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Marketing Mix Strategies for Private Schools: Impact on Parental Decision-Making

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Abstract The purpose of this study is to examine and analyze the effect of marketing mix elements which include product, price, place, promotion, people, process, and physical evidence on parents' decisions in choosing a school for their children. This study uses primary data through a survey of 175 parents of active students who live in Tangerang. The collected data were processed and analyzed using SmartPLS software. The results of this study indicate that the six factors of the marketing mix have a positive and significant effect on the decision of parents to choose a school for their children, except for process factors that do not influence parents' decisions in choosing a school for their children An in-depth analysis of the managerial implications for school management and the social implications for society of the results of this study are discussed further in the discussion of this article.

Keywords: Product, price, place, promotion, people, process, physical evidence

INTRODUCTION

Schools are the best entities in producing and elaborating knowledge (Asbari et al., 2023).. Therefore, for parents of students, the existence of the best school for their children's education is a very important concern. In the end, parents feel the need to choose the best school for their children, because it cannot be denied that school quality is an important and valuable variable to improve the level of thinking and life of their children in the future. The problem is that the quality of schools is sometimes not well informed to the general public, so the quality of schools is very likely to be directly proportional to the marketing efforts of the schools concerned. (Chou et al., 2020; Hossain et al., 2020; Wulandari, 2020)..

Marketing is an activity that happens everywhere (Mihic et al., 2013). Formally or informally, a person and or organization is involved in a large number of such marketing activities. Marketing heavily influences our daily lives and is inherent in everything we do, from the clothes we wear, the internet sites we click on, to the advertisements we see. According to Groening et al. (2018)According to Groening et al. (2018), marketing is part of a personal and organizational social and managerial process at the same time, where individuals or organizations get what they need and want through the creation and exchange of value with others.

According to Kotler & Keller (2009)there are several characteristics of services, among others: (1) Intangibility. Services cannot be seen, touched or cannot be touched, felt, heard, stored or smelled before the service is purchased. The important value of this is the intangible value that consumers experience in the form of enjoyment, satisfaction, or comfort. (2) Unstorability (cannot be stored). Services do not recognize the inventory or storage of products that have been produced. This characteristic is also called inseparability, considering that services are generally produced and consumed simultaneously. (3) Customization. Services are often specifically designed to meet customer needs, for example in insurance and health services. Then, Kotler & Keller (2009) suggests that there are four characteristics of services, namely as follows: (1) Intangibility (not materialized) Services are not materialized, cannot be seen, tasted, felt and heard before purchase. (2) Inseparability. Cannot be separated. Goods are usually produced by producers, then sold and

consumed by consumers. (3) Variability. Services are very diverse / varied, both in terms of form, quality and type of service produced. (4) Perishability. Services are commodities that cannot be durable, so they cannot be stored for future sale or use. (Akinnusi et al., 2017; Alserhan, 2017; Wang et al., 2020)..

Service is an invisible performance or action from one party to another. In general, services are produced and consumed simultaneously, where the interaction between the service provider and the service recipient affects the outcome of the service. According to Kotler & Keller (2009) services are activities or benefits offered to other parties that are basically intangible and do not result in any ownership. The marketing mix is a collection of controllable tactical marketing tools that companies combine to produce the desired response in the target market. The marketing mix consists of everything a company can do to influence demand for its products. Still according to Kotler & Keller (2009)(2009), the elements in the marketing mix services consist of: (1) Product is the overall concept of objects or processes that provide various values for customers. What needs to be considered is not only physical, but also the benefits and value of the product. Especially in service products, there is no known transfer of ownership from service providers to consumers. (2) Price. The pricing strategy is very significant in determining value for customers and plays an important role in shaping the image for these services and consumer buying decisions. (3) Promotion is one of the determining factors for the success of a marketing program.

The promotional element in the service marketing mix forms an important role in helping to communicate service positioning to customers. According to Kotler & Keller (2009) promotion is an activity / activity to convey product benefits and persuade customers to buy it. The important thing to note in promotion is the selection of a promotional mix consisting of advertising (advertising), personal selling, sales promotion, public relations, the use of mail, telephone, fax, e-mail, or the internet to communicate directly with customers (direct & online marketing). (Hossain et al., 2020). (4) Location (place). Location (related to the delivery system) in services is a combination of location and decisions on distribution channels. Location relates to where the company should be headquartered and carry out its operations or activities, here are three types of interactions that affect location: among others: a) Consumers come to the service provider (company), b) Service providers come to consumers and c) Service providers and consumers do not meet directly. (5) Process: A combination of all activities consisting of procedures, work schedules, mechanisms, activities, and routine matters, where services are produced and delivered to consumers. The process can be divided into two ways, among others: (1) Complexity, related to the steps and stages in the process and (2) Diversity, related to changes in the steps or stages of the process. (6) People. In service marketing, people function as service providers and greatly affect the quality of the services provided. Decisions in the "people" factor relate to selection, training, motivation and human resource management. (7) Physical Evidence. According to Kotler & Keller (2009)According to Kotler & Keller (2009), supporting facilities are part of service marketing which has a quite important role. Because the services delivered to customers require supporting facilities in their delivery. With the physical supporting facilities, the service will be understood by the customer. A magnificent building with air conditioning facilities, sophisticated telecommunications equipment or quality office furniture and others are considered by customers in choosing a product / service.

According to Khatab et al. (2019)"The marketing mix of educational services is the elements of an educational organization that can be controlled by the organization in communicating with students and will be used to satisfy students:. The elements of the education services marketing mix are described as follows. First: Product. Khatab et al., (2019) stated that in higher education services, the products/services offered to parents of students are a good reputation/quality of education, bright prospects for parents of students after graduating from school, and varied concentration options according to talents and interests. School reputation and prospects such as producing graduates who have good competence and can be accepted in the world of work easily. Second: Price. According to Barusman (2019)According to Barusman (2019), the price for higher education services is strongly influenced by the quality of the products offered. If the quality of the product is high, then potential customers are willing to pay more, as long as it is within their affordability limits. In this case, the price is the entire cost incurred by parents of students to obtain educational services offered by a school. Things that need to be considered in school pricing include tuition fees, construction costs, and laboratory costs, scholarships, payment procedures and installment terms. (Ivy, 2008).

Third: Place. According to Kotler & Keller (2009)According to Kotler & Keller (2009), "strategic location and easily accessible by public transportation will be an attraction for prospective parents. School locations can also be reached virtually, namely via the internet with the availability of a school's website ". While Khatab et al., (2019) stated that determining the location of a school will affect the preferences of potential customers in making choices. Schools need to consider the environment in which the location is located (near the city center or housing, parking conditions, conducive learning environment) and transportation (ease of transportation facilities and access to schools). Fourth: Promotion. Kotler & Keller (2009) stated that the marketing communication mix consists of eight main communication models, namely (1) advertising, (2) sales promotion, events and experiences, (4) public relations and publicity, (5) direct

marketing, (6) word of mouth marketing, (7) personal selling. According to Kotler & Keller (2009) "in higher education services, promotions that can be carried out are advertising (such as TV, radio, spot, and billboard advertisements), sales promotion (such as exhibitions and invitations), making direct contact with prospective parents, and conducting public relations activities".

Fifth: People. According to Khatab et al., (2019)According to Khatab et al. (2019), "people in services are people who are directly involved in carrying out all company activities, and are factors that play an important role for all organizations" In relation to schools, human resources include administrators, lecturers and employees. They need to have high competence because they directly deliver services to parents of students so that the level of satisfaction or not depends on how the service is delivered. Sixth: Process. This process can be seen from two main aspects, namely (1) the dimensions of administrative service quality (namely reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy), (2) the dimensions of lecture service quality (namely process / mechanism and quality of service / lecture) (Gajic, 2012). While Khatab et al., (2019) stated that "the process is a combination of all activities, generally consisting of procedures, work schedules, mechanisms, activities and routine matters, where services are produced and delivered to consumers". In real activities in educational activities, the process is a procedure, mechanism, and series of activities to deliver services from producers to consumers. In educational institutions, the process is a series of activities that parents of students experience while in education, such as the teaching and learning process, the thesis guidance process, the examination process, the graduation process and so on. Seventh: Physical evidence. According to Khatab et al., (2019)According to Khatab et al. (2019), "in the process of delivering educational services to parents of students, what schools must pay attention to is the style of the building (suitability between aesthetic and functional aspects as an educational institution) and supporting facilities (completeness of educational facilities, worship, sports, and security)".

Consumer behavior in making purchases is of course different. The more complex the decision to be taken, the more parties involved and the more considerations are needed. According to Khatab et al., (2019)According to Khatab et al. (2019), purchasing decisions are a process where consumers recognize their problems, seek information about certain products or brands and evaluate how well each of these alternatives can solve their problems, which then leads to a purchase decision. According to Khatab et al., (2019) purchasing decision is "the process of formulating various alternative actions in order to make a choice on one of the specific alternatives to make a purchase". Meanwhile, Kotler & Keller (2009) distinguishes types of buying behavior based on the level of buyer involvement, namely (a) complex buying behavior, (b) dissonance-reducing buying behavior, (c) buying behavior out of habit, (d) buying behavior that seeks variety.

Process stages of consumer purchasing decisions According to Kotler & Keller (2009) is as follows: First: Need Recognition. The stage where consumers recognize a problem or need. Needs can be triggered by internal stimuli, such as hunger or thirst and external stimuli such as stimuli offered by marketing in the form of a marketing mix. Second: Information Search, the stage where consumers conduct a more in-depth search for information related to the needs they will fulfill. The main sources of information that consumers refer to and the relative influence of each source on subsequent purchasing decisions. These sources of consumer information can be classified into the following four groups: (a) Personal sources. Family, friends, neighbors, acquaintances; (b) Commercial sources. Advertising, salespeople, distributors, packaging, displays in stores; (c) Public sources. Mass media, consumer rating organizations; (d) Experiential sources. Handling, reviewing, and using the product. Third: Evaluation of Alternatives. The stage when consumers use the information obtained to evaluate various brand alternatives into a certain priority choice ranking. Fourth: Purchase Decision. The stage where consumers form preferences for brands in the choice set and decide to make a purchase of the most preferred or most suitable brand or product. In carrying out purchase intentions, consumers can make five sub-purchase decisions, namely: brand decision (brand A), purchase channel decision (dealer 2). Quantity decision (1 computer), purchase time plan decision (weekend), and payment method decision (credit card). Fifth: Post-Purchase Behavior. The stage when consumers take further action after making a purchase, based on a sense of satisfaction and dissatisfaction. If the product does not meet expectations, consumers are dissatisfied; if it meets expectations, consumers are satisfied; if it exceeds expectations, consumers will feel very satisfied, and are expected to make repeat purchases.

In the era of globalization that occurs in all aspects of life also results in the emergence of highly competitive competition in the world of education services. Schools compete with each other and try to use all their potential and abilities to attract prospective parents. In this era, prospective parents can choose many education alternatives, schools that have a good education model and provide job prospects after graduating from college are the ones they will choose. By looking at this development, schools, especially private schools (PTS), must be in the form of developing effective marketing strategies to win the competition so that the parents of students who enter the school will be many, because the tight competition has an impact on fluctuating the number of parents of new students at PTS from year to year. In this digital era, it is

inevitable that the quality of an educational institution is also influenced by the perceptions of consumers and potential consumers. These perception factors can be referred to following the Marketing Mix theory, which includes several factors, namely: product, price, place, promotion, people, process, and physical evidence. Therefore, it is considered necessary and important to know the extent of customer perception, namely parents of school students towards the quality of the school where they are currently studying. The hope is that school management can make the results of this study as part of the basis for future school development planning.

Furthermore, the author proposes several research hypotheses related to what is described above, namely:

H1: Product (P1) has a positive effect on the decision to choose a school (PDM)
H2: Price (P2) has a positive effect on the decision to choose a school (PDM).
H3: Place (P3) has a positive effect on the decision to choose a school (PDM).
H4: Promotion (P4) has a positive effect on the decision to choose a school (PDM).
H5: People (P5) has a positive effect on the decision to choose a school (PDM).
H6: Process (P6) have a positive effect on the decision to choose a school (PDM).
H7: Physical evidence (P7) has a positive effect on the decision to choose a school (PDM).

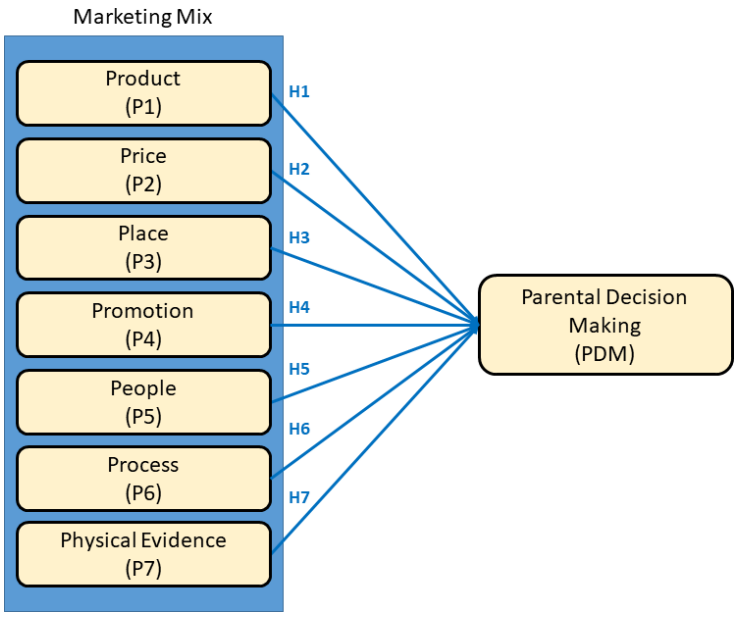

Figure 1. Research Model

RESEARCH METHODS

The research method that the author will use is descriptive analysis with a quantitative approach. According to Sugiyono (2012)The descriptive analysis method is a method used to analyze data by describing or describing the data that has been collected as it is. According to Sekaran & Bougie (1993)Descriptive studies are carried out to find out and be able to explain the characteristics of the variables studied in a situation. There are two variables in this study, namely: First, Dependent Variables or non-free variables, namely variables whose values are influenced by independent variables. The dependent variable is often called the response variable which is denoted by the letter Y. The dependent variable in this study is the purchase decision (school selection). Second, Independent Variables or independent variables, namely variables that cause the occurrence (influence) of dependent variables (non-free variables). Independent variables are often called predicators which are symbolized by the letter P. The independent variables in this research are product (P1), price (P2), place (P3), promotion (P4), people (P5), process (P6) and physical evidence (P7).

The population in this study were parents of active students in schools who live in Tangerang. Parents were asked to voluntarily complete a questionnaire containing statements about demographics, marketing mix, and school choice decisions. The questionnaire contained the names of the respondents on the back which were only used for identification and matching purposes. All research constructs were measured on a five-point Likert scale. All measurement items were adapted from Pratomo (2022). This scale has 30 items measuring all research variables.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

A total of 175 parent respondents participated, consisting of women (82%) and men (18%). The measurement model testing stage includes testing convergent validity, discriminant validity. Meanwhile, to test construct reliability, Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability values were used. The results of PLS analysis can be used to test the research hypothesis if all indicators in the PLS model have met the requirements of convergent validity, discriminant validity and reliability tests. The convergent validity test is carried out by looking at the loading factor value of each indicator on its construct. In most references, a factor weight of 0.7 or more is considered to have a strong enough validation to explain the latent construct (Chin W, 1998; Fletcher, 1998). (Chin W, 1998; Flury et al., 1988; Imam Ghozali, 2017).. In this study, the minimum limit of the accepted loading factor is 0.7, and provided that the AVE value of each construct is> 0.5. (Imam Ghozali, 2017). After going through SmartPLS 3.0 processing, all indicators have a loading factor value above 0.7 and an AVE value above 0.5. The fit or valid model of this study can be seen in Table 1. So thus, the convergent validity of this research model has met the requirements. (Purwanto, Asbari, et al., 2020a, 2020b; Agus Purwanto, Asbari, et al., 2020; Agus Purwanto et al., 2021b, 2021a).. The Loadings Factor, Cronbach's Alpha, Composite Reliability and AVE values for each construct can be seen in Table 1.

Discriminant validity is carried out to ensure that each concept of each latent variable is different from other latent variables. The model has good discriminant validity if the AVE square value of each exogenous construct (the value on the diagonal) exceeds the correlation between the construct and other constructs (the value below the diagonal). (Imam Ghozali, 2017). The results of discriminant validity testing are using the AVE square value, namely by looking at the Fornell-Larcker Criterion Value obtained as shown in Table 2. The results of the discriminant validity test in Table 2 show that all constructs already have an AVE square root value above the correlation value with other latent constructs (through the Fornell-Larcker criterion). Likewise, the cross-loading value of all items of an indicator is greater than other indicator items as mentioned in Table 2, so it can be concluded that the model has met discriminant validity. (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

Furthermore, a collinearity evaluation is carried out to determine whether there is a collinearity problem in the model. To find this collinearity, the VIF collinearity statistic of each construct is required. If VIF is more than 5, then the model has collinearity (Hair et al., 2014). As shown in Table 3, all VIF scores are less than 5, i.e. the results of the structural model collinearity reveal VIF values below 5. This indicates that this research model has no multicollinearity problem. Construct reliability can be assessed from the Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability values of each construct. The recommended composite reliability and Cronbach's alpha values are more than 0.7 (Imam Ghozali, 2017). The reliability test results in table 1 show that all constructs have a composite reliability value and Cronbach's alpha greater than 0.7 (> 0.7). In conclusion, all constructs have met the required reliability.

Table 1. Items Loadings, Cronbach's Alpha, Composite Reliability, and Average Variance Extracted (AVE)

Variables	*Cronbach's Alpha*	*Rho_A*	*Composite Reliability*	*AVE*
P1	0,892	0,894	0,933	0,823
P2	0,912	0,916	0,945	0,851
P3	0,832	0,894	0,891	0,679
P4	0,845	0,865	0,896	0,686
P5	0,852	0,872	0,910	0,771
P6	0,974	0,975	0,983	0,951
P7	0,955	0,958	0,965	0,848
PDM	0,963	0,966	0,972	0,873

Table 2. Discriminant Validity

Variables	*P1*	*P2*	*P3*	*P4*	*P5*	*P6*	*P7*	*MK*
P1	0,907							
P2	0,862	0,922						
P3	0,902	0,869	0,824					
P4	0,765	0,713	0,788	0,828				
P5	0,806	0,754	0,820	0,854	0,878			
P6	0,830	0,742	0,802	0,741	0,887	0,975		
P7	0,885	0,802	0,859	0,772	0,858	0,906	0,921	

PDM	0,828	0,754	0,814	0,769	0,943	0,979	0,903	0,934

Table 3. Collinearity (VIF)

Variables	*P1*	*P2*	*P3*	*P4*	*P5*	*P6*	*P7*	*MK*
P1								4,235
P2								2,035
P3								3,335
P4								2,271
P5								3,265
P6								1,130
P7								2,234
PDM								

Table 4. Nilai *R Square*

Variables	*R Square*	*R Square Adjusted*
PDM	0,788	0,786

Table 5. Hypotheses Testing

Hypotheses	*Relationship*	*Original Sample (O)*	*Sample Mean (M)*	*Standard Deviation (STDEV)*	*T Statistics (|O/STDEV|)*	*P Values*	*Decision*
H1	P1 -> PDM	0,457	0,466	0,081	5,644	0,000	Supported
H2	P2 -> PDM	0,881	0,883	0,018	49,746	0,000	Supported
H3	P3 -> PDM	0,459	0,450	0,081	5,662	0,000	Supported
H4	P4 -> PDM	0,404	0,397	0,071	5,715	0,000	Supported
H5	P5 -> PDM	0,556	0,557	0,022	25,222	0,000	Supported
H6	P6 -> PDM	-0,296	0,292	0,052	5,653	0,082	Not Supported
H7	P7 -> PDM	0,531	0,525	0,094	5,660	0,000	Supported

Hypothesis testing in PLS is also known as the inner model test. This test includes testing the significance of direct and indirect effects and measuring the magnitude of the influence of exogenous variables on endogenous variables. To determine the effect of the marketing mix on parents' decisions to choose a school, a direct effect test is needed. The influence test is carried out using the t-statistic test in the partial least squared (PLS) analysis model using the SmartPLS 3.0 software. With the boothstrapping technique, the R Square value and the significance test value are obtained as shown in Table 4 and Table 5. The results are that hypotheses H1, H2, H3, H4, H5, and H7 are supported, while H6 (process variable) is not supported.

Discussion

The growing importance of the influence of the variables of the marketing mix for school management has prompted the authors to correlate the influence among these factors. There is a consistent gap in the literature on what influences a parent's school choice decision. The current study investigated the seven factors of the marketing mix in their influence on school choice decisions. The authors found that except for the process variable, all other research variables namely: product, price, place, promotion, people, and physical evidence influence parents' decision to choose a school. This finding is in line with previous studies that found a direct positive relationship between the marketing mix and purchasing decisions that have been carried out research by Arifin et al., (2020); Gajic, (2012); Indrayani & Pardiyono, (2019); Safitri Amelia et al., (2019); Wulandari, (2020).. The results of this study reinforce the idea that marketing mix factors such as product, price, place, promotion, people, and physical evidence have a stronger influence on parents' behavior in choosing a school. However, this study differs in terms of the process variable which was found to have no significant effect. The findings of this study differ from the findings of several other

researchers such as Arifin et al., (2020) and Indrayani & Pardiyono, (2019), which state that the physical evidence factor does not have a significant effect on the behavior of parents.(2019), which states that the physical evidence factor has no significant effect on the decision to choose a school. Likewise research (Arifin et al., 2020; Hossain et al., 2020) which states that place, promotion and physical evidence have no significant effect on the decision to choose a school.

Why does the process variable not have a significant effect on parents' decisions in choosing the best school for their children? The analysis is that the awareness of parents is still lacking on the processes that occur in schools. In addition, the detailed process at school, namely the process of teaching and learning activities and the curriculum applied at school, is still not informed to the public, especially parents.

CONCLUSIONS

The research findings contribute to the existing literature in the following ways. First, the findings of this study can help advance knowledge about the effects of factors in the marketing mix on parents' school choice behavior. The findings justify the relevance of the analysis to investigate the behavior of parents of active students from a holistic perspective, and the authors found that the behavior of these parents in deciding why to choose a school is the result of the interaction of individual factors and organizational factors of the school in question.

Second, in addition to theoretical contributions, this study offers practical implications for school management. The findings of this study indicate that parents' school choice behavior does not emerge if school management does not focus on developing comprehensive and holistic marketing, as well as demonstrating the results of teaching and learning activities in schools. The managerial implications in this study were determined by interpreting the results of the influence analysis. Marketing mix variables that have a significant total influence on the decision to choose are variables that are prioritized for use in developing strategies, namely product, price, place, promotion, people, and physical evidence.

Based on this study, future research is expected to complement this study, among others, by using a sample of prospective parents of students who have not been enrolled or who have just entered. This can better illustrate the conditions when parents make decisions in choosing education services in schools. In addition, future research can use other variables that are considered appropriate for determining the choice of higher education services such as ethnic differences, high school origin of prospective student parents, parental income. It can also be developed by deepening the variables using other indicators.

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