

# Digital Content Marketing Strategy and Institutional Image of a Private Catholic Institution in the Philippines

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## Abstract

Digital content marketing can be a powerful tool for educational institutions to cultivate positive image. This study aims to investigate the correlation between a private Catholic school's digital content marketing strategies and institutional image. Six attributes of digital content marketing which are information quality, credibility, usefulness, positive emotions, interactivity, and self-congruity and five dimensions of institutional image were used in this research. This quantitative correlational research gathered data from 333 students of the institution. These respondents are selected

through stratified random sampling. For the results, digital content marketing strategy was found to be moderately effective and the image is moderately favorable. There were also significant positive correlations among all the six attributes of digital content marketing strategy, the strongest being links involving information usefulness, positive emotions, and self-congruity. The results underscore the significance of well-thought-of digital content strategy to brand image building. Marketers should come up with contents that are practical, evoke positive feelings, and aligned with the audiences' values.

**Keywords:** *Catholic schools, digital content marketing, institutional image, student perceptions*

## INTRODUCTION

Schools or educational institutions can employ digital marketing to foster positive image, attract prospective students and parents, and cultivate stronger relationships with its stakeholders. In fact, digital marketing strategies have become crucial today when interaction, information, and decision making are heavily influenced by online platforms (Szymanski, 2019). Digital marketing also contributes to school visibility and attractiveness, according to Bungai et al. (2024) while Silva et al. (2024) said that personalized content supports a wider reach and collaboration. Moreover, Saputra and Aras (2024) found that well-



designed digital campaigns build reputation and institutional image. These findings underscore the crucial role of effective digital contents in building a school's image in the online landscape.

A well-defined digital content marketing approach grounded in a thorough understanding of target audiences, marketing goals, and the institution's unique context is essential and offers multiple advantages for schools. Now that many rely on digital platforms for information about schools and their offerings and programs, these educational institutions should pay closer attention to creating content that is high-quality, credible, useful, emotionally positive, engaging, and aligned with the self-image of the audiences.

The study of Perera, Nguyen, and Nayak (2023) highlights the importance of strategically designed online content as a key factor to achieve authentic engagement and positive brand perception in the academic sector. Global studies discussed above point to how digital marketing can cultivate school visibility, reputation, and collaboration. However, they raise the question of how do such strategies apply in the Philippine education setting, particularly in a Catholic institution like San Sebastian College Recoletos de Cavite (SSC-RdC), where Catholic traditions meets modern communication demands. This study addresses that gap.

San Sebastian College Recoletos de Cavite is a private Catholic educational institution in Cavite City, Philippines that actively uses digital content marketing strategy across multiple platforms to promote its program offerings, reach and interact with audiences, and build favorable school image. However, an evaluation of the effectiveness of these strategies and their effects on the institution's image is not yet investigated. The purpose of this study is to bridge this gap by studying the correlation between the effectiveness of digital content marketing strategies of San Sebastian College Recoletos de Cavite and the perceived image of the institution among its senior high school and college students.

Digital content marketing involves creating and distributing relevant and valuable brand-related content across digital platforms to develop favorable brand engagement, trust, and relationships (Hollebeek & Macky, 2019). The six attributes of digital content marketing strategy, taken from the study of [Tyrväinen et al. \(2023\)](#) and its definitions are as follows: **information quality** pertains to the accuracy, completeness, and relevance of the information presented in the content; **information credibility** refers to the believability and trustworthiness of the information source; **information usefulness** is the value and practicality of the information in the target audience's perspective; **positive emotions** mean the extent to which the content evokes positive feelings and emotions in the audience, such as joy, excitement, inspiration, and happiness; **interactivity** is the level of engagement and interaction facilitated by the content; and **self-congruity** is the extent to which the content aligns with the individual's values, beliefs, and self-image.

Li (2022) defines brand image as the perceived value of a brand from the consumers' perspective. In this study, the term "institutional image" will be used to specifically refer to how SSC-RdC's image is perceived by its students. The five dimensions of institutional image are based on the study of [Khairani et al. \(2023\)](#) and definitions are: **trustworthiness** reflects the level of trust and confidence students have in the institution; the second dimension, **achievements**, is the perceived success and accomplishments of the institution, both academically and in other areas; **alumni achievements** include the successes and accomplishments of the institution's alumni; finally, **student achievements** are the academic and other achievements of the current student body, **social responsibility** means the perceived commitment of the institution to social and environmental responsibility. Additionally, the study of [Phan, Le, Duong and Phan \(2024\)](#) implies that the involvement of an educational institution in outreach activities is one of the key factors that contribute to a better image.

Research on digital content marketing in educational settings has identified several attributes that influence how institutions are perceived. The following review of related studies synthesizes existing literature in the said area of study.



### ***Information Quality and Image***

Based on Chen et al. (2024), good quality of information equates to a stronger brand image. Similarly, Mañosca et al. (2022) highlighted that content marketing strategies that are relevant and consistent lead to a better brand image. Moreover, while the volume of contents seems appealing, Rohman et al. (2024) introduce the concept of “content shock” which states that too much frequency of content posted can result to negative brand perceptions among the audience. These findings highlight the focus on the assurance that digital contents that are consistently accurate, complete, relevant and delivered in a way that an organization’s image will be positively perceived.

### ***Information Credibility and Image***

Both studies of Jafarova and Tolon (2022) and Barkah et al. (2022) state that credibility enhances brand image. However, they emphasize different views. Jafarova and Tolon highlight audience perception of reliability, while Barkah et al. emphasizes its indirect influence through brand value. Therefore, credibility builds trust and develops perceived institutional image. It is a must for schools competing in a crowded market.

### ***Information Usefulness and Image***

According to Garg and Pandey (2021), valuable marketing-driven information can be developed through credible and the quality information. This often leads to a stronger brand image which underscores that information usefulness can lead to increase the audiences’ trust towards the brand.

### ***Positive Emotions and Image***

Social media contents that evoke positive emotions is another crucial factor in cultivating a strong brand image. Saleem et al. (2022) states that a consistent content marketing and active social media presence positively influenced their audiences, leading to increased enrolment even during the COVID-19 pandemic. Moreover, Kong and Zhang (2024) found that brands improving their image and market competitiveness focus on emotionally positive contents while effectively addressing negative emotions. Therefore, brands should focus more on creating contents that brings out positive feelings to develop their image and consumer relationships. All findings suggest that emotionally positive digital contents play a important role in shaping audience perceptions of institutional image. This supports the objective of the study to investigate the correlation between positive emotion and institutional image.

### ***Interactivity and Image***

Research of He et al. (2021) discovered a positive correlation between customer interaction and participation, and other brand-owned content marketing strategies like conversation, storytelling, with consumer’s brand personality perceptions and attitudes. This agrees with Barreda et al.’s (2020) results that social media interactivity, combined with rewards, promote positive brand image. Furthermore, Dabbous and Barakat (2020) emphasize the importance of company-users’ interactivity and content quality on social media for Millennials, as it fosters online engagement and brand awareness. Brands should focus creating engaging, high-quality content to enhance their brand image and drive consumer behavior. These findings collectively agrees that fostering interactivity within digital content marketing strategies is a main driver in creating positive brand perceptions and attitudes, including a stronger brand image, which are in line with the objective of the current research project.

### ***Self-Congruity and Image***

Self-congruity influences brand image and consumer behavior. Studies suggest that when content is in line with audiences’ values and self-image, engagement and trust also increase as well. Shan et al.



(2020) show that a strong alignment between social media influencer's image and the consumer's ideal self-image contributes to effective endorsement results. Similarly, Bargoni et al. (2024) stated that a smaller perceived gap between brand personality and self-image increases customer engagement and purchase intention. Moreover, Luna-Cortes (2021) show that self-congruity leads to positive perception of the destination brand and its positive social media content. To effectively utilize this, brands should align their social media content with the self-images of their target audiences to cultivate stronger brand relationships. These results support the broader belief that when consumers perceive a congruence between digital content marketing strategy (using social media influencers or promoting a destination) and their own self-image, there will be positive outcomes.

Taken collectively, existing studies support that digital content marketing significantly influence institutional image through six interrelated attributes: quality, credibility, usefulness, positive emotions, interactivity, and self-congruity. While global studies demonstrate consistent patterns, a gap still remains in understanding how these dynamics operate within SSC-RdC.

This study addresses that gap by correlating digital content marketing strategies employed by SSC-RdC and the image of the institution among its senior high school and college students. Specifically, the aim of this study is to find out: the degree of effectiveness of the digital content marketing strategies of SSC-RdC in terms of information quality, information credibility, information usefulness, positive emotions, interactivity, and self-congruity; the institutional image of SSC-RdC on the basis of trustworthiness, achievements, social responsibility, alumni achievements, and student achievements; and the correlation between digital content marketing strategy effectiveness and the institutional image of SSC-RdC.

## **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

To test the relationship between the variables being studied, a quantitative correlation research design was utilized. Through this, a comprehensive examination of how SSC-RdC's digital strategy develop student perceptions was conducted. From a total student population of 1,972, Slovin's formula determined a sample size of 333, proportionally distributed among senior high school strands and college programs. The researchers used stratified random sampling where in the strata that was used is the strand or program the students belong.

A self-made survey questionnaire based on the reviewed studies will be used for data collection. The survey is divided into two parts. The first part assesses the effectiveness of SSC-RdC's digital content marketing strategy using 24 statements across six dimensions, presented in a shuffled order to encourage unbiased responses. The second part explores students' perceived institutional image through 19 shuffled statements covering the five dimensions. Both sections utilize a four-point Likert-type scale with the following values: 4 – Strongly Agree, 3 – Agree, 2 – Disagree and 1 – Strongly Disagree.

Prior to data collection, the survey underwent content validation by three subject matter experts using the Lawshe Content Validation Questionnaire and reliability testing via Cronbach's Alpha. Data was gathered from respondents through online surveys for three weeks. All collected data were treated with strict confidentiality. Mean was employed to answer the first and second research questions and Spearman Rank Correlation will be used for the third.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section provides answers to the research questions from the analyses the of gathered data regarding San Sebastian College-Recoletos de Cavite's digital marketing strategy effectiveness. It also evaluates the school's image as perceived by its students and how these two factors are interconnected.

**Table 1**

*Degree of Effectiveness of Digital Content Marketing Strategy*

Dimensions	Mean	Degree of Effectiveness
Information Quality	2.95	Moderate
Information Credibility	2.95	Moderate
Information Usefulness	3.16	Moderate
Positive Emotion	3.10	Moderate
Interactivity	2.88	Moderate
Self-Congruity	3.06	Moderate
<b>Overall Effectiveness</b>	<b>3.02</b>	<b>Moderate</b>

The senior high school and college students of SSC-RdC viewed the institution's digital strategy as "moderately effective". The table also shows that information usefulness garnered the highest level of effectiveness while interactivity is the lowest. Not reaching the highest degree means that these areas must be addressed to improve overall effectiveness and audience engagement. This result is in line with the research by Tyrvaïnen et al. (2023) about high-quality content is linked to brand trust.

**Table 2**

*Perceived Image of the Institution*

Dimensions	Mean	Interpretation
Trustworthiness	3.15	Moderately Favorable
Achievements	2.98	Moderately Favorable
Social Responsibility	3.20	Moderately Favorable
Alumni Achievements	3.17	Moderately Favorable
Student Achievements	3.16	Moderately Favorable
<b>Overall Image</b>	<b>3.13</b>	<b>Moderately Favorable</b>

Table 2 shows the overall mean of 3.13 which implies that the students hold a moderately favorable view of SSC-RdC's image. It is also notable in the results that the school's social responsibility through its various community outreach projects are noticed and appreciated by the student body. However, efforts in communicating the school's success stories and achievements to its audiences represent an area of improvement. Bungai et al. (2024) and Saputra and Aras (2023) works were similar to the current study regarding achievement-focused marketing can help foster brand image.

**Table 3***Correlation for Information Quality and Institutional Image*

		Information Quality	Institutional Image
Information Quality	Spearman's rho	—	
	df	—	
	p-value	—	
Institutional Image	Spearman's rho	0.583 ***	—
	df	327	—
	p-value	< .001	—

Note. \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$

Table 3 shows a significant correlation ( $\rho = 0.538$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) of information quality and favorable image, it reinforces the notion that a complete and relevant digital content can help achieve positive perceptions towards an institution. A similar study Chen et al. (2024) also found a direct relation between information integrity and brand power. Adding to that, the study of Mañosca et al. (2022) found that high-value and coherent content is crucial for shaping the markets' perception of the brand.

**Table 4***Correlation for Information Credibility and Institutional Image*

		Information Credibility	Institutional Image
Information Credibility	Spearman's rho	—	
	df	—	
	p-value	—	
Institutional Image	Spearman's rho	0.516 ***	—
	df	327	—
	p-value	< .001	—

Note. \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$

Moving on to Table 4, it shows a significant link between trustworthiness of information and the school's reputation ( $\rho = 0.516$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) and this means that when digital contents are deemed believable, it can elevate the image in its audiences' views. This supports the findings of Jafarova and Tolon (2022) that proved that online content's believability is a primary driver of positive brand perception and of Barkah, Pebrianti, and Mutari (2022) who noted in their work that the impact of content marketing is most profound when the information is deemed credible and high-value.

**Table 5***Correlation for Information Usefulness and Institutional Image*

		Information Usefulness	Institutional Image
Information Usefulness	Spearman's rho	—	
	df	—	

		Information Usefulness	Institutional Image
	p-value	—	
Institutional Image	Spearman's rho	0.735 ***	—
	df	327	—
	p-value	< .001	—

Note. \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$

Data on Table 5 reveals a very strong positive relationship ( $\rho = 0.735$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) between valuable and practical contents and the reputation of SSC-RdC. This shows that if the students find the contents to be useful, it can lead to a more favorable institutional image. The results of the work of Garg and Pandey (2021) who identified perceived usefulness as a crucial element that transforms a content into a powerful tool to foster audience trust and brand strength is similar to the results of this current investigation.

**Table 6**

*Correlation for Positive Emotion and Institutional Image*

		Positive Emotion	Institutional Image
Positive Emotion	Spearman's rho	—	
	Df	—	
	p-value	—	
Institutional Image	Spearman's rho	0.770 ***	—
	Df	327	—
	p-value	< .001	—

Note. \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$

The table above shows the strong positive correlation ( $\rho = 0.770$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) of positive emotion and SSC-RdC's image. Evoking happiness or inspiration through digital presence can help institutions like SSC-RdC significantly improve how it is perceived by its students. These findings reinforce the study of Kong and Zhang (2024) who argued that prioritizing emotionally-resonant content is essential for brands aiming to cultivate a more favorable image.

**Table 7**

*Correlation for Interactivity and Institutional Image*

		Interactivity	Institutional Image
Interactivity	Spearman's rho	—	
	Df	—	
	p-value	—	
Institutional Image	Spearman's rho	0.489 ***	—
	Df	327	—
	p-value	< .001	—

Note. \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$

The strong positive correlation for interactivity and image (Spearman's rho = 0.489,  $p < 0.001$ ) suggest that contents should facilitate engagement and interaction with its audience to build a more favorable image. This aligns with He et al. (2021) who found a positive correlation between customer interaction and participation and brand personality perceptions, and Barreda et al. (2020) who noted that social media interactivity improves brand image. Dabbous and Barakat (2020) also highlight the importance of company-users' interactivity and content quality on social media for enhancing online engagement and brand awareness.

**Table 8**

*Correlation for Self-Congruity and Institutional Image*

		Self-Congruity	Institutional Image
Self-Congruity	Spearman's rho	—	
	Df	—	
	p-value	—	
Institutional Image	Spearman's rho	0.733 ***	—

	Self-Congruity	Institutional Image
Df	327	—
p-value	< .001	—

Note. \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$

The very strong positive correlation for self-congruity and image (Spearman's  $\rho = 0.733$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) highlights how contents that aligns with the audiences' values, beliefs, and self-image influences brand image. The findings align with Shan et al. (2020) on the effectiveness of self-influencer congruence, Bargoni et al. (2024) on the impact of brand personality and self-image alignment on customer engagement, and Luna-Cortes (2021) who demonstrated that self-congruity improves the perception of the destination brand and its positive social media content. These studies collectively support the notion that when consumers perceive a congruence between digital contents and their own self-image, positive outcomes for the brand are observed.

**Table 9**

*Correlation for Digital Content Marketing Strategy Effectiveness and Institutional Image*

		Digital Content Marketing Strategy Effectiveness	Institutional Image
Digital Content Marketing Strategy Effectiveness	Spearman's rho	—	
	df	—	
	p-value	—	
Institutional Image	Spearman's rho	0.779 ***	—
	df	328	—
	p-value	< .001	—

Note. \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$

Overall, there is a strong link between successful digital content marketing strategy and image ( $\rho = 0.779$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) and this confirms that high quality digital content is an essential driver of how an institution is perceived by its important audiences. This supplies empirical weight to the argument made



of Szymanski (2019) and Silva et al. (2024) who both contend that in today's fast-paced and online-first environment, a brand's digital presence is very critical in shaping a favorable image.

## CONCLUSION

The study concludes that senior high school and college students of SSC-RdC view its digital content marketing as moderately effective and the institution has successfully provided useful content. However, there are points that requires immediate actions. Results showed that the students felt a lack of depth in content completeness and they desire for more objectivity. In terms of the school's image, it is perceived as moderately favorable but the institution, according to the students, is currently underselling its success.

Regarding the relationship between the school's digital content marketing and image, there is a statistically significant link between the two. Data confirms that effective digital strategy is a direct driver of positive institutional reputation. Particularly, the digital content marketing factors of positive emotion, information usefulness, and self-congruity were the strongest drivers of students' perception of image. This implies that when a student feels that contents evoke positive emotion, provides useful information for decision-making, and aligned with their values, how they view their school's image or reputation will also be positive.

The results of this study prove that simply having a social media presence is no longer enough in a highly-competitive educational market and school administrators must transition from basic promotion to high-integrity communication. Educational institutions can do this by being transparent and delivering comprehensive, authentic, and engaging contents. Administrators must also highlight their achievements and success to build a brand that truly resonates with their students. Based on the results, the researchers recommend the development of a comprehensive digital content marketing strategy on a regular basis, employ qualitative research methods to gain deeper insights the students and other stakeholders such as alumni or parents, and conduct a comparative study with other private institutions with larger enrollment for benchmarking of best practices.

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