

Marketing Strategy of Educational Service at MAN 3 Jombang

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Abstract : *This study aims to describe the marketing strategy of educational services at MAN 3 Jombang in facing competition between educational institutions. The focus of the study includes the characteristics of educational services, market segmentation, implementation of marketing mix (product, price, place, promotion), as well as challenges and innovations carried out to increase the attractiveness of the institution. The approach used is descriptive qualitative with in-depth interview techniques with leaders, teachers, public relations staff, students, prospective students, alumni, and guardians of students. The results of the study show that MAN 3 Jombang integrates general and religious curriculum, with market segmentation that includes students from outside Jombang and promotion through social media and alumni. The marketing mix strategy is implemented comprehensively, with the main products being educational services, scholarship programs, and the Center for Achievement and Innovation (PPI). The challenges faced include limited cost information, digital promotion competition, and teacher time for external promotion. Innovation is carried out through digitalization of services, student involvement in promotional content, and utilization of alumni as promotional agents. In conclusion, the marketing strategy at MAN 3 Jombang is collaborative, creative, and adaptive to the times.*

Keywords : *Marketing strategy; Educational services; Marketing mix strategy; Innovation.*

INTRODUCTION

Educational institutions, including schools, are service providers in the field of education that play a crucial role in shaping civilization and driving social change. In today's era of globalization and increasing competition, educational institutions are required to continuously innovate and improve their quality to remain relevant and attractive to society. The intense competition encourages educational institutions to offer advantages in both facilities and affordable fees (Dian & Prayoga, 2020).

The shift in the public's perception of education has also influenced how educational institutions are viewed. While education was once primarily regarded as a social aspect, it is now also seen as a corporate entity that must be able to offer valuable services to its consumers (Zainal, 2014). Therefore, the ability to manage and market educational services professionally is essential, especially in building a positive institutional image in the eyes of the public (Andreas, 2021).

Educational marketing is no longer considered taboo but has become a common strategy to maintain institutional existence and increase student enrollment. Marketing in

this context goes beyond mere promotion; it encompasses the entire process that enables institutions to understand customer needs and expectations, and to create services that deliver satisfaction (Agustina, 2011). This effort aims to provide services that align with societal needs and evolving times, so that students receive education that is both relevant and of high quality (Amiruddin, 2021).

In practice, educational marketing strategies must be designed systematically and based on environmental analysis. Institutions must understand the internal and external factors that influence marketing effectiveness, such as goals, target markets, and both challenges and opportunities (Sudirman & Ichwan Musa, 2011). The goals of educational marketing include building customer loyalty, maintaining institutional reputation, and increasing the satisfaction of students and parents (Anwar & Kasful, 2021).

One approach adopted from the business world is customer satisfaction-oriented marketing. When educational institutions fail to meet customer expectations, they will struggle to maintain their existence, particularly in attracting new students and keeping enrollment numbers stable (Mundir, 2016). Therefore, educational institutions are required to showcase the uniqueness and excellence of the services they offer to enhance their appeal amid increasingly tight competition (Wahyudi, 2017).

The success of educational marketing strategies can be assessed through various indicators, such as the increase in new student admissions, active participation of students and parents in school activities, and customer loyalty, which is reflected in timely payments and involvement in school programs (Firmansyah & Anang, 2019).

MAN 3 Jombang, one of the secondary education institutions in East Java, Indonesia, is an institution that needs to implement effective marketing strategies to maintain its existence. Although it is known as an institution that provides quality education, the dynamics of competition in the education sector require MAN 3 Jombang to continue to develop an adaptive marketing approach based on a deep understanding of the local education market, characteristics of prospective students, and trends in education marketing (Mulyana, 2018).

Preliminary research conducted by researchers through observations and brief interviews with the public relations of MAN 3 Jombang showed that marketing efforts were still conventional and had not fully utilized digital media optimally. This is a challenge in attracting prospective students in the increasingly competitive digital era. Other relevant studies also show the importance of a planned and adaptive marketing strategy. Habibi (2023), in his research at MAN 1 Yogyakarta, emphasized the effectiveness of implementing a marketing mix such as product, price, place, promotion, people, physical evidence, and process in increasing the interest of new students. Meanwhile, Rahma (2024) identified that market segmentation, target determination, and market positioning are important parts of the marketing strategy in Islamic private schools. In addition, Puspa et al. (2024) found that the strategic use of social media has a positive effect on increasing the number of registrants, while Binar (2024) revealed the main challenges of religious-based schools in the digital era, namely technological adaptation and changes in community preferences. Lusitania et al. (2024) also added that a strategy based on cultural and religious values can be an innovative approach to marketing religious educational institutions, which is relevant to the characteristics of MAN 3 Jombang. Based on these findings, a formulation of an appropriate, innovative, and contextual educational service marketing strategy is needed so that MAN 3 Jombang can compete sustainably amidst increasingly complex competition.

Based on these considerations, this research focuses on educational service marketing strategies at MAN 3 Jombang as an effort to understand and develop strategies

that can enhance the institution's competitiveness amid a highly competitive educational landscape. Specifically, this study aims to explore the characteristics of the educational services offered and the target market segments addressed in MAN 3 Jombang's marketing strategy. Furthermore, it seeks to analyze the application of the marketing mix elements (4Ps)—product, price, place, and promotion—and evaluate the effectiveness of their implementation. Lastly, this research aims to identify the challenges faced in executing the current marketing strategies and to formulate the necessary innovations to enhance the appeal of educational services offered by MAN 3 Jombang.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative descriptive approach aimed at uncovering phenomena in their natural context through the presentation of data in the form of words and narratives. According to Tohirin in his book (2002), qualitative research is a procedure that produces descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words and observable behavior. This method involves the collection of data through in-depth interviews, observations, and document analysis to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the marketing strategies used in MAN 3 Jombang (Wahidmurni, 2017). The qualitative method allows the researcher to explore the meaning behind behaviors and practices observed in the school's marketing efforts.

The research was conducted at MAN 3 Jombang, chosen for its strong reputation in delivering Islamic-based formal education and its innovative marketing strategies. Data sources included the school principal, head of public relations and student admissions team, teachers involved in promotional programs, students' parents from various cohorts, and alumni who participated in outreach activities. These informants were selected through purposive sampling based on their relevance and involvement in the research topic.

Data collection techniques consisted of in-depth interviews (Sugiyono, 2019), direct observation of promotional events and school activities, and document analysis such as brochures, social media content, and student admission reports. The interview questions were tailored according to the role of each informant to ensure relevance and depth of information; for example, the principal and public relations team were asked about overall marketing strategies and policies, while parents and alumni were questioned about their perceptions and experiences related to the school's educational services. This approach enabled the research to gather comprehensive insights on how the institution promotes its educational services to attract and retain students.

The collected data were analyzed using descriptive qualitative analysis, including data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing (Sugiyono, 2019). Data credibility was ensured through triangulation of sources, techniques, and timing. Triangulation of sources was used to compare data from different informants; technique triangulation involved cross-verifying interviews with observations and documents; and time triangulation was conducted to recheck data accuracy under varying conditions and times. This rigorous validation process aimed to produce reliable and in-depth findings related to the educational marketing strategies at MAN 3 Jombang.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The data in this study were analyzed using a qualitative descriptive approach, with the aim of interpreting the findings in depth based on the real conditions observed at MAN 3 Jombang. The analysis process involved three main stages: data reduction, data display,

and conclusion drawing or verification, as proposed by Miles and Huberman (1994). Data reduction was carried out by selecting relevant information from interviews, observations, and documentation. This information was then organized and displayed in the form of narrative descriptions and thematic groupings, allowing researchers to identify patterns and relationships between various elements of the marketing strategy.

To ensure the validity and credibility of the data, triangulation techniques were applied. This study employed source triangulation by collecting data from various informants, including school leaders, marketing or public relations officers, teachers, students, and parents. Method triangulation was also used, combining interviews, direct observations, and document analysis to compare and cross-check the consistency of the findings. In addition, theoretical triangulation was utilized by comparing the empirical findings with relevant concepts and previous research on educational marketing strategies. Through this comprehensive analysis process, the study aimed to obtain a thorough and reliable understanding of the educational marketing practices at MAN 3 Jombang.

1. Results

a. Characteristics of Educational Services at MAN 3 Jombang

MAN 3 Jombang is a state-based Islamic senior high school (madrasah) that uniquely integrates the pesantren (Islamic boarding school) education system with the national curriculum. Its location within the Bahrul Ulum Islamic Boarding School creates a strongly religious atmosphere. According to the Vice Principal of Curriculum, Mr. Manasiful Anam (interview, March 5, 2025), the integration of pesantren curriculum into local content is the hallmark of this madrasah. This was echoed by Mr. Sahri S., a teacher and OSIS advisor, as well as a parent, Mrs. Anis Wahira, who highlighted that MAN 3 Jombang's strength lies in its balance between spiritual intelligence (IPTAQ) and scientific knowledge (IPTEK).

An active student, Najwa Rukyanah, emphasized the religious yet modern atmosphere in the learning process, while alumni such as Ni'matul Maulidiyah highlighted the academic quality and professionalism of the teaching staff. Additionally, digital innovations such as the fingerprint attendance system and the online PTSP (Integrated Services Center) system are key differentiators (Manasiful Anam, interview, March 5, 2025).

Its flagship programs include religious coaching, vocational skills training, and student exchange programs, making the madrasah not only academically focused but also committed to practical skills development and global awareness.

b. Target Market Segments

The main target segments of MAN 3 Jombang include:

- 1) Santri (students) from Islamic boarding schools, particularly alumni of nearby MTs (Islamic junior high schools) (Manasiful Anam, interview, March 5, 2025).

- 2) Graduates of MTs and SMP (junior high schools) from across Indonesia, with nationwide promotional coverage (Muhammad Aang Kunaifi, interview, March 10, 2025).
- 3) High-achieving students, both academically and non-academically (Ahmad Zarkoni, interview, March 6, 2025).
- 4) Students with interests in religion and practical skills, especially from families seeking balanced education (Hanis Septihani & Effi Fadhilah, interviews, March 6 & 12, 2025).

Promotional strategies are carried out through social media, direct outreach, and alumni engagement (Ahmad Zarkoni & Manasiful Anam, interviews, March 2025).

c. Marketing Mix (4Ps) Implementation

1) Product

Quality education based on academic and Islamic values. Achievements are the main branding element, as noted by Hanis Septihani and Effi Fadhilah (interviews, March 6 & 12, 2025), and supported by alumni such as Salsabila Aulia Rohmati.

2) Price

Fees are considered reasonable, with various scholarship programs such as the MANTAP Foundation and the tahfidz (Qur'an memorization) program (Ahmad Zarkoni & Ainul Yaqin, interviews, March 2025). Place: Strategically located in Tambakberas, Jombang, with multiple campuses and skill galleries (Muhammad Aang Kunaifi, interview, March 10, 2025).

3) Promotion

A mix of social media, brochures, community activities, and alumni involvement in promotion. Instagram is the most effective platform (Muhammad Aang Kunaifi, Hanis Septihani, Ahmad Zarkoni, interviews, March 2025).

4) Challenges

The main challenges include:

- Adapting promotional content for Generation Z (Hanis Septihani, interview, March 6, 2025),
- Maintaining student motivation and discipline (Effi Fadhilah, interview, March 12, 2025),
- Limited teacher time for direct promotion (Ahmad Zarkoni, interview, March 6, 2025),
- Public perception of tuition costs (Manasiful Anam, interview, March 5, 2025),
- Increasing competition from other educational institutions (Sahri S., interview, March 12, 2025).

d. Innovations

Key innovations include digital services (fingerprint & online PTSP), involving students in promotional content for student admissions (Hanis Septihani, interview, March 6, 2025), optimizing alumni roles (Ni'matul Maulidiyah, interview, March 14, 2025), and the establishment of the Center for Achievement and Innovation (PPI), recognized by the Ministry of Religious Affairs (Muhammad Aang Kunaifi, interview, March 10, 2025).

2. Discussion

The characteristics of educational services at MAN 3 Jombang reflect an integration of the pesantren (Islamic boarding school) curriculum and the national curriculum. This not only reinforces the madrasah's Islamic identity but also demonstrates its adaptability to contemporary demands, particularly in the face of digital transformation. This distinctive feature provides a competitive advantage that strengthens MAN 3 Jombang's position in an increasingly competitive educational market.

These findings are consistent with those of Habibi (2023), who found that the implementation of the marketing mix effectively increased new student interest. At MAN 3 Jombang, the product—high-quality education based on Islamic values—is supported by both academic and non-academic achievements, affordable and transparent pricing, strategic locations, and mass promotion efforts through digital media.

The school's market segmentation strategy is broad and well-structured. MAN 3 Jombang targets students from pesantren, graduates of MTs/SMP from various regions across Indonesia, and high-achieving students. This strategy reflects the effective use of segmentation, targeting, positioning (STP), and product differentiation, as observed by Rahma (2024).

In terms of promotion, the use of social media and digital content has become a key strategy. This aligns with the findings of Sundari (2022), who reported that social media effectively expands outreach and enhances the public image of educational institutions. MAN 3 Jombang adapts its promotional strategies to Generation Z's media consumption patterns by producing creative content and involving alumni in digital campaigns.

Nevertheless, challenges such as limited time for promotional activities and adapting to digital communication remain obstacles. These challenges were also noted by Taufik et al. (2023), who highlighted that technological adaptation and shifting public preferences are among the primary issues faced by faith-based educational institutions. MAN 3 Jombang's response—through madrasah digitalization and promotional innovation—demonstrates its adaptability to dynamic market conditions.

The school's approach, which is rooted in cultural and religious values, has also proven effective in engaging broader community segments. Nurasiah and Cut Intan

hayati (2024) emphasized that value-based marketing strategies in religious education are particularly effective in attracting both urban and suburban communities.

In conclusion, the success of MAN 3 Jombang's marketing strategy lies in the synergy between its internal strengths (product and human resources), effective communication, and adaptability to technology and market trends. These findings reinforce prior research and underscore the importance of continuous innovation in maintaining the competitiveness of faith-based educational institutions in the digital era.

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