



Salaf Islamic Boarding School Marketing Strategy in the Digital Era

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Receive: 17/05/2023

Accepted: 17/06/2023

Published: 01/10/2023

Abstrak

Pondok pesantren merupakan salah satu lembaga pendidikan yang berperan aktif dalam pembangunan bangsa melalui pendidikan. Seiring berjalannya waktu, kesan baik/citra dari pondok pesantren di era serba digital harus terus dijaga, guna mempertahankan citra baik dari pondok pesantren, maka pondok pesantren perlu melakukan strategi pemasaran yang baik juga. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk melihat bagaimana strategi pemasaran pondok pesantren salaf dalam meningkatkan citra positif kepada masyarakat di era digital. Penelitian ini menggunakan penelitian lapangan yang bersifat diskriptif kualitatif dengan metode pengumpulan data melalui wawancara, observasi, dan dokumentasi. Data yang digunakan dalam penelitian kali ini menggunakan data primer dan skunder dan dilaksanakan dengan teori belajar bauran pemasaran 7P dan teori image restoration. Hasil penelitian mengemukakan bahwa strategi pemasaran dalam meningkatkan citra di pondok pesantren Al-Hidayah telah berjalan dengan berbagai macam strategi, yaitu produk jasa pendidikan yang ditawarkan pondok pesantren tradisional telah diselaraskan dengan kurikulum sekolah, pemasaran melalui media offline dan online, penyesuaian biaya, pemberdayaan SDM, dan fasilitas pesantren.

KATA KUNCI: *Strategi Pemasaran, Peningkatan Citra, Pondok Pesantren Salaf*

Abstract

Islamic boarding schools are one of the educational institutions that play an active role in nation building through education. Over time, the good impression / image of the Islamic boarding school in the all-digital era must continue to be maintained, in order to maintain a good image of the Islamic boarding school, the Islamic boarding school needs to carry out a good marketing strategy as well. The purpose of this study is to see how the marketing strategy of Islamic boarding schools in improving a positive image to the community in the digital era. This research uses qualitative descriptive field research with data collection methods through interviews, observation, and documentation. The data used in this study used primary data and skunder and were carried out with the 7P marketing mix learning theory and image restoration theory. The results of the study suggest that marketing strategies in improving the image of the Al-Hidayah Islamic boarding school have run with various strategies, namely educational service products offered by traditional Islamic boarding schools have been aligned with the school curriculum, marketing through offline and online media, cost adjustments, human resource empowerment, and pesantren facilities.

KEYWORDS: *Marketing Strategy, Image Improvement, Salaf Islamic Boarding School*

Introduction

The existence of Islamic boarding schools played a major role in the establishment of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia and has existed since before Indonesian independence. So far, Islamic boarding schools have also played an active role in nation building through education. Education in Islamic boarding schools is education that has existed for a long time and is considered the oldest education system in Indonesia. This education was originally Islamic religious education which began since the emergence of Islamic society in the archipelago in the 13th century AD (H.M. & Kusnuridlo, 2006: 4).

Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia have two types of pesantren, including modern pesantren and pesantren salaf. Modern pesantren are pesantren that have an educational program that is arranged independently (independently) where this program contains formal, non-formal and informal education processes that last all day in one conditioning in a dormitory (Tolib, 2015: 60). While the Salafiyah Islamic boarding school or abbreviated to Salafi or Salafi is a pesantren institution that still maintains traditional pesantren education patterns which are reflected in the curriculum that teaches only the classics (yellow book), the learning model is centered on kiai, and also other things that still maintain the tradition of the old pesantren (Hanafi, 2018: 105).

The application of management in Islamic boarding schools is carried out as well as in other educational institutions, but Islamic boarding schools have their own uniqueness ranging from the curriculum model prepared, the educational process / teaching and learning activities, student recruitment, and the managerial pattern of a leader. However, for the management of this Islamic boarding school is not an easy job, Pesantren has its own policies according to the leadership possessed by a caregiver or Kyai who is the leader of this educational institution. In this case, Islamic

boarding schools are required to further improve the quality and quantity so that they can continue to grow in this millennial era.

The good impression / image of the Islamic boarding school must continue to be maintained, the image is the perception and belief in a set of brand associations that occur in the minds of consumers. A close relationship between brand association and brand image where the association that is established in a brand in forming a brand image, a brand association is everything related to the memory of a brand (Iriani, 2013: 916). So far, Islamic boarding schools are better known as traditional religious educational institutions that are slow to adapt to the times and are suspected as educational institutions that only teach divine science and often forget what is being lived in this world (Rahmawati, 2020: 2).

In addition, the curriculum is specifically oriented to learn and understand the teachings of Islam and is not based on a worldly orientation as an independent character (Rahmawati, 2020: 2). In the modern era like today, Salafiyah Islamic boarding schools are faced with rapid changes in social and technological systems. Today's society wants to change the values of social life and the structure of modern society with characteristics as the antithesis of traditional society (Iryana, 2015: 64).

Marketing strategy is the process / effort of an organization / institution in conveying messages or desires to others and trying to achieve the message or desire conveyed according to the goals of the organization being run (Ujang Sumarwan, 2019: 16). Marketing Strategy is also the main thing that an educational institution does in increasing the quantity of a product and also consumers. Therefore, educational institutions are required to carry out good marketing management so that they can maintain a good image and can achieve the expected goals and can improve the quality and get the expected number of students, because the more the

number of prospective students who enter, it can raise a positive image in an educational institution in the community. In addition, educational institutions must have an advantage as an attraction to meet consumer satisfaction as prospective students or parents of prospective students who are customers of educational services in Islamic boarding schools. If the Islamic boarding school has a foundation in the form of a good marketing strategy, the quantity and even quality of education will increase. However, if the Islamic boarding school has a bad marketing strategy, then the Islamic boarding school can experience a decrease in interest, quality and even achievement.

Al-Hidayah Pageruyung Kendal Islamic boarding school is one of the Islamic boarding schools that has carried out marketing management activities in the form of promotion through print and digital media, namely through social media and by distributing stickers, installing banners, distributing brochures / pamphlets, providing registration website addresses and so on. Based on the research background that has been obtained, the author takes the title of research in the form of "Marketing Strategy of Salaf Islamic Boarding Schools in the Digital Era"

Research Methods

In this study, researchers use qualitative research methods, namely in the implementation of research, the author becomes a research tool that must capture, record, and analyze data. The data obtained are such as field notes compiled by researchers at the research location, looking for comparisons, relationships, and finding patterns based on research results presented in narrative form.

The type of research used is analytical descriptive research. Analytical descriptive is a method that serves to describe or describe the object under study through data or samples that have been collected as they are without conducting analysis and making conclusions

that apply to the public (Sugiyono, 2009: 29). Then the approach taken is to use a case study approach, which is research carried out intensively, in detail, and in depth on an organization, institution or certain symptoms (Arikunto, 2002, p. 120).

The type of data used in this study is sourced from primary data and secondary data. Primary Data is data taken directly from the data center or through field surveys. In this study in the form of data obtained directly through interviews with employees directly related to cash receipts, head of office, and parties related to the object under study (Arikunto, 2002: 148).

Data collection instruments are carried out by means of interviews, observations and documentation then developed for research using an analytical approach. While data analysis uses qualitative discriminative methods to analyze data that has been collected from the field by interpreting the data that has been obtained into sentences using analysis steps.

Results and Discussion

A. Profile of Salaf Al-Hidayah Pageruyung Kendal Islamic Boarding School

Salaf Al-Hidayah Islamic Boarding School is located on Jalan Serma Darsono number 46, Pucakwangi Village, Pageruyung District, Kendal Regency, Central Java Province. This Islamic boarding school is under the auspices of the Al-Hidayah Pucakwangi Foundation with a land area of about 415 m² and a building area of about 210 m². The location of this Islamic boarding school is on the side of the highway and adjacent to junior and senior high school educational institutions, namely MTs NU 10 Penawaja Pageruyung Kendal and MA NU 08 Pageruyung Kendal. Every year, with around 100 students, this pesantren opens seven classes that study the yellow book with fields including the book of ulumul qur'an, fiqh, hadith, tools, morals, and tawhid.

B. Strategy Concept

Strategy or "*strategos* or *Strategia*" comes from a Greek word meaning "*general or generalship*" or also interpreted as something related to top management in an organization (Holy, 2015: 1). In the Big Dictionary Indonesian, strategy means a careful plan of activities to achieve specific goals. Strategy is closely related to a goal, because this strategy is aimed at achieving a goal of an institution / organization. To achieve a goal of strategy, a tactic is needed.

Goals are something to be achieved from a strategy while tactics are steps taken to implement a strategy. Strategy becomes a basic framework in determining the long-term goals of an organization / company, then the strategy can adapt to an ever-changing environment.

C. Marketing Concept

Marketing is a process and managerial that makes individuals or groups get what they need and want by creating, offering and exchanging products of value to other parties or all activities that involve the delivery of products or services from producers to consumers (Shinta, 2011: 2). Marketing strategy is an inventiveness (innovation) and is a way of achieving goals that have been determined by the company's top leaders, while the focus on marketing is carried out by marketing managers (Humairaa, 2021: 6).

D. Marketing Objectives

The main purpose of marketing is that information in an organization can be disseminated. If in the business world, the purpose of the organization is in the form of profit, and the general / public organization has a goal in the form of funds for the sustainability of social activities / activities and so on. Buchari Alma stated several objectives of marketing, namely: Seeking market balance so that the distribution of products or services from producers to consumers can occur smoothly; Providing satisfaction to consumers, not only seeking large amounts of profit but the main purpose of marketing is to satisfy consumers (Alma, 2007: 181)

E. Islamic Boarding School Concept

Pondok pesantren is a combination of the words *pondok* and *pesantren*. The word *pondok* comes from the Arabic word *kat Funduq* which means hotel or lodging (Muhsin & Haryati, 2014: 273). But in Indonesia itself, the cottage here is more similar to housing activities into the tradition of *padepokan*, which is simple housing that is plotted in the form of rooms that are dormitories for students (Tamam, 2015: 27).

Then the word *pesantren* is a place for students in carrying out Islamic religious learning. The word *pesantren* comes from the word "*santri*" which means a student who is studying Islam. There are two types of Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia, namely modern *pesantren* and *pesantren salaf*. In short, modern *pesantren* are *pesantren* that have received elements of renewal with the establishment of formal education such as SD/MI, SMP/MTs, SMA/SMK/MA or PT and *pesantren pesantren* that are still bound by the old system and pattern (Rahmawati, 2020: 2).

F. Marketing Mix Theory

Marketing mix or often referred to as *Marketing Mix* introduced by Boom and Bitner. Marketing mix is one of the marketing strategies to convey information widely, introduce a product of goods and services, stimulate consumers to give and even create personal preferences for the image of a product (Christian A.D, 2016: 72).

The marketing mix in the discussion of education is one of the most important elements in producing a strategy in education marketing. There are at least 7 elements of the marketing mix commonly referred to as the 7Ps, including *product, price, place, promotion, people, physical evidence, process* (Khasanah, 2015: 166).

G. Implementation of educational marketing strategies

This research focuses on the steps of the Al-Hidayah Islamic Boarding School in marketing to offer educational services to the community.

1. Product

A product is anything that can be offered to a market in order to be noticed, demanded, worn, or consumed so as to possibly satisfy a desire or need (Kotler, 1996: 41). The superiority of a service product depends on the uniqueness and quality that is considered by the service whether it is in accordance with the expectations and desires of consumers (Syamsi, 2012: 23).

Al-Hidayah Islamic boarding school generally offers service products in the form of student learning using traditional pesantren learning methods that emphasize perseverance and discipline as well as *istiqomah* in carrying out worship as well as several extracurricular activity programs, including extracurricular art of tambourine music / prayer, speech / *khitobah*, singing art of Qur'anic verses / *qiro'ah*, and Arabic painting / calligraphy. This learning must be followed by every class of students *Mukim* and allowed also to be attended by general youth classes. Each product offered has its own uniqueness and in each learning program has its own benefits both for the needs in the world and in the hereafter. The superiority of a service product depends on the uniqueness and quality that is considered by the service whether it is in accordance with the expectations and desires of consumers (Syamsi, 2012: 23).

2. Price

Price becomes the most important element in determining the level of profit for the organization. According to Kotler and Armstrong, price is the value of goods and services measured by money (Nurmi, 2015: 6). In determining the pricing strategy of services/products, it is necessary to pay attention to several elements in pricing. The pricing policy or commonly called *shahriah* in pesantren in every month, Al-Hidayah Islamic boarding school does not set prices at high costs due to the condition of the community in the *sakitar* environment which tends to be middle to lower class. This is a strategy aimed at

meeting the needs of the surrounding community. The pricing strategy that is affordable to the community, and the needs of consumers in the market have been met, so this will facilitate the process of promoting pesantren.

Novia and Widyaningrum put forward several important elements in pricing, namely: price according to quality; price according to facilities; Priced; the price set in accordance with the benefits obtained; room access rates according to service; price *cooperate* For cooperating companies (Supriyanto & Taali, 2018: 14)

3. People (Human Resources)

Browse In the context of education are people involved in the process of seeding educational services such as administration, principals, teachers and employees. These educator and educational resources are very important and even spearhead in the process of providing educational services to students in madrasah institutions (Khasanah, 2015: 167). So to get consumer satisfaction, human resources in an organization / institution must be well trained so that the quality of the products offered will get a good image as well.

Al-Hidayah Pageruyung Kendal Islamic boarding school has a total of human resources of around 11 people consisting of caregivers and families totaling 5 people, 6 teachers / *ustadz* graduates of Islamic boarding schools. Then human resources who become educators also have the task of studying the yellow book and have been divided into 7 learning classes. Each educator has their own experience both in Islamic boarding schools and in schools. Educators in this pesantren on average have studied at Islamic boarding schools around 6-10 years before teaching at Al-Hidayah Islamic boarding schools. Then 7 out of 11 educators have held an S1 bachelor's degree after

completing their religious education at pesantren.

Some things that need to be considered in empowering human resources include: *Product Knowledge* employees are spacious and nice; friendly and polite employees; attractive and sympathetic appearance of employees; the ability of employees to resolve guest complaints; the appearance of employees is neat and pleasant; The language used is polite and easy to understand (Supriyanto & Taali, 2018: 15).

4. *Physical Evidence*

Physical evidence is a tangible manifestation offered to customers. There are actually no physical attributes to service, so consumers tend to rely on material cues (Marcelina & B, 2016: 4). Physical evidence is often referred to as the facilities and infrastructure and facilities provided by the organization/product provider.

The facilities and infrastructure owned by this pesantren include 5 male student rooms, 5 female student rooms, 2 large halls for congregations, 7 halls for reciting, 2 cooperatives, 1 student kitchen, 3 female bathrooms, 1 large male bathroom, 1 well for student irrigation, 1 photocopier, 2 printers, 1 LCD TV, a computer set, and 1 laptop unit. Facilities and infrastructure in the Al-Hidayah Islamic boarding school are provided to provide comfort for students / students so that they can support all learning processes in order to fulfill traditional learning in pesantren and for the learning needs of public schools.

The above statement is in accordance with what Rosady Ruslan stated, namely that marketing is an effort to stimulate purchases while increasing values or satisfaction for customers who enjoy their products (Ruslan, 2005: 254).

5. *Process*

According to Kotler, the process here is to cover how the company serves the demands of each of its consumers. Starting from the consumer ordering (*order*) Until finally consumers get what they want (Marcelina & B, 2016: 4). Al-Hidayah Islamic boarding school in Kendal Regency has a curriculum prepared by Islamic boarding school caregivers along with several educators by applying traditional aspects of pesantren such as methods *Sorogan* and *Bandongan* Then it is aligned by the secretary with the activities of students in the school to fit the curriculum at school. The learning process at Al-Hidayah Islamic Boarding School is arranged and determined according to the school year when students enter the Islamic boarding school.

In addition, at the Al-Hidayah Pageruyung Kendal Islamic boarding school also has a special time program to study together. The students are given a special schedule by the board to study together, and all students are required to take part in this special activity so that students can keep pace with learning at school and even excel in the field of general science. This process in the context of educational services is several steps in education which include all activities that support the implementation of the process of teaching and learning activities for the formation of products / graduates (*output*) desired (Hidayat & Machali, 2012: 21).

6. *Promotion*

Promotion is the last and most important marketing mix activity. According to Kotler, promotion is a variety of activities carried out by companies that highlight the specialty of their products that persuade target consumers to buy them (Kotler, 2002: 41).

The promotion carried out by the Al-Hidayah Pageruyung Kendal Islamic boarding school utilizes several digital technologies, both using print media such as brochures,

calendars and so on, as well as non-print media such as registering new students online through google forms, registration information in the form of posts on social media, as well as photos of infrastructure facilities and learning activities posted on social media in the form of photos and video documentation.

This promotional step can be carried out if all promotional needs are ready to be promoted starting from the products offered, prices, human resources, infrastructure and the learning process are ready to be offered in the community. Promotion is indispensable for every educational institution. With the promotion of the community will know the programs implemented by educational institutions and the purpose of establishing these educational institutions. Marketing is needed for educational institutions in building a positive image (Faizin, 2017: 261).

Conclusion

Based on the description and discussion in the research above, the author can conclude that the Al-Hidayah Pageruyung Kendal Islamic Boarding School has implemented marketing strategies with various activities and uses the foundation / concept of the 7P marketing mix marketing strategy to achieve more accurate marketing goals, the 7P mix includes *Product, Price, Place, People, Promotion, Process, Physical Evidence*. With this concept, Al-Hidayah Islamic Boarding School has a real and clear direction in achieving its goals.

The marketing process of Al-Hidayah Islamic boarding school has a strategy with the offering of salaf / traditional pesantren educational service products that support the curriculum in schools so that they have a quality of education that is not left behind and needed by consumers. Furthermore, human resources at the Al-Hidayah Islamic boarding school are educators who have received religious education at the Islamic boarding school and some of them have bachelor's degrees. Learning facilities are well managed to meet learning needs. After that, a

promotion was carried out regarding everything in the Al-Hidayah Islamic boarding school.

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