

The Effectiveness Of Application Of Marketing Strategies In Private Higher Education

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Submitted: 10th Nov 2021 | **Edited:** 14th August 2021 | **Issued:** 01st Sept 2021

Cited on: Nuriadi, N. (2021). The Effectiveness Of Application Of Marketing Strategies In Private Higher Education. *AKADEMIK: Jurnal Mahasiswa Humanis*, 1(3), 104-113.

ABSTRACT

For private higher education institutions, education is an educational service. Therefore, there needs to be a measurable effort in finding students. One common way of doing this is by implementing a marketing mix. Starting from publications, promotions, and the application of affordable educational costs, as well as various educational facilities. Based on this, this study was conducted to reveal the effectiveness of implementing marketing strategies in private higher education in Banten Province. The strategic step in answering the objectives of this research is to use a qualitative approach and descriptive analysis. The unit of analysis was students, and research data was obtained through a simple random distribution of questionnaires. The results showed that the background/characteristics of the students greatly influenced the marketing strategy model used. Thus, universities need to conduct research on student profiles comprehensively, from demographics to the presence of other universities. The price penetration strategy is the most dominant factor for the urban market, in the lower-middle class category. Thus, the main key in the effectiveness of implementing a private higher education marketing strategy is the affordability of education costs.

Keywords: Private Higher Education, Effectiveness Marketing Strategy, Student

INTRODUCTION

The progress of the times is a manifestation of changes in thinking and changes in behavior, or rather evolution. The emergence of progress certainly has an impact, namely competition. Competition is the nature of evolution, but what is unpredictable is how competition impacts. History records, the worst possible competition from evolution is its absence.

Today, education competition is influenced by global factors, namely economic competition. So do not be surprised, every educational institution, especially private higher education institutions take a role. The large population is one of the reasons for the increasing competition in education, so the impact is that every university is competing to provide the best, of course at a reasonable price.

Marketing strategies are used to attract people. There are some educational institutions that emphasize on the facilities side (buildings, luxurious facilities and infrastructure), for example UPH, BINUS, Trisakti, and others. Some campuses focus on education quality strategies, such as state universities. Some campuses focus on a strategy of affordable tuition fees. And some higher education institutions use a value-added strategy (service ties/providing work).

Hasanah (2020) stated that marketing strategy is a necessity in doing business. In other words, educational institutions have a business dimension, namely services. Admit it or not, the fact that shows how expensive education is is a simple explanation. Therefore, it is very naive not to use marketing as a strategy. Canada (2019) stated that marketing is a strategy in doing business. If an organization wants to achieve its goals, in this case profit, then building marketing fundamentals is a must, then strengthening the system or method is its operational strategy.

In marketing, there are many tools or methods that can be used as strategies. However, in fact the most appropriate strategy is the strategy that best suits the needs and circumstances of the organization. Therefore, every organization is different in using marketing strategies. There are some dominant organizations in the marketing mix, the rest are other aspects of marketing. There are also some organizations that combine conventional and digital marketing. And there are some organizations that only use one part of marketing as a business strategy, for example Apple uses a product quality strategy, Toyota uses a *low cost* (low prices), for example Aqua uses a *brand image* (brand image), and so on.

The number of curious strategies gives every organization many options to grow its business, either slowly or aggressively. For example, in private universities. That brand image or positive perception is the main capital to gain public trust, especially for parents to want to send their children to the college. While other marketing aspects, such as advertising, location, facilities, study programs are supporting strategies. In fact, in this case the University of Pamulang, in the last 10 years (2008-2018) has grown rapidly, and is even one of the campuses with the largest growth. It was recorded in 2018 as the University with the highest number of students in the face-to-face lecture category. However, UNPAM realizes that delivering quality is at the core of higher education institutions. Therefore, UNPAM still needs to improve various aspects in

order to remain trusted by the community, including deciding what marketing strategy is most in line with the campus vision and mission.

In an effort to gain public/community trust, UNPAM is quite successful in implementing the vision and mission through a *low cost*. Affordable price is a jargon used to connect campus characteristics with market segmentation. It is recorded that 90% of students come from the lower-middle class. According to Ummah (2019) in business competition, strategy plays a major role. Market share depends on how close an organization is to its needs. In other words, UNPAM is quite close to the characteristics of its market share. Through affordable prices, it is proven to be able to dominate market share both demographically and public psychology. The ability to read market characteristics is an advantage of UNPAM.

Has, et al. (2020) suggests that every business organization should focus on one main strategy by lowering other marketing strategies into small pieces. This statement confirms that UNPAM has succeeded in utilizing *low cost* as the main strategy, through advertising, building relationships with schools, social activities, *personal selling*, and so on as small parts of a marketing strategy.

Wono & Aji (2020) suggest that sometimes using multiple strategies provides an advantage in terms of probability, assuming the exact characteristics of the market are not known, requiring organizations to undertake various possibilities, because there may be one of the most suitable marketing strategies, whether it is price, image, satisfaction, location, promotion, or so on.

Semaun (2019) emphasized that it is important to have a strong determination in influencing the market, because the market is unique (complex), if you can, then put all your efforts. In other words, using a marketing strategy is the right way to influence the behavior, attitudes and perceptions of the market. Thus, the best organization is the one that can provide many possibilities through the most suitable marketing strategy.

THEORY

Marketing activities in business is a necessity. That is, every organization has hopes and desires to achieve a goal. The use of marketing strategies is part of business operations. How a product or service can be accepted by consumers, this assumption is universal. In other words, the market has certain characteristics in using a product or

service. So marketing efforts and strategies are ways to find out these characteristics. So far, marketing is believed to be the only way to gain market. Through marketing, companies can produce quality products, position themselves close to consumers, promote attractively, set prices wisely, optimize professional and humane human resources, and so on.

Marketing strategies can be understood as ways to convince and gain market share trust. Some of these strategies include strategic location, quality of the offered products, attractive promotions, competitive prices, professional and human resources, effective and efficient processes, elegant organizational performance, and so on. According to Sartika (2019), the influence strategy is not only material but also non-material, and with that all parties are satisfied. In other words, marketing strategy is the politics of business operations, if it can be optimized it can generate maximum profit.

Before implementing the most appropriate marketing strategy, it is necessary to first study the characteristics of the market. Starting from gender, age, type of work, income level, consumption level, purchasing power, area location, density, lifestyle, habits, customs and so on. This is done to see the compatibility between the marketing strategy to be used and the organization's vision and mission with market needs. The results of research conducted by Sitanggang, et, al. (2021) suggest that large companies first conduct demographic research to market their products. Pratama & Prasetyaningrum (2021) suggest that demographics help companies make decisions. In other words, looking at market demographics is an important stage in marketing planning.

Next determine the price. Price is a value of goods or services that can be measured. In other words, there is a synchronization between the capabilities and needs of consumers with the company's goals. Therefore, price has always been a primary good for consumers and companies. Its nature is fundamental, so it has a great influence on the psychology of both. According to Azan (2019), price has a significant effect on consumer behavior and decisions. The results of research conducted by Iqbal (2019) have an effect on consumer decisions. This finding confirms, in general, that price is the first factor seen by consumers. At least the price gives a positive impression on the first response or first glance.

In addition, building personal communication through word of mouth is quite effective. marketing strategy *word of mouth* builds downward communication or horizontal communication, thus the main goal is to influence the mental and thoughts of consumers, if done consistently the impact will be changes in attitudes and behavior (Syakur & Panuju, 2020). The results of research conducted by Ginting & Ginting (2019) stated that word of mouth is one of the traditional marketing strategies that is very effective in influencing consumers, even in the digital era.

In the digital era, the existence of technology and systems is a necessity. Therefore, using systems and technology in this century is an existential strategy. Organizational sustainability is fixed, thus efforts to combine existing strategies with technological innovations can strengthen the company's fundamentals. Research conducted by Nasution & Ichsan (2020) suggests that the success of marketing in the 21st century is the use of technology. Meanwhile, according to Romli (2020) marketing collaboration with technology can increase company sales. The same thing was also stated by Malarangan, et al. (2020) that the use of technology in marketing is an advantage that can maintain and increase market share indefinitely.

METHOD

The approach used is qualitative with descriptive narrative. The research object is Pamulang University and the unit of analysis is students. The sampling technique used simple randomization and a questionnaire as the instrument. The research design was made based on the characteristics of the object and unit of analysis. This is done to meet the elements of accuracy and precision. So that the research results can describe the phenomenon.

RESULTS

Table 1. Demographics of Respondents

	Social Status	Level of Income	Employment	Education	Lifestyle
Average Score	1	1	1	1	1
Note	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium

Source: Research Data, 2021

Based on the data above, it is known that on average the parents / guardians of UNPAM students are at the intermediate level with a score of 1. The social status of UNPAM's market share is at the middle level with the majority of answers 73%, the income level is at the middle level with the majority of answers 88 %, occupation is at the intermediate level with the majority of answers 94%, education is at the intermediate level with the majority of answers 51% and lifestyle is at the intermediate level, with the majority of answers 53%.

In general, the findings above confirm that the demographics of UNPAM's market share are at the Lower > Middle level, not Middle > Upper level. Thus, establishing a modern minimalist marketing strategy is the right step, for example eliminating building costs and registration is done online. Thus, it will give birth to a domino effect, namely *word of mouth*. Realizing these advantages, UNPAM added a referral system. Where the registration fee can be free if one of the students provides a reference to new students. In other words, UNPAM creates rewards as well as convenience. This strategy has been quite effective for the past decade.

Demographic data can be used by UNPAM to find out what the market wants. Realizing its strategic existence, which is located between a big city (Jakarta) and an urban city (BODETABEK) is able to position itself (*Positioning*) as an alternative to education, not as a challenger. This makes UNPAM quite taken into account in the midst of society. The next impact is the formation of perception. Indirectly, the strategy applied is able to change the perception and behavior of the market, thus placing UNPAM on another perception. UNPAM is not seen as upper class, which incidentally is expensive and luxurious, and UNPAM is not seen as lower class, which incidentally is of low quality.

Table 2. Unpam

	Building	Facilities	Cost	Curriculum	System
Mean Score	2	1	0	1	1
Key	High	Middle	Lower	Middle	Middle

Source: Research Data, 2021

Information: (0 = low), (1 = medium), (2 = high)

Based on the data above, it can be seen that the building is UNPAM's advantage, with a score of 2. This means that UNPAM is perceived as very good from the physical

side of the building. It can be admitted, UNPAM has two luxury campuses. Parents or guardians of students recognize that the UNPAM building is equivalent to a well-known public and private campus. In addition, in answering respondents, the perception of comparing affordable prices with luxurious buildings makes it a matter of pride. This is what causes the market to respond to UNPAM.

In addition, the Facility has an average score of 1 which is in the middle category. In answering this category, respondents imagined that UNPAM had sufficient complete educational facilities. Starting from the internet, labs, fully air-conditioned study rooms, and so on, on the other hand, UNPAM is weak in maintaining facilities. In other words, respondents tend to admit that UNPAM has adequate educational facilities, however, there are still records that must be improved so that they are perceived as high.

Furthermore, in terms of cost, the respondents saw that UNPAM with its various advantages could be recognized as a cheap/affordable campus. This reason is quite strong in the minds of the respondents. From this, people unconsciously have become *public relations* UNPAM. The public markets UNPAM by *word of mouth*, through stories with family, relatives, neighbors and so on, that UNPAM deserves to be an option to send their sons and daughters to school. In addition, in the minds of respondents that with a low cost, UNPAM is not underestimated. This means that low costs are not perceived as cheap and of poor quality, on the contrary, UNPAM is strong enough to be perceived as cheap because its advantages in terms of education are quite dominant. For example, UNPAM has e-cards, e-students, online lectures/e-learning, and payments through the *mobile banking system*.

In addition, the UNPAM System and Curriculum are perceived in the middle category. The curriculum includes courses and teaching staff, while the System includes academic services, administration and education information systems. Both of these categories, UNPAM is honestly perceived as strong by the respondents, but with a number of notes, namely the consistency of service.

In line with the discussion and analysis above, UNPAM applies *low cost* as a marketing strategy. Then use a *proxy* through buildings, facilities and technology system services. Thus creating a perception in the minds of students is a quality of value, this is the trigger for the birth of a *word of mouth*.

Recognizing the existence of *word of mouth* UNPAM facilitates it by implementing supporting marketing strategies, namely through a referral system and waiver of registration fees. The system doubles the effectiveness of UNPAM's marketing, namely strengthening the *low cost* as an alternative.

Another interesting thing, in the last 4 years UNPAM has built a partnership marketing system. To maintain the existence and public trust, it involves the market as a partner, through official ties and strengthening the bureaucracy. UNPAM has externally strengthened its marketing shield, and sharpened its core marketing strategy. Thus the market share has been bound both physically and non-physically.

Based on the explanation above, the following findings can be stated:

1. The initial stage needs to be marketing planning through demographic analysis.
2. Seeing internal and external conditions as *positioning*, thus being able to determine a *low cost* wisely.
3. Build a proxy strategy through *word of mouth*.
4. Strengthen the main strategy through the technology system.

CONCLUSION

The results of the study indicate that the demographics of respondents affect the accuracy of the marketing strategy used, *low cost* is the main marketing strategy, costs and the education system are *word of mouth*, and the technology system is a supporting marketing strategy.

The findings above provide evidence that a marketing strategy is a must in business, business education is no exception. Using a *low cost* is a wise choice as an alternative. But building a plan is an absolute requirement at least to do a demographic analysis. Then reinforced with other marketing strategies, such as *word of mouth*. Thus, the *low cost* can be effective in gaining market share.

In addition, building a relationship with the market is the right decision. Given the effect is a Mutual system, namely interdependence. In other words, the existence of the organization will continue to be maintained by the market, because the market has become part of the organization. Therefore, using technology is a must to obtain accurate information in order to see the future (opportunities and opportunities).

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