest of 0.830 units. A positive coefficient indicates that the more optimal the management of location-based digital visibility, the more registration interest will tend to increase significantly.

T -test

The t - test is conducted to determine the influence of each independent variable on the dependent variable.

Table 6. Partial Parameter Estimation

Estimation Components						
Analysis Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficient	T - value	Significant Value
		Coefficient Value	Standard Error	Relative Coefficient		
Model 1	Permanent	4.040	3.324		2.52	0.013
	Local SEO (X1)	0.83	0.064	0.825	13.06	.000
Source : Data processed by SPSS for Windows v.25 (2026)						

Empirical findings show that After the data is processed in Table 6, the regression equation is found : $Y = 4.040 + 0.830X$. The constant value is 4.040 m indicating that if the Local SEO variable is considered constant , then Registration Interest already has a positive baseline value . The regression coefficient of 0.830 indicates a positive relationship , where any increase in the quality of local SEO implementation will be followed by a significant increase in registration interest .

F Test

he F test is used to evaluate the overall suitability of the model in describing the relationship between variables .

Table 6. F Test Results

ANOVA ^a						
Model elements		Whole Square	Degrees of Freedom	Rate-rate	F statistic	Significance Value
Element 1	Regression	3012.45	1	3012,45	14,46	0.000 ^b
	Residual	1417.55	98	14,46		
	Total	4430.00	99			

Source : Data processed by SPSS for Windows v.25 (2026)

These results confirm that the model used has a good level of suitability and is capable of explaining the relationship between independent and dependent variables simultaneously .

Conclusion

Based on the results of the analysis that has been carried out , it can be formulated with the following conclusion that the *Local Search Engine Optimization* (SEO) strategy has a crucial role in determining the dynamics of interest in registering at Smart Ekselensia Indonesia. The results of statistical tests prove that there is a partially positive and significant impact , where the effectiveness of location- based search engine optimization contributes 68 % to increasing the interest of prospective students . This confirms that the higher the digital visibility of an institution on a local scale , the stronger the attraction and trust of the community to register .

Thus , strengthening location- based digital assets is no longer just an option , but a strategic necessity in educational marketing management in the era of digital transformation .

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