

Optimizing the Islamic school quality improvement through 7P concept

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Abstract

Purpose of the study: The purpose of this study is to design and formulate the practice of optimization strategies performed by Islamic schools to improve school quality and customer satisfaction.

Methodology: This study used field research method as the data obtained through interviews and direct observation. The object of the research is SMP Muhammadiyah Sinar Fajar Cawas and SMP Islam Terpadu Muhammadiyah An Najah Jatinom Klaten, Central Java, Indonesia

Main Findings: The results of the study show that the optimization of quality improvement performed by two schools under study is a marketing mix strategy through 7P application: (1) product of a variety of programs; (2) price of school fees offered to parents; (3) places of both schools are strategic and accessible by public and private transportation; (4) promotion through printed, electronic, and social media; (5) people including educators and office staff are young and enthusiastic; (6) physical evidence of school buildings and student reports and; (7) process of teaching and learning in both schools have met national education standards. The seven concepts are very influential in improving and optimizing the progress and quality of schools. The most influential concept applications in SMP Muhammadiyah Sinar Fajar are product, price, place, and people. Meanwhile, product, price, place, and physical evidence are five major applied concepts carried out in SMP Islam Terpadu Muhammadiyah An Najah.

Applications of this study: This research is expected to be applied in schools, universities, and the wider community that focuses on education issues and optimizing the quality of Islamic schools

Novelty/Originality of this study: Therefore, the impacts of the seven concepts are the high public interest; young, enthusiastic, and high creativity teachers; a variety of programs; teachers who are admired by prospective students and parents and; professional and certified school principals.

INTRODUCTION

The fundamental problems in Indonesia education to date are intricate. Many educational experts and activists noted several internal problems in educational activities, such as issues regarding learning strategies, the role of teachers and students, curriculum, and school infrastructure. One of the problems related to the role and figure of the teachers is teachers only act as educators or are very limited to merely providing material to students. (Wibawa, 2013) In fact, teachers should have special qualifications and characteristics, such as have a strong knowledge base, must be based on individual competence, have a selection and certification system, must be cooperative and competitive interest among peers, must have high professional awareness, must have ethical principles, must have a professional selection system, should have individual militancy, and teachers should have professional organizations. Whereas in practice, many teachers today are not qualified to meet the aforementioned criteria as professional teachers. (Shodiq et al., 2017)

It has been common sense that the success of education is inseparable from the role of teachers as reliable and quality educators. Teachers become the main factor in educational success; for that, teachers should have a sincere soul in carrying out their roles. Individuals involving in education must have already understood that teachers in schools should place themselves as parents who always educate their students. The public opinion, such as teachers solely transfer knowledge to their students must be avoided because teachers understand and have a close emotional bond with their students to instil a good attitude and character in their students. (Akmal Mundi IAI, 2016)

As stipulated in the National Education System Law No.20 of 2003 Article 42 paragraph (1) states that teachers must acquire minimum qualifications and certifications in accordance with the levels of teaching, physically and mentally healthy, and have the ability to fulfil national educational goals. Following the aforementioned law, it is necessary to have an adequate strategy in educational institutions to produce reliable teachers and to achieve the educational goals that have been pursued by Indonesia and its people. The success of education needs to be accomplished through the improvement of education quality which has become the benchmark of success in managing educational institutions. (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2016)

School quality is the ideals and expectations of each school customer as stated by Edward Sallis that the quality of education is a philosophy of sustained improvement that can provide a set of practical tools to every educational institution to meet the needs, desires, and expectations of its customers in the present and the future. Sallis also reveals that quality is an important part of the whole agenda in the organization, and improving quality is the most important task for any institution. Thus, the challenges of the education quality will be clearer and unavoidable to face global competition. As a result, educational milieu needs to create changes as expressed by the education experts above. ([Sallis, 2006](#))

The quality must be improved so that the institution can provide knowledge for students' sake in the future. The benchmark of a quality school is based on the perception of users or customers which refers to school assessments such as accreditation, school graduates, professional teachers, national examination results, student achievement, and student character. ([Machali, 2019](#)) In the development of quality assurance, a professional attitude is required, which is to be fully responsible for their works towards excellence quality. According to Imam Machali, quality assurance, in general, can be implemented through three stages: 1) Agreement upon required needs to achieve satisfaction; 2) Determine the steps in which the quality will be assessed; 3) Perform procedures that ensure the quality is always maintained. ([Shobron & Rahman, 2019](#))

Customer satisfaction can be seen from marketing by schools to sell products or services to customers. The term marketing in education is synonymous with marketing in general, according to Martin Sone Kwang, marketing is as a social and managerial process that triggers individuals and groups to obtain their needs and wants through the production and mutual exchange of products and values with others. Marketing management in educational institutions (especially Islamic schools) is essential as competition between schools becomes stronger. Marketing is needed for educational institutions to build a positive image. A good image of schools or institutions before the community will be more likely to ease them to overcome problems. ([Kwang, 2019](#))

The 7P concept of the marketing mix is one of the marketing strategies to convey information evenly, introduce a product and service products, attract consumers to give and even create personal preferences for the image of the product. The marketing mix is a set of controllable marketing tools that an institution uses to produce the response it wants from its various target markets. It consists of everything that the university can influence the demand for the services it offers. Tangible products have traditionally used a 4Ps model, the services sector, on the other hand, uses a 7P approach to satisfy the needs of the service provider's customers: Products, price places, promotions, people, physical facilities and processes. ([Mohammad, 2015](#))

The marketing mix is considered as one of the most potential strategic elements in marketing the product. The marketing mix strategy includes four components: product, price, promotion, and place. The roles of pricing and sales promotion are very important, especially to build commitment and customer loyalty, since this concept is one of the strategies to solve various problems in educational institutions. The concept of the marketing mix must be carried out by educational institutions; otherwise, the educational institution will fail in determining the direction of the development and progress of the institution. ([Muthoifin, Nur Hanif Wachidah, 2020](#))

The marketing mix is carried out by the education sector to influence demand for its products, as Olaleke suggests in an international journal entitled *Empirical Analysis of Marketing Mix Strategy and Student Loyalty in Education Marketing*: "The marketing mix consists of everything the educational sector can do to influence the demand for its product. There is also an increase in the perception of the consumers of the term 'quality' on the services recommended by the educational sectors. The relationship between customer satisfaction and service quality has also undergone a good deal of attention. ([Olaleke et al., 2014](#)) The purpose of the marketing mix is to reorient management systems, staff behavior, organizational focus, procurement processes, and services so that the organization can produce well and provide more effective services that can meet the needs and requirements of customers. If these objectives can be achieved, then the marketing mix strategy will bring improved services, reduced costs, and customer satisfaction. ([Ivy, 2008](#))

The implementation of education in SMP Muhammadiyah Sinar Fajar Cawas and SMP Islam Terpadu Muhammadiyah An Najah Jatinom Klaten is oriented to customer satisfaction to improve the quality of education through a marketing mix strategy. Researchers took the object of research in SMP Muhammadiyah Sinar Fajar Cawas and SMP Islam Terpadu Muhammadiyah An Najah Jatinom Klaten because of various reasons that make these two schools deserve as the research site. First, both schools are newly established schools but their presence has received a good response from the community. This can be seen from the increasing number of new student registrations at both schools. Second, SMP Muhammadiyah Sinar Fajar Cawas and SMP Islam Terpadu Muhammadiyah An Najah Jatinom Klaten can win various championships in every event both at the district and regency levels. ([Sukardi, 2016](#))

The success of a school in various aspects is entangled to a good management system that makes the quality school. ([Hartono et al., 2018](#)) SMP Muhammadiyah Sinar Fajar Cawas and SMP Islam Terpadu Muhammadiyah An Najah Jatinom are considered to have good school management. Based on this observation, the researchers conducted research and noted the steps in the implementation of the marketing mix strategy and provided a solution to the obstacles encountered by two schools under the study based on existing theoretical studies. ([Fasa, 2017](#))

Therefore the purpose of this study is to design and formulate the practice of optimization strategies performed by Islamic schools to improve school quality and customer satisfaction, and the object of the research is SMP

Muhammadiyah Sinar Fajar Cawas and SMP Islam Terpadu Muhammadiyah An Najah Jatinom Klaten, Central Java, Indonesia. ([Shobron & Anshori, 2020](#))

LITERATURE REVIEW

Marketing is a familiar thing in our society, as is educational marketing. Machali explained that marketing for educational institutions is absolutely necessary, educational institutions will be known by the wider community if they carry out marketing functions properly. In this case, public relations and educational institutions have a significant role in carrying out educational marketing.

Daulay explains that the purpose of educational marketing is to provide information to the public and increase interest in educational institution products, provide assessments and provide benefits and strengthen the existence of educational institutions in society. ([Daulay, 2017](#)) According to Azzahra, schools are educational institutions for learning and teaching as well as places for receiving and giving lessons, while the products produced by schools are educational services and graduates. ([Azzahra, 2020](#)) So it can be said that the products of educational institutions are not goods like products in companies, but in the form of educational services and graduates provided to their customers, namely students, students, parents and the community. ([Wolly, 2017](#)) Education services cannot be seen and felt by the community before the community buys or gets them from educational service providers directly. People also cannot predict what results will be obtained by consuming educational services, except after they buy or become users of these educational services. ([Muflih, 2014](#)) The education marketing strategy is no less important, so that educational institutions can be widely known by the public and attract potential users of educational services. ([Mustari, 2014](#))

Research by Shodiq concluded that through educational marketing, improving the quality of schools can provide various benefits for educational institutions both for consumers and the income and output of these educational institutions. The marketing mix is a tool for marketers that consists of various elements of a marketing program that need to be considered so that the implementation of the established marketing and positioning strategies can be successful. ([Muh. Shodiq, Suyata, 2008](#)) Research by Iwan also concluded that based on the concept of marketing mix, information technology-based marketing in Islamic schools is described in terms of product content and advantages, information technology-based marketing methods and media have attracted people to become school choices. ([Iwan Syahril, 2016](#))

Research by Syah concluded that good marketing management in increasing the quantity of new students by implementing seven elements, namely; product, price, location, promotion, people / teachers and staff and physical form. ([Syah, 2016](#)) The challenge for educational institutions in the future is that there is intense competition, so that the quality and quality of educational institutions is one of the factors in educational marketing efforts that have a positive impact on increasing the interest of educational service users. ([Tamrin, Afrizal, 2018](#)) Indeed, currently there is an interesting phenomenon in which many schools are opening admission of students early, this is due to the high enthusiasm of the community as potential users of educational services. Including in SMP Muhammadiyah Sinar Fajar Cawas and SMP Islam Terpadu Muhammadiyah An Najah Jatinom Klaten. ([Zuhdi, 2018](#))

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Site and Subject: This research was conducted at SMP Muhammadiyah Sinar Fajar Cawas and SMP Islam Terpadu Muhammadiyah An Najah Jatinom Klaten. The primary research subjects are the principal, teachers, students, the community, and other parties if necessary. ([Fauziyah, 2017](#))

Data collection approach and methods: This research is field research in which data obtained is the result of field research combined with existing theories. This research is qualitative, research that positions the research subject in the same position as the researcher so that the research subjects perceive this as part of their life. The research procedures carried out using qualitative data in the form of words, directly or written data from the individuals observed. ([Williams, 2007](#))

This research is field research because the research procedure explores data sources from the field observed and found in the field which produces descriptive data in the form of written or oral taken from people and actors observed, directed at the background of the individual holistically without isolating individuals and organizations in variables or hypotheses. ([Ramdhani et al., 2012](#)) This study determines to collect data relating to the marketing mix applied to improve the quality of education in SMP Muhammadiyah Sinar Fajar Cawas and SMP Islam Terpadu Muhammadiyah An Najah Jatinom Klaten. In this research, the researchers place themselves as part of the participants and meticulously record the data and then integrate it with existing theories.

Analysis technique or data interpretation: The data analysis technique in this study is qualitative followed by the data collection process, therefore, the data collection conducted by researchers is accompanied by writing, editing, clarifying, reducing, presenting, and drawing conclusions or data verification. ([Nee, 2019](#)) The following figure is the data analysis chart that illustrates the flow or stages conducted in research Figure 1.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The optimization of quality improvement performed by two schools in (SMP Muhammadiyah Sinar Fajar and SMP Islam Terpadu Muhammadiyah An Najah) under study is a marketing mix strategy through 7P application: (1) product of a variety of programs; (2) price of school fees offered to parents; (3) places of both schools are strategic and

accessible by public and private transportation; (4) promotion through printed, electronic, and social media; (5) people including educators and office staff are young and enthusiastic; (6) physical evidence of school buildings and student reports and; (7) process of teaching and learning in both schools have met national education standards. (Busyairi, 2017)

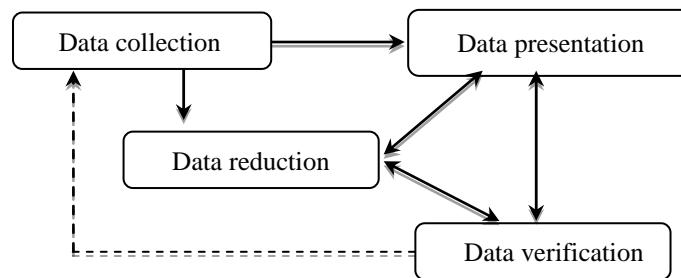


Figure 1: Flowchart of the research phase

The seven concepts are very influential to improve and optimize the progress and quality of schools. The most influential concept applications in SMP Muhammadiyah Sinar Fajar are product, price, place, and people. Meanwhile, product, price, place, and physical evidence are five major applied concepts carried out in SMP Islam Terpadu Muhammadiyah An Najah. (Muthoifin et al., 2020)

Marketing Mix/7P Concepts

7P concept including product, price, place, promotion, people, physical evidence, and process are the concepts of marketing mix theory which is essential to convey information evenly, introduce a product of goods and services, and attract consumers to give or even create personal preferences for the image of a product. This concept also includes in the educational field and school institutions, in which well-designed and planned education will be able to improve the quality and progress of education for teachers, students, users, and even the government. (Sulisno & Abdullah, 2019)

Education that is inattentively organized will create careless graduates and generation. On the reverse, education with an established concept will produce well-established graduates in every aspect. This certainly will be beneficial for users and governments to advance and create excellent human resources, in which education is an absolute requirement for individuals and countries to achieve progress in all aspects. Through the quality of education, a state can also balance the growth and progress of a nation as education will also form an incompetent individual to become a better and more qualified human being. (Surya, 2012)

Education is closely related to the concepts that will be followed by a certain individual. For the quality of education to run and work optimally, the actors, supporters, promotions, facilities, and infrastructure, leaders, and others must be optimized properly because the quality of education is very dependent on the quality of the concepts and systems management surrounding the institutions. (Muthoifin, 2019) This includes the role of institutional leaders and existing human resources because the role of both elements as the front is very influential on the quality of education and plays a key position to accomplish the objectives. (Abou & Fadl, n.d.) This is an important role of synergy between the existence of a leader or principal with strategic concepts concerning improving the quality of schools and education, including what is found in both schools under the study. (R. Nadia, Dahlya Indra, Siti Nuraeni Muhtar, 2019)

Optimization of School Quality

From discussions of the previous theories and direct observations in the field, it was found that the step that has been taken in optimizing the school quality in SMP Muhammadiyah Sinar Fajar Cawas and SMP Islam Terpadu Muhammadiyah An Najah Jatinom Klaten is the use of the 7P concept which includes the product of a variety of programs, price of school fees offered to parents, places of both schools in the strategic locations that are accessible for public and private transportation, promotion through print, electronic and social media, people include teachers and office staff who are competent and professional, physical evidence of school buildings and student reports, the process of the implementation of education in the two schools that have fulfilled the national education standards and school-friendly service towards customers. (Mustaffa, 2019)

From the seven concepts, there are the same and different components performed by two schools. From various observations and analyses, there are differences in price and place aspects. The following is a brief description of the steps carried out by two schools to improve their quality. (Sudarno Shobron, Amrin, Imron Rosyadi, 2020)

Table 1: Optimizing School Quality with 7P Marketing Mix Strategy

Marketing mix 7 P	SMP Muhammadiyah Sinar Fajar Cawas	SMP Islam Terpadu Muhammadiyah An Najah Jatiom
Product	Various program activities Does not have graduates	Various program activities Has graduates
Price	The determination of school fees at the beginning of the academic year and installment payments for three months. School fee is excluded and paid every month.	The determination of school fees at the beginning of the academic year It contains the <i>fisabilillah</i> housing program as the social service for

		underprivileged students.
Place	Strategic, good accessibility	Strategic, good accessibility
Promotion	Through printed, electronic, social media and invitation and visits	Through printed, electronic, social media and invitation and visits
People/person	Young, energetic, creative, and innovative Certified principal as an educator	Young, energetic, creative, and innovative Certified principal as an educator
Physical evidence	The buildings in Muhammadiyah cawas as the center of school activities and strategic	Has representative and accessible buildings
Process	Contains friendly, trustworthy, and sensitive administrative staff	Contains friendly, trustworthy, and sensitive administrative staff

Source: Various sources

From the data above, it clearly shows that the two schools have implemented seven marketing mix concepts to improve the school quality, but the emphasis of each concept has similarities and differences. This occurs due to different goals, visions, missions, and objectives of both schools, including supporting and barrier factors in implementing the seven concepts in schools. ([Hashim & Hamzah, 2014](#))

The following are supporting factors in the application of 7P Marketing Mix strategy in SMP Muhammadiyah Sinar Fajar Cawas: 1) Public interest towards SMP Muhammadiyah Sinar Fajar is relatively high as proven by the presence of indent list before the registration of new students begins. 2) Teachers at SMP Muhammadiyah Sinar Fajar are young and have high enthusiasm and creativity, so the teaching and learning activities run effectively. 3) The programs in SMP Muhammadiyah Sinar Fajar vary and attract prospective students and parents. The teachers who are admired by prospective students and parents stimulate parents to be in two minds to enrol their children to SMP Muhammadiyah Sinar Fajar. ([S. shobron Muthoifin & Rahman, 2019](#))

While the supporting factors in implementing 7P Marketing Mix strategy in SMP Islam Terpadu Muhammadiyah An Najah Jatinom are: 1) Public interest towards SMP Islam Terpadu Muhammadiyah An Najah Jatinom is high as shown by the presence of indent list before the registration of new students begins. 2). Teachers at SMP Islam Terpadu Muhammadiyah An Najah Jatinom are moderately young and have high enthusiasm and creativity so the teaching and learning activities can run efficiently. 3) The school building is adequate, comfortable, and attractive so it becomes one of the attractions for prospective students and parents. 4) The programs in SMP Islam Terpadu Muhammadiyah An Najah Jatinom vary and attract prospective students and parents. The barriers in the implementation of 7P Marketing Mix strategy in SMP Muhammadiyah Sinar Fajar Cawas are 1) limited school facilities and infrastructure, 2) minimum networks outside of school, and 3) limited amount and inexperience human resources in teaching. Whereas, the barriers in the application of 7P Marketing Mix strategy in SMP Islam Terpadu Muhammadiyah An Najah Jatinom are: 1) minimum quantity and quality of teachers, 2) the inconsistency of program implementation, and 3) limited supporting learning facilities. ([Muthoifin, 2020](#))

Therefore, the suggestions to support the optimization of school quality improvement are the managers of school institutions should procure adequate buildings, facilities, and qualified school infrastructure; procurement of supporting learning facilities; maximizing the concept of 7P for both schools to accomplish the vision, mission, and objectives; increasing the number of teachers with the linear and related field of study; expanding schools' network with other institutions. For teachers, it is encouraged to implement school programs consistently, attend workshops, seminars, and training to improve their competence. ([Irmawati et al., 2017](#))

The recommendations of this research are to optimize and conduct 7P marketing mix strategy with priority and per their capabilities through the school quality improvement programs; improve service to school customers; set prices in accordance with product quality; increase promotion on social media; increase competition, professionalism and maintain the quality culture of schools; and increase the procurement of school buildings and infrastructure to create progressive and quality Islamic schools. ([Utami, 2015](#))

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the analysis, the implementation of 7P concept optimization that exists in the Marketing Mix strategy in two schools has applied marketing mix strategy to improve school quality through the implementation of 7P strategies: product, price, place, promotion, people, physical evidence, and process. The seven concepts that have the most influence on customer satisfaction in applying the marketing mix strategy at SMP Muhammadiyah Sinar Fajar are; the product of various program; price of affordable education costs and installments payments for three months except school fees; place of school is in a strategic location and has good accessibility; people (person/HR) of the schools or principals have educator certificate and aspired teachers. Furthermore, 7P components with the most influential aspect on customer satisfaction in marketing mix strategy application in SMP Islam Terpadu Muhammadiyah An Najah Jatinom are; the product of various programs of school activities; price of affordable education costs and scholarships for underprivileged students; place of the school is in a strategic location and has good accessibility; and physical evidence (facilities) of a representative school building. The impact of the application of the 7P concept, for instance, the high public interest to enroll their children to two schools, under study, various school activities, enthusiastic and creative

board of teachers in teaching and learning process, the realization of adequate and impressive school buildings followed by sufficient facilities.

LIMITATION AND STUDY FORWARD

The implication of this research is expected to become a reference and material for experts working in schools, universities, and the wider community who study education issues and optimizing the Islamic school quality improvement through 7 p concept and marketing mix in Indonesia.

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CONTRIBUTION OF EACH AUTHOR

Muthoifin: First author, correspondence, finishing, article reviewer, and doctor of Islamic education; Eko Supriyanto: Second author and article reviewer; Sudarno Shobron: Third author, head of the Islamic education masters study program, research funder, doctor of Islamic politics; Agus Mulyadi: research data finder and student of Department of Islamic education UMS..

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