

MARKETING COMMUNICATION STRATEGY FOR ISLAMIC BOARDING SCHOOL-BASED EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

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Abstract :

Communication is an important component in education as a means to connect between educational components. The role of communication in education marketing is a positive interaction that must be built by stakeholders as an effort to maintain the existence of educational institutions. The importance of communication must be built internally in educational institutions and also externally in educational institutions in the form of the community as an effort to build institutional synergy with the community. This research uses descriptive qualitative analysis method . Data collection techniques were carried out through observation and interviews. While the data analysis technique uses Miles and Huberman. The results of the study show that the communication strategy used by Nuris Vocational School has not been successful in the New Student Admissions (PPDB) activities.

Abstrak:

Komunikasi merupakan komponen penting dalam pendidikan sebagai sarana menghubungkan antar komponen pendidikan. Peran komunikasi dalam pemasaran pendidikan merupakan interaksi positif yang harus dibangun oleh para pemangku kepentingan sebagai upaya mempertahankan eksistensi lembaga pendidikan. Pentingnya komunikasi harus dibangun secara internal pada lembaga pendidikan dan juga secara eksternal pada lembaga pendidikan berupa komunitas sebagai upaya membangun sinergi kelembagaan dengan masyarakat. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode analisis deskriptif kualitatif. Teknik pengumpulan data dilakukan melalui observasi dan wawancara. Sedangkan teknik analisis datanya menggunakan Miles dan Huberman. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa strategi komunikasi yang digunakan SMK Nuris belum berhasil dalam kegiatan Penerimaan Peserta Didik Baru (PPDB).

INTRODUCTION

Educational institutions are educational service provider organizations that are purchased by education consumers, both students and other consumers. This indicates that educational institutions are producers of a service product in the form of educational services (Sahabuddin & Syahrani, 2022; Saleha et al., 2023). If producers are unable to satisfy consumers with their products (educational services), then the service products offered will no longer be in demand by consumers. The term marketing in the world of education still sounds foreign, considering that schools or madrasas are non-profit organizations, let alone education under the auspices of a boarding school. Even so, schools or madrasas still need marketing or marketing, because after all schools and madrasas are service organizations, namely educational services (Kosim et al., 2022; Irawati & Subhan, 2017).

In the world of education, what is meant by customers are those who need educational services. Education customers are classified into three, namely the main customers: students, the second customer: parents, and sponsors, and the third customer, namely the government and society (Sa'dullah & Supriyatno, 2021). As providers of educational services, both schools and madrasas are required to attract the interest of their customers, especially students who are the main customers of educational services. Lack of student interest in an educational institution will have a negative impact on educational institutions (Saleha et al., 2022).

One of the strategies carried out by educational institutions in increasing public interest is by implementing the right communication strategy (Syahrial et al., 2019). The purpose of this proper communication is to increase the number of students for the long-term sustainability of an educational institution (Dewi, 2017). This is in accordance with the Regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia Number 17 of 2017 in article 24 which states that the number of new students in one study group includes; (1) SD/ equivalent at least twenty children and a maximum of twenty eight children; (2) SMP/ equivalent at least twenty children and a maximum of thirty-two children; (3) SMA at least twenty children and a maximum of thirty-six children; (4) SMK/ equivalent at least fifteen children and a maximum of thirty-six children (Munawwaroh, 2017).

Quality assurance produced for every institution, including educational institutions, is an important task to attract public interest. Quality is a dynamic condition related to products, people or labor, processes and tasks, and the environment that meets or exceeds customer or consumer expectations (Artilah et al., 2022).

Therefore, the role of communication in marketing the quality of education is a positive interaction that must be built by education *stakeholders* in maintaining the survival of the institution, not only the task of public relations (PR), but good communication should maintain the quantity of students from time to time. as a bargaining value for educational institutions that are still trusted by the community to manage and develop them for the better, so that *the output* produced is of good quality.

Thus, marketing in an educational institution becomes crucial, because all

schools have competed to show their best face. As a provider of educational services, you should think about advancing *user satisfaction* because educational institutions must win the competition and have good quality management. With this marketing activity, educational institutions can provide information to the public about existing products, for example, from the educational institution introducing some of the existing superior programs and showing some of the achievements that have been achieved. That way, educational institutions can more easily increase public or consumer interest and interest in existing products, so that the public or consumers can trust these educational institutions as educational institutions that can educate their children with the excellent programs offered.

One way to attract the interest of students is through the acceptance of new students. Acceptance of new students is a process that will determine students who are accepted at a school. Acceptance of new students is the initial stage of starting the formal education level. The process of admitting new students must be carried out objectively, accountably, transparently, and without discrimination, so as to encourage increased access to services and educational equity (Margareta et al., 2018; Saleha, 2023). Acceptance of new students (PPDB) needs to be managed in such a way because it is a very risky stage in managing the education services marketing strategy.

From the explanation above, it can be understood that implementing the right strategy in education marketing is very important in order to maintain the sustainability of educational institutions as providers of educational services in the long term. Therefore, it is important for educational institutions to pay attention to how to manage marketing communication strategies within their institutions, in the context of this research is the educational institution SMK Nurul Islam Jember (hereinafter abbreviated as SMK Nuris) which is under the auspices of the Nurul Islam Jember Islamic boarding school.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a descriptive qualitative analysis method with the aim of providing an overview of the communication strategy carried out by Nuris Jember Vocational High School in attracting public interest in New Student Admissions (PPDB) activities. The source of the data was obtained through informants, namely informants by conducting guided debriefing through questions that are in accordance with the focus of the research. Data collection techniques were carried out through observation and interviews. While the data analysis technique uses data analysis from Miles and Huberman (1992) with processes starting from data collection, data reduction, data presentation to drawing conclusions or verification.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

As a service provider in the world of education, school administrators can ideally communicate marketing messages that the market expects. One form of effective communication is the publication of achievements from private advertisements or from the mass media. In order to convey positive news to educational institutions and influence society (Ariyanti, 2016)

Advertising plays a very important role, so that a company faces the choice of advertising. Advertising is part of marketing that can make products or services known to consumers. In advertising, companies must also be aware of the levels of consumer behavior with AIDDA, namely *Attention, Interest, Desire, Decision, and Action*. So, advertising must be able to influence consumers and attract consumers to be able to buy their products. If the ad can encourage buyers to buy the advertised product, then the ad can be said to be successful. Selection of the type of media in advertising that will be used is one of the important decisions for sponsors. Each media has different characteristics, these types of media include newspapers, radio, television, direct mail, billboards, banners, and others (Munir, 2022; Noorfajarsari et al., 2023).

The main factor of advertising is that advertising must give *user attention* to educational products or services that will be provided by education. Promotion is very good for *user connections* with school programs or educational institutions (Ulfah et al., 2022). Promotion in the form of advertising is an important part of fulfilling the marketing function where promotion does not only provide information to audiences but is also aimed at influencing feelings, *information*, impressions, beliefs and images of *users* related to the educational program being offered (Na'imah et al., 2020).

Publicity is a non-personal communication model that includes a product or service. This publicity activity is a promotional activity through the mass media without charge while the media voluntarily includes products or services produced by companies or educational institutions. With this publicity activity it can create higher trust in customers because it is considered more objective (Cinta et al., 2022).

Educational Services Marketing Communication Strategy

According to Rizki & Ary, (2021) marketing communication is a field of science that combines communication science with marketing science, giving rise to a new study, namely marketing communication or *marketing communication*. It can be understood that marketing communication is a process of sending and receiving messages for a product, with communication procedures and techniques, so as to generate profits between producers and consumers.

Marketing is a social and managerial process by which individuals and groups obtain what they need and want by creating, offering, and exchanging something of value with one another, in which both parties benefit. Even though using the term educational marketing, this activity is not a business activity aimed at getting as much profit as possible from students in an educational institution, but educational marketing is a form of responsibility of schools or educational institutions to the wider community regarding educational services that have been provided. carried out or achieved, ongoing, or still in the planning of a school or educational institution, so that it will provide an understanding to the wider community that the educational institution is functioning as expected.

According to Kurniawan, (2021) marketing of educational services is absolutely necessary because:

1. We need to provide information to consumers of educational services (students, parents and other related parties) that the educational institutions we manage have an existence.
2. We need to provide information to consumers of educational services (students, parents and other related parties) that the education we provide is capable of meeting the relevant criteria for their needs.
3. We need to provide an understanding to consumers of educational services (students, parents and other related parties) about the specifications of the educational services we provide in an educational institution.
4. We need to maintain the existence of educational institutions because it is related to their sustainability, so as not to lose the trust of the community.

The marketing *mix* is an element of marketing management that is used to maintain the competitiveness of a product in the market, whether in the form of goods or services. According to Margareta et al., (2018) the marketing mix is a combination of variables or activities which are the core of the marketing system namely product, price, promotion, and distribution. In other words, the definition of the marketing mix is a collection of variables that can be used by companies to influence consumer responses. Meanwhile, according to Manurung & Siagian, (2021), the marketing mix is a strategy to combine marketing activities, in order to create the maximum combination so that the most satisfying results will appear. So it can be concluded that *the marketing mix* is a combination of elements regulated by the company that can form a market system that is used in such a way as to achieve company goals in a marketing context.

Wilbur Schramm's Communication Strategy Model

Pratama & Elistia, (2020) argued that the AIDDA model is an acronym for the words *Attention* , *Interest* , *Desire* , *Decision* , *Action* . According to Widyanto & Athanasius, (2021) this communication strategy model is actually old and some experts have tried to make modifications, but the basic model is still used, apart from being simple it is also easier to apply to practical matters. Based on this theory, it can be explained that in effective communication, the communicator must first try to raise the communicant's awareness (in this case the listener), so that it can raise attention, followed by a desire for a decision and action to occur on what is communicated.

AIDDA's communication planning model is linear in nature and is widely used in commercial extension and marketing activities. *Attention* (attention) is the first step that must be made by someone marketing or counseling to the target audience. The attention referred to here is focused on the products, goods, or ideas (ideas) being offered. The extent to which the target avoids the benefits of the goods offered. For this reason, a marketer or extension officer must be able to show the usefulness of the goods offered to the target (consumer) (Wuwung et al., 2020).

Interest (*interest*) is the emergence of target interest (audience) to own the goods offered by the marketer. This attention may arise because what is being offered is something that has never been seen before. In addition to the benefits, it could also be because the goods offered are packaged in an attractive way, thus causing interest in potential buyers to own them (Pristikasari et al., 2022).

Desire (*desire*) is a process that occurs after the attention of potential buyers or targets arises on the goods offered. At this stage the buyer has a desire to own after weighing the benefits or uses. Business marketers try to give prospective buyers a psychological (psychological) touch in more persuasive ways, so that the desire arises to own or follow his teachings if what is offered is in the form of an instructor's idea.

Decisions are actions taken by prospective buyers in the form of execution, namely deciding to own the goods offered after weighing the benefits and seeing the possibility of available funds. Here the sole decision making is carried out by the prospective buyer. Of course it happens after the awareness process will be beneficial. Attention to packaging, and also maybe the price offered can be affordable, so there is interest (*desire*) (Liu & Setiawan, 2020).

Action (*action*) is the treatment made by the buyer after having the goods in the form of sides. For example, if he wants to consume or use it according to his wishes when he wants to have it. Of course as purchased goods will be used to meet needs and to create self-satisfaction.

Strategy Conducted by SMK Nuris Jember

The school communication strategy that has been set at Nuris Vocational School starts with planning to form a PPDB committee which is formed by the head of the foundation and the school principal as the person in charge of PPDB. The school principal will first consult together with the PPDB committee from technical formation, capacity, location, administration, budget determination, PPDB announcement information such as making banners, brochures, billboards, school website updates, to designs that will be uploaded on the school's official social *media* .

In carrying out the predetermined plan, the school also approaches targeted prospective new students. Collaborative activities between lower secondary schools that could reach more prospective new students were obtained. In addition, the method used is more targeted because the message is conveyed directly (*mouth to mouth*) so that if there are some things that are not understood, responses can be directly given to minimize miscommunication.

Attention Indicator (*Attention*)

Student interest in studying at Nuris Vocational School for the past 3 years until the 2023 New Student Admissions (PPDB) period has relatively decreased. This is related to the number of new student applicants at the Nuris Islamic Boarding School also experiencing the same thing. These symptoms make schools carry out a communication strategy to create audience attention, namely by posting through digital media, namely the web and brochures.

Providing information about the achievements of students, alumni who have been accepted at several State Universities, and the absorption of alumni in the world of work is considered to be able to attract the attention of students and parents to find out more about this information. In addition, the Nuris Vocational School also made direct visits to several schools to conduct outreach with the target of 9th grade junior high school students. This strategy really helps the school to find out how far the audience's attention is to SMK Nuris as seen from the level of visits to both the school and the website.

Interest Indicator

Instagram, Facebook and TikTok Nuris Vocational School information media which act as communication channels to audiences are also used to provide information such as educational content, testimonials and achievements that have been achieved by students. This strategy is considered to support the school's achievement in attracting prospective students to enter Nuris Vocational School. The interest given in the form of interaction can also be seen in the interactions given by prospective new students through activities *like, comment, share* or *save* that information. This can be seen in the posts uploaded on the Instagram *feed* and also the official Facebook homepage of SMK Nuris. It can be seen that the responses given by prospective students and parents were quite good from this interaction.

Desire Indicator

Indications of enthusiasm are information about the advantages of the school, how the communication conveyed can arouse the desires of prospective students and be able to provide reasons why they should study at Nuris Vocational School. To fulfill this, the school includes *contact persons* in several of its promotions which aim to make it easier for prospective students or parents to find out more about the school. The application of *a contact person* cannot fully become a measure of enthusiasm, but it can also be supplemented with a questionnaire format regarding the desire to go to school at Nuris Vocational School which can be distributed during visits to schools or distributed via Google *form*. In addition, there are obstacles in managing the Nuris Vocational School website due to limited time and school human resources to manage the website.

Decision Indicator

Based on the results of interviews and observations of the school, it was stated that there was an impact seen from the increase in the number of students. For this reason, the right communication strategy after prospective students know the ins and outs of Nuris Vocational School can be seen through the web or *word of mouth information* through the alumni network. In the future, the school will publish an easily accessible *online registration form* in several cities in the horseshoe area. With this strategy it will be seen how many registrants are doing online, although there is also the possibility of those who do not continue to continue paying registration.

Action Indicator

Based on the results of observations that some parents and prospective students decide to re-enroll on the grounds that education under the auspices of Islamic boarding schools is more compatible with current conditions. Islamic boarding school education has added value which is manifested in the form of Islamic studies which are not offered by public educational institutions. Some parents and prospective students are still reluctant to continue their education at SMK Nuris because they are still unfamiliar with educational institutions under the auspices of Islamic boarding schools which require their students to live in

Islamic boarding schools. Thus the communication strategy that has been implemented so far needs to be evaluated and reviewed to what extent the effectiveness of the communication strategy that has been carried out by Nuris Vocational School has caused the communication delivered to be not properly scrutinized.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the presentation and discussion, it can be concluded from the formulation of the problem that the communication strategy to increase the interest of prospective students at SMK Nuris Jember has not been fully successful. This is because the school has not been fully able to create the attention of prospective new students. Indicators of attention (*attention*) can only be obtained through information on student achievements and alumni absorption in the world of work. For indicators of interest, schools have received enough responses from prospective new students, which can be seen from the interactions that occurred during the PPDB period. For indicators of desire, namely by visiting or responding to prospective students who are carried out further, such as contacting the school through the school's *contact person* and visits through the school's official website. For *decision* indicators, it can be seen from how many prospective new students finally register themselves at SMK Nuris Jember. This registration can be accessed by prospective new students via the school's website or coming directly to school (*offline*). As for the action indicators (*action*), it was found that all prospective students who had enrolled did not necessarily take action for school at SMK Nuris Jember with the consideration that education at Islamic boarding schools was more compatible with education at other public institutions. Islamic boarding schools are considered capable of keeping up with the times without neglecting the teaching of religious knowledge.

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