

The Effect of Marketing Mix on Student Decision to Choose a Private University

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Abstrak - The purpose of this study was to examine and analyze the influence of the marketing mix elements which include product, price, place, promotion, people, process, and physical evidence on students' decisions to choose one of the private university campuses in Tangerang. This research uses primary data through a survey of 245 active students at the university concerned with the even semester of the 2022/2023 academic year. The collected data were processed and analyzed using SmartPLS software. The results of this study indicate that the seven factors of the marketing mix (marketing mix) have a positive and significant effect on the student's decision to choose to study at their current campus. An in-depth analysis of the managerial and social implications of the results of this study is discussed further in the body of this article.

Keywords: Product, price, place, promotion, people, process, physical evidence, students' decisions

INTRODUCTION

The tertiary institution is the highest level of education in the education system both in Indonesia and in other countries which is a continuation of basic, junior high, and senior high school education so that students have high competence to be ready and successful in taking on jobs in the future (Nuryanti et al., 2020; Agus Purwanto, Pramono, et al., 2020). In Indonesia there are two forms of tertiary institutions, the first is State Universities, the second is Private Universities. A state university is a tertiary institution established and/or organized by the government, while a private university is a tertiary institution established and/or organized by individuals or foundations. According to Law No. 12 of 2012 concerning Higher Education, private tertiary institutions are tertiary institutions that are established and/or organized by the community by establishing non-profit legal entity organizing bodies, for example, foundations. The difference with public universities, private universities are not established by the government or the state. Private tertiary institutions can take the form of academies, Polytechnics, Colleges, institutes, or Universities (Sudiyono et al., 2020; Yuwono et al., 2020).

Marketing is an activity that occurs everywhere (Mihic et al., 2013). Formally or informally, a person and or organization is involved in a large number of marketing activities. Marketing influences our lives every day and is embedded in everything we do, from the clothes we wear to the websites we click, to the advertisements we see. According to Groening et al. (2018), marketing is a social and managerial process by which individuals or organizations obtain what they need and want through creating and exchanging value with others.

According to Kotler & Keller (2009), there are several service characteristics, including (1) Intangibility. Services cannot be seen, touched, tasted, heard, stored, or smelled before they are purchased. The importance of this is the intangible value that consumers experience in the form of enjoyment, satisfaction, or convenience. (2) Unstorability (cannot be stored). Services do not know the inventory or storage of products that have been produced. This characteristic is also called inseparability, considering that services are generally produced and consumed simultaneously. (3) Customization. Services are often specifically designed to meet customer needs,

for example in insurance and health services. Then, Kotler & Keller (2009) suggested that there are four service characteristics, namely as follows: (1) Intangibility. Services are intangible, and cannot be seen, tasted, felt, and heard before they are bought. (2) Inseparability. Goods are usually produced by producers, then sold and consumed by consumers. (3) Variability (diversity). Services are very diverse/varied, both in terms of form, quality, and type of services produced. (4) Perishability (can not last long). Services are perishable commodities, so they cannot be stored for sale or use at a later date (Akinnusi et al., 2017; Alserhan, 2017; Wang et al., 2020).

Service is an invisible performance or action from one party to another. In general, services are produced and consumed simultaneously, where the interaction between service providers and service recipients affects the results of these services. According to Kotler & Keller (2009), services are activities or benefits offered to other parties which are basically intangible and do not result in any ownership. The marketing mix is the controllable set of tactical marketing tools that a company blends to produce the response it wants in the target market. The marketing mix consists of everything a company can do to influence the demand for its product. Still, according to Kotler & Keller (2009), the elements in the service marketing mix (marketing mix services) consist of: (1) The product is the overall concept of objects or processes that provide various values for customers. What needs to be considered is not only the physical but also the benefits and value of the product. Particularly in service products, there is no known transfer of ownership from service providers to consumers. (2) Price. Pricing strategy is very significant in determining value for the customer and plays an important role in the formation of the image for the service and consumer buying decisions. (3) Promotion is one of the determining factors for the success of marketing programs.

The promotion element in the service marketing mix forms an important role in helping to communicate the positioning of services to customers. According to Kotler & Keller (2009), promotion is an activity/activity to convey the benefits of a product and persuade customers to buy it. An important thing to consider in promotion is the selection of a promotion mix consisting of advertising, personal selling, sales promotion, public relations, use of letters, telephone, fax, e-mail, or the internet to communicate directly with customers (direct & online marketing) (Hossain et al., 2020). (4) Location (place). Location (associated with the delivery system) in services is a combination of location and distribution channel decisions. Location relates to where the company must be headquartered and carry out operations or activities, the following are three types of interactions that affect location: among others: a) Consumers come to service providers (companies), b) Service providers come to consumers and c) Service providers and consumers do not meet directly. (5) Process: A combination of all activities consisting of procedures, work schedules, mechanisms, activities, and routine matters, where services are produced and delivered to consumers. The process can be divided into two ways: (1) Complexity, related to the steps and stages in the process, and (2) Diversity, related to changes in the steps or stages of the process. (6) people. In service marketing, people function as service providers and greatly influence the quality of services provided. Decisions in the "people" factor relate to the selection, training, motivation, and management of human resources. (7) Physical Evidence. According to Kotler & Keller (2009), supporting facilities are part of service marketing which has quite an important role. Because services delivered to customers require supporting facilities in delivery. With the existence of physical supporting facilities, the service will be understood by customers. Magnificent buildings with air-conditioning facilities, sophisticated telecommunications equipment or quality office furniture, and others are considered by customers in choosing a product/service.

According to Khatib et al. (2019), "The marketing mix of educational services are elements of educational organizations that can be controlled by organizations in communicating with students and will be used to satisfy students. The elements of the marketing mix of educational services are described as follows. (1) Products. Khatib et al., (2019) state that in higher education services, the products/services offered to students are a good reputation/quality of education, bright prospects for students after graduating from college, and concentration options that vary according to talents and interests. The reputation and prospects of higher education such as producing graduates who have good competence and can be easily accepted into the world of work. (2) Price. According to Barusman (2019), prices for higher education services are strongly influenced by the quality of the products offered. If product quality is high, then potential customers are willing to pay more, as long as it is within their affordability. In this case, price is all costs incurred by students to obtain educational services offered by a tertiary institution. Matters that need to be considered in setting prices at tertiary institutions include tuition fees, development costs and laboratory costs, scholarships, payment procedures and installment terms (Ivy, 2008). (3) Place. According to Kotler & Keller (2009), "a strategic location and easily accessible by public transportation

will be an attraction for prospective students. The location of universities can also be reached virtually, namely via the internet with the availability of a university's website. Whereas Khatab et al., (2019) stated that determining the location of a college will influence the preferences of prospective customers in making choices. Tertiary institutions need to consider the environment in which the location is located (near the city center or housing, parking conditions, a conducive learning environment) and transportation (ease of transportation facilities and access to tertiary institutions). (4) Promotions. Kotler & Keller (2009) states that the marketing communication mix consists of eight main communication models, namely (1) advertising, (2) sales promotion, events, and experiences, (4) public relations and publicity, (5) direct marketing, (6) word of mouth marketing, (7) personal selling. According to Kotler & Keller (2009) "in higher education services, promotions that can be carried out are advertising (such as TV, radio, spot and billboard advertisements), sales promotions (such as exhibitions and invitations), making direct contact with prospective students, and conducting public relations activities". (5) People. According to Khatab et al., (2019), "people in services are people who are directly involved in carrying out all company activities, and are factors that play an important role for all organizations." In relation to tertiary institutions, human resources include administrators, lecturers, and employees. They need to have high competence because they directly deliver services to students so the level of satisfaction of students depends on how the services are delivered. (6) Process. This process can be seen from two main aspects, namely (1) the dimensions of the quality of administrative services (namely reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy), (2) the dimensions of the quality of lecture services (namely processes/mechanisms and quality of services/lectures) (Gajic, 2012). Whereas Khatab et al., (2019) stated that "a process is a combination of all activities, generally consisting of procedures, work schedules, mechanisms, activities and routine matters, where services are produced and delivered to consumers". In real educational activities, the process is a procedure, mechanism, and a series of activities to deliver services from producers to consumers. In educational institutions, the process is a series of activities that students experience while in education, such as the teaching and learning process, the thesis guidance process, the examination process, the graduation process, and so on. (7) Physical evidence. According to Khatab et al., (2019), "In the process of delivering educational services to students, what universities must pay attention to is the style of the building (suitability between aesthetics and functionality as an educational institution) and supporting facilities (completeness of educational facilities, worship, sports, and security)".

Consumer behavior in making purchases is certainly different. The more complex the decisions to be made, the more parties involved and the more considerations needed. According to Khatab et al., (2019), purchasing decisions are a process in which consumers recognize the problem, seek information about a particular product or brand and evaluate how well each of these alternatives can solve the problem, which then leads to a purchase decision. According to Khatab et al., (2019), purchasing decisions are "the process of formulating various alternative actions to make a choice on one particular alternative to make a purchase". Meanwhile, Kotler & Keller (2009) distinguished types of buying behavior based on the level of buyer involvement, namely (a) complex buying behavior, (b) dissonance-reducing buying behavior, (c) habitual buying behavior, (d) variation-seeking buying behavior.

According to Kotler & Keller (2009), the stages of the consumer purchasing decision process are as follows: First: Recognition of Needs. The stage where the consumer recognizes a problem or need. Needs can be triggered by internal stimuli, such as hunger or thirst, and external stimuli, such as stimuli offered by marketing in the form of a marketing mix. Second: Information Search, The stage where consumers search for more in-depth information related to the needs that will be fulfilled. The main sources of information that consumers refer to and the relative influence of each of these sources on subsequent purchasing decisions. These consumer information sources can be classified into the following four groups: (a) Personal sources. Family, friends, neighbors, acquaintances; (b) Commercial sources. Advertising, salespeople, dealers, packaging, store displays; (c) Public sources. Mass media, consumer rating organizations; (d) Source of experience. Handling, Assessing, and using the product. Third: Alternative Evaluation. The stage is when the consumer uses the information obtained to evaluate various alternative brands into a certain ranking of priority choices. Fourth: Purchase Decision. The stage where consumers form preferences for brands in the selection set and decide to make purchases of the most preferred or most appropriate brand or product. In carrying out purchase intentions, consumers can make five sub-purchase decisions, namely: brand decisions (brand A), and purchasing channel decisions (dealer 2). Quantity decision (1 computer), purchase plan decision (weekend), and payment method decision (credit card). Fifth: Post-Purchase Behavior. The stage when the consumer takes further action after making a purchase, based on

satisfaction or dissatisfaction. If the product does not meet expectations, the consumer is dissatisfied; if it meets expectations, consumers are satisfied; if it exceeds expectations, consumers will feel very satisfied, and are expected to make repeat purchases.

In the era of globalization that occurs in all aspects of life, it also results in very competitive competition in the world of educational services. Universities compete with each other and try to use all their potential and abilities to attract prospective students. In today's era, prospective students can choose many educational alternatives, universities that have a good educational model and provide job prospects after graduating from college are the ones they will choose. By looking at this development, universities, especially private universities, must develop an effective marketing strategy to win the competition so that there will be a lot of students entering higher education because this intense competition has an impact on fluctuating the number of new students at private universities from year to year. In this digital era, it is inevitable that the quality of an educational institution is also influenced by the perceptions of consumers and potential customers. These perception factors can be referred to following the Marketing Mix theory which mentions several factors, namely: product, price, place, promotion, people, process, and physical evidence. Therefore, it is considered necessary and important to know the extent to which customers' perceptions, namely university students, of the quality of the campus where they currently study. The hope is that campus management can make the results of this study part of the basis for planning for the development of higher education institutions in the future.

Furthermore, the authors propose several research hypotheses related to what is described above, namely:

- H1: Product (P1) has a significant effect on the decision to choose a tertiary institution (MK)
- H2: Price (P2) has a significant effect on the decision to choose a tertiary institution (MK)
- H3: Place (P3) has a significant effect on the decision to choose a tertiary institution (MK)
- H4: Promotion (P4) has a significant effect on the decision to choose a tertiary institution (MK)
- H5: Process (P5) has a significant effect on the decision to choose a tertiary institution (MK)
- H6: People (P6) has a significant effect on the decision to choose a tertiary institution (MK)
- H7: Physical evidence (P7) has a significant effect on the decision to choose a tertiary institution (MK)

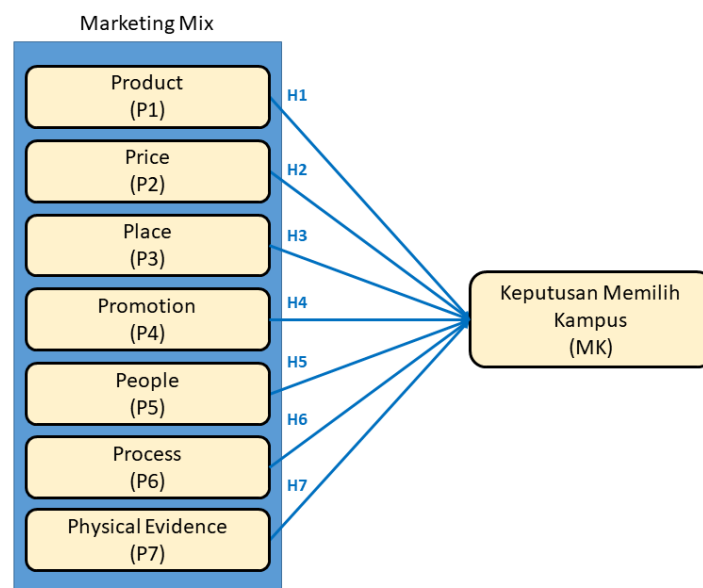


Figure 1. Research Model

RESEARCH METHOD

The research method that the author will use is descriptive analysis with a quantitative approach. According to Sugiyono (2012), "The descriptive analysis method is a method used to analyze data by describing or describing the data that has been collected as it is. According to Sekaran & Bougie (1993), "Descriptive studies are conducted to find out and be able to explain the characteristics of the variables studied in a situation". There are two variables in this study, namely: First, the dependent variable or dependent variable, which is a variable whose value is influenced by the independent variable. The dependent variable is often called the response variable which is denoted by the letter Y. The dependent variable in this study is the purchase decision (campus selection). Second, the Independent Variable or independent variable, namely the variable that is the cause (influenced) of the dependent variable (the dependent variable). Independent variables are often called predictors which are denoted by the letter X. The independent variables in this research are product (X1), price (X2), place (X3), promotion (X4), people (X5), process (X6) and physical evidence (X7).

The population in this study were active students at a private university in Tangerang in the even semester of the 2022/2023 academic year. Students are asked to voluntarily fill out a questionnaire containing statements about demographics, marketing mix, and the decision to choose a college. The questionnaire contains the names of the respondents on the back which are only used for identification and matching purposes. All research constructs were measured on a five-point Likert scale. All measurement items were adapted from Pratomo's research (2022). This scale has 30 items measuring all research variables.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

In total, there were 245 student respondents who participated, consisting of women (78%) and men (22%). The measurement model testing phase includes convergent validity testing and discriminant validity. Meanwhile, to test construct reliability, Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability were used. The results of the PLS analysis can be used to test the research hypothesis if all indicators in the PLS model meet the requirements of convergent validity, discriminant validity, and reliability testing. The convergent validity test is carried out by looking at the loading factor value of each indicator against the construct. In most references, a factor weight of 0.7 or more is considered to have strong enough validation to explain latent constructs (Chin W, 1998; Flury et al., 1988; Imam Ghozali, 2017). In this study, the minimum limit for the size of the loading factor received is 0.7, and with the condition that the AVE value of each construct is > 0.5 (Imam Ghozali, 2017). After going through SmartPLS 3.0 processing, all indicators have a loading factor value above 0.7 and an AVE value above 0.5. The fit or valid model of this study can be seen in Table 1. Thus, the convergent validity of this research model meets the requirements (A Purwanto, Asbari, et al., 2020a, 2020b; Agus Purwanto, Asbari, et al., 2020; Agus Purwanto et al., 2021b, 2021a). The full loadings, Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability, and AVE values for each construct can be seen in Table 1.

Discriminant validity is carried out to ensure that each concept of each latent variable is different from other latent variables. The model has good discriminant validity if the AVE squared value of each exogenous construct (value on the diagonal) exceeds the correlation between that construct and other constructs (value below the diagonal) (Imam Ghozali, 2017). The results of discriminant validity testing are by using the squared AVE value, namely by looking at the Fornell-Larcker Criterion Value obtained as shown in Table 2. The results of the discriminant validity test in Table 2 shows that all constructs have an AVE square root value above the correlation value with other latent constructs (via Fornell-Larcker criteria). Likewise, the cross-loading value of all items from an indicator is greater than the other indicator items as mentioned in Table 2, so it can be concluded that the model meets discriminant validity (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

Furthermore, a collinearity evaluation is carried out to determine whether there is a collinearity problem in the model. To find the collinearity, VIF collinearity statistics are needed for each construct. If VIF is greater than 5, then the model has collinearity (Hair et al., 2014). As shown in Table 3, all VIF scores are less than 5, that is, the results of the collinearity structural model reveal VIF values below 5. This indicates that this research model has no multicollinearity problem.

Construct reliability can be assessed from Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability of each construct. The recommended composite reliability and Cronbach's alpha values are more than 0.7 (Imam Ghozali, 2017). The results of the reliability test in Table 1 show that all constructs have composite reliability and Cronbach's alpha values greater than 0.7 (> 0.7). In conclusion, all constructs have met the required reliability.

Table 1. Items Loadings, Cronbach’s Alpha, Composite Reliability, and Average Variance Extracted (AVE)

Variables	Cronbach’s Alpha	Rho_A	Composite Reliability	AVE
P1	0.892	0.894	0.933	0.823
P2	0.912	0.916	0.945	0.851
P3	0.832	0.894	0.891	0.679
P4	0.845	0.865	0.896	0.686
P5	0.852	0.872	0.910	0.771
P6	0.974	0.975	0.983	0.951
P7	0.955	0.958	0.965	0.848
MK	0.963	0.966	0.972	0.873

Source: SmartPLS Processing Results 3.0 (2023)

Table 2. Discriminant Validity

Variables	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	MK
P1	0.907							
P2	0.862	0.922						
P3	0.902	0.869	0.824					
P4	0.765	0.713	0.788	0.828				
P5	0.806	0.754	0.820	0.854	0.878			
P6	0.830	0.742	0.802	0.741	0.887	0.975		
P7	0.885	0.802	0.859	0.772	0.858	0.906	0.921	
MK	0.828	0.754	0.814	0.769	0.943	0.979	0.903	0.934

Source: SmartPLS Processing Results 3.0 (2023)

Table 3. Collinearity (VIF)

Variables	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	MK
P1								4.23
P2								5
P3								2.035
P4								3.335
P5								2.271

P5	3.265
P6	1.130
P7	2.234
MK	

Source: SmartPLS Processing Results 3.0 (2023)

Table 4. R Square Value

Variables	R Square	R Square Adjusted
MK	0.788	0.786

Source: SmartPLS Processing Results 3.0 (2023)

Table 5. Hypotheses Testing

Hypotheses	Relationship	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values	Decision
H1	P1 -> MK	0.457	0.466	0.081	5.644	0.000	Didukung
H2	P2 -> MK	0.881	0.883	0.018	49.746	0.000	Didukung
H3	P3 -> MK	0.459	0.450	0.081	5.662	0.000	Didukung
H4	P4 -> MK	0.404	0.397	0.071	5.715	0.000	Didukung
H5	P5 -> MK	0.556	0.557	0.022	25.222	0.000	Didukung
H6	P6 -> MK	0.296	0.292	0.052	5.653	0.000	Didukung
H7	P7 -> MK	0.531	0.525	0.094	5.660	0.000	Didukung

Source: SmartPLS Processing Results 3.0 (2023)

Hypothesis testing in PLS is also known as the inner model test. This test includes a significance test of direct and indirect effects as well as a measurement of the magnitude of the influence of exogenous variables on endogenous variables. To find out the influence of the marketing mix on the decision of students to choose a university, a direct effect test is needed. The influence test was carried out using the t-statistic test in the partial least squared (PLS) analysis model using SmartPLS 3.0 software. With the bootstrapping technique, the R Square value and significance test values were obtained as Table 4 and Table 5. The result is that all hypotheses (H1, H2, H3, H4, H5, H6, H7) are supported.

Discussion

The increasing importance of the influence of the variables of the marketing mix for tertiary management has prompted the authors to correlate the influences between these factors. There is a consistent gap in the literature about what influences a college student's decision to choose a campus. The current study investigates the seven factors of the marketing mix in their influence on the decision to choose a college. The author found that the product, price, place, promotion, people, process, and physical evidence variables influenced the student's decision to choose a college. This finding is in line with previous studies which found a direct positive relationship between the marketing mix and purchasing decisions research conducted by Arifin et al., (2020); Gajic, (2012); Indrayani & Pardiyono, (2019); Safitri Amelia et al., (2019); Wulandari, (2020). The results of this study reinforce the idea that

marketing mix factors such as product, price, place, promotion, people, process, and physical evidence have a stronger influence on student behavior in choosing a college. However, this study differs from the findings of several researchers such as Arifin et al., (2020) and Indrayani & Pardiyono, (2019), which state that physical evidence factors do not have a significant effect on the decision to choose a tertiary institution. Likewise, research (Arifin et al., 2020; Hossain et al., 2020) states that place, promotion, and physical evidence have no significant effect on the decision to choose a tertiary institution.

CONCLUSION

The research findings contribute to the existing literature in the following ways. First, the findings of this study can help advance knowledge about the effect of factors in the marketing mix on student behavior in deciding to choose a college. The findings justify the relevance of the analysis to investigate the behavior of active students from a holistic perspective, and the authors find that the behavior of these students in choosing the reasons why they decide to choose a college is the result of the interaction of individual factors and organizational factors of the college concerned.

Second, apart from theoretical contributions, this study offers practical implications for higher education management. The findings of this study indicate that student behavior in choosing a tertiary institution does not appear if campus management does not focus on developing processes and demonstrating the results of teaching and learning activities in tertiary institutions. The managerial implications in this study are determined by interpreting the results of the influence analysis. The marketing mix variables that have a significant total influence on the decision to choose are the variables that are prioritized for use in developing strategies, namely product, price, place, promotion, people, process, and physical evidence.

Based on this study, further research is expected to complement this study, among others by using a sample of prospective students who have registered or are new. This can better describe the conditions when students make decisions in choosing educational services in tertiary institutions. In addition, future research can use other variables deemed appropriate to determine the choice of higher education services such as ethnic differences, the origin of the prospective student's high school, and parents' income. It can also be developed by deepening the variables using other indicators.

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