

PRODUCT STRATEGY AND DISTRIBUTION OF EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

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Abstract

Marketing educational services is a crucial aspect in creating value for education providers and prospective students. The right product and distribution strategy can influence the competitiveness of educational institutions in an increasingly competitive market. The method used in this study, the researcher uses a qualitative approach with case studies by collecting data through interviews, class observations, and analysis of documents related to the supervision process. This article examines the four main components in the educational services marketing mix, namely the elements of the marketing mix, the educational services product mix, the creation of educational service products, and the distribution of educational services. With this approach, universities can design marketing strategies that are effective, relevant and responsive to market needs. This article also discusses the challenges faced by educational service providers in implementing effective marketing strategies.

Keywords: product strategy, distribution, marketing mix, educational services, product creation

Introduction

In today's era of globalization and digitalization, education not only serves as a means of knowledge transfer, but also as a means to develop individual skills and character. According to a UNESCO report (2021), more than 1.5 billion students worldwide have been affected by school closures due to the COVID-19 pandemic, demonstrating how important flexibility is in the delivery of education services. In this context, the right educational service product model and effective distribution strategy are the keys to reaching more students and meeting their various needs.

Higher education is a very important sector in human resource development, and the marketing of educational services has a central role in attracting the interest of prospective students. Marketing of educational services involves not only promotion, but also product development and proper service delivery. In this context, the marketing mix of educational services includes important elements that must be considered by

educational institutions to provide services that are competitive and relevant to market needs. for example, universities in Indonesia, can be taken as a case study in the implementation of marketing strategies that include product mix and distribution of educational services.

Research Methods

The method used in this study, the researcher uses a qualitative approach with case studies by collecting data through interviews, class observations, and analysis of documents related to the supervision process. The participants in this study consisted of school principals and several teachers. The position of the researcher is the main instrument in collecting and interpreting data, both from questionnaires and other documents only as a tool if it is needed (Nur et al., 2023). The orientation of the qualitative approach lies in the process of meaning or perception, where qualitative research uses inductive and descriptive analysis (Putra, Tuerah, Mesra, Sukwika, & Sarman, 2023).

Results and Discussion

Elements of the Educational Services Marketing Mix

The marketing mix in educational services consists of four main elements: product, price, distribution, and promotion. According to Kotler et al. (2017), the elements in the marketing mix of educational services are as follows:

Products: It includes educational programs, curriculum, facilities, as well as learning experiences provided to students. Products in the context of educational services include all services offered by educational institutions, from curriculum, facilities, to the learning experience that students receive. According to a report from UNESCO (2020), the quality of education is greatly influenced by relevant curriculum design and adequate facilities. For example, a university in Indonesia that offers a mechanical engineering study program with well-equipped laboratories and experienced instructors will be more attractive to prospective students compared to an institution that does not have adequate facilities.

Apart from that, innovation in educational products is also very important. For example, many institutions now offer online or hybrid learning programs that allow students to study from anywhere. Data from the Distance Education Association (2021) shows that 70% of students prefer flexibility in learning, and institutions that are able to offer this will have a competitive advantage. Another example is certification programs offered by non-formal education institutions, which are increasingly in demand by professionals looking to improve their skills.

The quality of educational products can also be measured through accreditation and recognition from official bodies. For example, institutions accredited by BAN-PT (National Accreditation Board for Higher Education) in Indonesia are often more attractive to prospective students. This shows that high-quality educational products will

attract more students, so institutions need to focus on improving the quality of the educational services they offer.

Pricing: Pricing that is appropriate to the quality and benefits of education provided, including tuition and other additional fees.

Price is an important element in the marketing mix of educational services. The right pricing can influence a prospective student's decision to enroll. According to research by the Educational Research Institute (2022), 65% of students consider the cost of education as the main factor in choosing an institution. Therefore, educational institutions need to conduct market analysis to determine competitive prices.

One strategy that can be implemented is to provide various payment options, such as installments or scholarships. For example, University A offers a scholarship program for outstanding students, which not only attracts quality students but also helps create a positive image for the institution. Data shows that institutions offering scholarships have higher enrollment rates, with up to a 30% increase in the number of applicants (Source: Education Annual Report 2023).

Additionally, institutions should also consider the added value of their educational products when determining prices. If an institution offers a program with better facilities, higher quality teaching, or a strong alumni network, they may justify the higher price. For example, XYZ Business School in Jakarta is known for its MBA program which has high fees, but many alumni have managed to get high-paying jobs, thereby attracting many prospective students.

Distribution: Refers to the way information and educational services are delivered to prospective students, both through online and offline channels.

Distribution in the context of educational services refers to the way institutions deliver educational services to students. With advances in technology, the distribution of education is now not only limited to physical locations. According to a report from the World Bank (2021), the use of online platforms in education has increased rapidly, with more than 50% of educational institutions in Indonesia integrating online learning in their curriculum.

One successful example is the implementation of the Learning Management System (LMS) platform which allows students to access learning materials online. University B in Yogyakarta has adopted an LMS that makes it easier for students to interact with lecturers and fellow students, which in turn increases student involvement in the learning process. Data shows that using an LMS can increase student retention by up to 20% (Source: Journal of Education and Technology 2022).

However, distribution also includes physical aspects, such as campus location and ease of access. Strategically located institutions, close to public transport, will be more attractive to students. For example, Middle School C in Jakarta, located in the city center, experienced an increase in enrollment by 15% after renovating and improving the accessibility of their location.

Promotion: Includes how the university informs prospective students about the services and programs available through various media, including advertisements, promotional activities, and collaborations with other educational institutions. D. Promotion.

Promotion is the final element in the educational services marketing mix which functions to increase awareness and attract the attention of prospective students. Effective promotional strategies can create a positive image for educational institutions. According to a survey by the Marketing Education Network (2023), 80% of prospective students get information about educational institutions through social media and online advertisements.

One effective promotional strategy is the use of social media to build a community and interact with prospective students. For example, University D in Bandung actively uses Instagram and Facebook to share interesting content, such as alumni testimonials, campus activities and registration information. As a result, they recorded a 25% increase in the number of registrants from the previous year (Source: Education Social Media Report 2023).

Apart from that, institutions can also carry out promotional activities such as open houses or educational seminars. This activity provides an opportunity for prospective students to get to know more about the programs offered. For example, School E in Surabaya holds an annual open house attended by thousands of prospective students and parents, which significantly increases interest in enrollment.

Finally, it is important to measure the effectiveness of each promotional strategy implemented. By using data analysis tools, institutions can evaluate which ones are most successful in attracting prospective students and then adapt their strategies as needed.

Educational Services Product Mix

The product mix in educational services includes various elements that can be developed by universities to create a superior educational experience. The mix of educational products consists of:

1. Curriculum: An educational program that is prepared based on the needs of the job market and the development of science. Study programs that are relevant to industry trends will be the main attraction for prospective students.
2. Facilities and Infrastructure: The existence of adequate facilities, such as comfortable classrooms, laboratories, libraries, and supporting technology networks, is an important part of the product mix.
3. Lecturers and Teachers: The quality of teaching provided by lecturers is a key factor in creating valuable educational products. Lecturers who are competent and have industry experience add value to the educational programs offered.
4. Student Experience: The learning experience is not only limited to activities in the classroom, but also includes extracurricular activities, seminars, training, and career development programs offered by the university.

Creation of Educational Service Products

Product creation in educational services includes innovation in designing study programs, preparing relevant curriculums, and adapting to industry needs and technological developments. Higher education must be responsive to changing market needs and expectations, and have a clear vision to produce graduates who are ready to enter the workforce. UNSURBAIRAN can create innovative educational products by involving stakeholders from various sectors, such as government, industry, and alumni, in designing the curriculum and educational programs that will be offered.

Distribution of Educational Services

The distribution of educational services refers to the way universities convey information to prospective students and how they access the educational programs offered. A distribution strategy can include several channels, including:

1. Online Channels: Use websites, social media, and online registration platforms to reach prospective students from various locations. This is becoming increasingly important in today's digital age, where information can be accessed anytime and anywhere.
2. Education Exhibition and Roadshow: Holding activities in various regions to introduce educational programs to prospective students directly.
3. Partnerships with Secondary Schools: Establish relationships with schools to provide information about continuing education opportunities at the university.
4. New Student Admission Program: An effective and transparent student admission system, by providing various entry options, such as selection pathways, scholarship pathways, and others

Conclusion

Marketing of educational services requires an integrated and comprehensive strategy, with special attention to product mix and distribution. Elements in the marketing mix of educational services, including products, pricing, distribution, and promotion, are interrelated and play an important role in creating value for universities and prospective students. Universities, for example, can leverage these elements to design effective marketing strategies, by creating relevant and innovative educational products, as well as distributing them through the right channels. Facing challenges in the world of higher education, universities need to continue to innovate and be responsive to changing market needs in order to compete and succeed in the global education environment. An effective educational services marketing mix consists of four main elements: product, price, distribution, and promotion. Each of these elements is interrelated and contributes to the success of educational institutions in attracting and retaining students. By understanding and implementing the right strategies in each element, educational institutions can build a positive image and increase their competitiveness in an increasingly competitive market.

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