

Marketing Educational Services : The Practices Of Marketing Mix In Building Brand Image Of SMK Bina Mandiri Multimedia Bogor

Usman^{1*}, Giyoto², Didi Mulyadi³

¹ STEBIS Bina Mandiri, Cileungsi Bogor, Indonesia

² UIN Raden Mas Said Surakarta, Indonesia

³ UInstitit Bisnis Muhammadiyah Bekasi, Indonesia

*Corresponding Author:

Email: usman.hm07@gmail.com

Abstract.

This article discusses the marketing of educational services; The application of marketing mix in building branding image at SMK Bina Mandiri Multimedia includes four main elements, namely product, price, promotion, and distribution. This research is a qualitative study where data is obtained through interviews, documentation and observation of all parties involved in this marketing process consisting of the Foundation, Principal and field marketing personnel who make visits to schools. The results showed that in terms of products, SMK Bina Mandiri Multimedia needs to present quality education programs that are relevant to the needs of the multimedia industry. This may include developing an up-to-date curriculum, upgrading facilities and equipment, and ensuring optimal teaching and learning quality. Pricing should consider the added value offered by SMK Bina Mandiri Multimedia. Fair and competitive pricing can attract prospective students and illustrate the quality of education offered by the school. Promotion should be done effectively to introduce and strengthen the brand image of SMK Bina Mandiri Multimedia. Marketing strategies such as advertising, promotional activities, and social media utilization can be used to increase visibility and attract prospective students and parents. Distribution relates to the way SMK Bina Mandiri Multimedia conveys information regarding their educational programs. This may involve cooperation with other educational institutions, participation in education fairs, or utilization of online platforms to connect with potential students. In general, the strategy carried out by SMK Bina Mandiri Multi Media has been quite successful, which can be seen from the SMK Bina Mandiri Multi Media brand which is already quite well known in this area with the number of registrations reaching more than 250 each year. However, in anticipation of increasingly fierce competition, the marketing strategy must always adjust to the changing characteristics of consumers.

Keywords: Marketing mix, quality services, potential students, and education.

I. INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, people's awareness of the importance of quality education has encouraged them to seek good educational institutions for their children (Pratama et al., n.d.). Education is considered a process that can change the attitudes and behavior of a person or group through teaching and training [1] In addition, education can also help a person develop intelligence, noble character, personality, spiritual strength, and skills that are beneficial for oneself and society [2] In the context of education globalization, educational institutions are no longer limited by cultural and geographical boundaries [3]. The globalization of education brings changes in various aspects, including curriculum, teaching methods, access to information and technology, and interactions between educational institutions from different countries [4]. In the face of educational globalization, educational institutions have the opportunity to adopt and integrate educational elements from various traditions and contexts [5]. However, the globalization of education also brings challenges and complexities, such as increased competition among educational institutions in recruiting qualified students and human resources [6]. To face these challenges, educational institutions need to develop effective strategies, such as providing adequate facilities and buildings, recruiting qualified teachers, and developing attractive education programs [7]. In this case, marketing education services is important for educational institutions to understand and implement. Marketing of educational services is not an effort to commercialize education, but rather a strategy used by educational institutions to remain relevant and adapt to the changing times that continue to develop [8].

The application of marketing concepts in education aims to increase the attractiveness and quality of educational institutions, as well as communicate their unique values and advantages to prospective students and parents. This helps educational institutions to remain relevant and respond to the challenges and changes that occur [8]. In this regard, marketing education services involves strategies such as market segmentation, positioning, brand development, promotion, and efforts to develop positive bonds between teachers and

students, as well as involving parents, have great significance. This marketing concept helps educational institutions to attract students, increase the number of applicants, and retain existing students [7]. However, it is important to remember that the application of marketing in education must still pay attention to the essential educational values, integrity, and the main purpose of education itself. The purpose of marketing in education is to ensure that educational institutions can provide the best service to students and fulfill their educational needs properly [9]. This research aims to examine the efforts of SMK Bina Mandiri Multimedia, the application of the concept of marketing educational services in the era of highly competitive globalization is crucial. This research has great significance as a guide and model of marketing educational services that can be applied by SMK Bina Mandiri Multimedia to face changes and the current globalization requirements pose complex challenges. In addition, this research also helps develop the confidence and self-confidence of educational institutions to be important, often getting labeled or stigmatized as private educational institutions with low-level development compared to public SMKs.

By conducting this research, it is expected that SMK Bina Mandiri Multimedia can gain better insight and understanding of the concept of marketing educational services. They can use the findings of this study as a guide to develop marketing strategies that are effective and relevant to the current needs of the education market. In the context of fierce competition, educational institutions need to strengthen their image and reputation and provide attractive added value to prospective students and parents. In addition, this research also has the potential to overcome the stigma attached to private educational institutions, especially SMK Bina Mandiri Multimedia. By applying the concept of effective marketing of educational services, these educational institutions can change people's perceptions and prove that they are also capable of providing quality education. It is expected that this research will have a significant impact in developing and improving the quality of education at SMK Bina Mandiri Multimedia. By adopting appropriate marketing strategies, these educational institutions can increase their attractiveness and sustainability in the face of increasingly fierce competition in the era of globalization.

II. METHODS

This research uses qualitative methodology where data is obtained through the process of interviews, documentation and observation. Structured interviews were conducted with all parties involved in determining marketing policies at Bina Mandiri Multi Media Vocational School and also the implementers of field activities, namely marketing personnel. Observation is carried out on marketing activities through social media and the response of potential customers during the implementation of canvassing, while documentation is carried out through data obtained from the number of registrants who become students of SMK Bina Mandiri Multi Media.

This research also uses literature analysis to match the practices that have been carried out by the management of SMK Bina Mandiri Multi Media with previous research. Library research is conducted through the library research method, which involves searching various sources of literature related to the topic discussed, such as books, papers, journals, and other writings that can provide guidance in writing this paper. In qualitative research, literature review must be used consistently with methodological assumptions. This means that the use of literature review is done inductively, so that it does not direct the questions asked by the researcher. One of the main reasons for conducting qualitative research is that it is exploratory in nature.

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Marketing Strategy at SMK Bina Mandiri Multimedia

SMK Bina Mandiri Multimedia, a vocational education institution located in Bogor Regency, has been chosen by several parents or guardians as an alternative to develop students' characters. Despite its young age, SMK Bina Mandiri Multimedia, known as BM3, has a well-known reputation for its superior quality of education. However, in the course of its development, this institution must be able to face competition with other educational institutions that are parallel both in level and stage of education. In this research, the author focuses on marketing strategies in the context of educational services at SMK Bina

Mandiri Multimedia. Through a descriptive analysis approach in qualitative methods, the author studies the steps of planning and implementing marketing strategies in the educational services of this institution. To improve the marketing strategy at SMK Bina Mandiri Multimedia, there are several steps that can be taken. This is in line with Surya's theory that marketing strategy has a significant role in the field of education to consumers in a satisfactory way [10]. Education marketing strategy can be divided into three parts, namely external marketing, internal marketing and interactive marketing. External marketing involves activities such as product preparation, pricing, information distribution and promotion to customers. Internal marketing is concerned with training and motivating educators, educational staff, and students as the main assets of the organization. Meanwhile, interactive marketing includes direct interaction between educational institutions and customers in providing positive experiences and building good relationships (Surya et al., 2020).

Strategic Planning carried out at SMK Bina Mandiri Multi Media

SMK Bina Mandiri Multimedia can plan its marketing strategy for education services by following these steps: *Market identification*: Conduct a market analysis to understand the needs and preferences of prospective students and parents in Cileungsi and surrounding areas. Surveys or interviews can be conducted to gather data on competitors around the school. *Market segmentation*: Group prospective students based on certain criteria, such as major interests, education level, or other preferences. With good market segmentation, SMK Bina Mandiri Multimedia can customize marketing strategies for each group more effectively.

Determination of unique value/differentiation: Identify the unique values that differentiate SMK Bina Mandiri Multimedia from its competitors. Focus on these values in marketing communications to attract prospective students and parents, such as religious programs, discipline, excellent facilities, masagi programs, or information technology-based learning approaches. *Promotion through social media*: Utilize social media such as Instagram, Facebook, or YouTube to promote SMK Bina Mandiri Multimedia. Create interesting content such as photos of student activities, presentation videos, student/alumni testimonials, and information about the education programs offered.

Cooperation with other educational and non-formal institutions: Establish cooperation with schools (SMP and MTs) and non-formal educational institutions around the Cileungsi area. Actively participate in educational events, seminars, or educational exhibitions to increase the trust and visibility of SMK Bina Mandiri Multimedia. *Orientation program and school visits*: Hold orientation programs and school visits open to prospective students and parents. Showcase facilities, educational programs, and interesting extracurricular activities to give them a hands-on experience.

Collaboration with alumni: Utilize the school's alumni network or tracer study to assist in promotion. Invite successful alumni to share their experiences and success stories through testimonials or speaking engagements. *Scholarship and subsidy programs*: Consider offering scholarship or subsidy programs to potential but financially challenged students. This can help increase the accessibility of education at SMK Bina Mandiri Multimedia.

By implementing this marketing strategy, SMK Bina Mandiri Multimedia is expected to increase its visibility, attract prospective students and parents, and compete effectively with other educational institutions in the region. This concept is also in accordance with the opinion of experts who explain that implementing marketing strategies in educational institutions, there are three main components that have a significant impact, namely; integrated marketing, creating customer satisfaction, and achieving profits [11]. These three components are the main prerequisites that must be considered to create a superior educational services marketing strategy that is well received by the community as consumers of education. The implementation of marketing strategies in educational institutions involves steps such as advertising, promotion, admission of new students, and the use of media such as websites, Instagram, brochures, and roadside banners [2]. The purpose of implementing this marketing strategy is an effort to attract the attention of prospective students as consumers of education, marketing strategies are carried out with determination and excellence. By implementing a successful marketing strategy, it is expected that there will be healthy and dynamic competition between educational institutions.[12].

The implementation of marketing strategies plays a crucial role in educational institutions to achieve excellence in competition between schools and improve the quality of education. The marketing strategy implementation process in the context of educational institutions can be considered as changing marketing strategies and plans into concrete marketing actions [13]. The implementation of marketing strategies for educational services consists of two stages, namely planning and implementing marketing strategies. Marketing strategy planning involves identifying marketing objectives, market segmentation, target market selection, and determining the desired market position to build product or service excellence in the minds of consumers [11]. Meanwhile, the implementation of marketing strategies involves the implementation of marketing tactics, such as promotional activities, information distribution, developing relationships with customers, and measuring the effectiveness of the strategies carried out. In the context of educational institutions, the implementation of marketing strategies is important because it is able to maintain harmony between the cost of education and the quality of institutions. The quality of educational institutions is the main focus that is considered by the public as consumers [14]. Through the implementation of effective marketing strategies, it is hoped that educational institutions can meet the expectations of the community, and inspire the institution's motivation to continue to innovate and grow.

Strategy Implementation

The steps taken in implementing the marketing strategy at Bina Mandiri Multimedia Vocational School, are as follows: *Product strategy*: SMK Bina Mandiri Multimedia emphasizes the use of information technology in its curriculum to become a school that excels in this field. In addition, the school also offers religious programs such as congregational prayer, duha prayer, tadarusan, and memorizing the Qur'an. This concept is in line with the theory which says that the product involves developing and providing educational services that meet the needs and wants of consumers. This includes aspects such as curriculum, teaching methods, physical facilities, extracurricular activities, and so on [4][15].

Price strategy: SMK Bina Mandiri Multimedia offers affordable and more economical tuition fees compared to other vocational schools in the vicinity. The price paid is proportional to the facilities provided. Meanwhile, in determining the price, the institution must provide the right price with the value provided by the educational services offered. Prices must consider operational and investment costs and take into account the desires and abilities of consumers [16].

Place strategy: SMK Bina Mandiri Multimedia has a strategic location, located in front of the highway and easily accessible through various modes of mass transportation such as buses, angkot, and gojek. This makes access to the school easier and more affordable. In their theory, Suciati and Maulidiyanti state that determining the strategic location of the school is very important so that the school is easily accessible to the target market. This also includes selecting the location of branches or additional school units if the institution is going to expand so that the brand that has been built can be maintained [17].

Promotion strategy: SMK Bina Mandiri Multimedia conducts formal promotions to junior high schools and MTs through direct information delivery. In addition, the school also conducts non-formal promotion through junior and senior high school level competitions held at SMK Bina Mandiri Multimedia. The concept that has been carried out by SMK Bina Mandiri Multimedia is in accordance with the theory that has been developed where the implementation of promotion is carried out by involving promotional activities to increase awareness and interest of prospective students in schools. This includes advertising, publicity, educational exhibitions, cooperation with other institutions, and online marketing strategies [9][18].

Human resources strategy: SMK Bina Mandiri Multimedia recognizes that quality human resources are an important factor in determining the quality of the institution. Therefore, the school is working on a policy to engage new teaching staff with credible academic track records. The practice carried out by SMK Bina Mandiri Multi Media is in accordance with the concept put forward by Suciati who said that schools must improve the quality of staff and teachers as providers of educational services so that the quality of education can be guaranteed. Their competence, skills, attitudes and communication skills are also very important in providing a positive experience to consumers. And all of them are the result of the development process carried out by the school [15][19]

Physical evidence strategy: Physical elements that serve as evidence of the quality and existence of an educational institution are important in the marketing strategy, as prospective students and parents will use physical evidence as a reference in choosing a school. SMK Bina Mandiri Multimedia pays attention to this aspect and strives to provide adequate facilities and create comfortable environmental conditions. Physical evidence is an element in the marketing mix related to the physical environment where services are provided and interact directly with consumers. In the context of education, this includes the physical design and arrangement of the school building, as well as supporting evidence such as student report cards, progress notes, certificates, or other documents that provide evidence of learning achievement or progress [16]. By considering these aspects of the marketing mix, educational institutions can design a comprehensive and effective strategy to market their educational services.

Process strategy: SMK Bina Mandiri Multimedia has ensured that the educational process organized is in accordance with the National Education Standards (SNP). By having an accreditation certificate with an A grade, the school is considered to have organized the educational process professionally and met the set standards. Process is an important factor in the marketing mix, especially in the context of services. Process is defined as a series of activities or procedures carried out to deliver services from producers to consumers [20]. This process includes teaching methods, curriculum, interactions between teachers and students, and all activities involved in delivering educational services.

By implementing this strategy, SMK Bina Mandiri Multimedia is expected to improve its image and attractiveness as a vocational education institution in the region, and gain the trust of prospective students and guardians. The concept that has been carried out above is in accordance with several theories which state that in the implementation of educational services marketing strategies, it can use the concept of marketing mix or marketing mix [6]. The marketing mix consists of various marketing program variables to ensure the successful implementation of marketing and positioning strategies in accordance with the previously developed plan. The marketing mix consists of seven main components, with four traditional aspects related to physical product marketing, and there are three aspects that need to be considered related to service marketing [7].

IV. CONCLUSION

In order to face competition with other educational institutions, SMK Bina Mandiri Multimedia needs to adopt a planned and systematic marketing strategy. It is important for this school to manage the community's expectations of learners' progress and deliver tangible results in the learning process. Good quality education will be a key factor in building the image and trust of the community.

Infacing competition in the education market, SMK Bina Mandiri Multimedia needs to carry out the steps of planning and implementing a marketing strategy. These steps include market identification, market segmentation, market positioning, and implementation of the marketing mix which includes product, price, location/venue, promotion, human resources, physical evidence, and service management. By paying attention to and implementing marketing strategies well, it is hoped that SMK Bina Mandiri Multimedia can build a strong image, attract prospective students and parents, and maintain the superior quality of education offered. This will help the school to remain competitive and succeed in the education market.

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