The Marketization of Educational Institutions in Increasing Sales Value at Nahdlatul Ulama Vocational High School

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Abstract
SMK NU Purworejo is a vocational school with an Islamic background under the auspices of the Nahdlatul Ulama organization. Over the past few years, the school has experienced ups and downs in the number of new students. This study examines the marketing strategy of education at SMK NU Bener Purworejo. This research aimed to find out the marketing strategies and results of the SMK NU Bener Purworejo in recruiting new students. This research used a qualitative descriptive design. Research results showed that marketing strategies and results carried out by SMK NU Bener varied greatly, including visiting community leaders, advertising media through distributing brochures and installation of 'banners' at strategic locations, school sports competitions, word of mouth, and socializing with junior high school (MTs/SMP). However, the marketing results are still far from expectations. Therefore the school is necessary to rebrand educational marketing strategies relevant to the current era to achieve the expected targets and combine offline and online marketing strategies that align with the digital era.

Keywords: Community Interest, Education Promotion, Education Strategy

Introduction
The era of competition in this century demands increased educational institutions to increase student interest.1 Therefore, educational institutions must provide the best possible service to prospective students or consumers because educational services significantly affect the development of the number of students. Besides that, it is also necessary for educational institutions to improve their educational marketing strategies to achieve maximum results.2 Educational marketing can be interpreted as how to satisfy consumers

or students using a logical rationale. If consumers are not satisfied, it means the marketing has failed.³ The educational marketing strategy aims to attract the public's interest and trust them to send them to school in these educational institutions. If educational institutions are not introduced to the general public or are not marketed, educational institutions will never develop. Therefore, every educational institution must have a good marketing strategy to attract public interest in entrusting their children to school.⁴

Competition in education is unavoidable; many educational institutions are abandoned by their customers, so in recent years there have been many mergers of several educational institutions.⁵ The administrator's ability to understand educational marketing is a prerequisite to maintaining and enhancing the institution's growth.⁶ Although when we hear marketing language in the world of education, it will disturb our thinking because the term marketing is usually synonymous with the business world or business. Meanwhile, we all know that services in education are businesses that do not have a profit/profit objective or can be called non-profit-oriented businesses because the only benefits that exist are educational. In his book, David Wijaya reveals that education requires marketing. Here are some reasons to ensure that the managed educational institutions still exist and can adapt to the educational needs of the community even though the educational institution is a non-profit institution that focuses on education. Second, educational institutions must convince the public that their educational institutions are relevant to society's times and needs. Third, educational marketing activities are required so that the wider community knows the activities that exist in educational institutions. Fourth, so that the wider community does not abandon these educational institutions.⁷

Among the success of educational institutions in marketing, education uses print and non-print media such as electronic media or social media; of course, educational services

will be offered in educational marketing. To achieve its educational marketing goals, every educational institution must use a strategy; a strategy is a broad and integrated set of plans that then connects the organization's internal strengths with the opportunities around it. In the process, of course, it will affect the evaluation and alternatives available in the management. Because basically, the educational strategy is intended for external customers (community, guardians, students) and internal customers (teachers, education staff, lecturers) because all customers need to be served as much as possible.

Similar to the competition in the world of education in Purworejo district, where the competition is so tight, it is known that in the last few years, there have been many educational institutions at the level of high school/vocational and madrasah aliyah which have just been established, both public and private schools so that it is very influential on prospective students in determining the choice of educational institutions according to their desired goals.

The Ma'arif NU Vocational High School 1 (SMK Ma'arif NU 1) Bener Purworejo is an educational institution under the auspices of the Nahdlatul Ulama Ma'arif Education Institute (LP Ma'arif NU), which aims to educate new generations to become skilled, religious, and have good morals. The school's location is on National Road, on the Jalan Purworejo-Magelang Km. 12, Kaliboto Village, Bener District, Purworejo Regency. The SMK Ma'arif NU 1 Bener is undoubtedly the favorite brand in the religion field. From the beginning, this school's educational institution cannot be separated from solid faith and Islam. It is proven by the many activities with Islamic nuances, such as the yellow book study and mujahadah for students, where these studies are routinely carried out before the pandemic. Furthermore, Cerdaini said, the SMK Ma'arif NU 1 Bener cooperates with many high-ranking companies such as PT. Jogja Youth Clothing in the garment sector, there is also an ultrasound in Semarang in the garment or clothing sector and PT. SAMI Jepara in the field of auto parts and others.

Behind it all, it turns out that the SMK Ma'arif NU 1 Bener has experienced problems with new student admissions in the last three years. In the last three years at SMK Ma'arif NU 1 Bener, there have been ups and downs in the acquisition of new students; namely, in 2021, there are 233 registrants. In 2020 there were 182 students.

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9 The Principal of SMK NU Bener Purworejo, Interview, 2022.
enrolled, and in 2019 there were 290. The development of the number of students is one problem from the marketing of educational services that SMK Ma'arif NU 1 Bener implements. Therefore, schools have challenges increasing public confidence in sending their children to school. See also trending marketing developments. In today's world, the digital era 4.0 has penetrated the world of education, requiring school administrators to take appropriate steps to maintain the school's existence.

With this, the author is interested in researching related facts in the field of why the interest of prospective students at SMK Ma'arif NU 1 Bener has ups and downs, so the researcher gives the title Marketing Strategy to Increase the Attractiveness of Prospective Students at SMK Ma'arif NU 1 Bener, which has a focus on how marketing strategies and the results of the marketing strategy carried out by the SMK Ma'arif NU 1 Bener in recruiting new students.

Methods

Researchers used field research using the descriptive qualitative research method in this research. What is meant by descriptive is to reveal events accurately and systematically by the facts found in the field. As for what is meant by qualitative research is appropriate to understand all human behavior so that the data of research results is done inductively. In analyzing the researchers using a normative approach—which views religion in terms of its primary and original teachings from God in which there is no human reasoning, techniques for determining informants use purposive sampling techniques, namely information retrieval techniques with specific objectives by the research theme.

Several techniques were chosen, namely interviews, observation, and documentation. To obtain research data. Observations were conducted in January - February 2022. Here, interviews are conducted with teachers, staff, school principals, and students' parents directly involved in the research location. This collection technique is expected to provide data as accurate and valid as possible. For data analysis, the researcher uses qualitative descriptive means to describe and describe the implications of educational thinking on educational marketing strategies in increasing students' interest at The Ma'arif NU

12 Sugiyono Sugiyono, Metode Penelitian Kualitatif, Kuantitatif Dan R&D (Bandung: Alfabeta, 2013), 86.
Vocational High School 1 (SMK Ma'arif NU 1) Bener Purworejo clearly and entirely following the facts obtained by researchers in the field. To obtain valid findings and interpellations, the researchers conducted a credibility test with several techniques: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. After being tested for credibility, the validity of the data will be carried out with another method, namely triangulation. Triangulation is a technique of checking the validity of data that uses something other than the data for a practical purpose or as a comparison against the data. Data analysis activities include data reduction, data presentation, and verification/conclusion.

Discussion
Marketing Strategy Concept and The Characteristics of Educational Services

Competition in the world of education is unavoidable. Many educational institutions are abandoned by their customers, so in recent years there have been many mergers of several educational institutions. The administrator's ability to understand educational marketing is a prerequisite to maintaining and enhancing the institution's growth.

The key components that can be used as material for analysis to understand the concept of educational marketing, namely the market concept. The market is a place to transact various commodities produced by producers with what is needed, wanted, and expected by consumers. Marketing is a transactional process to increase prospective consumers' hopes, desires, and needs so that potential consumers become interested in having the products offered by issuing rewards as agreed.

Educational services have three main characteristics. The first is that the nature of educational services is intangible rather than tangible (more intangible than real), which means that the service will not be felt if the service has not been purchased. One of the intangible services here can be handled by the customer and satisfaction, enjoyment, or comfort. The Second is that production and consumption are carried out simultaneously (simultaneous production and consumption), meaning that in services, production and

consumption are carried out simultaneously. For example, service producers will be physically present when consumption occurs.

The third is the lack of standardized and uniform means that the service industry tends to be differentiated based on people (people-based) and equipment (equipment-based). This difference implies that the "outcomes" or results of services based on people (people-based) services lack standardization, compared to the outcomes of services based on equipment (tools). Besides, Hurriyati offers four educational service characteristics: intangible but can be felt, the production process can or can be assisted by physical products, the services obtained do not result in a transfer of ownership, and constantly interact between service providers and service users. In short, Mudie and Pirrie noted that the main characteristics of services that influence the marketing program are four, namely, intangible, inseparable, variability, and perishability (easy to destroy).

Departing from this, it is not surprising that every educational institution provides different services, so the success of education depends on who, when, and where the instruction takes place. The more qualified the educators, the more quality the education process will produce. When showing quality also depends on the right time in the process. Where is the location of the educational process? At the same time, the customer can determine the value when it has been received and has felt the benefits.

Kotler explains that service products are "everything that a producer can offer to be noticed, requested, sought, purchased, used or consumed by the market as a fulfillment of the needs of the relevant market. Marketing in educational services is a process that runs in education to offer products in academic institutions to the general public. In marketing ethics, the education provided is the intellectualism of good habits. Besides the academic products offered, additional life skills or extracurricular materials must be utilized according to customer needs to increase the quality of their education. Apart from the

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above, the offer in terms of achievement is no less generous, which proves that the educational institution can compete with other educational institutions.  

Therefore educational services can be interpreted as a social activity carried out in academic organizations that individuals plan and organize to determine educational services. While the main goals of educational services are one, to realize the mission of educational institutions in success, and second to increase consumer satisfaction with educational services. Third, increase educational interest, and fourth, increase efficiency and effectiveness in education promotion.  

Education marketing must also be better to determine an excellent educational institution. There are two desired expectations in educational marketing; getting customers and getting funds from donors. Indirectly, the stakeholders in determining policy greatly determine the education marketing process. From the explanation above, it can be concluded that educational services are essential things that must be done to increase interest, public interest, and the number of students in these educational institutions.

Furthermore, the aspects of educational services are interrelated and affect the success of educational institutions, so all of them can be said to be necessary as a unit that supports the success of educational institutions in the service mix marketing strategy. Similarly, the world of education cannot be separated from the service marketing mix, such as the 7P concept. For this reason, the marketing mix strategy is an essential part of the marketing strategy to determine educational institutions' success. It serves as a guide when using marketing elements carried out by policymakers in educational institutions that benefit educational institutions.

**The Implementation of Educational Marketing Strategy**

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The strategy carried out by SMK Ma'arif NU 1 Bener to attract public interest is to use elements of the educational service mix where the education service mix element is essential and plays a vital role in the educational process, which will later influence customers to use the services offered by educational institutions. The first in educational marketing services is the product provided to customers. No matter how good the promotions and advertisements are offered. If the products delivered do not satisfy the customers, the customers will leave the product sooner or later. In educational services, what is meant by by-product is the form, type, and variety of academic service programs offered to customers if they decide to register their child as a student at SMK Ma'arif NU 1 Bener.

The start time of the promotion is in January-June. All schools will accept new students at the end of this school year. Starting in January, teachers, staff, and managers of educational institutions at SMK Ma'arif NU 1 Bener began to busy marketing their schools through the media they had. The registration period for the SMK Ma'arif NU 1 Bener is determined by the principal, staff, and teachers from January to the end of June after accepting other high school seniors. Purworejo. At SMK Ma'arif NU 1 Bener, in addition to the core service products offered, the teaching and learning activity program, as conveyed by the principal of SMK Ma'arif NU 1 Bener, namely that the teaching and learning process starts from 07.00 until 14.30 on Monday to Thursday then Friday. 'at starts at 07.00 until 11.00. On Saturday it starts at 07.00 until 15. The marketing activities carried out by SMK Ma'arif NU 1 Bener is very varied, such as visiting community leaders, distributing brochures, using banners in strategic locations, and many other ways.28

This activity was carried out to disseminate product information at SMK Ma'arif NU 1 Bener to be offered and captivate customers' hearts to use educational services. The researcher found that the principal of SMK Ma'arif NU 1 Bener said that "...our promotions are not only through advertising media but also school sports competition events outside school, word of mouth and during the acceptance period of new students, the teachers scattered to MTs and SMP schools. At that time, a teacher at SMK Ma'arif NU 1 Bener was in charge of providing brochures for SMP or MTs teachers".29 Similarly, the interview results with the principal of SMK Ma'arif NU 1 Bener below that "we used to promote web and Facebook, it has been a long time, now not anymore because they do not update too often social media.

28 The Principal of SMK NU Bener Purworejo, Interview.
29 The Principal of SMK NU Bener Purworejo.
Here, interviews were conducted with teachers, staff, school principals, and students' parents. As a parent of MH's students, ST stated, "...I saw that this SMK Ma'arif NU 1 Bener school put a lot of banners and pamphlets on the streets past the market. My son graduated from MTs last year, so I sent him to the SMK Ma'arif NU 1 Bener because the cost is relatively cheap; he often wins sports competitions and UAN on average. No one does not pass, meaning this school can achieve quite a lot. However, the problem is that it is located in a school complex, predominantly a country. However, as a parent and my child, I do not mind the school's location; my parents said that if the school is a bit crowded, it is good, so my child will be able to study with students from nearby schools.\(^\text{30}\)

In addition to this strategy, the SMK Ma'arif NU 1 Bener has another method to meet community leaders, as the principal said. "... in meeting community leaders, we intend to ask for prayers and to be socialized that the SMK Ma'arif NU 1 Bener will accept new students this year; with this request from community leaders, it is hoped that the number of students will continue to grow." From this, it can be interpreted that the SMK Ma'arif NU 1 Bener is still very dependent on the influences of community leaders, which makes the SMK Ma'arif NU 1 Bener less respected because the respected ones are none other than the community leaders. Besides that, later, the SMK Ma'arif NU 1 Bener will depend on community leaders if there are some obstacles to educating students. However, this step also has a point because what is needed from the SMK Ma'arif NU 1 Bener is to find new students, not look for the respect of prospective students.

The description above indicates five marketing activities at the SMK Ma'arif NU 1 Bener. There are visiting community leaders, advertising media through distributing brochures and installation of 'banners' at strategic locations, school sports competitions, word of mouth, and socializing with junior high school (MTs/SMP). Besides, the SMK Ma'arif NU 1 Bener had previously used social media (Facebook) as a marketing strategy. The five marketing activities showed the existence of the traditional method, while the last indicated the contemporary methods that align with the digital era.

For Garcia et al., in today's digital era, using Facebook or other social media significantly affects educational marketing strategy because other users more easily see the indicators, such as 'like' on the Facebook page.\(^\text{31}\) Nurmalasari also informs that many social

\(^{30}\) The Student’s Guardian, Interview, 2022.

media platforms can be used in strategic management where the main point of the content is the highlight school achievement.\textsuperscript{32} Through social media, the school can also get many customer satisfaction testimonials displayed on websites and social media to increase the school's credibility.\textsuperscript{33} That means the SMK Ma'arif NU 1 Bener Purworejo needs to improve its marketing strategy by aligning with 'the digital era.' In short, the school must apply offline and online marketing strategies relevant to Marketing 4.0.\textsuperscript{34}

**The Results of Education Marketing Strategy**

The marketing strategy carried out by the SMK Ma'arif NU 1 Bener l in recruiting new students is quite varied. It can be seen from the various efforts in marketing (promoting) the SMK Ma'arif NU 1 Bener, seen from marketing they do as explained below. First, meeting with community leaders around the Bener sub-district has been very interesting because community leaders have a significant role and share in determining the education of the community, and seeing from the history of the establishment of the SMK Ma'arif NU 1 Bener, it was the idea of various community leaders in the Bener sub-district, so it is not surprising when parties SMK Ma'arif NU 1 Bener continues to coordinate with local community leaders, but this can be a boomerang for the continuity of education.

Because of the dependence on community leaders around the SMK Ma'arif NU 1 Bener, they will always depend continuously on any business in internal and external affairs within the SMK Ma'arif NU 1 Bener. Therefore, it would be better if they did not always depend on local community leaders so that SMK Ma'arif NU 1 Bener could develop according to what they wanted, including marketing strategies for SMK Ma'arif NU 1 Bener.

Second, pamphlets (banners) can get the desired results if done correctly concerning marketing strategies. In the above discussion, it has been explained that banner installations are not given much attention because they are installed in places with too many other school banners. Which is, of course, from the country so that, if there are new prospective students, they will see the school's flag next door.

\textsuperscript{32} Nurmalasari and Masitoh, “Manajemen Strategik Pemasaran Pendidikan Berbasis Media Sosial.”


\textsuperscript{34} Aris Nurbawani, “Strategi Kepala Sekolah Dalam Pemasaran Jasa Pendidikan Di Lembaga Pendidikan Baru Pada Era Marketing 4.0 (Studi Kasus Di SMK BP Subulul Huda),” *Southeast Asian Journal of Islamic Education Management* 2, no. 1 (January 26, 2021): 52–73, https://doi.org/10.21154/sajiem.v2i1.41.
That can be proven by the progress of state schools around the SMK Ma'arif NU 1 Bener; maybe it will be different if the banner is placed in a public place that is not accompanied by other school banners, which will make it easier to attract new prospective students and automatically if the candidate If new students are captivated, then students at SMK Ma'arif NU 1 Bener will continue to grow with each unique teaching.

Third, related the analysis of the marketing strategy of the SMK Ma'arif NU 1 Bener through brochure leaflets distributed to the students to be distributed to their neighbors, relatives, and friends in their environment are not very interesting because basically in determining the first level of education which has a role in deciding The choice of school is still very dependent on the parents.

If this is continued, it may make the name of SMK Ma'arif NU 1 Bener less attractive; maybe it will be different if the leaflets are directly distributed to prospective guardians of students so that they will consider whether to enter SMK Ma'arif NU 1 Bener with a first-level school. In the Kutoarjo area.

Fourth, the strategy carried out by SMK Ma'arif NU 1 Bener is to socialize with junior high school or its equivalent, which results in a variety of considerations in determining the choice of prospective students because students, of course, will see a school with existing advantages, this should be able to well presented by the SMK Ma'arif NU 1 Bener.

That can filter out many students if it is carried out in various locations at the primary level and does not have to be in the Kutoarjo sub-district. It can be done in other sub-districts or more strategically to reach the SMK Ma'arif NU 1 Bener area. All of the above aspects will be more successful if the strategy handling is carried out optimally and actively sees prospective new students when and where they have to carry out good strategies and produce what the manager of SMK Ma'arif NU 1 Bener Purworejo wants.

Conclusion

From the description above, the researcher concludes that education's marketing strategy in increasing students' interest at SMK Ma'arif NU 1 Bener has varied dramatically, starting with meeting community leaders in Bener sub-district to distribute to prospective community leaders and new students, installing banners in accessible public places. To be reached by the general public, distributing brochures for new student admissions to students to be continued to prospective new students up to the last one,
namely by socializing to the first intermediate levels in the Purworejo district. The results of the marketing strategy carried out by the SMK Ma'arif NU 1 Bener gave less than optimal results so that in the last three years, the number of students who registered themselves was decreasing, and this could happen because the strategies carried out were less than optimal and active in seeing prospective students. New, when, and where they have to carry out the systems designed by the manager of SMK Ma'arif NU 1 Bener. This study suggests that in the future, the school must combine offline and online marketing strategies that align with the digital era.

References


