MARKETING MIX WITH CONTINUOUS DEVELOPMENT: A SURVIVAL STRATEGY OF KINDERGARTEN SCHOOL

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Abstract. Many kindergarten schools have experienced a decrease in the number of students during the Covid-19 pandemic. This can threaten the institution's sustainability because schools must have students to obtain operational permits. Thus, there is a need for a strategy to maintain the existence of kindergarten schools during and after the Covid-19 pandemic. This study aims to analyze the implementation of the marketing strategy of ABA Mardi Putra Kindergarten to survive from its inception until facing the Covid-19 Pandemic using a marketing mix strategy perspective. This research is a type of qualitative research with a case study approach that collects data by observation, interviews, and documentation. The source of data in this study was obtained from the ABA Mardi Putra Kindergarten, Bantul, which consisted of one school principal, a sample of four teachers, one school administrator, and documents relating to the object of research. The data analysis techniques used by Miles and Huberman consist of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion/verification. The research results show that implementing a marketing mix strategy (product, price, promotion, place, people, physical evidence, and process) with continuous development can help maintain the existence of a kindergarten school. Thus, kindergarten schools that have problems with the number of students can use this strategy to support the existence of their schools.

Keywords : marketing mix, kindergarten, early childhood.

INTRODUCTION

The occurrence of the Covid-19 pandemic that attacked Indonesia had an impact on various sectors including education (Martoredjo, 2020). Schools at the early childhood education level are also not free from this impact. According to CNN Indonesia and merdeka.com, parents' interest in sending their children to kindergarten has decreased due to the Covid-19 pandemic (CNN Indonesia, 2020; Yopi, 2020). Student interest in learning also decreased during the Covid-19 pandemic (Yunitasari & Hanifah, 2020). Thus, it can be seen that kindergarten schools are facing problems in terms of students due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The number of students owned by an educational institution, including kindergarten, is very important and must be considered. This is because it will affect the issue of funding related to the receipt of Education Operational Assistance funds which are given every year. The nominal will depend on the number of students owned. In addition, the survival of kindergarten schools is also under threat. According to the jogja.tribunnews.com page, several kindergarten schools in the Yogyakarta area had to close because they did not have students due to the Covid-19 pandemic (Husna, 2020). This could also happen in other areas besides the City of Yogyakarta. So that the problem of kindergarten students really must be considered.

Based on the explanation above, the issue of the number of students can affect the issue of funding for the survival of kindergarten schools. This illustrates how important the number of students is for an educational institution, especially kindergarten schools. Thus, it is important for a kindergarten school to evaluate and find the best formula for managing the marketing of school education services to increase the number of students and maintain the institution's existence. Choosing the right education service marketing strategy will help improve education services and help an educational institution rise from adversity (Iqbal, 2019).

The goal in efforts to manage the marketing of educational services is to provide quality services in the form of quality education that can be enjoyed by students so that both children and parents will be maximally satisfied with these educational services (Munir, 2018). This can be achieved by paying attention to things that are indeed the needs and expectations of consumers and looking for solutions to correct the deficiencies of the marketing

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strategy that has been implemented (Faizin, 2017). There are still many who see the discipline of marketing as a practical and pragmatic science, which is seen only as a technique for marketing, selling, persuading, and so on. Even though the marketing discipline is dynamic, adaptive, accommodative, and has complete generalization abilities (Rahayu et al., 2018).

It is important to carry out marketing activities for educational services to convince the public and customers of educational services that the educational institutions being managed still exist and are relevant to their needs so that the types of educational services provided can be recognized and understood by the community. The existence of schools is not abandoned by the community and service customers. potential education (Wijaya, 2016). In addition, educational service marketing activities can also be used to increase stakeholder trust, quality and institutional image, as well as improve school image and parental loyalty (Elytasari, 2017; Fahrurrozi, 2014; Fradito et al., 2020; Khasanah, 2015). Based on some of these reasons and the reasons mentioned in the previous paragraph, it is very important to carry out good educational service marketing management for an educational institution.

One of the educational marketing strategies that can be used is the marketing mix strategy. A marketing mix strategy is a combination of several core aspects of the marketing system that can be controlled in order to influence consumer reactions (Assauri, 2011). At first Perreault Jr. & McCarthy (1968) popularized four aspects of the marketing mix consisting of product, price, place, and promotion which are known as the 4P. Then, it was developed by Booms & Bitner (1981) into 7P which consists of product, price, place, promotion, people, physical evidence, and process.

Previously, the existence of the 7P strategy was known as the 4P marketing term, but the 4P was considered not effective enough because it would make our product considered the same as other products (Kartajaya, 2006). In relation to the marketing of educational services, the 4P strategy, which was originally used as a marketing mix for goods, needs to be expanded to 7P if you want to use it in marketing services (Yazid, 2001). Thus, the 7P marketing mix strategy is considered more effective in assisting education service marketing activities.

The marketing mix strategy is considered very effective when used for marketing educational services. The variables in the marketing mix strategy are good and effective marketing management to increase the quantity of students (Fadlilah & Masfiah, 2021; Munir, 2018). In addition, the marketing mix strategy has also proven effective in helping to increase the number of new applicants or students in an educational institution (Saimima et al., 2018). Then, the marketing mix strategy also influences parents' decisions in choosing a school for their child (Irawan, 2019). Thus, it can be concluded that this strategy is very appropriate when used for educational marketing.

There have been several previous studies examining the marketing of educational services in kindergarten schools, such as in Mubaridah's research (2016) and research conducted by Sumiyati & Nurkhosi'in (2019) which describes the form of marketing management applied to the kindergarten studied. Furthermore, there is also research by Margareta et al. (2018) and Rashid et al. (2020) which focuses on studying the implementation of kindergarten school marketing management with several specific objectives, such as to make the institution better known, increase the interest and number of students, and increase stakeholder trust. Meanwhile, research on the marketing mix strategy in kindergarten was conducted by Sjamsir & Gunarto (2017) and Sa'baniah et al. (2018) who examines the implementation of the marketing mix strategy in kindergarten schools and its effects.

This research is different from some of the studies mentioned above. This study aims to analyze the implementation of the marketing strategy of ABA Mardi Putra Kindergarten to survive from its inception until facing the Covid-19 Pandemic using a marketing mix strategy perspective. The researcher chose the ABA Mardi Putra Kindergarten as the research location on the grounds that this school is the oldest school in the city of Yogyakarta which has the largest number of students even during a pandemic. It is hoped that the results of this research can benefit kindergarten schools that have problems in maintaining their school's existence, not only during a pandemic. Apart from that, it can also be a reference for kindergarten schools to compete with other schools during normal times.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research uses a descriptive-qualitative method with a case study approach. The purpose of this study was to analyze the application of the marketing mix strategy at ABA Mardi Putra Kindergarten, Bantul. The source of the data in this study was obtained from the ABA Mardi Putra Kindergarten, which consisted of one school principal, a sample of four teachers, one school administrator and documents relating to the object of research. The techniques used to collect data in this study uses the Miles and Huberman technique which consists of data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. While the research instrument used is the variables in the marketing mix strategy (product, price, place, promotion, people, physical evidence, and process) which are adjusted to indicators of success in the field of education. More details will be presented in table 1 below.

Fadlilah¹ Machali² Na'imah³ Hibana⁴ Suyadi⁵ Azhari⁶

Marketing Mix With Continuous Development: A Survival Strategy of Kindergarten School

| No Variabl | Indicators |
|--------------|---|
| | indicators |
| 1 Product | 1. Various educational services. |
| | 2. The school's reputation is in the form of superior accreditation. |
| | 3. Qualified graduates (achieved all six aspects of early childhood |
| | development). |
| 2 Price | 1. Education costs adjust to the consumer economy. |
| | 2. The tuition fee packages vary. |
| | 3. Scholarships are available for local residents who can not afford |
| | it. |
| 3 place | 1. Strategic location, easy to reach, and easy access. |
| | 2. The atmosphere of the learning environment is conducive. |
| | 3. The location is close to public service places. |
| 4 Promotions | 1. Promotional activities are many and varied. |
| | 2. There are promotional activities in direct contact with consumers. |
| | 3. Wide promotional target market. |
| 5 People | 1. There is a selection process in recruitment. |
| | 2. There are special qualifications that must be held. |
| | 3. Clarity of roles and duties of each. |
| 6 Physical | 1. School layout design (aesthetic and functional). |
| Evidence | 2. Complete facilities / infrastructure. |
| | 3. Fulfill the principle of procurement of infrastructure. |
| 7 Process | 1. Learning planning activities. |
| | 2. The effectiveness of the implementation of walking learning. |
| | 3. Learning evaluation activities. |
| | 4. Efforts to supervise learning. |

RESULT AND ANALYSIS

The results of this study indicate that the implementation of the marketing mix strategy can help ABA Mardi Putra Kindergarten to maintain the number of students, so that it can maintain the survival of the school. The applied marketing mix strategy consists of product, price, place, promotion, people, physical evidence, and process. Each of these variables will be explained in more detail in the following sub-headings.

1.1 Products

Based on the results of observations, interviews and documentation, the researchers found that ABA Mardi Putra Kindergarten had met the indicators of successful implementation of the marketing mix strategy, especially on the product variable. Details will be presented in table 2 below.

| Variable | | Indicators | Fulfillment |
|----------|----|---|-------------|
| Product | a. | Various educational services | Yes |
| | b. | The school's reputation is in the form of superior accreditation | Yes |
| | c. | Qualified graduates (achieved all six aspects of early childhood development) | Yes |

| | 1 | | |
|------------------|--------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Table 2. Product | Variable Indicator | Fulfillment Data | of Marketing Mix |

Based on the data in table 2 above, information can be obtained that ABA Mardi Putra Kindergarten has fulfilled the indicators of successful implementation of the marketing mix strategy, especially in the product variable. ABA Mardi Putra Kindergarten provides a variety of educational services, has a good school reputation, and has quality graduates (achieved all six aspects of development) and has more expertise in memorizing and cultivating worship.

In the context of educational services, Minarti (2012) revealed that one of the criteria of a good school is being able to offer various types of educational services so that students can choose according to their needs. Thus, it can be seen that ABA Mardi Putra Kindergarten is classified as a good school because it is able to provide a variety of educational services, adjusting to consumer desires. Then, the reputation of an educational institution is also very important. This is because based on the results of research conducted by Harahap (2017) proves that the reputation of an educational institution has a major influence on students' interest in choosing an educational institution. Thus, if you want to attract students' interest, one way is to improve the reputation of a good school.

1.2 Prices

Based on the results of observations, interviews and documentation, the researchers found that ABA Mardi Putra Kindergarten had met the indicators of successful implementation of the marketing mix strategy especially on price variables. Details will be presented in table 3 below.

| Variable | | Indicators | Fulfillment | |
|----------|----|--|-------------|--|
| Price | a. | Education costs adjust to the consumer | Yes | |
| | | economy | | |
| | b. | The tuition fee packages vary | Yes | |
| | c. | Scholarships available | Yes | |

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Based on the data in table 3 above, information can be obtained that ABA Mardi Putra Kindergarten has fulfilled the indicators of successful implementation of the marketing mix strategy, especially on the variable price. The tuition fees applied to the ABA Mardi Putra Kindergarten vary depending on the type of class chosen. There are various types of classes that consumers can choose according to their needs and economic capabilities. These types of classes range from regular classes, superior classes, to full day classes. In addition, ABA Mardi Putra Kindergarten also provides scholarships for less fortunate local residents.

The cost of education factor has an influence on several aspects. Research Ermelinda Miss Sulce et al. (2022) proves that there is an effect of education costs on students' interest in choosing a school. Thus, with the offer of varied tuition fees and the availability of scholarships, it will certainly attract more students to choose the school. In addition, Togatorop (2017) also stated that there is a positive direct influence between education cost to the school's quality. Not only that, the cost of education also has a direct and indirect effect on the competency of graduates (Yayuk & Sugiyono, 2019). Therefore, the cost aspect is very important to note.

1.3 Places

Based on the results of observations, interviews and documentation, the researchers found that ABA Mardi Putra Kindergarten had met the indicators of successful implementation of the marketing mix strategy, especially on the place variable. Details will be presented in table 4 below.

| Variable | | Indicators | Fulfillment |
|----------|----|--|-------------|
| place | a. | Strategic location, easy to reach, and easy access | Yes |
| | b. | The atmosphere of the learning environment is conducive | Yes |
| | c. | The location is close to public service places | Yes |

Table 4. Place of Marketing Mix Variable Indicator Compliance Data

Based on the data in table 4 above, information can be obtained that ABA Mardi Putra Kindergarten has fulfilled the indicators of successful implementation of the marketing mix strategy, especially on the place variable. Based on the results of the observations made, the researchers saw that the location of the ABA Mardi Putra Kindergarten was classified as strategic, and not too crowded. The school is located in the center of Bantul City which makes it easy to reach various types of vehicles. The road access is also easy. This is an advantage, because the location factor has an influence on parents' decisions in choosing a school (Lukviarman, 2015). Thus, it can encourage parents to choose this school.

Even though it is located in the center of Bantul City, the atmosphere of ABA Mardi Putra Kindergarten is not very crowded, because it is not right on the edge of a major highway, but is still a little bit into the residential area. With an atmosphere that is not so crowded, it will help create a conducive learning atmosphere. By creating a conducive learning atmosphere, it will encourage students to study actively (Arianti, 2017). The learning atmosphere must be properly conditioned because it can affect student learning concentration (Novianti, 2019; Tambunan et al., 2020).

In addition, based on the results of the location map documentation, ABA Mardi Putra Kindergarten is also close to various important public service places such as the Bantul Regent's Office, Bantul BKAD, Bantul Bappeda, Bantul Police Office, Bantul City Square, Bantul Market, PMI Office, as well as various Bank. Being near various important places will certainly make it easier if you need services or have certain interests.

1.4 Promotions

Based on the results of observations, interviews and documentation, the researchers found that ABA Mardi Putra Kindergarten had fulfilled the indicators of successful implementation of the marketing mix strategy, especially on the promotion variable. Details will be presented in table 5 below.

| Variable | | Indicators | Fulfillment |
|------------|----|---|-------------|
| Promotions | a. | Promotional activities are many and varied | Yes |
| | b. | There are promotional activities in direct contact with consumers | Yes |
| | c. | The target market for promotion is wide | Yes |

 Table 5. Data on Compliance Indicator Variable Promotion of Marketing Mix

Based on the data in table 5 above, information can be obtained that ABA Mardi Putra Kindergarten has fulfilled the indicators of successful implementation of the marketing mix strategy, especially on the promotion variable. There are various kinds of promotional activities carried out by ABA Mardi Putra Kindergarten in marketing management, there are promotional activities in direct contact with consumers of educational services and online. In addition, this school has a wide target market.

ABA Mardi Putra Kindergarten carries out a lot of promotional activities, such as online and offline promotions, placing banners for new admissions, inviting local TV stations and journalists when holding major school activities, inviting the mayor to activities held by the school and posting pictures on the website. or the school's front banner, and willing to actively participate in an activity when asked to represent the City of Bantul and not back down, even though it sometimes takes a lot of time, effort, and money.

There are interesting things from ABA Mardi Putra Kindergarten in carrying out promotional activities. Even though it has become a large and well-known educational institution, it is still active in carrying out many promotions and is not ashamed to carry out various promotional activities. Promotion of educational services is important to do because it is proven to have a large influence on consumer interest in educational services (Lathipah, 2017). Thus, to attract consumer interest, promotional activities are very important to do.

1.5 People

Based on the results of observations, interviews and documentation, the researchers found that ABA Mardi Putra Kindergarten had met the indicators of successful implementation of the marketing mix strategy, especially on the people variable. Details will be presented in table 6 below.

| Variable | | Indicators | Fulfillment |
|----------|----|--|-------------|
| People | a. | There is a selection process in recruitment | Yes |
| | b. | There are special qualifications that must be held | Yes |
| | c. | Clarity of roles and duties of each | Yes |

Table 6. People of Marketing Mix Variable Indicator Fulfillment Data

Based on the data in table 6 above, information can be obtained that ABA Mardi Putra Kindergarten has fulfilled the indicators of successful implementation of the marketing mix strategy, especially on the people variable. ABA Mardi Putra Kindergarten carries out the process of recruiting teaching and educational staff, there are special qualifications that must be possessed by teaching and educational staff, and there is clarity of their respective roles and tasks.

The selection of school principals at ABA Mardi Putra Kindergarten was carried out in a highly organized manner through various stages of selection. At the beginning, the foundation has selected several candidates who are considered qualified as school principals. Then some of these candidates went through a selection consisting of psychological tests, interviews, and their managerial skills. The term of office for one period is four years. However, it continues to evaluate its performance. So that if deficiencies or errors are found that cannot be tolerated and no changes are made for the better, the principal will be removed from his position.

Teachers who teach at ABA Mardi Putra Kindergarten are required to have qualifications in the field of early childhood education. For teachers who do not have these qualifications it is recommended to return to college to take up early childhood education. Until now, out of a total of 19 teachers, there are only two teachers who do

not have these qualifications. This is because the teacher is old, and it is too burdensome to go back to education. Even so, teaching experience that has been carried out for many years can support the quality of the teacher. Even though the old teacher is a little behind in terms of technology, the old teacher has a high enthusiasm to continue learning things that are not yet capable of. Each teacher continues to strive to improve their performance. This is important to do because the quality of teacher performance affects motivation, interest, and student learning outcomes (Asmawati, 2017; Harnipa, 2016; Putro et al., 2013).

1.6 Physical Evidence

Based on the results of observations, interviews and documentation, the researchers found that ABA Mardi Putra Kindergarten had met the indicators of successful implementation of the marketing mix strategy, especially on the physical evidence variable. Details will be presented in table 7 below.

| Variable | | Indicators | Fulfillment |
|----------------------|----|---|-------------|
| Physical Evidence | a. | School layout design (aesthetic and functional) | Yes |
| | b. | Complete facilities / infrastructure | Yes |
| | c. | Meet the principle of procurement of infrastructure | Yes |

Table 7. Physical Evidence of Marketing Mix Indicator Compliance Data

Based on the data in table 7 above, information can be obtained that the ABA Mardi Putra Kindergarten has fulfilled the indicators of successful implementation of the marketing mix strategy, especially on the physical evidence variable. Based on the results of observations made by researchers, the school layout design both aesthetically and functionally is good. ABA Mardi Putra Kindergarten has completeness in terms of facilities and infrastructure. ABA Mardi Putra Kindergarten has also met the principles of procuring infrastructure facilities which consist of: 1) safe, clean, healthy, comfortable, and beautiful, 2) according to the level of child development, 3) utilizing the potential and resources in the surrounding environment, and objects suitable for use and does not endanger the health of children.

The facilities or infrastructure provided by the school have an influence on various aspects. Satria Lubis et al. (2020) proved in their research results that school facilities had a positive and significant effect on student decision making in determining school choices. Students will certainly be more interested in choosing a school that has more complete facilities. In addition, school facilities can also help improve student learning outcomes (Chayani & Januardi, 2019). Not only affecting students, school facilities have also been shown to have a positive and significant effect on teacher performance (Sahrul et al., 2022). Based on this explanation, it can be seen that the provision of facilities and infrastructure is one of the factors that really provides positive support for schools and can attract students' interest in choosing a school.

1.7 Process

Based on the results of observations, interviews and documentation, the researchers found that ABA Mardi Putra Kindergarten had met the indicators of successful implementation of the marketing mix strategy, especially on the process variable. Details will be presented in table 8 below.

| Variable | | Indicators | Fulfillment |
|----------|----|-------------------------------------|-------------|
| Process | a. | Learning planning activities. | Yes |
| | b. | The effectiveness of the | Yes |
| | | implementation of walking learning. | |
| | c. | Learning evaluation activities. | Yes |
| | d. | Efforts to supervise learning. | Yes |

Table 7. Process of Marketing Mix Variable Indicator Compliance Data

Based on the data in table 7 above, information can be obtained that the ABA Mardi Putra Kindergarten has fulfilled the indicators of successful implementation of the marketing mix strategy, especially on process variables. There are learning planning activities at ABA Mardi Putra Kindergarten, the implementation of learning is also running effectively, there are learning evaluation activities, and there are efforts to supervise learning.

Lesson planning activities are carried out by teachers with the same grade level once a week. In addition, there are also meetings held by all teachers and the school principal which are held once a month. Planning activities

Fadlilah¹ Machali² Na'imah³ Hibana⁴ Suyadi⁵ Azhari⁶

Marketing Mix With Continuous Development: A Survival Strategy of Kindergarten School

are important to do before learning. This is because lesson planning has an influence on improving the quality and quality of educators in teaching activities (Renna Apriliana, 2022).

The implementation of learning related to the learning model questions used is understood by each teacher. Then, teachers at ABA Mardi Putra also try to do stimulation to develop children's intelligence. In addition, the implementation of learning also runs effectively with adaptation efforts amid the Covid-19 pandemic. Learning is carried out online with the use of online learning applications. The assignment system is carried out by being taken by the guardians without students and has been changed to a drive thru system to reduce physical contact between teachers and guardians. Teachers and parents can work well together in supporting the learning process even though conditions are in the midst of a pandemic and cannot run normally as usual.

Learning evaluation activities are carried out before carrying out the next planning meeting. The evaluation activities are carried out by teachers with the same grade level once a week. Each mutually evaluates the work of each teacher. In addition, there are also meetings held by all teachers and the school principal which are held once a month. Learning evaluation is able to have a very large influence on students' motivation in learning (Tsawab et al., 2020). In addition, learning evaluation also influences student learning outcomes (Mahrita & Saidah Tunnoor, 2022). After the evaluation stage, efforts to supervise learning are also carried out by the school principal. In carrying out his duties as a school principal, he continues to supervise the performance of each teacher. Reprimands will be given to teachers who carry out inappropriate assignments. The goal is to make improvements, so that mistakes will not be repeated and continue.

As the explanation of some of the subtitles above, seven variables in the marketing mix strategy have been used to analyze the marketing strategy implemented at ABA Mardi Putra Kindergarten. The seven variables have been implemented properly. There is one important conclusion that researchers found from the results of this study. ABA Mardi Putra Kindergarten continues to make efforts to develop each of these variables, continuously and sustainably. This school is not easily satisfied. Even though the school is large and there are always many students, the seven marketing mix variables continue to be developed and promoted. So that the consistency and existence of the school is maintained.

CONCLUSION

The results of this study found that ABA Mardi Putra Kindergarten, Bantul did marketing with a marketing mix strategy with sustainable development efforts for each variable. The product variable is implemented by providing a variety of educational services, having a good school reputation, and quality graduates. Variable price, carried out by providing various educational costs and scholarships for less fortunate local residents. Place variable, can be seen by the location of the school which is classified as strategic, and not so crowded. The school is located in the center of Bantul City which makes it easy to reach various types of vehicles and easy road access. Variables Promotion is carried out by holding promotional activities in direct contact with consumers of education and online services, and has a wide target market. The people variable is realized by carrying out the process of recruiting teaching and educational staff, there are special qualifications that must be possessed by teaching and educational staff, namely early childhood education, and there is clarity of roles and tasks for each. The physical evidence variable can be seen in the school layout design both aesthetically and functionally which is already good, as well as facilities and infrastructure that are complete and meet the principles of procuring infrastructure facilities. The process variable is applied by carrying out planning activities, implementing evaluations, as well as efforts to monitor learning.

Suggestions that researchers can give kindergarten schools to implement a marketing mix strategy with sustainable development. Both schools that currently have problems with students or not. Because the existence of the school must be maintained in any situation. Especially during the pandemic which caused a decline in interest in early childhood schooling and seriously threatened the survival of schools. So that with the implementation of this marketing mix strategy it is hoped that it can maintain the existence of the school in any condition.

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Marketing Mix With Continuous Development: A Survival Strategy of Kindergarten School

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