

SCHOOL MARKETING STRATEGIES IN INCREASING STUDENTS' INTEREST IN MADRASAH IBTIDAIYAH MUHAMMADIYAH PROGRAM KHUSUS

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ABSTRAK

Strategi pemasaran sangat penting untuk dipahami oleh setiap lembaga pendidikan. Kerja sama dan hubungan baik dengan masyarakat sangat penting dalam proses pemasaran. Lembaga pendidikan harus mempunyai strategi khusus dalam memasarkan jasa pendidikannya untuk menarik minat masyarakat. Terkadang masih banyak lembaga pendidikan yang kurang memperhatikan strategi pemasarannya. Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk mendeskripsikan strategi pemasaran pada Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Program Khusus Muhammadiyah Kartasura. Jenis penelitian ini adalah kualitatif, dimana data yang dikumpulkan berupa kata-kata bukan angka. Teknik pengumpulan data menggunakan wawancara, observasi, dan dokumentasi. Berdasarkan penelitian terdapat strategi pemasaran di Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Muhammadiyah Program Khusus Kartasura dalam pemasaran melalui unsur bauran pemasaran yang meliputi produk, harga, tempat, dan promosi.

Kata Kunci: Strategi, Pemasaran, Minat Peserta Didik

ABSTRACT

Marketing strategies are very important for every educational institution to understand. Cooperation and good relations with the community are very important in the marketing process. Educational institutions must have special strategies in marketing their educational services to attract public interest. Sometimes there are still many educational institutions that pay less attention to their marketing strategies. The purpose of this research is to describe the marketing strategy in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Muhammadiyah Program Khusus Kartasura. The type of this research is qualitative, where the data collected is in the form of words not numbers. The data collection technique used interviews, observation, and documentation. Based on the research there is a marketing strategy in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Muhammadiyah Program Khusus Kartasura in marketing through elements of the marketing mix which includes product, price, place, and promotion.

Keywords: Strategy, Marketing, Learner Interest

INTRODUCTION

Competition in the world of education is getting tighter and harder to avoid. In this competitive situation, every educational institution needs to design and implement marketing strategies that are not only effective, but also efficient, to attract prospective students and maintain the sustainability of their institutions (Saidah et al., 2022). People are made aware of the importance of education so that there is a demand and need to improve their lives and as a long-term investment for themselves and their families (Dayat, 2019). Educational institution managers need to design ways to market their educational services in order to attract prospective students and compete with other educational institutions.

Marketing strategy has an important role for an educational institution or a company. According to Kotler and Armstrong (2008), marketing strategy is the marketing logic expected

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by business stakeholders to create value and profit from a relationship with consumers. According to Kurtz (2008) marketing strategy is the entire program in a company to determine the target market and provide satisfaction to consumers with a combination of elements from the marketing mix: product, distribution, promotion, and price. Meanwhile, according to Philip Kotler, a marketing strategy is a marketing thought used in achieving marketing objectives in which there are strategies regarding target markets, positioning, marketing mix, and budget. Meanwhile, according to Tjiptono, marketing strategy is a fundamental thing that is determined to achieve goals with a strategy to develop advantages that are in accordance with the market and marketing programs to serve target targets. Furthermore, according to Stanton, marketing strategy is an element that supports the entire system related to planning, pricing, and product distribution with the aim of satisfying consumer needs.

Based on several definitions of marketing strategy from experts, it can be concluded that marketing strategy is a comprehensive plan or program designed to achieve company goals, namely creating value and satisfaction for consumers and making a profit. This strategy involves identifying the right target market and using the elements of the marketing mix, namely product, distribution, promotion, and price, to build strong relationships with consumers. These elements are organized to create value for consumers and achieve profits for the company. Marketing strategy also emphasizes the importance of establishing a market position and allocating the right budget to achieve a competitive advantage in the intended market.

Marketing strategy plays an important role in ensuring the success and sustainability of a company in a dynamic market. Through its function, it motivates management to think ahead, improves the effectiveness of team coordination, formulates clear objectives, and facilitates performance monitoring. Marketing strategy is to strengthen coordination among individuals in the team, become a performance measurement tool, provide a logical basis for decision-making, and improve adaptability to market changes. Thus, marketing strategy helps companies move effectively, efficiently, and remain relevant amidst ever-changing market challenges (Grace, et al., 2021).

One of the most important things in marketing is planning. The marketing plan is an important element in business planning for the company. It would be nice to have a marketing plan done annually that is focused on implementing decisions. An annual marketing plan is a long-term strategy that is specifically detailed in short-term goals. Effective marketing can be achieved by setting clear and focused goals, so that companies can target specific targets precisely. This approach is important to ensure the sustainability of a business that continues to grow and develop in the long term (Saribu & Maranatha, 2020).

An institution needs to develop relationship marketing that aims to build long-term mutually beneficial relationships with constituents. Thus, the institution can attract attention and maintain its existence. Marketing should also be integrated as part of the marketing mix which includes four main elements (4P), namely Product, Price, Place, and Promotion. These four elements are important tools used to influence consumer decisions (Yusuf & Miah, 2019).

Along with the rapid development of technology, competition in marketing is increasing. Therefore, utilizing social media as a marketing tool in the world of education is a very strategic choice, because it facilitates access to information for various groups. Digital marketing is one of the marketing methods widely used by sellers and business people to reach a wider audience. Digital marketing uses digital technology, such as social media as a means of promoting products or services to reach a wider community (Hamidah, et al., 2023). Before the rise of social media, it is important for schools to conduct in-depth market analysis and identify competitive advantages that can be utilized for marketing. Marketing education is not only formal but also education of talents and interests in various fields. With the many variations

offered, it can be an update or bring changes towards a better direction in the field of education to increase student interest.

From this statement, the researcher is interested in studying and examining how the marketing strategy carried out by the management of MI Muhammadiyah PK Kartasura in an effort to increase student interest. This is interesting to study because seen from year to year this school is quite significant in marketing its institution to attract students. In addition, MI Muhammadiyah PK Kartasura also has social media that is used to attract a wider audience. The purpose of this research is to provide benefits for other educational institutions to pay more attention and manage school marketing strategies better. The research also intends to realize that marketing activities are not just done casually, but really need the right strategy to encourage the achievement of predetermined goals.

METHODS

This research uses descriptive qualitative research with a case study form because this research aims to reveal, understand, and describe an object (Ulfatin, 2015). With this type of research, researchers get data in the field that occurs and is experienced by the parties involved, especially in the process of institutional marketing activities. This research is about marketing strategies in attracting prospective students at MI Muhammadiyah PK Kartasura. Research techniques used as research data collection are interviews, observation and documentation. Researchers conducted interviews to collect information from the source, namely the Head of Public Relations. In addition, researchers also made observations by visiting the school directly. Data collection techniques through documentation were used to clarify the findings and information that had been obtained. According to Miles and Huberman (2007), the data analysis process is carried out through several stages, namely data collection, data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Marketing Strategy of MI Muhammadiyah PK Kartasura

In moving an institution, it is important to manage the institution to achieve the goals of the institution. Marketing management for educational institutions is very important along with the many competitions between educational institutions. Marketing is useful for building a positive image. If an educational institution can build a positive image, it will be easier to overcome competition. According to Muhaimin (2011) marketing is a process that must be carried out by an educational institution to provide satisfaction to stakeholders and the community (Fathurrochman, et al., 2021).

Based on the results of interviews, observations, and documentation, it is known that MI Muhammadiyah Kartasura carried out a marketing strategy by changing the madrasah program which was originally only MI Muhammadiyah Kartasura to MI Muhammadiyah Kartasura Special Program. In addition, this madrasah also became a multiple intelligence-based madrasah which made this madrasah different from other madrasahs. The program builds a positive madrasah image for the community as consumers. Another thing is also done by the madrasah management by following the demands of the times, namely by introducing madrasah through social media. This is done so that the madrasah is known by the outside community and increases the quantity of students at MI Muhammadiyah PK Kartasura.

B. Implementation of Marketing Strategy through Programs at MI Muhammadiyah PK Kartasura

Programs Khusus at MI Muhammadiyah PK Kartasura are designed to improve the quality of education with a different approach compared to other schools. Here are some excellent programs that can be identified from the implementation of their strategies :

1. Multiple Intelligence Based School

Multiple intelligences are forms of intelligence that everyone can have. The term multiple intelligences was coined by Howard Gardner in 1983. The theory states that there are many intelligences, not just limited to mathematical logical intelligence. Intelligence is the ability to solve problems or produce something needed in a particular cultural setting. (Putri, et al., 2023). Aside from being an ability to solve problems, MI Muhammadiyah PK Kartasura uses a multiple intelligence approach to educate students according to their unique talents and potential. The program accommodates different types of intelligence, such as linguistic, mathematical-logical, musical, spatial, and kinesthetic intelligence, so that students can develop in various fields.

2. Inclusion and Child Friendly School Program

MI Muhammadiyah PK implements an inclusion program for students with special needs. This shows that the school opens its doors to students from different backgrounds and conditions and tries to create a friendly environment for children.

3. Life Skills Development

A program that focuses on developing life skills is one of the hallmarks of MI Muhammadiyah PK. The school prepares students to face challenges beyond academics, such as the ability to communicate, work in teams, and think critically and creatively.

4. Extracurricular Activities and Offline Event Participation

MI Muhammadiyah PK actively involves students in various extracurricular activities and offline events such as to develop students' talents outside the classroom. These activities include competitions, exhibitions, and social activities that enrich students' experiences.

C. Elements of Marketing Mix at MI Muhammadiyah PK Kartasura

One of the roles of marketing in education is to build a positive image of the institution in order to attract new prospective students. Educational institutions need to take various steps to achieve this goal. One of the steps is to utilize the elements in the marketing mix. The education services marketing mix strategy is a combination of various elements that schools offer to potential users of education services to promote the education services they have. The marketing mix in the context of education is an important factor that can be combined to design a marketing strategy that can win the competition (Mahmud, et al. 2022). E. Jerome McCarthy (1960) coined the concept of the 4P in marketing, which includes Product, Price, Place, and Promotion (Yusuf & Miah, 2019).

1. Product

A product is a set of needs in the form of features, functions, benefits, and uses that are used to provide satisfaction to consumers. According to Kotler and Keller, "The set of beliefs consumers hold about a particular brand" is a belief held by the public formed from an institution so that it can form an institutional image (Munir, et al. 2022). More specifically, Keegan explained that a product is a collection of physical, service, and symbolic properties that produce satisfaction, or benefits for a

user or buyer. Product management is concerned with decisions that affect customer perceptions of the products offered by the company (Maisah, et al. 2020).

From the above understanding, it can be concluded that a product is a collection of physical, service, and symbolic properties that produce satisfaction for consumers on offer and will influence consumer perceptions in making purchases. In the product mix, the target is product differentiation so that consumers can easily recognize marketed products. In the scope of educational institutions, the products/services offered to students are the quality of education, educational programs, and the image of the institution.

MI Muhammadiyah PK Kartasura tries to provide and offer program products that are tailored to the needs of the community, namely madrasah based on multiple intelligence in its learning. Multiple intelligence is being discussed in the world of Indonesian education. The program makes MI Muhammadiyah PK Kartasura different from other schools. Multiple intelligence-based learning strategies to train students to understand concepts, facts, procedures, explain interrelationships and apply them by encouraging the intelligence that exists in students as optimally as possible and trying to maintain other intelligence by adjusting the minimum standards of subjects that have been determined by educational institutions (Afandi. 2021).

Implementation of multiple intelligence in MI Muhammadiyah PK Kartasura by enforcing registration with Multiple Intelligence Research (MIR) to find out the eight intelligences of children. The result of the research is the division of classes based on the intelligence tendencies and learning styles of students. It is also a reference for teachers to choose teaching strategies. In addition, this madrasah is also a child-friendly madrasah by implementing inclusive classes in it. This child-friendly madrasah is expected to help fulfill the needs and rights of children to achieve a generation that is free from violence and discrimination.

2. Price

a. Education Costs

MI Muhammadiyah PK Kartasura offers more affordable fees than similar schools. This becomes one of the main strategies in attracting prospective students. Offering competitive prices is an important part of the "price" element in the marketing mix, especially in the education sector, where cost is often a determining factor for parents. MI Muhammadiyah PK Kartasura provides discounted fees for families of students who have several children attending school there, as well as discounts for orphaned students based on observations of their economic conditions. This fee discount is a pricing strategy used to maintain the number of students and also reflects the school's social concern.

b. Volunteer Program

Each class has the freedom to create its own program supported by voluntary funds. This shows that in addition to tuition fees, there is flexibility in terms of parental financial contributions, which can provide more value in terms of affordability.

c. Unavailability of Scholarships

Although there are no scholarships available yet, the reduced fee policy provides an alternative for underprivileged students. However, this could also be seen as an opportunity to further increase the school's appeal by introducing a scholarship program in the future.

Overall, the "price" element at MI Muhammadiyah PK Kartasura is designed to remain competitive, flexible, and support the sustainability of students

from various economic backgrounds. The discount policy and affordable fees play an important role in attracting and retaining students.

3. Place

MI Muhammadiyah PK Kartasura is located on Jalan Slamet Riyadi No. 80, Kartasura, Sukoharjo, Central Java. The location of this school is very strategic, because it is on the edge of the highway, which facilitates access to public transportation. In addition, the existence of this school is also easily recognized by the surrounding community.

4. Promotion

Promotion is a form of communication in marketing to disseminate information, persuade or influence and remind of goods and services so that they are willing to accept, buy and be loyal to the products offered (Fauziah, et al., 2022). MI Muhammadiyah PK Kartasura implements various promotional strategies to attract new students through various means, including the following :

a. Student Guardian

One method that is considered effective is through testimonials from student guardians. Word of mouth by guardians plays an important role in improving the school's reputation and attracting prospective students. Student guardians often share information about their experiences at the school to people around them, such as relatives, friends and relatives. This phenomenon is evident when guardians of students who have children in the school tend to register their siblings to attend MI Muhammadiyah PK Kartasura. To improve the quality of service, the school regularly evaluates the guardians of students who do not continue their children's education at this school, with the aim of identifying and overcoming obstacles that may be faced.

b. Social Media

In today's era of rapid technological development, social media plays a significant role in marketing strategies. MI Muhammadiyah PK Kartasura utilizes various social media platforms for promotion, including :

1) Website

MI Muhammadiyah PK Kartasura has a website that is used as one of the platforms for marketing the school. Through this website, the public can see an overview of the school. The school website can be accessed through <https://mimpk-kartasura.sch.id/>.

2) Instagram

One of the social media platforms that almost everyone has is Instagram. Through this platform, MI Muhammadiyah PK Kartasura can share information and school activities in the form of photos, videos, and other features. MI Muhammadiyah PK Kartasura's Instagram account, @mimpkkartasura, has more than 2,700 followers with 1,333 posts. This media has a significant impact, because guardians of students who do not have time to visit the school can easily obtain the necessary information through direct messages (DM), thus increasing communication efficiency.

3) YouTube

Another promotional activity carried out by MI Muhammadiyah PK Kartasura is through the YouTube platform. Through this media, the school can share various activities that take place in the school environment. The content available on the MIMPK TV YouTube channel has attracted attention with 3.67 thousand subscribers and more than 460 uploaded videos. The

content includes videos of student competitions, murottal, and other activities regarding activities at school that can be accessed by the wider community.

4) Facebook

MI Muhammadiyah PK Kartasura also utilizes Facebook social media as a means of promotion. Although currently the activity on the platform is not as intensive as before, given the number of other applications that are more attractive, MI Muhammadiyah PK Kartasura still maintains a Facebook account under the name SD/MI Muhammadiyah PK Kartasura, which has around 1,500 followers.

5) Print Media

In addition to utilizing social media, MI Muhammadiyah PK Kartasura also maintains the use of print media, especially newspapers, as one of the marketing strategies. The school realizes that the diversity of communication channels is very important to reach a wider audience. Not only relying on social media, MI Muhammadiyah PK Kartasura is committed to maximizing all forms of media available to improve school branding. This media approach allows the school to reach various levels of society, including people who prefer printed information.

6) Field Promotion

In addition to the various promotional activities mentioned above, direct promotional activities in the field also play an important role. MI Muhammadiyah PK Kartasura regularly organizes various events outside the school, such as featuring students at Car Free Day (CFD) events and conducting graduations in prestigious locations. Other public activities are also carried out to attract the attention of the community. Through this approach, it is hoped that community interest in the school can increase, which in turn will have a positive impact on the number of prospective students.

D. Challenges and Solutions

The following are the challenges and solutions carried out by MI Muhammadiyah PK Kartasura in implementing marketing strategies to increase student interest, including:

1. Many other schools invest in business, while MI Muhammadiyah PK Kartasura focuses more on the educational aspect. This makes branding more challenging, especially since many parents choose schools based on physical appearance and prestige. The solution that the school can do is to strive to build an image through good infrastructure and providing superior services to students and parents. The branding is reinforced by positive testimonials from student guardians.
2. Building a strong school image and gaining parents' trust is a big challenge. Parents are more interested in tangible things such as physical facilities than educational programs. MI Muhammadiyah PK Kartasura comes with adopting a multiple intelligence system and opening an inclusion program, MI Muhammadiyah PK Kartasura offers a competitive advantage that can attract prospective students who need a different approach to learning.
3. Although MIM PK has been a multiple intelligence-based school for 15 years, there are periods where the number of students decreases. This signifies the challenge of maintaining parents' interest over time. One strategy that MI Muhammadiyah PK Kartasura can do to attract more students is to offer more affordable fees compared to similar schools. The school also provides fee discounts to families of students who have economic difficulties.

4. The use of social media as a paid marketing tool does have a positive impact, but it is less significant to increase branding massively. So MI Muhammadiyah PK Kartasura also utilizes promotional activities and public participation by utilizing offline events to promote the school and increase visibility.

CONCLUSIONS

MI Muhammadiyah PK Kartasura successfully demonstrated that implementing a good marketing strategy can increase the interest of prospective students. The school changed its approach by not only relying on traditional marketing methods, but also utilizing social media and various digital channels as a means of promotion, such as Instagram, YouTube, Website, and Facebook have become important elements in reaching a wider audience. Thus, MI Muhammadiyah PK is able to introduce its excellent programs to the community more effectively.

In addition, MI Muhammadiyah PK Kartasura applies a comprehensive marketing mix strategy, which includes four elements: product, price, place and promotion. The school offers education services based on multiple intelligence, which is an important differentiation compared to other schools. Although it faces challenges from competition with other schools, MI Muhammadiyah PK is able to overcome this by utilizing social media and digital marketing, and focusing on long-term relationships with student guardians. Innovation in developing new programs that are relevant to the needs of the community is also an added value for this school.

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