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## EDUCATIONAL MARKETING MIX INNOVATION TO INCREASE STUDENT ENTRY INTEREST

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**ABSTRACTS**

*This study aims to analyze innovations in education marketing strategies at MI Al-Wathoniyah 22 Bekasi in increasing interest in entering schools. The qualitative method used in conducting this research is qualitative. Research data collection is done through interviews, observations, and document studies. The data analysis techniques are reducing data, presenting data, and finally drawing conclusions. The results showed that MI Al-Wathoniyah 22 innovated by implementing and maximizing seven marketing mixes: products, places, prices, promotions, human resources, physical evidence, and processes. Innovation in the educational marketing mix, especially in physical evidence and process elements. The use of advanced technology in learning, the design of adequate physical facilities, and the implementation of efficient admissions procedures are examples of innovations that can increase the attractiveness of schools and improve the overall quality of education services. This will increase the interest in prospective students entering the school.*

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## A. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the educational landscape has become increasingly competitive, with schools and universities striving to attract students and meet the growing demands of parents and society. As educational institutions are no longer seen solely as places of learning but also as service providers, they must adopt marketing strategies that effectively communicate their value proposition. This shift has made it essential for schools to develop a well-rounded approach to marketing, one that goes beyond traditional methods and addresses the dynamic needs of their target audiences (Kotler & Fox, 1995).

The concept of the marketing mix, long utilized in the business sector, has been adapted to fit the context of education, giving rise to the "educational marketing mix." This approach includes critical elements such as the product (educational programs), price (tuition fees), place (accessibility of the institution), and promotion (efforts to raise awareness and interest). Additionally, other important factors like people (faculty, students, staff), processes (admissions, learning systems), and physical evidence (facilities, achievements) contribute significantly to shaping perceptions of a school's quality (Kotler, Keller, & Chernev, 2022; Yusuf, 2018).

In the context of educational marketing, many institutions rely heavily on their reputation and achievements as promotional tools. For instance, schools often highlight their success in academic competitions, such as the National Science Competition (KSM), as a form of promotion to enhance their brand. Achievements in these competitions not only showcase the quality of the educational programs offered but also serve as concrete evidence of a school's excellence (Sadiman, 2009). However, relying solely on merit and competition victories is no longer sufficient in today's competitive environment. Schools must adopt a more comprehensive marketing strategy that incorporates all elements of the educational marketing mix to build a strong and attractive image (Green, 2012).

Given these challenges, this study explores how schools can implement a holistic and effective marketing strategy by leveraging the educational marketing mix. The urgency of this research lies in the growing need for schools to differentiate themselves in a saturated market, where prospective students and parents are becoming more selective in their choices. By understanding and applying the marketing mix in the educational context, schools can enhance their ability to attract and retain students, ultimately ensuring their sustainability and growth in an increasingly competitive sector (Kotler & Fox, 1995; Keller, 2015).

### Educational Marketing Mix Theory

The educational marketing mix is an adaptation of the traditional marketing mix, tailored specifically to meet the needs of educational institutions. Kotler and Fox (1995) provide a comprehensive framework that outlines how schools and universities can apply marketing principles to attract, retain, and engage students. They highlight that the "product" in an educational institution refers to the curriculum and learning experiences offered, while the "price" encompasses tuition and other associated costs. "Promotion" involves all outreach efforts aimed at raising awareness of the institution, and "place" refers to both the physical location and online presence of the school.

Yusuf (2018) expands on this by including additional elements such as the quality of the teaching staff (people), admissions processes (processes), and the physical facilities and infrastructure of the school (physical evidence). These factors, when

combined, create a comprehensive strategy for educational institutions to differentiate themselves in the market and appeal to prospective students and their families.

#### Marketing Mix Theory (7Ps)

The marketing mix, originally introduced by Jerome McCarthy in the 1960s as the 4Ps (Product, Price, Place, and Promotion), has evolved into the 7Ps model, adding three more components: People, Processes, and Physical Evidence (Booms & Bitner, 1981). This model emphasizes that marketing a product or service requires a holistic approach, where all elements work in harmony to meet customer needs and build brand loyalty. Kotler et al. (2016) further developed this model, arguing that it is essential for businesses and services, including educational institutions, to integrate these elements into their strategies to remain competitive in the marketplace.

In an educational context, the "product" refers to the educational programs offered, "price" refers to the tuition and other costs, "place" involves the accessibility and location of the institution, and "promotion" encompasses all marketing efforts to raise awareness and attract students. The additional elements of "people" (faculty, staff, and students), "processes" (admissions, teaching methods, and administrative procedures), and "physical evidence" (infrastructure, facilities, and achievements) are crucial in shaping the perceptions of prospective students and parents regarding the quality and reliability of the institution (Kotler & Keller, 2022).

Innovation is a key factor in adapting to rapidly changing markets and staying competitive. Educational institutions must constantly innovate their marketing strategies to appeal to the evolving needs and expectations of students and parents. According to Trott (2017), innovation in marketing involves modifying traditional strategies, utilizing technology, and finding new ways to communicate value to consumers. In education, innovation might involve using digital platforms for promotion, personalizing student engagement, or creating new program offerings that cater to market demands. Educational institutions that innovate their marketing mix are more likely to attract student interest, as these innovations can better align with student needs, highlight differentiators, and enhance the overall appeal of the institution (Kotler et al., 2022).

## **B. METHOD**

The approach uses a qualitative approach. The qualitative approach is one approach that primarily uses a knowledge paradigm based on constructivist views such as the plural meaning of individual experience, meaning that is socially and historically constructed to develop a theory or pattern or view of participatory advocacy such as political orientation, issue, collaborative, or change orientation or both. (Siti Nurhasanah, 2022). Data collection techniques are the primary step in conducting a study because data collection is to obtain data. Researchers used three data collection techniques: Observation, documentation and interviews. At the same time, data sources are obtained from internal data, namely those sourced from the circumstances or activities of an organization or school. (Siti Nurhasanah, 2019)

## C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Result

Before carrying out marketing activities, schools determine the target market and use a marketing mix (marketing mix), a combination of various elements an organization uses to promote and market its products or services to determine market strategies.

Before innovating from the education marketing mix, schools focus on education marketing on five things: Product, Price, Place, Promotion, and People.

#### 1) Product

To introduce it to the community, the school must offer its flagship program as part of its product, presenting the program to the community in the hope that the community will be interested in this school. To get the attention of many people, the school must work hard to maintain the condition of this school with its best reputation. Programs that the school favours will have their appeal to the community. Moreover, the programs owned by the school have direct involvement with the community. The following programs offered by MI Al-Wathoniyah School can attract public interest:

##### a) Religious and National Celebrations

Religious celebrations that schools usually carry out include slaughtering sacrificial animals during Eid al-Adha; at this time, the sacrificial animals that have been killed are distributed to the community. Muharram New Year, students at this celebration do a carnival using decorations made to revitalize this new year by touring the village. Isra Mi'raj also conducts school by inviting speakers, which is one of the events during Isra Mi'raj.

##### b) Tadarus

In general, tadarus activities in schools are read together. There will be one teacher who guides or even a school that does not conduct tadarus. However, the difference in this school is that the tadarus they carry out is done individually. One student will read the Quran directly in front of his teacher. Implementing a system like this will give more attention because the teacher can justify if there is an inaccurate reading. For parents, implementing tadarus is very beneficial because some parents cannot teach their children at home because of limited knowledge and time from their parents.

##### c) Muhadoroh

is a series of activities in which goals are to be achieved. The intended purpose of implementing this muhadoroh is to guide children in moving on to da'wah activities. In this school, students consider implementing muhadoroh attractive because every student has the same opportunity to contribute.

##### d) Parent counseling

Counselling in each school is usually only done by students to BK teachers. The counselling conducted by these students can be about their learning and personal life. As a complement to the services provided by the school, the school opens counselling sessions in the form of complaints, criticisms or complaints. The school is open to parents who want to complain about their children's education.

## 2) Price

Sekolah MI Al-Wathoniyah 22 Bekasi is a private school, so parents pay fees. The school determines the cost first to see what the school needs, then based on the parent's ability. After that, the new school can determine the fees to be paid. The average price of the school is the same as other schools. The school also sets the price difference to be categorized into 3, namely students who can afford to pay in full, those who excel will be lightened (grade 1 champions will be exempt from tuition for three months, grade 2 champions will be exempt from tuition fees for two months, and grade 3 champions will be exempt from tuition for one-month, orphan students).

## 3) Place

The school's location is Jalan Bintara IX No 10 RT 006/001 Kelurahan Bintara Jaya, West Bekasi District, Bekasi City. For a more detailed picture regarding the strategic distance of the school, accessible transportation, supporting facilities, and the state of the school environment. If we look at the position of this school, it is in a strategic location. The school building directly faces the highway. The school's location in a position like this is advantageous because the surrounding community will more easily know it.

## 4) Promotion

Promotion is one of the most essential parts of marketing activities. Without promotion, the school cannot be known, and others cannot see the existence of this school. The school has been conducting promotional activities since the beginning of the school's establishment. The way of delivery is different and continues to develop. In the early days, schools promoted themselves only by communicating and conveying messages from one person to another. But now there have been many changes. Promotions carried out by the school are:

### a) Word-of-Mouth Marketing

Word of mouth is often called "Word-of-Mouth Marketing" (WOMM). It is a marketing strategy in which information or recommendations about a product, service, or brand are disseminated orally from individual to individual. Rosen, Emanuel, 2009; Tjiptono, Fandy, & Chandra, Gregory. , 2020). In school promotion, such as MI Al-Wathoniyah 22 Bekasi, positive testimonials from parents or students who have attended school can be a very effective form of word-of-mouth marketing.

### b) Advertising

In addition to word-of-mouth, the school also promotes through advertising, including the following:

1) Banner: A banner is a promotional tool shaped like a long flag that contains information about the school, such as its logo, address, and other promotional messages. Usually installed in strategic places such as in front of school buildings or crowded locations.

2) Brochure: A brochure is a small book printed to introduce the school and the services offered. It usually contains detailed information about the school's vision and mission, facilities, extracurricular activities, fees, and enrollment requirements. These brochures are distributed to prospective students or placed in strategic public places.

3) Social Media: Schools use social media platforms like websites, Instagram, and WhatsApp to promote themselves. They can share information about school activities,

student achievements, facilities, and more through posts, images, and messages sent to potential students or parents.

4) **Website:** The school's website becomes an important platform to promote information about the school, including the vision and mission, teacher profiles, academic programs, extracurricular activities, and contact information.

5) **Broadcast Messages:** Schools use messaging services like WhatsApp to send broadcast messages to prospective students or parents. These messages can contain information about school events, registrations, or other promotions.

6) **Publication:** Schools can also utilize local print or online media to publicize school activities or student achievements. This includes articles in local newspapers or coverage on local news websites.

### **5) People**

People or human resources intended in the marketing mix are educators and educational personnel where both have roles that are interrelated with each other in building school branding to attract students to the institution, including:

a) **Principal:** As the highest leader in the school, the principal is responsible for the planning, management, and development of the school. They also act as educators and supervisors and lead various programs to improve the quality of education.

b) **Teacher:** Responsible for teaching and guiding students. They are essential in shaping students' character and knowledge and instilling moral values. Teachers also play a role in developing practical and diverse teaching methods.

c) **Administrative Personnel:** These are the backbone of the school administration process. They are responsible for various administrative aspects, including marketing planning, financial management, and preparation for new student admissions.

d) **Students** are responsible for studying earnestly and participating actively in extracurricular activities. Student achievement is also an essential factor in improving the reputation and quality of the school.

e) **Parents:** Play a role in assessing satisfaction with school services and providing support and cooperation with schools in supporting their children's education.

### **Discussion**

In educational innovation theory, school promotion strategies through achievements in KSM competitions can be considered a form of innovation to improve the school's image. According to the theory of educational innovation, innovation can appear in many forms, including in educational institutions' promotion and marketing strategies (Rogers, E. M. (2003). By utilizing the competition as a platform to demonstrate excellence and achievement, the school uses an innovative approach to attract prospective students and parents. This shows that innovation is not limited to curriculum areas or teaching methods but can also occur in school management and promotion strategies. Thus, integrating the marketing mix concept with the theory of educational innovation strengthens schools' efforts to increase their attractiveness and reputation in education.

The institution innovates its marketing strategy by adding physical evidence or processes to maximize the marketing mix.

### **1. Physical evidence**

Physical evidence or physical evidence is an environment that describes the state of an organization with goods owned to interact with customers to facilitate communication. (David Wijaya, 2016). Physical evidence refers to anything that customers can perceive or see as evidence of the quality or existence of an educational service, such as physical facilities, technology, or learning environments.

Innovations in physical evidence can include the use of advanced technology in learning during the COVID-19 pandemic; the learning process is carried out online by the school using advanced technology such as the Google Class Room application or, WhatsApp calls or Zoom meetings. Interactive classroom design, or the development of adequate physical facilities to support modern learning. Facility design includes determining the capacity of services, such as classrooms of a specific size that can only accommodate how many students and the layout of the building. In schools measuring 8m x 7m can be filled with the number of students 30 students. The school building consists of 4 floors, and classes are adjusted to the level of the building. As for class 1, it is on the 1st floor, and for class 6, it is on the 4th floor.

### **2. Proseses**

Process refers to the procedures or steps applied in providing educational services, from accepting students to the learning process carried out by academic institutions.

The school has prepared the marketing process at 4 a.m. before entering the new school year. The marketing process of educational services includes promotional planning, banner installation, distribution of brochures, registration, student entrance tests, and the last stage is the announcement of who is accepted at this school. Implementation of more efficient and transparent admissions procedures.

Innovation in the Process can include using innovative teaching methods, such as ensuring that all teachers who teach are certified to be more optimal when teaching. The teaching methods are quite diverse because the teacher adjusts the teaching method to the lesson. For example, in the SKI lesson, the teacher will show more of a film that tells a story related to the material. The teacher considers that when the material is about history, students will focus more if a movie is shown compared to listening to the teacher speak.

Through this marketing mix innovation, the school tries to maximize all the potential that can be explored to attract prospective students and parents to be interested in attending the institution. Physical evidence and Processes are part of parents' consideration when sending their children to the best institution according to their parent's version and abilities. For this reason, the institution made extraordinary innovations in the marketing mix to increase the interest of prospective students entering schools.

## **D. CONCLUSION**

Based on the results of research and discussion, it can be concluded as follows:

Research shows an effective marketing strategy is critical in introducing schools to the community and attracting prospective students and parents. Through the right marketing mix, schools can communicate excellent programs and create a positive image, differentiate themselves from other schools, and increase the attractiveness of their educational services.

Innovation in the educational marketing mix, especially in physical evidence and process elements. The use of advanced technology in learning, the design of adequate physical facilities, and the implementation of efficient admissions procedures are examples of innovations that can increase the attractiveness of schools and improve the overall quality of educational services. This will increase the interest of prospective students in the institution. By adopting these innovations, schools can strengthen their position in the education market competition and better meet the educational needs of the people.

## **E. SUGGESTIONS**

Suggestions from the Research Results:

1. Enhance the Use of Achievements in Promotional Strategies Schools should continue to utilize achievements in competitions, such as the KSM (Kompetisi Sains Madrasah), as an integral part of their promotional strategy. By showcasing these accomplishments, the institution demonstrates its academic excellence, which can attract prospective students and parents. This aligns with the theory of educational innovation (Rogers, 2003), which highlights that innovation in promotional activities can strengthen the institution's image and reputation. Schools should also consider expanding their promotional platforms by integrating both traditional and digital media to reach a broader audience.

2. Further Develop Physical Evidence Schools should invest in upgrading their physical environment to provide a more engaging and supportive learning space. As highlighted by David Wijaya (2016), physical evidence plays a critical role in shaping how prospective students and parents perceive the institution's quality. Therefore, innovations in facilities, such as technologically advanced classrooms, well-designed spaces, and modernized infrastructure, are essential. These upgrades not only enhance learning but also offer a compelling visual testament to the institution's commitment to educational excellence. For schools with space limitations, strategic design and layout improvements can optimize existing facilities to accommodate more students comfortably while maintaining high standards.



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