

The Implementation of Marketing Mix Strategy in Marketing Educational Services at Raudhatul Athfal Al Muttaqin Cirebon

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Abstract

Implementing the 7P marketing mix strategy in marketing educational services at RA Al Muttaqin aims to determine how the marketing strategy is implemented at the RA Institution. This study uses qualitative research with data collection techniques such as observation, interview, and documentation. Data analysis includes data presentation, data reduction, and conclusion. The results show that RA Al Muttaqin uses the 7P marketing mix strategy in marketing educational services, which includes product, price, place, promotion, people, physical evidence, and process. The product offered is an Islamic school with local wisdom. The price offered is affordable and light enough to meet needs. The place is strategically located near the highway and has a large yard. Promotion uses social media, word of mouth, and flyers as the main promotional media. People include educators and education personnel who are recruited with certain qualifications. The physical evidence provided is complete and according to needs. The learning process is in accordance with the learning plan and is running quite effectively.

Keywords: Education, marketing mix, marketing educational service.



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INTRODUCTION

Intense and increasingly complex competition occurs in all aspects of human life. Likewise, this cannot be ignored in education because if we are indifferent to the developments and changes that exist, then we will be left behind or even abandoned by customers. Competition in education has become something that cannot be avoided (Musselin, 2018); several educational institutions have begun to be abandoned by their customers and cannot maintain their existence. In fact, in recent years, several educational institutions have been merging. The ability to understand educational marketing is a prerequisite for maintaining and increasing the growth of educational institutions.

Currently, preschool education is increasing in Indonesia (Nakajima et al., 2021). This is because the community has realized the importance of early childhood education, and many articles have been published about its importance. Establishing many different preschool educational institutions has led to inevitable competition between schools. Education service providers face competition in early childhood education services by planning marketing strategies. Marketing strategies play a crucial role in achieving the desired goals of educational institutions (Rahayu, 2020). Educational institutions can compete superiorly in maintaining their existence with a good marketing strategy. All activities carried out by education service providers will create value for users of education services regarding customer satisfaction. Customer satisfaction compares parents' expectations when enrolling their children in a particular school and their feelings after attending school.

Marketing activities are not only carried out by non-profit organizations such as the business world (Werke & Bogale, 2024). Marketing can also be carried out at educational institutions (Hübscher et al., 2022; Uncles, 2018), requiring marketing activities to generate interest in educational services. An educational institution must have good quality to attract prospective new students' attention as customers. Accepting new students is also an opportunity for educational institutions to provide a good picture of the quality of educational institution services. In addition, since the enactment of Law No. 20 of 2003, Article 51 Number 1 concerning the National Education System is the legal basis for organizing education in Indonesia. The education of preschool, elementary, and secondary education units is carried out by baEducationnimum service standards with the principal of school-based management.

According to the Team of Lecturers in Educational Administration at the Indonesian University of Education, the management of PAUD educational institutions is critical in the context of the growth and development of PAUD educational institutions. This is influenced by the ability of managers to analyze the external environment; competitors of other institutions, by considering internal skills, must create effective strategies to win the competition without leaving the essence of education (Uminar, 2022).

There is an interesting phenomenon: many schools are opening admissions early. This is due to the great enthusiasm of the community as prospective users of educational services. The community often chooses educational institutions that have a good image because of their ability to please users of educational services. One strategy that schools can use to display their vision and mission is a marketing strategy.

Marketing strategy can be the next step for schools to achieve their goals. Marketing mix strategy plays a vital role in an educational institution's efforts to achieve its goals. Marketing strategy is a plan of activities or efforts to provide goods and services from producers to consumers (including customers), create satisfactory exchanges through these distribution activities, and adapt to external environmental conditions (Wijaya, 2012). Educational service marketing management that implements a marketing mix strategy can compete and win the competition with other Educational Institutions' competitors to be able to meet the expectations and satisfaction of students as consumers (Amiruddin, Ritonga, & Samsu, 2021). Therefore, the marketing mix strategy is expected to boost the marketing of Educational Services.

Based on the background above, the author focuses this research on examining the education marketing strategy at RA Al Muttaqin in depth. As an educational institution that has survived for a long time, RA Al Muttaqin's marketing strategy is to improve quality and competitiveness so that it can continue to exist and be accepted by the community. RA Al Muttaqin is one of the private schools in Cirebon Regency, Kedawung District; this school has an Islamic school concept while still implementing local culture. From here, the author is interested in researching marketing mix services' marketing strategy at the two institutions. RA Al Muttaqin carries out the marketing mix service marketing strategy titled "The Implementation of Marketing Mix Strategy (7P) in Marketing Educational Services at RA Al Muttaqin, Kedawung District, Cirebon Regency."

METHOD

This study uses qualitative methodology. Qualitative research is conducted in accordance with field conditions (Arifin, 2011). The Authors collect data through observation, interviews, and documentation. Observations are conducted by researchers who go to the field to observe relevant information directly (Ghony & Almanshur, 2012). According to Arifin (2011), interviews are a data collection method involving questions and answers and conversations with subjects either directly or indirectly to achieve certain goals. Interviews in this study use open interviews – documentation through relevant data collection.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Marketing Mix (7P) Strategy

The marketing mix is a tool for marketers consisting of various elements of a marketing program that need to be considered so that the implementation of the marketing strategy and positioning that has been set can run successfully (Machali & Hidayat, 2018). Kotler et al. (2002: 9) define the marketing mix as follows: "marketing mix as a set of controllable, tactical marketing tools that the firm blends to produce the results it wants in the target market." The point is that the marketing mix is a series of marketing elements that can be controlled by the company and combined in such a way that they can achieve their goals in the target market. In the context of education, the marketing mix is an essential element and can be combined with a strategy that can be used to win the competition (Machali & Hidayat, 2018).

The elements contained in the marketing mix are seven things, usually abbreviated as 7P, consisting of the traditional 4P used in marketing goods and 3P as an expansion of the marketing

mix (Machali & Hidayat, 2018). The 4P elements are product, what kind of services are offered, price, pricing strategy, place, where the service is provided, promotion, and how the promotion is carried out. The 3P elements are people (HR); the quality, qualifications, and competencies possessed by the people involved in providing services, physical evidence, what kind of facilities and infrastructure are owned and the process of managing the learning services provided (Machali & Hidayat, 2018). The seven marketing mix elements in the context of education can be briefly explained through the following diagram.

Table 1. Seven components of the marketing mix strategy

No.	Komponen	Subvariables	Indicators
1.	Product	Choice of concentration Name of the madrasah	Variety of choices Reputation, prospects of the madrasah
2.	Price	Discount pricing Payment Credit Terms	SPP, Development fees, laboratory fees Student fees Procedure Credit Terms
3.	Place	Environment Transportation	Close to the city center, spacious parking area and conducive Public transportation and congestion levels
4.	Promotion	Advertising Sales promotion Face to face sales Public relations	Media advertising Invitation Exhibition Direct contact Public relations activities
5.	People	Administrator Teacher Employee	Administrator competencies Teacher competence Employee competency
6.	Physical Evidence	Building style Supporting Facilities	Aesthetic and functional suitability

		Facilities for education, worship, sports, and security
7. Process	Quality of KBM services	KBM process
	Administrative quality	Reliability, responsiveness, assurance, dan empathy

Source: (Machali & Hidayat, 2018)

Implementation of the 7P Marketing Mix Strategy at RA Al Muttaqin

Nowadays, Early Childhood Education Institutions compete and try to attract the public's attention amidst the many educational institutions that have been established. Educational institutions compete to offer schools with unique characteristics, such as integrated Islamic schools, nature schools, and bilingual schools.

RA Al Muttaqin is an educational institution that was established in 1990. Based on observations and interviews at RA Al Muttaqin, the marketing mix strategy has been applied systematically in marketing educational services. Below are the results of the analysis of implementing the Marketing Mix Strategy at RA Al Muttaqin.

1. Product

Kotler (2017) defines a product as anything that can be offered to the market to meet a need or desire. Products in the context of educational services are services offered to customers through reputation, prospects, and various choices. Educational institutions that can survive and win the competition in educational services can offer a good reputation, prospects, quality of education, and bright opportunities for students to determine the desired choices such as further study, work, or society.

Kotler defines a product as anything that can be offered to a market to satisfy a need or desire. Products in educational services are services provided to customers through reputation, prospects, and various choices. Educational institutions that can survive and excel in the competition of educational services can provide a good reputation, prospects, quality education, bright prospects, and opportunities for students to make the desired choices such as further study, work, or becoming a good society (Machali & Hidayat, 2018).

Table 2. Product Marketing Mix Data Variables, Indicators, and Descriptions

Component	Sub-variables	Indicator	RA Al Muttaqin
Product	Choice concentration	Variety of choices	Yes
	Name of madrasah	Reputasi, prospek lembaga	Yes

Based on the Table 2 above, implementing products at RA Al Muttaqin prioritizes Islamic-based education. In addition to being under the Ministry of Religion, RA Al Muttaqin also supports the learning process by implementing religious foundations. Religious, educational institutions can also create a good image or reputation for the institution.

The graduates produced by RA Al Muttaqin are reflected in the profile of graduates who can continue to the next level with satisfactory achievements, such as consistently being ranked in the top three in the first semester, participating in various competitions, and being known for their responsiveness and character. This indirectly makes the public trust the two educational institutions.

Reputation and prospects are the attraction and interest of students. So far, Islamic educational institutions have offered products in accordance with their mission, namely, the character-building process for students with noble character, religious, and total values , including the fulfillment of graduate competency standards. This product is the main attraction.

Reputation and prospects will be a unique attraction to students' interests (Munisamy et al., 2014). For example, Islamic educational institutions have provided products in accordance with their missions, especially character-building, to students who have noble values, are religious, and form noble characters towards graduate competency standards (Machali & Hidayat, 2018). So, the products or outputs produced have their appeal.

2. Price

Price in the context of education is all costs incurred to obtain the education services offered. The education price element is considered in terms of pricing, such as tuition fees, building investment, and laboratory costs (Machali & Hidayat, 2018). Price in education services includes costs incurred to obtain the education services, such as school fees, building investment, or laboratory costs.

Table 3. Price Marketing Mix Data Variables, indicators, and descriptions

Component	Sub-variables	Indicator	RA Al Muttaqin
Price	Pricing	SPP, Development fees, laboratory fees	Yes
	Discount	Scholarship	Yes
	Payment	Procedure	Yes
	Credit Terms	Credit Terms	Yes

Based on the data in the Table 3 above, it was found that RA Al Muttaqin has a special policy related to the administration of educational financing. Financing consists of tuition,

registration, uniforms, and additional learning activity fees such as celebrating special days or outing classes. There is a separate policy for financing. RA Al Muttaqin has relatively low fees so that it can reach any level of society. However, it still relieves students as consumers by providing discounts based on their economic background. For payment procedures, RA Al Muttaqin still uses cash and receipts as proof of payment, which are then summarized in financial data. However, there is a relief where students may use school savings. Payments can also still be made using an installment system not to burden parents or guardians of students.

3. Place

In the context of educational services, the location of a school depends, to some extent, on the preferences of potential consumers when determining their choices. A strategic location and easy access will be a special attraction compared to a school near a cemetery (Machali & Hidayat, 2018).

Table 4. Place Marketing Mix Data Variables, indicators, and descriptions

Component	Sub-variables	Indicators	RA Al Muttaqin
Place	Environment	Close to the city center, spacious parking area and conducive	Yes
	Transportation	Public transportation and congestion levels	Yes

Based on the data in the Table above, the information obtained is that RA Al Muttaqin meets the place component indicators in implementing the marketing mix strategy. The observations at the institution RA Al Muttaqin show that it has a strategic location and is not too densely populated. RA Al Muttaqin is located in Kedungdawa Village. The road access is quite strategic because it is close to the public road but still supervised by teachers. The institution's teachers limit access to public readers and can continue to assist in welcoming and returning students. The parking area is conducive, and the congestion level is relatively low. An atmosphere that is not too crowded will help create a conducive learning atmosphere. Being near various public places will make it easier if students need services or have certain interests (Fadlilah, et al., 2023). The learning atmosphere for students is more comfortable and conducive.

4. Promotion

Promotion is an activity that communicates product sales directly related to the community according to the target market. Promotion activities can be done through advertising on TV, radio, newspapers, bulletins, bazaars, and platforms (Machali & Hidayat, 2018).

Tabel 5. Promotion Marketing Mix Data Variables, indicators, and descriptions

Component	Sub-variables	Indicators	RA Al Muttaqin
Promotion	Advertising	Media advertising	Yes

	Sales Promotion	Invitation	Yes
		Exhibition	
	Face to face sales	Direct contact	Yes
	Public relations	Public relations activities	Yes

Based on the data in the Table above, RA Al Muttaqin meets the indicators in the promotion component when implementing the marketing mix strategy. RA Al Muttaqin carries out promotional activities both online and offline. Among them are exhibitions at the end of the year attended by the surrounding community, direct contact in the form of direct invitations, and public relations activities such as outing class activities introducing children to the surrounding environment. In addition, each institution has its social media, which contains documentation and promotions, such as Instagram and Facebook. This activity certainly gets permission from the committee and parental approval through the POMG (Parent Teacher Meeting) meeting. Documentation is also shared with the parent/guardian group of students as an indirect report on the activities that students carry out every day. Indirectly, parents/guardians also upload photos of their children on social media, which introduces institutions that align with what Lau said: the best practice for conducting promotions is through social networks, which includes showing videos, publishing achievements, and updating the information regularly (Lau, 2020).

5. People

In this case, human resources deliver educational services, such as TU staff, principals, teachers, and employees (educators and education personnel). In PP 32 of 2005 concerning national education standards, it is stated that the standards for educators and education personnel are the criteria for pre-service education, physical and mental eligibility, and in-service education. Human resources are the spearhead in providing educational services to students, such as the techniques used in teaching, the ability to master technology, fun teaching methods, and the ability to motivate students (Machali & Hidayat, 2018).

Table 6. Data People Marketing Mix Variables, Indicators, and Descriptions

Component	Sub-variables	Indicators	RA Al Muttaqin
People	Administrator	Administrator	Yes
		Competence	
	Teacher	Teacher Competence	Yes
	Employee	Employee Competence	Yes

Based on the data in the Table above, the study's results found that RA Al Muttaqin met the people indicator when implementing the marketing mix strategy. This can be seen in the recruitment process for the Institution's teachers, administrators, and employees.

In carrying out the recruitment process for teaching and education staff, there are special qualifications that must be possessed by teaching and education staff, and there are duties, main points, and functions. The foundation and the principal evaluate the performance of teachers, staff, and employees. Teachers recruited to teach at RA Al Muttaqin are prioritized to have qualifications in the Faculty of Education, and it is an added value if they come from the appropriate field, namely Early Childhood Education. Teachers who do not have these qualifications will be advised to take the appropriate field or participate in training activities or seminars related to Early Childhood Education.

At RA Al Muttaqin, one principal meets the qualifications for Early Childhood Education, 1 certified teacher, two teachers who graduated from the Faculty of Education, 1 assistant teacher, 1 administrative staff, and 1 cleaning employee. Based on observations and interviews in the field, it was found that elderly teachers at RA Al Muttaqin were slightly behind in implementing technology. Still, these teachers had the enthusiasm to continue learning things that they had been unable to through discussions with colleagues or consultations with the principal of the madrasah. Even so, years of teaching experience can support the quality of teachers (Fadlilah, et al., 2023). Every teacher continues to strive to improve their performance in carrying out learning.

A well-known teacher is a teacher who has a good reputation and is well-known by his students. One of the most critical factors that influence students' perceptions of the quality of education is the qualifications of the teaching staff (Akareem & Hossain, 2016). One of the key components to designing a successful educational service is having the right teaching staff to convey knowledge in the learning process to students. Administrative staff refers to providing administrative and support services that enable the delivery of student services effectively and efficiently and can contribute to improving the image and satisfaction of students (Lau, 2020).

6. Physical Evidence

Physical evidence is the environment where the service is created and directly interacts with its consumers and students. Zeithaml and Bitzer define it as the environment in which the service is delivered and where the firm and customer interact and tangible components that facilitate the performance or communication of service, which means the environment where services are provided and where companies and customers interact with each other and tangible components that facilitate performance or communication of services (Machali & Hidayat, 2018).

Table 7. Physical Evidence of Marketing Mix Data Variables, Indicators and Descriptions

Component	Sub-variables	Indicators	RA Al Muttaqin
Physical Evidence	Building style	Aesthetic and functional suitability	Yes
	Supporting Facilities	Facilities for education, worship, sports and security	Yes

Based on the data in the Table above, RA Al Muttaqin fulfills the Physical Evidence component in implementing the marketing mix strategy. Based on the results of observations made, the design of the school's layout is both aesthetically and functionally pleasing. Like other Early Childhood Education Institutions, RA Al Muttaqin has a characteristic bright color that depicts the joy of children. RA Al Muttaqin has a building and classrooms dominated by green by combining it with other colors.

RA Al Muttaqin has complete facilities and infrastructure. The institution has also fulfilled the principle of procuring facilities and infrastructure that uphold safety, cleanliness, health, comfort, and beauty according to the level of child development and can utilize the potential and resources in the surrounding environment. There are various supporting facilities and infrastructure such as hand washing, Educational Play Equipment, Indoor and Outdoor Games, Reading Corners, etc. RA Al Muttaqin has four classrooms, each containing 15 children, 1 principal's room, 1 teacher's room, and 2 toilets, and is close to a place of worship, the Baitul Muttaqin Mosque.

Facilities provide a first impression of service quality (Saut & song, 2022). In addition, the learning environment is also a factor that can influence students' choices in choosing educational institutions (Lau, 2020) It can be seen that the provision of facilities and infrastructure is one of the factors that can provide positive support for schools and attract students' interest in choosing schools (Fadlilah, et al., 2023).

7. Physical Evidence

The process in educational services is all forms of activities that support the implementation of the teaching and learning process and the administrative process of the institution to produce the desired graduates (output) (Rahmat, 2021). The process is essential to obtain the desired results of the institution.

Table 8. Data Process of Marketing Mix Variables, Indicators and Descriptions

Component	Sub-variables	Indicators	RA Al Muttaqin
Process	Quality of KBM services	Teaching and Learning Process	Yes
	Quality of Administrative Services	Reliability, responsiveness, assurance, dan empathy	Yes

The principal continuously supervises each teacher's performance in carrying out their duties. After the evaluation stage, the principal also carries out learning supervision efforts.

Reprimands will be given to teachers who do not carry out their duties properly. Reprimands are given to ensure mistakes are not repeated, and improvements are made (Fadlilah, et al., 2023). This is done in the process component.

Based on the data in the Table above, it can be obtained that RA Al Muttaqin meets the indicators of successful marketing mix strategy implementation, especially in the process component. There are learning planning activities at RA Al Muttaqin, and the implementation of learning is also effective. Learning evaluation and supervision activities are carried out by each head of the institution to monitor the learning process. Learning planning activities are carried out by teachers according to the class or group they teach once a week. In addition, meetings are held monthly for all teachers, principals, and administrative staff.

CONCLUSION

The results of this study indicate that RA Al Muttaqin has implemented marketing activities with a marketing mix strategy and ongoing efforts in each component. The product component is done by providing diverse educational services, having a good reputation, and having quality graduates. Different prices are applied according to the economic conditions of students through discounts and installments. Location (place) is seen from the school's location, which is considered strategic and not too crowded. RA Al Muttaqin is in Cirebon Regency, precisely in Kedungdawa Village, Kedawung District, with a different block. Both institutions have easy access to public roads with various types of vehicles. The promotion component is done by organizing promotional activities that are in direct contact with consumers and through online media so that it can more easily reach the target market. The Human Resources (people) section is a consideration in the recruitment process for teaching and education staff; qualifications are prioritized, especially early childhood education, and each party's roles, responsibilities, duties, main points, and functions are clear. Physical evidence can be seen from the design of school spaces that are good in terms of aesthetics and functionality, complete facilities, and infrastructure, and meet the principles of providing infrastructure. In the process component, it is applied through activity planning, implementation of assessments, and monitoring of learning evaluation efforts.

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