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# Outdated Curricula or Outdated Perceptions? Unpacking SPM Leavers’ Views on Marketing Diploma Relevance in Malaysia’s Digital Era

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## **Abstract**

The rise in the digital economy and the subsequent demand in niche positions like TikTok Specialists and Shopee marketers have increased exponentially, however, formal marketing diploma enrollment has experienced an estimated 25-35% drop. This paper explores the behavioural theory of SPM graduates in obtaining a marketing diploma by directly looking at the perception of the curriculum as being outdated or simply that an enrollment is being discouraged by subjective factors. The study is based on the Theory of Planned Behaviour and considers the respondent data of 343 participants. The descriptive statistics indicate high scores on perceived relevance of contemporary skills, including preparation in E-commerce positions (M=4.13) and practical advertising in Tik Tok (M=4.11).

There are, however, critical blockades when it comes to time and economical survival. Results show that students appreciate the content but strongly believe that taking two years courses is a time wastage compared to fast and easy online courses (M=3.88). In addition, the paper also determines that economic stress due to family income of less than RM5,000 (M=4.15) is the main reason pushing students out of long-term education and straight into the immediate income of the gig-economy. These findings are important in making it clear that the enrollment crisis is not a curriculum content problem, but a program length and financial urgency disjunction of the Gen Z. The research highlights the role of implementing micro-credentials and industrial relations in terms of assuring the digitization of the Malaysian economy through the RM15 billion to be could be sustained by HR workforce that is trained and well-equipped.

**Keywords :** *Digital marketing, Enrollment decline, Curriculum reform, Enrollment intention, Perceived curriculum advance.*

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