

Market Segmentation Analysis in Educational Marketing at Junior High School Level

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze educational marketing strategies reviewed from the market segmentation perspective at SMP PGRI 1 Sempor. This study is a descriptive qualitative study. The study took place at SMP PGRI 1 Sempor. Data were sourced from the principal, vice principal for curriculum, vice principal for student affairs, vice principal for public relations, students, guardians (committee) and the community around the school. Data collection techniques used were observation, interviews, and documentation. The data was tested for validity using data triangulation techniques. The data analysis techniques were carried out by reducing data, presenting data and drawing conclusions. The results of this study indicate that the market segmentation chosen by SMP PGRI 1 Sempor is by grouping the education market. SMP PGRI 1 Sempor in implementing market segmentation involves all stakeholders. SMP PGRI 1 Sempor distinguishes itself by presenting innovative programs such as VIP and Regular Ples (+) classes, CIBI (Cinta Baca Indonesia), Bina Prestasi, and Moving Class activities

INTRODUCTION

Education is believed to be one of the strategies to improve human living standards. Through education, humans become intelligent, dignified, and have a good quality of life in society (Amiruddin, Nurdin, & Ali, 2021). Education is one of the important tools in improving the welfare of society through mastery of science, information, and technology as prerequisites for modern society (Ismoilovich, 2021). Educational institutions have the authority to manage education that takes place in their educational institutions, including learning models, learning methods, learning materials, student development activities, and so on.

The ability to compete determines whether the institution can survive or not. Agencies or institutions that are unable to compete will be abandoned by those interested. This competitiveness is determined by quality learning, and existing facilities. This also requires an introduction to the wider community about the Administrator's ability to understand educational marketing which is a prerequisite for maintaining and improving their schools. Ideally, educational management is wrapped in special abilities so that the expected output becomes highly competitive in education and globally (Fariz, 2022). Educational institutions act as producers of educational services. If producers are unable to market their products well, then the products offered will not sell in the market. This has an impact on decreasing public trust in organizations/schools, causing schools to be closed due to the inability of school management and its staff.

Marketing strategies for educational institutions are needed along with the increasingly attractive competition between schools (Rana, Verma, Haque, & Ahmed, 2022). Marketing is needed for educational institutions in building their positive image. If an institution or school has a good image in the eyes of the public, then it is likely to be easier to overcome competition. Emphasis on providing satisfaction to stakeholders is something that must be done by every institution, in order to be able to compete. Marketing strategies focus on the side of consumer satisfaction with the mind used to think logically. In other words, if educational institutions are unable to satisfy users' educational needs according to market needs, then educational institutions will not exist.

The current reality is that the paradigm in viewing education has begun to shift. Initially, education was viewed and studied from a social aspect. However, now, the majority of people view education more corporately. This means that educational institutions are understood as a production organization that produces educational services that are then purchased by consumers. If producers can't market their products, in this case educational services because the quality cannot or even does not satisfy consumers, then the production of services offered will not sell. This has often happened in several schools that have not responded to this paradigm shift so that these schools are less popular and have difficulty getting students.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The success of educational service marketing is closely related to the activity of fulfilling the needs, desires, and expectations of internal and external customers (Riccomini, Cirani, Pedro, Garzaro, & Kevin, 2024). Determining the needs, desires, and expectations of school stakeholders or educational service customers is an important part of the educational service marketing strategy (Hasanudin & Srinio, 2024). This can be done by educational institutions by implementing good educational service marketing strategies such as segmentation, targeting, positioning, and marketing mix as effective marketing tools.

Specific strategies must be chosen by educational institutions in marketing their products to the public. In marketing activities, schools or madrasahs must be able to cooperate and establish good relations with the community (Ghufron, Khusnurridlo, Najiburrahman, Baharun, & Muchlis, 2023). This is because today's society is starting to think selectively in choosing educational institutions that suit what they need. The lack of a good strategy in educational institutions will result in the difficulty of the institution being known and in demand by the public. Therefore, an appropriate marketing strategy is needed to carry out efficient and effective marketing, so that the marketing goals desired by the educational institution will be achieved.

Wilson and Gilligan state that organizations must have segmentation, targeting, and positioning as strategic roles (Jakšić, Dabo, & Volarević, 2021). Segmentation is a way of viewing the market creatively. Segmentation is also called a mapping strategy and is useful for dividing potential customer groups with similar characteristics (Kasem, Hamada, & Taj-Eddin, 2024). The target market for educational services consists of a group of buyers of educational services with similar needs and characteristics that will be served by the school, including parents of students, students, or various other segments of the educational service market. The determination of the position of educational services (positioning) is how an educational service product can be formulated differently by educational service customers for attributes that are considered important and relative compared to other educational service products (Kotler). A study conducted by Niedlich, Kallfaß, Pohle, & Bormann (2021) stated that every educational institution is certainly able to maintain its trust because, without trust in the institution, it is difficult to gain trust from the community. A similar thing was experienced by the SMP PGRI 1 Sempor educational institution. The large number of students at the school needs good management and marketing strategies. The results of initial observations showed that SMP PGRI 1 Sempor had implemented several marketing strategies in introducing education to the wider community. Activities carried out such as installing billboards, optimizing services on educational social media, participating in several sub-district, district, and other competition activities.

The quality of this school can be categorized as very good so that many parents flock to send their children to SMP PGRI 1 Sempor. This school has high religious tolerance, interesting learning activities by highlighting the VIP and Regular + classes, namely learning using digital methods and there are additional

programs of 4 materials so that many parents are interested in the school. In addition to the inexpensive cost of education, the place of education is also strategically located, then from the service that makes it easier for students and parents to access SMP PGRI 1 Sempor education information. This education also has many facilities that many do not have in other education and there are still many things at SMP PGRI 1 Sempor.

Similar studies have indeed been conducted by several previous researchers. Hasanudin & Srinio (2024) investigating marketing strategies at the elementary madrasah level. In addition, Siti Fatimah's research also focuses on marketing strategies for educational services at the junior high madrasah level. Karim, Zafi, & Rochimuzzama (2022) highlights the management of educational marketing strategies to increase competitiveness, as well as other studies that target marketing strategies. However, this study sees the uniqueness that exists at SMP PGRI 1 Sempor. This uniqueness is not found in other schools. SMP PGRI 1 Sempor is an effort from the foundation management and from the school in marketing educational services using a marketing management approach or "marketing". By highlighting the side of VIP & Regular + Learning programs and complete facilities so that the output of the institution is able to foster student interest and talent. Based on the importance of marketing strategies and the reality of success carried out by SMP PGRI 1 Sempor, an in-depth study is needed regarding the educational marketing strategies that have been carried out at SMP PGRI 1 Sempor in terms of segmenting strategies.

METHODOLOGY

The approach used in this study is qualitative. A qualitative approach is a study that produces descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words from people and observed behavior (Creswell & Creswell, 2022). The qualitative approach in this study is used as a way to obtain information on the actual condition of the object. This study was conducted at SMP PGRI 1 Sempor. The reason for choosing this place is the efforts of the foundation management and the school in marketing educational services using a marketing management approach or "marketing". By highlighting the religious side that uses the facility method and class program so that the output of this is that students are able to learn by exploring knowledge and developing their interests and talents.

The subject of the study is someone who is involved in the study and whose existence is a source of research data. The subjects of this study are the principal, vice principal for curriculum, vice principal for student affairs, vice principal for public relations, students, guardians (committee) and the community around the school. The data collection techniques in this study are observation, interviews, and documentation. Observation is a systematic observation and recording technique of the phenomena being investigated (Darlington & Scott, 2020). What the researcher observed was organizational behavior in marketing educational services. In addition, the researcher also observed all activities carried out by the school in running each school program.

The interview is a conversation to exchange information and ideas through questions and answers, so that meaning can be constructed on a particular topic (Darlington & Scott, 2020). The interview technique used is a semi-structured in-depth interview, namely an interview that uses guidelines in the form of a list of free questions so that the interviewer is free to answer and the interviewer can develop questions according to the course of the interview. The use of this type of interview was chosen so that the interview runs in a friendly and flexible manner. Interviews are used to communicate with related parties, including the principal, vice principal of public relations, New Student Admissions (NSA), vice principal of student affairs, vice principal of curriculum, students, guardians of students, and the community around SMP PGRI 1 Sempor to obtain an explanation about marketing school services.

Documentation is an activity used by researchers to collect data obtained through documents. The documentation method is the result of observations and interviews and the existence of existing documents, and photographs that are in accordance with the objectives of the study. Document analysis is carried out to collect data sourced from archives and documents both in schools and outside schools, which are related to the study.

To test the validity of the data, the researcher used triangulation techniques. Triangulation is defined as a data collection technique that combines various existing data collection techniques and data sources. Meanwhile, the researcher also conducted data analysis. Data Analysis Technique is the process of systematically searching and compiling data obtained from interviews, direct notes, and documentation by organizing data into categories, describing them into units, synthesizing them, compiling them into patterns, choosing what is important and what will be studied, and making conclusions so that they are easily understood by oneself and others. The stages of data analysis in this study are data condensation, data presentation, and drawing conclusions (Miles & M Huberman, 1994).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Before discussing the results of the study on the marketing strategy of educational services at SMP PGRI 1 Sempor, the following will examine the orientation of the community at SMP PGRI 1 Sempor. Based on the results of interviews with the principal of SMP PGRI 1 Sempor, it was obtained that in general the orientation of the educational market, especially the community who trusts education at SMP PGRI 1 Sempor, is one of them by looking at the Accreditation owned by SMP PGRI 1 Sempor. This can encourage graduates of SMP PGRI 1 Sempor to be able to compete in good quality secondary schools (State).

Second, the community that entrusts their children's education at SMP PGRI 1 Sempor is mostly because of the location of SMP PGRI 1 Sempor which is affordable. As conveyed by the principal of SMP PGRI 1 Sempor, "Mostly, he also said that alumni influence the school, where their sons and daughters are also entrusted to SMP PGRI 1 Sempor. Thus, SMP PGRI 1 Sempor can become a

private school in Sempor that is chosen and trusted by the community in large numbers.”

Third, the perception of the education market towards SMP PGRI 1 Sempor is a school that has an educational output that can be said to be good. This means that students who graduate from SMP PGRI 1 Sempor not only have cognitive knowledge in the field of formal education subjects but also have abilities in the field of religion. SMP PGRI 1 Sempor has an interesting morning routine. The routine is reading prayers, starting from intentions to greetings. This aims for students of SMP PGRI 1 Sempor to have a useful grasp of religious knowledge. This is because prayer can bring a servant closer to His Creator. Other studies support these findings, stating that religious activities support the improvement of students' religious attitudes and cognitive knowledge (Gunawan, Yanti, & Nelson, 2023).

In general, SMP PGRI 1 Sempor has had a very large provision in gaining sympathy and interest from the community to entrust their children's education to the school. So, it is natural that SMP PGRI 1 Sempor has reached 250 this year. SMP PGRI 1 Sempor has analyzed by identifying school marketing and determining market segmentation in implementing educational service marketing management. Schools need to determine the right target market because there are still many schools that have not implemented educational programs to meet the needs of educational service customers. So, the first step for schools is to carefully determine the target market strategy to determine the educational program that suits the needs and desires of the community. This step has been done by Iskandar, Rifuddin, Ilham, & Rahmat (2021) They determine the target market strategy first before following up on other steps. This is to identify the needs and desires of the community.

Segmentation is the process of dividing several consumer groups that have the same needs into one group (Kasem et al., 2024). This market segmentation is the initial step that must be taken by schools as an effort to find out the needs of the community for the importance of education. The principal explained that if the market segmentation is clear and orderly, then the school will find it easier to promote its educational services. In addition, determining the educational market segmentation can improve educational services by conducting better communication, promotion, and strengthening the image of educational institutions in the eyes of the community. Other studies support this finding (Murlita, Evriani, Dewi, & Yani, 2023). Market segmentation should focus on market segment variables (demographic, psychographic, geographic, and benefit segmentation). These four segments divide the consumer market in order from the general and massive to the most specific.

Regarding marketing segmentation, the principal of SMP PGRI 1 Sempor explained that schools can be grouped into two market segments. The first is emotional. One of the reasons parents of students register their children at SMP PGRI 1 Sempor is because the school is close to home. Then, there are additional classes for certain classes. The second is rational. Parents are interested in enrolling their children at SMP PGRI 1 Sempor because the school has been established for a long time but still follows the development of the times. Most

alumni continue their children to attend SMP PGRI 1 Sempor. Thus, the level of public trust in SMP PGRI 1 Sempor increases and strengthens public interest. In the initial stage, the principal determines the basis of the marketing segmentation process of SMP PGRI 1 Sempor which requires sufficient time by sorting prospective students who are considered competent. SMP PGRI 1 Sempor in implementing market segmentation involves all stakeholders of the institution, in line with that SMP PGRI 1 Sempor determines several segmentations including geographic, demographic, and psychographic segmentation. This aims to group prospective students who will be accepted by SMP PGRI 1 Sempor.

Market segmentation implemented by SMP PGRI 1 Sempor includes: First, this geographical segmentation is based on the location of residence of potential consumers who are the same and have the same needs. In this case, SMP PGRI 1 Sempor does not only market in Keniten, Sempor District but also tries to market in other villages outside Keniten. Moreover, it is now made easier by the existence of social media which can reach a wider market area.

Meanwhile, one of the teachers (NSA committee) explained that the education market segmentation at SMP PGRI 1 Sempor includes demographic segmentation. SMP PGRI 1 Sempor divides it based on the socio-economic conditions of the community. This is following the results of an interview with the principal, "The school broadly divides it into two large groups, namely students from the lowlands and students from the highlands. This grouping follows the background of the students. So, it will be easier to achieve." In line with the interview with the teacher and secretary of NSA SMP PGRI 1 Sempor who said:

"Students of SMP PGRI 1 Sempor are divided into two groups, namely the pesantren group and non-pesantren group. This is because the location of the madrasah is surrounded by several pesantren in the Kesugihan area. In addition, we want to continue to facilitate students who are not from pesantren. We also see that the condition of the community in Kesugihan is mostly farmers who are people with a lower middle economy. So, we will also try to accommodate students from these circles."

Based on the social, environmental and economic conditions of the community, SMP PGRI 1 Sempor is divided into VIP and Reg+ classes and regular Regular. Then, there is psychographic segmentation which is an approach to lifestyle, interests and opinions of the community. In accordance with the statement of the Deputy Head of Student Affairs of SMP PGRI 1 Sempor who stated that; "SMP PGRI 1 Sempor, which is a school with a strategic location, makes parents have more specific reasons to send their children to SMP PGRI 1 Sempor."

In addition to the location of the school, SMP PGRI 1 Sempor is a general educational institution. However, the school also has a characteristic of accustoming students to habits that can shape their character. This is certainly an attraction in the eyes of the community. As conveyed by the principal of SMP PGRI 1 Sempor that: "Currently, the community is starting to see the advantages of schools that offer several additional classes to study the Koran. They are aware

of the importance of religious education. Schools must also prioritize the moral education of their students."

From this, SMP PGRI 1 Sempor tries to improve and enhance the quality of its students through the programs they offer to the community. Then, the community will be interested in sending their children to school at SMP PGRI 1 Sempor. This is in accordance with the statement of the Head of OSIS SMP PGRI 1 Sempor who said that: "I chose to study at SMP PGRI 1 Sempor because I wanted a school that was close to home. In addition, SMP PGRI 1 Sempor is famous for its excellent facilities and programs, such as additional classes, reciting the Koran, English and computer programs."

SMP PGRI 1 Sempor to develop its market segmentation also looks at the condition of the surrounding environment. Similar activities were carried out by previous researchers who first identified and observed the surrounding environment to be on target (Fachrurazi, Zarkasi, Maulida, Hanis, & Yusuf, 2022). If the condition has entered the second semester, then the madrasah will prepare urgent matters, such as the formation of a new student admission committee (NSA). This was explained by the head of the new student admission committee (NSA) of SMP PGRI 1 Sempor that:

"Usually, we start the preparation and hold meetings in January. Then, in early February, we form the madrasah NSA committee. After being formed, the school socializes it in late February. In March, we prepare all the needs and components. In April, we start opening registration for new students."

Demographic segmentation is also based on age and education. In terms of age, students who will be accepted as students at SMP PGRI 1 Sempor are children who are 13-15 years old. If prospective students have not reached the specified age, they cannot be accepted. However, this does not apply if the child has received a recommendation from the previous Elementary School/Islamic Elementary School Principal. This is because they are considered to be able to follow learning at the next level of education. SMP PGRI 1 Sempor also pays attention to the education of prospective students. SMP PGRI 1 Sempor wants students to be graduates of Elementary School/Islamic Elementary School. This is because children who have received education at Elementary School/Islamic Elementary School are considered to be easy to adapt and ready to accept learning at a new level. However, SMP PGRI 1 Sempor does not rule out the possibility of accepting prospective students from Kejar Paket, because the institution prioritizes the quality and achievements that have been achieved by prospective students. This finding was agreed upon by previous researchers that demographic segmentation consists of several variables such as age, gender, or occupation so that the different needs and desires of consumers can be identified for each of these variables (Osei, Ampomah, Kankam-Kwarteng, Bediako, & Mensah, 2021).

Finally, the segmentation carried out is behavior. This grouping is based on the behavior of students and the behavior of parents of students. The behavioral characteristics of prospective students are prospective students who have normal characteristics, not children with special needs (ABK). This is because at SMP PGRI 1 Sempor there are no teaching staff and learning support

facilities for ABK. In addition, ABK students have been handled specifically by special education units, namely Special Schools. This is following expert theory. Segmentation is the process of grouping heterogeneous markets into one group that has the same characteristics and needs. Segmentation can be grouped based on demographics, geography, psychographics, or primary behavior. Previous findings show that market segmentation is done with a combination of four types of segmentation criteria - demographic, geographic, psychographic, and behavioral. The results of the analysis revealed that behavioral and psychographic criteria showed the greatest influence on the segment (Madzík, Čarnogurský, Hrnčiar, & Zimon, 2021).

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The market segmentation chosen by SMP PGRI 1 Sempor is by grouping the education market consisting of geographic, demographic, and behavioral segmentation. Geographic segmentation is based on the location of residence of potential consumers who are the same and have the same needs. Demographic segmentation is based on age and education, among others. Behavioral segmentation is based on the behavior of students and the behavior of parents of students.

Based on the conclusions above, some suggestions that can be submitted are as follows. SMP PGRI 1 Sempor should further increase efforts in implementing marketing strategies so that the community is more interested in sending their children to this school. SMP PGRI 1 Sempor should always maintain communication and cooperation and always create solidarity with various parties, both internal and external parties, because with good cooperation can contribute to school development, so that the school's contribution program can be communicated well between parties

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