

Strategies for Achieving Competitive Advantage in Transformative Islamic Education

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to identify and analyze the strategy for creating a competitive advantage in the transformative Islamic education service industry at MAN 1 Jombang. Transformative Islamic education is an educational approach that focuses on developing students' character, morals and spirituality to achieve positive transformation in themselves. As an Islamic education institution, MAN 1 Jombang has adopted this approach and strives to attract prospective and retain existing students. This study used qualitative methods with data collection techniques in the form of interviews, observation and document analysis. The results showed that MAN 1 Jombang had implemented several strategies to create a practical competitive advantage, namely: 1) the establishment of a positive image of the institution, 2) improving the quality of education, 3) promotion through social media, and active involvement with the local community. Competitive advantage focuses on the many students who register and are enrolled and the positive changes students can achieve regarding human resource quality, character, and spirituality.

Keywords: *competitive advantage, transformative islamic education, educational quality improvement.*

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INTRODUCTION

The Industrial Revolution 4.0 encourages drastic changes in various fields of life. In the world of science, people are required to make changes to keep up with the times. The role of knowledge is vital for every society that wants to improve its ability to keep up with competitive competition in a multi-dimensional crisis.¹ Education is a strategic tool to improve human life.² Through Education, humans become intelligent, have abilities, and have good attitudes to life so that they can get along well in society.³ Education is an investment that provides personal social benefits that make the nation dignified. Its individuals become individuals who have degrees.⁴

Educational institutions are places to produce educational services, and the primary consumers are students or students.⁵ If producers are unable to market their products because of several things, including the quality of the product is not liked by the community, does not provide added value, or the service is not satisfactory, then the products offered will not sell, so the school is closed due to the inability of the managers.⁶ Advertising and promotion in business and marketing is not to deceive the public, but to educate and convince the public to the truth and believe that the school is of high quality.^{7,8}

In profit-oriented organizations, marketing has a different function from marketing in non-profit-oriented educational institutions. The difference lies in how the organization obtains the financial resources needed to carry out various company operating activities, obtaining its first capital from investors or shareholders. The company's operational funds are obtained from selling products produced if the company has been operating. Conversely, non-profit organizations (schools) obtain funds from donations from donors or parent institutions that do not expect anything in return from the organization.⁹

¹ et.al Monovatra Predy Rezky, Joko Sutarto, "Generasi Milenial Yang Siap Menghadapi Era Revolusi Digital (Society 5.0 Dan Revolusi Industri 4.0) Di Bidang Pendidikan Melalui Pengembangan Sumber Daya Manusia | Prosiding Seminar Nasional Pascasarjana (PROSNAMPAS)," *Prosiding Seminar Nasional Pascasarjana UNNES*, no. 2686–6404 (2019).

² Nia Yunia Sari, "Pendidikan Dalam Pemikiran Ibnu Khuldun Dan Kh Ahmad Dahlan (Sebagai Refleksi Sistem Pendidikan Islam Indonesia Di Era Perkembangan)," *Tarbawi Ngabar: Jurnal of Education* 1, no. 02 (July 31, 2020): 114–32, <https://doi.org/10.55380/tarbawi.v1i02.58>.

³ Murtasyadatul Laili and Moch. Sya'roni Hasan, "Konsep Pendidikan Islam Dalam Pembentukan Pribadi Kafah Menurut Ibnu Athaillah," *Urwatul Wutsqo: Jurnal Studi Kependidikan Dan Keislaman* 11, no. 2 (October 1, 2022): 217–35, <https://doi.org/10.54437/urwatulwutsqo.v11i2.597>.

⁴ Dina Oktaviana, Ahmad Barizi, and Mohamad Zubad Nurul Yaqin, "The Challenges of The Society 5.0 Era: The Evaluation of Learning in Primary Education," *Al-Adzka: Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan Guru Madrasah Ibtidaiyah* 12, no. 1 (June 30, 2022): 10, <https://doi.org/10.18592/aladzkapgmi.v12i1.5831>.

⁵ M. Rizal Fuadiy and Ahmad Fahrur Rizal, "Strategi Madrasah Tsanawiyah Sabilil Muttaqin Badas Kediri Dalam Mewujudkan Visi Dan Misi Madrasah," *DIMAR: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 4, no. 2 (June 14, 2023): 281–97, <https://doi.org/10.58577/dimar.v4i2.84>.

⁶ M. Asep Fathur Rozi, Ahmad Sunoko, and Elis Eliana, "Penerapan Variasi Metode Pembelajaran Pada Pelaksanaan Pembelajaran Aksara Dasar Pegon," *DIMAR: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 3, no. 1 (December 1, 2021): 145–58, <https://doi.org/10.58577/dimar.v3i1.72>.

⁷ Viethzal Rivai, *Manajemen Corpraten Dan Strategi Pemasaran Jasa Pendidikan*, Bandung: Alfabeta, 2004.

⁸ Fuadiy and Rizal, "Strategi Madrasah Tsanawiyah Sabilil Muttaqin Badas Kediri Dalam Mewujudkan Visi Dan Misi Madrasah."

⁹ Muhammad Iqbal, "Pemasaran Jasa Pendidikan Dan Implementasinya Sebagai Strategi Pengembangan Pendidikan Di SMP Muhammadiyah 1 Depok Sleman Yogyakarta," *MANAGERIA: Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan Islam* 4, no. 1 (2019), <https://doi.org/10.14421/manageria.2019.41-08>.

For educational institutions, marketing is necessary and must be done by every school to introduce and promote several new prospective students. As a non-profit institution engaged in educational services, for any level, it is necessary to convince the customer community (students, parents, and other related parties) that educational institutions still exist. Second, it must convince the community and customers that educational services are relevant to their needs. Third, it is necessary to carry out marketing activities so that the types and kinds of education can be widely recognized and understood by the community. Fourth, so that the wider community and potential customers do not abandon the existence of educational institutions.¹⁰

Marketing activities are not just business activities so that educational institutions get students, but also an increase in the quality of education as a form of responsibility to the broader community. Educational institutions must constantly revitalize their strategies to ensure the suitability of environmental and competitive demands with their internal strengths. Marketing strategies are designed to increase consumer opportunities so that they have optimistic assumptions and feelings towards specific products, services, and brands will try these products, services or brands because the strategy is a broad and integrated unit that connects the internal strengths of the organization to take advantage of and external.¹¹

To develop a competitive marketing strategy, marketers need to know which consumers are likely to buy their products, what factors are likely to cause them to like the product, what criteria are used in deciding to buy the product, how they obtain information about the product and so on.¹² The level of competition between schools these days is getting tighter. This is undoubtedly a positive signal for schools in improving the quality of education. Of course, this can be proven by the very creative efforts made by education providers to explore the uniqueness and excellence of schools so that they are needed and demanded by the community. The birth of public and private schools that offer various advantages of facilities and exciting learning programs, even at a very affordable cost, is very influential on the rise of educational competition.¹³

An institution that wants to be successful for the future in facing competition in this millennial era must practice marketing continuously in order to get the desired number of students, because increasing or prospective students who enter can raise a positive image of an institution in the community. For the success of an institution in the long term, the

¹⁰ Bunga Dwimala and Maimunah Maimunah, "Analisis Bauran Pemasaran Untuk Mempengaruhi Permintaan Pasar Dalam Memilih TK," *Studia Manageria* 2, no. 2 (January 1, 1970): 165–82, <https://doi.org/10.19109/studiamanageria.v2i2.4160>.

¹¹ Muhammad Yusuf Saleh and Miah Said, *Konsep Dan Strategi Pemasaran: Marketing Concepts and Strategies*, CV Sah Media, 2018.

¹² Adri Efferi, "DINAMIKA PERSAINGAN ANTAR LEMBAGA PENDIDIKAN," *Journal of Empirical Research in Islamic Education* 2, No 1 (2 (2017).

¹³ Eldi Kustian, Omon Abdurakhman, and Willis Firmansyah, "STRATEGI PEMASARAN JASA PENDIDIKAN DALAM MENINGKATKAN KUANTITAS SISWA," *TADBIR MUWAHHID* 2, no. 2 (October 31, 2018): 87, <https://doi.org/10.30997/jtm.v2i2.1176>.

institution must create services that satisfy the 'need and want' of its customers.¹⁴ Based on this phenomenon, several problems were formulated, namely how market segmentation as a marketing strategy for educational services in educational institutions and how the implementation of service marketing strategies in educational institutions with the application of the education marketing mix.

METHOD

This type of research is *field research*, which takes the object of research MAN 1 Jombang. At the same time, the approach used is qualitative. Qualitative research is research conducted to understand the phenomenon of what is experienced by the research subject, for example, behaviour, perception, motivation, action, etc., thoroughly and with a description in the form of words and language in a unique natural context by utilizing various natural methods.¹⁵ Researchers chose this type of field research with a qualitative approach because the data that will be needed by researchers in the form of interviews and observations of phenomena in the field. The primary purpose of research is to get data.¹⁶ In qualitative research, data collection techniques go through the following stages: Observation, interviews, and documentation.¹⁷

Researchers – in this study, used the Miles and Huberman interactive analysis model, which includes:¹⁸ 1) reducing data: the more researchers go to the field, the more data will be obtained; for this reason, it is necessary to reduce data as an analysis process in a study. The more data is obtained in the field, the more the researcher must sort out the data to be included in the study because all data may be wrong; therefore, before analyzing the data, the researcher should reduce the data first. 2) presenting data: In qualitative research, data can be presented as narrative text. This is most often done in qualitative research. 3) Conclusion: Concluding is the final stage of data analysis techniques.

DISCUSSION

Marketing Strategy for Islamic Education Services

According to Peter and Olson, marketing strategies are designed to increase the chances that consumers who have positive assumptions and feelings about certain products, services and brands will try these products, services or brands.¹⁹ In this paper, we will explore various marketing strategies that can be applied to Islamic education services. To develop a competitive marketing strategy, marketers need to know which consumers

¹⁴ Irwan Fathurrochman et al., "Strategi Pemasaran Jasa Pendidikan Dalam Meningkatkan Nilai Jual Madrasah Aliyah Riyadus Sholihin Musirawas," *Jurnal Isema: Islamic Educational Management* 6, no. 1 (June 30, 2021): 1–12, <https://doi.org/10.15575/isema.v6i1.9471>.

¹⁵ Lexy. J. Moleong, *Metodologi Penelitian Kualitatif* (Bandung: Remaja Rosdakarya, 2018).

¹⁶ Sugiyono, "Sugiyono, Metode Penelitian Pendidikan Pendekatan Kuantitatif, Kualitatif, Dan R&D (Bandung: Alfabeta, 2013), Hlm. 3 . 1," *Metode Penelitian 2013* (2013).

¹⁷ Agus Maimun, *Penelitian Studi Kasus Bidang Pendidikan Islam* (Malang, 2020), <http://repository.uin-malang.ac.id/6115/>.

¹⁸ Emzir, "Metodologi Penelitian Kualitatif Analisis Data," *Jakarta: Raja Grafindo*, 2012.

¹⁹ Meithiana Indrasari, "Pemasaran Dan Kepuasan Pelanggan: Pemasaran Dan Kepuasan Pelanggan - - Google Books," *Unitomo Press*, 2019.

tend to buy their products, what factors are likely to cause them to like the product, what criteria are used in deciding to buy a product, how they obtain information about the product and so on.²⁰

Strategy is seen as a program that includes goals to be achieved accompanied by specific actions or steps to achieve these goals to respond to the environment.²¹ Experts put forward different definitions in their presentation and emphasis. However, all of them have almost the same meaning between one another. Here are some definitions of marketing. According to The American Marketing Association states: "*Marketing is the planning and executing the conception, pricing, promotion and distribution of ideas, goods and services to create exchanges that satisfy individual and organizational goals.*"²²

Marketing is planning and carrying out the concept, price, promotion and distribution of several ideas, goods, and services to create exchanges that can satisfy individual and organizational goals. *Marketing* is a management process responsible for recognizing, anticipating and satisfying the wants or needs of buyers for profit. In Swastha and Irawan, Stanton defines *marketing* as an overall system of business activities aimed at planning, pricing, promoting, and distributing goods and services that satisfy the needs of existing and potential buyers.

Marketing, as described by Kotler and Keller, *is a societal process. It is through this process that individuals and groups obtain what they need and want. This is achieved by creating, offering, and freely exchanging products and services of value with others.* Marketing is a social and managerial process that plays a crucial role in meeting the needs and wants of individuals and groups.

In the field of education, two concepts of marketing strategy need to be considered, namely: (1) *Distinctive competence*, which is an action taken by educational institutions in order to carry out activities better than competitors; (2) *Competitive advantage*, which is a specific activity developed by educational institutions to be superior to their competitors, through differentiation strategies, namely competitive advantage caused by the choice of strategies made by educational institutions to seize market opportunities. Meanwhile, Kotler provides three elements needed to create a marketing strategy, namely:²³

1. Target market strategy, which decides which market segment to target. These market segments may focus on segments where demand exceeds supply. In this case, schools must divide the education market according to student's demographic, psychographic, and behavioural characteristics. Thus, schools can more easily determine the marketing strategy of education services according to the characteristics and needs of the market.

²⁰ Aliming Bassi, "Pengaruh Bauran Pemasaran Jasa Terhadap Keputusan Konsumen Pada Hotel Bintang Dua Di Kota Palembang," *Jurnal Ilmu Manajemen* 4, no. 1 (2014).

²¹ Dian, Ilis Rosbiah, and Ari Prayoga, "Implementasi Strategi Pemasaran Pendidikan Di Madrasah," *Dirasah : Jurnal Studi Ilmu Dan Manajemen Pendidikan Islam* 3, no. 1 (February 29, 2020): 1–14, <https://doi.org/10.29062/dirasah.v3i1.73>.

²² Seyed Mohammad Hasan Hosseini, "Marketing Mix from the Viewpoint of Zanjan Grand Hotel Costumers," *Academia*, 2011, https://www.academia.edu/608446/Marketing_mix_from_the_viewpoint_of_Zanjan_Grand_hotel_costumers.

²³ Philip Kotler and Kevin Lane Keller, *A Framework for Marketing Management, Marketing Management*, 6th ed. (Pearson, 2016).

2. Competitive positioning strategy, which bases provisioning on the relative privileges and strengths of the institution, can ensure a competitive level.
3. A mixed strategy is a comprehensive approach that identifies specific elements an organization can promote. In the context of the education sector, this mixed strategy consists of four essential components, often referred to as the 4Ps: *product, place, price,* and *promotion*. However, for the service sector, including educational institutions, these components are expanded to the 3Ps, namely: *people, process,* and *proof*, to ensure a more holistic marketing approach.²⁴

Marketing Mix of the Islamic Education Service Industry

As defined by Kotler, services are all economic activities that produce *outputs* other than physical products. They are consumed and produced simultaneously, provide added value, and are essentially intangible to the first buyer. This means they cannot be touched, felt, or seen in the same way as a physical product but still hold value.²⁵

Services have the following characteristics: 1). Something intangible but can meet consumer needs; 2). The service production process can or cannot use the help of a physical product; 3). Services do not result in the transfer of rights or ownership; and 4). There is interaction between service providers and service users.²⁶

Services have four main characteristics that significantly affect the design of marketing programs, namely as follows: 1). *Intangibility*. Services are *intangible*, meaning they cannot be seen, felt, smelled, heard, or touched before they are purchased or consumed; 2). *Inseparability* (inseparable). Services are *inseparable*, meaning that services cannot be separated from their source, namely the company that produces them; 3)—*Variability* (varies). Services are *Variable*, meaning that the services provided often change depending on who presents them when and where the service presentation is carried out; 4). *Perishability* (easily destroyed). Services are *Perishability*, meaning that services cannot be stored or easily destroyed so that they cannot be sold in the future.

Services can be defined – in relation to education, as the activities of educational institutions to provide services or deliver educational services to consumers by satisfying them. Marketing in the context of educational services is a complex social and managerial process, given the multifaceted nature of education. It involves creating offers, exchanging products of value with other parties in the field of education, and ensuring the highest standards of quality and ethics. The ethics of marketing in education is to offer quality intellectual services and overall character formation, recognizing the complexity and responsibility that comes with shaping the future through education.²⁷

²⁴ Fathurrochman et al., "Strategi Pemasaran Jasa Pendidikan Dalam Meningkatkan Nilai Jual Madrasah Aliyah Riyadus Sholihin Musirawas."

²⁵ Didin Sirojudin and M. Dzikrul Hakim Al-Ghozali, "SISTEM PENYAMPAIAN JASA PENDIDIKAN," *DINAMIKA : Jurnal Kajian Pendidikan Dan Keislaman* 5, no. 2 (December 28, 2020): 95–108, <https://doi.org/10.32764/dinamika.v5i2.1029>.

²⁶ Dwimala and Maimunah, "Analisis Bauran Pemasaran Untuk Mempengaruhi Permintaan Pasar Dalam Memilih TK."

²⁷ Rivai, *Manajemen Corpraten Dan Strategi Pemasaran Jasa Pendidikan*.

In the world of marketing educational services, it must be distinct from the elements of the marketing mix. According to Buchari Alma, the mix in question is the 7P concept,²⁸ namely:

a. Product

Products are the primary consideration for the community. Education products are everything that is offered, aiming to fulfil their needs and desires. Products produced and offered must be of high quality. For example, in addition to products in the academic field, producers must be able to make educational service products more varied, such as sports, arts, and religious activities, to increase the quality of education. A commodity to be produced must consider social and humanitarian reasons; that is, in addition to being needed by the community, there are also positive benefits that the production of a commodity will obtain. In an educational environment, academic services such as curriculum or extra-curriculum can be offered. In addition, offering through achievements that have been achieved is also a supporting factor in achieving competition between schools.

b. Price

Pricing is a critical point in the marketing mix because price determines the income of a business/business.²⁹ Producers must be good at setting high or low price policies, which are based on: 1) State or quality of goods; 2) The intended consumer; 3) The market atmosphere, whether the product is newly introduced to the market or dominates the market, the product is already attached to the hearts of consumers or has many competitors.³⁰ A price strategy that is affordable for all can influence school choice. Generally, parents with lower-middle incomes choose a relatively cheaper school unless they receive a scholarship, while parents with upper-middle incomes choose the best school, even if it is not cheap. However, if the school is of high quality at a relatively low price, it will undoubtedly be a consideration when choosing an educational institution.

c. Place or Location

The leaders of educational institutions agree that the institution's location, which is easily accessible by public transportation, plays a role in determining prospective students. Likewise, students stated that location also determines their choice. They like locations in the city that are easily accessible by public transportation, or there are transportation facilities from the institution or public buses provided by the local government. James and Phillips categorize the elements of education service distribution channels into three parts, as follows: 1) *Appearance(appearance)of* educational services, namely how effective the appearance and location of the school is; 2) *Customers and their visitors(customers and their visitors)* education services, where the culture of education

²⁸ Buchari Alma, *Manajemen Pemasaran Dan Pemasaran Jasa Edisi Revisi*, CV. Alfabeta, Cetakan Ke (Bandung: CV. Alfabeta, 2018).

²⁹ Aditia Fradito, Suti'ah Suti'ah, and Muliyadi Muliyadi, "Strategi Pemasaran Pendidikan Dalam Meningkatkan Citra Sekolah," *Al-Idarah : Jurnal Kependidikan Islam* 10, no. 1 (June 23, 2020): 12–22, <https://doi.org/10.24042/alidarah.v10i1.6203>.

³⁰ Rivai, *Manajemen Corpraten Dan Strategi Pemasaran Jasa Pendidikan*.

services that are oriented to customers of education services must pay attention to customers of education services; 3) *First contact* and accessibility of education services related to how individuals relate to schools and the ease of establishing relationships with schools.³¹ Therefore, the state of the strategic location that is easily accessible from all directions by public transportation and private vehicles, as well as the ease of access to the school, is a supporting factor for the convenience of students, parents and the community around the school.

d. Promotion

Promotion is one of the factors determining the success of a marketing program. Regardless of the quality of a product, if consumers have never heard of it and are not sure that the product will be helpful for them, they will never buy it.³² Promotional activities can be carried out through mass communication media, such as newspapers, magazines, television, billboards, and sticky images. The programs often covered are when there are certain events, such as when getting achievements or awards from the government and others. Likewise, promotion can also be done through the involvement of alums who consistently promote to the community. This has a significant impact because people trust the testimony of those involved in it.

e. Person (People or Human Resources)

People are all actors who play a role in presenting services to influence buyer perceptions. People are company employees, consumers, and others in the service environment. All attitudes and actions of employees and the appearance of employees influence consumer perceptions or the success of service delivery.³³ A professional recruitment system is needed to realize human resources (teachers) in a professional school environment. In addition, it is necessary to improve teacher competence by providing opportunities and scholarships for teachers to continue their education. Improvement through seminars and training also continues to be carried out according to the needs of teachers. Another thing to consider is that teachers must also be friendly. In addition to qualified and friendly teachers, administrative and non-administrative employees are also expected to be reliable and friendly when performing all tasks. Therefore, it is necessary to improve the friendly culture of all school community members to create a conducive learning atmosphere with the hope that all students are motivated to improve their knowledge.

f. Physical Evidence (Physical Facilities or Supplies)

Physical facilities are a real thing that influences consumer decisions to buy and use service products. An educational institution, a physical facility, is a building with all the available facilities. The factor of adequate learning facilities is a facility that is very helpful in the learning process. The use of technology in explaining learning materials to students is also an attractive option when choosing a school. Likewise, the comfort of students'

³¹ David Wijaya, *Pemasaran Jasa Pendidikan Jakarta*, Penerbit Salemba Empat, vol. 1, 2012.

³² Rivai, *Manajemen Corpraten Dan Strategi Pemasaran Jasa Pendidikan*.

³³ Wijaya, *Pemasaran Jasa Pendidikan Jakarta*.

learning because buildings and classrooms are clean and supported by modern learning facilities makes it easier for students to understand learning materials.

g. Process

The process of services is a significant factor in the service marketing mix, as service customers will often feel the service delivery system is part of the service itself. In this case, paying attention and continuously improving the process of distributing services from producers to consumers is necessary. In educational institutions, the main product is the teaching and learning process, from teachers to students. Is the quality of service or teaching provided by the teacher sufficient, or is the appearance and mastery of the material?

Therefore, the management of educational institutions must pay attention to the quality of teachers who greatly support the success of marketing and satisfaction. The seven educational services marketing mix strategies above influence each other, so they are all important as a unified strategy, namely the reference/mix strategy. At the same time, this marketing mix strategy is part of a marketing strategy. It serves as a guide in using marketing elements or variables that organizational leaders can control to achieve organizational goals in the marketing field.³⁴

Implementation of Strategies for Creating Competitive Advantage

Public relations is an activity to instil and obtain an understanding of goodwill, trust and respect from the public of an agency in particular and society in general.³⁵ In the context of the Islamic education service industry, this could involve community outreach programs, transparent communication with parents and students, and fostering a positive reputation through academic and moral excellence. If the school/madrasah obtains an understanding of *goodwill*, trust and respect from the community, the school/madrasah will have a good image for the community. Explained in the word of Allah QS. Al-Isra' verse 7.³⁶

The strategy of creating a competitive advantage in the transformative Islamic education service industry carried out by MAN 1 Jombang is market segmentation with consumers or general education customers who have a "strong" desire to study at MAN 1 Jombang. The enrollment and selection period is long before the current academic year ends. The new student registration period for the 2024/2025 academic year was only ten days, and on February 27-28, 2024, the entrance selection was carried out in the form of written tests and interviews. On March 4, 2024, the admission test results were announced. This is different from other schools, especially schools within the scope of the Education Office, which will only select new students in May 2024.

In addition, to become a superior madrasah and ready to compete with other madrasahs, MAN 1 Jombang has made marketing packaging using the transformative

³⁴ Minarti Sri, "Manajemen Sekolah: Mengelola Lembaga Pendidikan Secara Mandiri," Yogyakarta: Ar-Ruzz Media, 2011.

³⁵ Sri.

³⁶ Lajnah Pentashihan Mushaf al Quran, *Al Quran Dan Terjemahannya (11-20)*, Al-Qur'an Dan Terjemahannya Edisi Penyempurnaan 2019, 2019.

Islamic education service industry marketing mix as follows: *Product*, as a fundamental consideration in the marketing mix so that madrasah becomes the choice for the community, the quality products produced and offered by MAN 1 Jombang are related to the aim of meeting the needs and desires of the community, namely its academic products, foreign language development activities (Arabic-English), Scouts, Paskas, tilawah, BTQ, banjari, volleyball, basketball, futsal, Tahfidzul Qur'an, Youth Ilmiyah Work with outstanding achievements by being able to achieve achievements at the sub-district, district and provincial and national levels.

Price, the price strategy used by MAN 1 Jombang is very affordable for the economic standards of the Jombang community. In addition, there is an infaq fund that is carried out every Friday to train students' almsgiving awareness. *Place* and the institution's location are among the considerations parents must make to ensure their children are safe while travelling to and from the madrasah / educational institution. MAN 1 Jombang takes the safety of its students very seriously. We have implemented various safety measures, including 24/7 security, regular safety drills, and a strict visitor policy. Access to locations that are easily accessible either by using two, three or four-wheeled vehicles. MAN 1 Jombang has met these criteria with its location at Jl. Dr. Wahidin Sudirohusodo No. 2 Jombang. Dr. Wahidin Sudirohusodo No. 2 Jombang. The access road to the madrasah is smooth and easy to reach by students from various regions. For students from outside the city or suburbs, a dormitory is provided in the madrasah environment.

Based on the category of elements of educational service distribution channels revealed by James and Phillips, at MAN 1 Jombang in terms of the appearance of educational services, namely the appearance of a representative building for learning and the location of the madrasah is very effective with proven smooth roads and easy to pass. The services provided are oriented towards customer satisfaction.³⁷ The relationship between the madrasah and the customer is well established, and access to the madrasah can be easy. Therefore, the location of MAN 1 Jombang is strategic and easily accessible from all directions by public transportation and private vehicles, as well as easy access to the madrasah, and it becomes a supporting factor for the comfort of students, parents and the community around the madrasah.

Promotion, promotion is one of the determining factors for the success of a marketing program. No matter how high-quality a product is, if consumers have never heard of it and are not sure that the product will be useful to them, then they will never buy it. Our promotional activities to introduce madrasah through social media, including the MAN 1 Jombang website, namely Youtube, Whatsapp (WA), Facebook, TikTok, Instagram, newspapers, magazines, television, billboards, and sticky pictures, are crucial. We showcase the madrasah's activities, achievements, and awards in these various media. A significant part of this Promotion is the active involvement of our alumni, who play a key role in promoting the madrasah to the public.

³⁷ Fradito, Suti'ah, and Mulyadi, "Strategi Pemasaran Pendidikan Dalam Meningkatkan Citra Sekolah."

Person (people/human resources) people are all actors who play a role in the presentation of services so that they can influence buyer perceptions. People are company employees, consumers, and others in the service environment. All employee attitudes, actions, and appearances influence consumer perception or the success of service delivery.

We recognize the need for a professional recruitment system to ensure a professional school environment. This system is crucial in selecting the right individuals who will contribute to the school's professionalism and friendliness. Additionally, we are committed to enhancing teacher competence by providing opportunities and scholarships for teachers to continue their education. We also conduct seminars and training to meet the evolving needs of our teachers. It's important to note that while professionalism is a priority, we also value the friendliness of our teachers. In addition to qualified and friendly teachers, administrative and non-administrative employees are also expected to be reliable and friendly when performing all tasks. Therefore, it is necessary to improve the friendly culture of all school members to create a conducive learning atmosphere with the hope that all students will be motivated to improve their knowledge.

Physical Evidence (physical facilities/facilities): Physical facilities at MAN 1 Jombang are pretty magnificent and representative of the continuity of learning activities consisting of 30 comfortable classrooms, a school mosque as a means of congregational prayer (dhuha, dhuhur, and asar), computer laboratories, science laboratories, libraries, School Health Service (UKS) rooms, shady and beautiful fields. Which is a real thing that influences consumer decisions to buy and use MAN 1 Jombang service products. Becomes the madrasa of choice for parents for their sons and daughters. Provision in the classroom with learning facilities such as LCDs and projectors is sufficient to assist the learning process. The condition of buildings and classrooms is clean and supported by modern learning facilities, making it easier for students to understand learning material.

Process (process), the process of teaching and learning activities, which is the main factor in the service marketing mix at MAN 1 Jombang, namely the organization of face-to-face learning in the classroom, learning facilities such as LCDs and projectors are adequate. For example, service customers often feel that the service delivery system is part of the service itself. In this case, paying attention and continuously improving the process of distributing services from producers to consumers is necessary. In educational institutions, the main product is the teaching and learning process, from teachers to students. Is the quality of service or teaching provided by the teacher sufficient, or is the appearance and mastery of the material? Therefore, the management of educational institutions must pay attention to the quality of teachers who greatly support the success of marketing and satisfaction.

The seven strategies for achieving competitive advantage in the transformative Islamic education service industry, implemented by MAN 1 Jombang, are not standalone. They are interconnected and work together as a unified strategy, known as the reference strategy. This marketing mix strategy, a part of the overall marketing strategy, guides the use of controllable marketing elements to achieve organizational goals. The coherence and

strength of this approach are what set MAN 1 Jombang apart in the Islamic education service industry.

CONCLUSION

Implementation of strategies to create a competitive advantage in the transformative Islamic education service industry at MAN 1 Jombang by creating satisfying services. The marketing mix, consisting of interrelated marketing elements, is blended, organized, and used appropriately so educational institutions can effectively achieve marketing objectives while satisfying consumer needs and desires. MAN 1 Jombang has successfully carried out its vision and mission effectively by applying the 7Ps. Among other things, products, promotions, places, prices, people, facilities and infrastructure, and processes owned by MAN 1 Jombang can increase the number of student applicants each year, making it easier to choose quality input that can later be proud of. For this reason, MAN 1 Jombang exists in the world of education and is the leading choice of parents in Jombang Regency when sending their children to school.

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