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THE INFLUENCE OF SERVICE QUALITY AND MARKETING COMMUNICATION ON PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS' DECISIONS MODERATED BY THE MARKETING MIX

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ABSTRACT

This journal aims to test and analyze the effect of service quality and marketing communication on the decisions of prospective new students and is moderated by the marketing mix. A total of 250 respondents as a sample were prospective students who wanted to continue their education to university. Random data collection by distributing research questionnaires through social media. *Smart PLS software* is used in research with the results of service quality having a significant effect on the decisions of prospective students, marketing communications have a significant effect on the decisions of prospective students , and the marketing mix has a significant effect on the decisions of prospective students. In addition, the marketing mix can significantly moderate the influence of service quality on the decisions of prospective students. The marketing mix has also been shown to have a significant effect on moderating the influence of marketing communications on prospective student decisions. Following up on the findings in this study, the decision of prospective students to choose a university can be optimized through service quality, marketing communication, and marketing mix.

Keywords: Marketing Mix; Quality of Service; Marketing Communications; Decision of Prospective Students.

INTRODUCTION

Education is an important part of our lives because with the help of education we know what attitudes and actions to show and what to manage in any situation and place. Education is not only important for its own sake, but also important for improving the quality of the country's human resources (HR) and for the further development of the country, in (kependudukan.ukm.unej.ac.id, 2022). Today, the level of education in society has undoubtedly increased over time. Higher education in particular is seen as very important to society. The existence of this college is an opportunity to further develop science. This is reflected in the increasing number of students from final year schools who want to continue their desired higher education at public and private universities.

The number of private universities today is increasing and competing with each other for new students. Private universities are certainly now facing difficult choices and must compete not only with state universities but also with other private universities that are now competing to offer their advantages in order to become market *leaders*. Therefore, PTS needs to pay attention to the needs and desires of prospective students.

Table 1
State Universities in DKI Jakarta

State University	Name of State University
University	Jakarta State University
University	National Development University Veteran Jakarta
Polytechnic	Polytechnic of Creative Media
Polytechnic	Jakarta State Polytechnic

Kemdikbud.go.id, (2023)

Table 2
The number of private higher education institutions in DKI Jakarta

State University	The number of private higher
University	68
Institute	24
Collage	93
Academic	81
Polytechnic	17

Kemdikbud.go.id, (2023)

The table above contains the number of private universities in DKI Jakarta that compete to attract new students. Based on (Kemdikbud.go.id, 2023) there are 278 private universities (PTS) and 4 state universities (PTN), not to mention of course many universities outside DKI Jakarta are participating in the competition. This will certainly lead to the fact that each university will try to provide the best and appropriate service and will be intensive in the implementation of promotions, of course, with the aim of attracting many students.

The University of 17 August 1945 Jakarta is a private university, the name 17 August 1945 Jakarta was used as the name of the University to devote the historical event of the Proclamation of Independence of the Republic of Indonesia. Universitas 17 August is located in Podomoro, Jl. Sunter Permai Raya No.1, RT.11/RW.6, Sunter Agung, Kec. Tj. Priok, North JKT, Special Capital Region of Jakarta 14350. Currently the University of August 17, 1945 Jakarta has 4 Faculties with 14 S1 Study Programs, Postgraduate Programs and Pharmacist Professions consisting of the Faculty of Law with S1 Law Study Programs and S2 and S3 Law Postgraduate Programs. Faculty of Economics and Social Affairs with Study Programs in Public Administration, Government Political Science, Communication Science, International Relations, Business Administration, Management, Accounting, and Digital Business. Faculty of Engineering with Study Programs in Electrical Engineering, Civil Engineering, and Mechanical Engineering, and Informatics Engineering. Faculty of Pharmacy with S1 Pharmacy and S2 Study Programs and Pharmacist Professional Programs.

In designing new student admission programs, the University of 17 August 1945 Jakarta was seconded by the New Student Admissions division (PMB). PMB is the main gateway or the beginning of the business process of a university where students are sought after and selected who are then trained to become qualified human resources when students graduate and work. Therefore, the PMB division must be able to offer and provide the best for universities (Suteki Technology, 2020).

Based on the phenomenon that the author found in the field, most prospective students are interested in continuing to college because they are influenced by their family or relatives who have studied first, then prospective students tend to be more interested in universities that have superior accreditation, so they do not see the majors offered by universities first. Prospective students tend to prefer well-known universities or a good image in the community. Most prospective students prefer to enter universities that are located close to their homes and of course they also choose universities with affordable costs. Then prospective students tend to prefer state universities by following sbmptn and snmptn because most of these pathways prospective students will not pay for tuition. Prospective students on average will choose a public university first in the hope that they can be admitted to the college. However, there are also a small number who have enrolled in state universities, and they are not accepted at these state universities, then they will enroll in the private universities they want (Jayanti & Hariyati, 2020).

Judging from the phenomena that occur, researchers are interested in knowing the influence of service quality, marketing communication and also moderation of the marketing mix to determine the influence on the decision of prospective new students who want to continue

their education to higher education from the new student admission division of the University of August 17, 1945 Jakarta

Quality of Service

According to Okarina, 2020 in a research journal (Hidajat & Fahlevi, 2020) "Service quality is a provision of products or services according to the applicable measure where the product or service is provided and the delivery is the same as what consumers want and expect". In the field of services, quality is maintained by meeting service standards. From the consumer's point of view, quality means value i.e. how well a product or service serves its intended purpose at the level of price the consumer is willing to pay (Hidajat & Diandaru, 2020). According to the author himself, service quality is something that must be considered in marketing activities in order to attract potential customers, as can be seen from the ethics of politeness to customers, reliability in terms of delivery of a product that is marketed, and responsiveness to customers. According to Kotler and Keller, 2012: 21 The higher the level of service quality in satisfying customers, it will cause high customer satisfaction as well (Simamora & Susanti, 2017). Service quality can be determined by five indicators of Subagyo 2013 in (Santoso, 2019) :

(a) Reliability refers to the capacity to consistently provide the agreed-upon services promptly and dependably.
(b) Responsiveness is the consciousness or willingness to assist customers and deliver prompt service.
(c) Assurances are knowledge, decency and the ability to engender trust and confidence. This dimension includes aspects of knowledge and employee behavior towards consumers.
(d) Empathy is the consumer's personal care and concern. It is made visible to consumers through special services.
(e) Physical evidence describes the service and physical form that consumers receive. So it is important for companies or organizations to present a positive image of the quality of services provided.

Marketing Communications

Marketing communication according to Kotler & Keller (2009) in research (Saraswati et al., 2020) is a means by which companies persuade, To prompt and notify customers, either directly or indirectly, regarding the products they offer. Marketing communication also serves to remind consumers and explain the reasons why they should use the product. (Firmansyah, 2020) The word 'marketing communication' consists of two elements. 'Communication' is a process of thought and understanding between organizations and individuals. Communication is the process of sending a message, which is information or ideas, from the sender through the medium to the receiver to understand the sender's intent. The word 'marketing' is the activity by which companies or other organizations convey value (exchange) of product, service and idea information between themselves and customers. According to Limakrisna, 2008 in research (Ali & Widodo, 2022) There are five indicators of 'marketing communication': (1) accuracy of marketing communication objectives, (2) accuracy of target market selection, (3) media accuracy, (4) clarity of information, and (5) effectiveness of marketing communication.

Prospective Student Decisions

In the process of continuing their education in college, they certainly think in advance about where they will go to college next. Therefore, the conclusion drawn from an understanding of the decision of prospective students is an action aimed at choosing the best college for himself as a place of study. The decision indicators of prospective students consist of awareness of needs, information search, evaluation of alternatives, and various fields of majors offered (Amirsyah & Cholila, 2017).

Marketing Mix

When determining the level of marketing productivity within an organization, the marketing mix is identified as the main performance indicator, and everything related to it is mandated to provide advice to customers or market segments that have been targeted. In essence, the marketing mix consists of various strategies to increase consumer confidence while meeting the sales goals of goods and obtaining products and services that can provide customer and consumer satisfaction (Gazali, 2017).

According to Tatik Wijayanti, (2017) In the book Marketing Plan for Business, "Marketing Mix" is one type of marketing variation and also one of the tactics for brand building that can be used by business actors to achieve the desired marketing goals. According to Kotler and Armstrong in (Ii, 2019) Elements or elements of the marketing mix consist of price, product, place, and promotion".

Hypothesis

The Influence of Service Quality on Prospective Student Decisions

The quality of service provided is very influential on the decision of prospective students to register, because the better the service provided and if the quality of service can be felt by prospective students, more prospective students will register (Chandra, 2020).

The Influence of Marketing Communication on Prospective Student Decisions

According to (Helmi & Nurhayati, 2019) In her study, she found that marketing communication variables (X) influence prospective students' decision-making (Y). In other words, if marketing communication variables are improved as much as possible, decision making will improve. There is evidence that marketing communication strategies have a unidirectional impact on student decision-making processes. Decisions will also improve with a better marketing communication strategy.

The Influence of Marketing Mix on Prospective Student Decisions

According to (Mahyus et al., 2022) stated the results of research showing that the marketing mix has a positive impact on the satisfaction of prospective students who choose the campus and the marketing mix through student satisfaction has a positive impact on the decision of students to choose the campus. The results of this study explain that research variables from the marketing mix concept consisting of Promotion, Product, People, Cost, and Location affect students' decisions to study simultaneously (Bunga, 2019).

Marketing Mix Moderation on Service Quality on Prospective Student Decisions

The marketing mix positively influences prospective student satisfaction, while service quality positively impacts student satisfaction. Additionally, the marketing mix has a positive effect on student selection decisions, and service quality plays a role in student choice decisions. Student satisfaction also positively influences student choice decisions. Furthermore, the marketing mix, through student satisfaction, positively affects student choice decisions, and service quality, through student satisfaction, has a positive impact on students' decision to choose. The Marketing Mix is a collection of marketing tools utilized to shape the attributes of services provided to customers, encompassing elements such as indicators, product, place, price, and promotion (Nurbani et al., 2019).

Marketing Mix Moderation of Marketing Communication on Prospective Student Decisions

At a basic level, communication can inform consumers and make consumers aware of what the organization has to offer, communication can engage consumer interests, change relationships, communication can improve the experience, and marketing communications can act as differentiators, especially in markets with few competitive products (Suharyanto, 2018) entitled The Impact of Marketing Mix Performance on Prospective Student College Decisions.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study used a sample of students who were at the final level of school and prospective students who wanted to continue their education to higher education who responded to the research questionnaire. The study involved surveying 250 respondents to gather samples. It encompassed four variables, with service quality (X1) serving as the independent variable. Service quality comprised five indicators, specifically reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangible (physical evidence). The second variable is marketing communication (X2) as the independent variable. Variable X2 consists of 5 indicators, namely the accuracy of marketing communication objectives, accuracy in choosing target markets, media accuracy, clarity of information, and effectiveness of marketing communications. The third variable is the decision of prospective students (Y) as the dependent variable. Variable Y consists of 4 indicators, namely awareness of needs, information search, evaluation of alternatives, and various majors offered. The fourth variable is the marketing mix (Z) as a moderation variable. Variable Z has 4 indicators consisting of price, product , place and promotion. Every statement included in this research questionnaire adheres to the indicators of each variable under investigation. The responses provided by the respondents were collected and compiled for analysis purposes. The research employed the Partial Least Square (PLS) method for data analysis, utilizing Smart PLS 3.0 software. PLS is one of the variant-based statistical methods of Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). SEM with PLS is variance-based so that it is able to handle two conditions, namely conditions with undeterminable factors and conditions where solutions are unacceptable. This study used a PLS 3.0 smart computer program and determined significant variables.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

A total of 250 respondents were prospective students who were sitting at the final level of school. 146 respondents were female (58.4%), and 106 respondents (42.4%) were male.

Judging from school background, as many as 155 respondents (62%) were high school students, 55 respondents (22%) were vocational students, and as many as 40 respondents (16%) were MA (madrasah aliyah) students. Test the data in this study using SmartPLS Software (*Partial Least Square*) by testing the *Structural Equation Modeling* (SEM) equation model using an approach based on *variance* or *component based structural equation modeling*.

Table 3
Construct Ralibility and Validity

	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_ A	Composite Reability	AVE	Decision
KP[1]	0.980	0.983	0.982	0.765	Accepted
KP[2]	0.979	0.980	0.981	0.773	Accepted
KCM	0.978	0.979	0.980	0.794	Accepted
BP	0.955	0.968	0.962	0.682	Accepted
Moderasi BP*KP[1]	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000	Accepted
Moderasi BP*KP[2]	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000	Accepted

The results of reliability tests conducted with Cronbach's Alpa and Composite Reliability have greater results of 0.7, meaning that reliability tests are declared reliable and meet the criteria. The results of the validity test conducted by comparing the square root of the average variance extracted ($\sqrt{AVE}$) have a result of 0.05, meaning that the validity test has met the criteria and is declared good. The structural model test or inner model shows the relationship or strength of estimation between latent variables or constructs measured using 3 criteria, namely R-Square, F-Square, and Estimate for Path Coefficients. Furthermore, to prove the hypothesis, the test is based on the value of Path Coefficients, the results of the Estimate for path Coefficients which are used

to see the significance of the influence between variables have significant results for all hypothesis tests. The following results of research hypothesis testing are presented:

Table 4
The results of research hypothesis testing

	Hypothesis	Original Sample	Sample Mean	Standard Deviation	T Statistics	P Values	Decision
H1	$KP^1 \rightarrow KCM$	0.486	0.482	0.103	4.713	0.000	Accepted
H2	$KP^2 \rightarrow KCM$	0.212	0.198	0.102	2.084	0.038	Accepted
H3	$BP \rightarrow KCM$	0.231	0.243	0.073	3.189	0.002	Accepted
H4	$BP*KP^1 \rightarrow KCM$	-0.428	-0.431	0.154	2.776	0.006	Accepted
H5	$BP*KP^2 \rightarrow KCM$	0.385	0.381	0.152	2.532	0.012	Accepted

Based on the results of the hypothesis test above, it can be described as follows.

Proving the first hypothesis, Service Quality has a positive effect on the Decision of Prospective Students. Service quality is the expected level of excellence and control over these advantages to meet the needs of consumers / prospective students. These results are in line with the study (Lubis & Hamdan, 2020) which states that the quality of service and promotion has a positive and significant influence on students' decisions to choose universities.

Proving the second hypothesis test, Marketing Communication has a positive effect on the decisions of prospective students. These results are in line with the study (Syaifullah, 2021) states that there is a relationship between marketing communications and interest in studying in new students. Marketing communication plays a very important role for marketers. Without communication, consumers and society as a whole will not know the existence of products in the marketr (Putri, 2020).

The third hypothesis test, Marketing Mix, has a positive effect on the decisions of prospective students. These results are in line with the study (Ayomi & Mazni, 2022) which states that the service marketing mix consisting of products (study programs), prices (tuition fees), promotions, and locations together affect the decisions of prospective students.

Proving the fourth hypothesis test, the marketing mix has been shown to have a significant effect on moderating the influence of service quality on the decisions of prospective students, these results are in accordance with research (Mahyus et al., 2022) Which states that the marketing mix also has a positive and significant effect on students' decisions to choose universities. In addition, the quality of service has a positive influence and determines students' choices towards the university.

Proving the fifth hypothesis test, the marketing mix has been shown to have a significant effect on moderating the influence of marketing communications on the decisions of prospective students. These results are in line with the study (Suarsyaf, 2022) which states that the campus combines theory with the marketing communication mix to find out the strategy, process, coordination and evaluation of student enrollment during the Covid-19 pandemic and with it found that the marketing communication strategy implemented by the university has been implemented optimally.

CONCLUSION

This research provides evidence regarding service quality, marketing communication, and marketing mix to be strong factors to make prospective student decisions. Then the quality of service has a positive influence on the decisions of prospective students. Marketing communication has a positive influence on the decisions of prospective students. Marketing mix

has a positive influence on the decisions of prospective students. The Marketing Mix has been shown to have a significant effect on moderating the influence of service quality on prospective student decisions. In addition, the marketing mix has been shown to have a significant effect on moderating the influence of marketing communications on prospective student decisions. This study has limitations that the respondents who are sampled are only prospective students who come from students from SMA / SMK / MAN who want to continue their education at one university, which means there is a possibility that case studies elsewhere have different analysis results.

In terms of service quality, marketing communication and marketing mix from the new student admission division (PMB) of the University of 17 August 1945 Jakarta can be well received by prospective new students, but it also cannot be a benchmark for them to continue their education at the University of 17 August 1945 Jakarta. In the future, marketing strategies need to be improved with the help of each study program to introduce the study program directly when conducting socialization.

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