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Building the Image of Pantoloan 10th State Elementary School: An Effective Educational Marketing Strategy Approach

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
<p><i>Historis:</i> Submit 5 March 2024 Review 27 April 2024 Revision 24 May 2024 Accepted 18 June 2024 Publish 27 July 2024</p> <hr/> <p><i>Keywords:</i> Educational Marketing, School Image, Social Media, Differentiation Strategy, Quality of Educational Services.</p> <hr/> <p><i>Corresponding Author:</i> Laorensia Yolanda Sundah email: yolandakweee358@gmail.com</p>	<p>This study analyzes the educational marketing strategy implemented at State Elementary School (SDN) 10 Pantoloan, Palu City, with the aim of improving the school's image in the eyes of the public. Educational marketing is considered an important factor in attracting the attention of parents and prospective students, as well as in increasing the school's competitiveness, especially with other leading schools in Palu City. The results of the study indicate that SDN 10 Pantoloan has utilized social media to promote school activities, but still faces major obstacles related to limited facilities.</p> <p>The importance of consistent and structured marketing strategies is emphasized in this study, where word of mouth and the use of social media can improve the image of the school. However, the quality of educational services and adequate facilities remain the main factors in building a sustainable positive image. This study suggests that SDN 10 Pantoloan continue to improve the quality of teaching, facilities, and marketing approaches in order to attract more prospective students and increase the school's attractiveness in the education market of Palu City.</p>

INTRODUCTION

The development of elementary school education in Indonesia has experienced significant progress over time. Increasing access to education, quality of education, equity of education, poverty alleviation, improving teacher quality, and developing educational facilities and infrastructure have all contributed to this progress. Educational marketing is one of the important factors in influencing the development of education at the elementary school level. An effective marketing strategy in the context of education allows institutions to be better known and in demand by the public (Mukmin, 2020).

Educational marketing plays a crucial role in introducing institutions to the public. According to Najiha & Munastiwi (2022), educational institutions that carry out marketing tasks effectively will have greater appeal to prospective students and parents. This is also supported by research

Ningsih et al. (2024) which shows that educational institutions that fail to attract prospective students are often caused by their inability to adapt to change, including low marketing efforts made by school management. Therefore, a consistent and planned marketing strategy can greatly help in increasing the attractiveness of schools to prospective students and their parents, especially in the current competitive situation (Bahri, 2021).

The main objective of educational marketing is to raise public awareness of the importance of education and promote institutions to encourage parents to enroll their children. Through good marketing, information about educational institutions, the facilities offered, and the benefits that children can obtain can be conveyed clearly (Fauziah et al., 2023). Educational marketing also serves to ensure the survival of institutions amidst increasingly fierce competition, by effectively marketing the advantages of each institution (Rahman et al., 2023).

School image is an important element in educational marketing that can influence the decisions of parents and prospective students in choosing an educational institution. School image is formed from community assessments, experiences, and public sentiment (Mukmin, 2020). Elements such as service quality, educational facilities, programs offered, and school culture have a significant impact on this image (Ariyani et al., 2024). Schools with a positive image are more likely to be of interest to prospective students and are often considered the main choice by parents (Ningsih et al., 2024). Thus, planned marketing efforts play a major role in building and improving the school's image to achieve greater appeal in the eyes of the public (Elshifa et al., 2023).

For example, Pantoloan 10 Public Elementary School in Palu City, although it has the potential to develop, faces challenges in terms of facilities, service quality, and competent teaching staff, all of which affect the image and attractiveness of the school (Ningsih et al., 2024). In addition, institutions must pay attention to the development of digital marketing to attract more public attention (Milyane, 2023). Thus, strengthening the field of educational marketing, both through traditional and digital methods, is a strategic step to improve the quality and image of education in Indonesia.

Table 1. Best Primary Schools in Palu City

No	Elementary school	Address
1	SDN 15 Palu	Jl. Suprpto No.15, Central Besusu
2	Palu Islamic Elementary School for Developing Human Resources	Jl Agatis Nunu, Tatanga District
3	SDN 3 Palu	Jl. Moh Hatta No.17, North Lolue, East Palu District
4	Al-Azhar Independent Elementary School, Palu	Jl. Merpati II No.25, Tanamodindi, Mantikulore District
5	SDN 10 Palu	Jl. Mawar No.4 North Lolue, South Palu District
6	SDN 16 Palu	Jl. Una-una No.68 North Lolue, South Palu District
7	SDIT Fosters the Nation's Children	Jl. Towua II No.29 South Tatura, South Palu District
8	SDN 22 Palu	Jl. Soeprpto Besusu Tengah, East Palu District
9	SDN 24 Palu	Jl. Cik Ditiro No.25 West Besusu, East Palu District
10	SDN 9 Palu	Jl. KH. Wahid Hasyim No.25, West Palu District

Source: *Jati Times.com* (2023)

From the table above, it can be concluded that SDN 10 Pantoloan is not yet included in the list of the best leading schools in Palu City. One of the main factors influencing this is the lack of adequate facilities, suboptimal service quality, and limited number and quality of competent teachers. All of these factors have a major impact on the image of SDN 10 Pantoloan in the eyes of the public. Therefore, strengthening the right marketing strategy is very necessary to improve the school's image and increase its competitiveness among other leading schools.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research methodology uses a qualitative approach with a case study to analyze the educational marketing strategy implemented at Pantoloan 10 Elementary School, Palu City. The qualitative approach was chosen because this study aims to deeply understand the phenomena that occur in the field related to the image of the school and the implementation of educational marketing. By using a case study, researchers can explore in detail how the marketing strategy implemented in this school relates to public perception and how it affects the school's attractiveness.

The data in this study will be obtained through in-depth interviews with the principal, teachers, administrative staff, and parents of students to explore their understanding of educational marketing implemented and its impact on the school's image. In addition, direct observation of marketing activities carried out by the school, such as promotions through social media and interactions with the community, will also be carried out to provide a more complete picture of the implementation of the strategy. Document analysis is also used to evaluate marketing materials that have been used by the school, such as brochures, announcements, and information published on the school website.

Data analysis was conducted using thematic analysis techniques to identify themes and patterns that emerged from interview, observation, and document data. With this thematic analysis, researchers can understand the factors that influence school image and how educational marketing plays a role in improving public perception of Pantoloan 10 Elementary School. In addition, data triangulation will be conducted to ensure the validity of the findings by comparing data obtained from various sources, such as interviews, observations, and documents, to obtain a more accurate picture of the marketing strategies implemented.

With this qualitative approach based on case studies, the research is expected to provide deeper insight into the important role of educational marketing in building school image, as well as provide recommendations for strategies that can be implemented to improve the competitiveness of Pantoloan 10 Public Elementary School in the Palu City education market.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

This study aims to analyze the educational marketing strategy implemented at SDN 10 Pantoloan, Palu City, to build a positive school image in the eyes of the community. Based on interviews with various informants involving the Principal, teachers, parents of students, and administrative staff, it can be concluded that educational marketing is an important factor in increasing the attractiveness of schools, especially in the context of competition with leading schools in Palu City.

According to the Principal of SDN 10 Pantoloan, Mr. M. educational marketing is an important step to introduce the school to the public. "Educational marketing is indeed very important, especially to introduce this school to the public. Currently, we realize that although the quality of education in our school is quite good, many people are not yet fully aware of the facilities and services we offer. Therefore, marketing is a part that we prioritize," he said. He explained that the school has started to utilize social media such as Instagram and Facebook to promote positive activities in the school. However, the biggest challenge faced is the limited facilities which are still a major obstacle in building the school's image.

A 5th grade teacher, Mrs. A. also highlighted the importance of educational marketing to improve the school's image. She said, "I think educational marketing is very important, because through marketing, parents and the community can find out the advantages of our school. Although we have provided good teaching, many parents do not know about our school's achievements, both

in terms of teaching and extracurricular activities." The biggest obstacle faced in educational marketing at this school is the lack of facilities that support teaching and learning activities, such as inadequate classrooms and limited learning tools. "Things like this make the school's image less than optimal in the eyes of the community," she added. However, the 5th grade teacher believes that marketing through social media is very helpful, but it must be accompanied by correct and interesting information in order to reach more parents and the community.

Mrs. M., a parent of a student, also shared her views on the importance of educational marketing at SDN 10 Pantoloan. She stated, "From my experience, SDN 10 Pantoloan has excellent teachers, although the facilities are still lacking. I feel that my child gets full attention in the learning process." However, according to her, improving the facilities is very much needed to attract more parents to choose this school. Mrs. M. also added, "The school needs to be more active in promoting student success and school activities. Maybe if there is a more structured program and it is often published on social media, other parents will be more interested in sending their children to school here." She feels that social media is very helpful in providing information about school activities and hopes that it will be used more often to reach more parents and the community.

From the administrative staff side, Mr. B, explained their role in supporting education marketing. "We strongly support school marketing through transparent administration management that is easily accessible to parents and the community. We also document every activity carried out at school to be uploaded to social media or the school website, which helps to promote a positive image of the school," said Mr. B. He also saw an increase in the number of registrants in recent years, although not significant. "With more information accessible to parents, they are starting to have more confidence in the quality of education we provide," he added.

Based on the results of interviews and observations in the field, the educational marketing strategy implemented at SDN 10 Pantoloan still faces several obstacles, especially in terms of limited facilities. Even so, the school has utilized social media as a means to introduce the school and positive activities carried out by students. The use of social media is in line with research showing that its use can contribute to improving the image of the school and attracting the interest of new students (Fradito et al., 2020; Wijayanto & Qana'a, 2023). This shows that promotion, as an important part of a marketing strategy, has a significant role in building a positive image of educational institutions (Fradito et al., 2020).

However, service quality is also a key factor underlying customer satisfaction in the education services sector. High service quality is essential to attract and retain students and parents, but proper references to support this statement are not included in the text. Therefore, schools need to continue to improve the quality of service in the teaching and learning process to ensure that students and parents are satisfied with the services provided. Previous studies have shown that parent and student satisfaction can be influenced by the effectiveness of marketing management implemented by educational institutions (Sarifudin & Maya, 2019).

In addition, Educational marketing strategies must be oriented towards customer satisfaction, namely students and parents. In this context, SDN 10 Pantoloan needs to be more active in communicating the successes that have been achieved by students, as well as improving existing facilities. Improving facilities will contribute to a more positive school image, which can attract more new students (Ibrahim et al., 2022; Nurbawani, 2021). With a more structured and consistent marketing approach, it is hoped that the school's image can improve.

Overall, although SDN 10 Pantoloan faces several challenges in building its positive image, the steps that have been taken by the school, such as utilizing social media and improving the quality of educational services, show their commitment to improving the school's image. By strengthening facilities and improving communication with the community through more planned and structured marketing, it is hoped that SDN 10 Pantoloan can strengthen its position in the education market in Palu City (Fradito et al., 2020; Sarifudin & Maya, 2019).

Discussion

This study examines the educational marketing strategy implemented at SDN 10 Pantoloan, Palu City, with a focus on efforts to build a positive image of the school in the eyes of the public. Based on the results of the study, it can be concluded that educational marketing plays a key role in attracting the attention of the public, especially parents and prospective students, to this school. This is very important considering the competition with leading schools in Palu City that have more complete facilities (Ismuratno et al., 2021) (Detisha et al., 2023). According to Ismuratno et al., good and structured marketing is one of the keys to achieving school targets and goals, and must be carried out with the right and sustainable approach to achieve optimal results (Ismuratno et al., 2021).

Along with the development of the times, the use of social media has become one of the most effective means in the educational marketing strategy at SDN 10 Pantoloan. The Principal, Mr. M., stated that they have started to utilize platforms such as Instagram and Facebook to introduce various positive activities at school. This is in line with the results of research by Detisha et al. which shows that promotion through social media can increase the attractiveness of educational institutions and reach more parents and the community (Detisha et al., 2023). Promotion through social media makes it easier to build greater awareness of the quality of education at SDN 10 Pantoloan.

However, the biggest challenge faced by this school is the limited facilities available, which is an obstacle in creating an optimal image in the eyes of the public. This is in line with the theory that states that the quality of service and facilities greatly influences customer satisfaction in the service sector (Munawaroh & Ikhsan, 2022). Research by Sarifudin and Maya also emphasizes the importance of service quality in educational marketing strategies to increase customer satisfaction, in this case students and parents (Sarifudin & Maya, 2019).

Therefore, the marketing strategy implemented by SDN 10 Pantoloan needs to be more active in communicating the successes that have been achieved by students, both in academic and non-academic matters. The 5th grade teacher, Mrs. A., also expressed something similar, emphasizing that although the teaching in this school is good, many parents do not know the school's achievements as a whole.

Incomplete facilities at school make the school's image less than optimal, even though the marketing efforts made are quite good. The school must be more active in promoting the achievements that have been achieved by students and success in extracurricular activities to build a positive image in the community (Nurbawani, 2021). One of the most important marketing tactics used by SDN 10 Pantoloan is word of mouth. The school realizes that although distributing brochures and other promotional materials is important, promotions carried out by parents and students who have felt the benefits of educational services will be more effective (Najiha & Munastiwi, 2022).

As explained by (Fradito et al., 2020), promotions that come from direct recommendations from satisfied customers have a greater impact and can increase the trust of other potential customers (Fradito et al., 2020). Therefore, SDN 10 Pantoloan needs to ensure that every student and parent gets adequate services, so that they will voluntarily recommend the school to others.

However, although promotions through social media and word of mouth are very helpful, the quality of educational services remains the main factor in building a positive school image. Kotler (2002) emphasized that in the service sector, especially education, service quality is the key to creating customer satisfaction which in turn will result in loyalty and positive promotion from customers (Munawaroh & Ikhsan, 2022). In this case, the school must continue to improve the quality of teaching, facilities, and administrative services to ensure that students and parents are satisfied with the services provided (Sarifudin & Maya, 2019).

In addition to promotion, the differentiation strategy implemented by SDN 10 Pantoloan is also worth noting. The advantages possessed by this school, such as achievements at the local to national levels, are added value that can be used to differentiate SDN 10 Pantoloan from its competitors (Maisah et al., 2020). Another advantage is the relatively affordable cost of education, which provides benefits for people who want quality education without having to spend high costs.

This differentiation strategy supports the school's efforts to compete in the increasingly competitive education market, as explained by Alma (2003), that educational marketing strategies must utilize existing advantages to attract the attention of a wider market (Akbar et al., 2024). SDN 10 Pantoloan also implements a marketing approach by combining several components of a marketing strategy, including Product, Place, Price, and Promotion, as well as additional People, Process, and Proof in the context of education (Suyarti et al., 2024). By optimizing the use of social media and improving the quality of services and facilities, SDN 10 Pantoloan can be more effective in building a positive image.

Overall, although SDN 10 Pantoloan faces challenges in terms of facilities and resources, the steps that have been taken in the educational marketing strategy show that the school is committed to improving its image and increasing the school's attractiveness. Through the use of social media, word of mouth promotion, and differentiation in terms of achievement and affordable costs, SDN 10 Pantoloan can strengthen its position in the education market in Palu City. However, to achieve more optimal results, the school needs to continue to improve existing facilities and teaching quality, in order to meet the expectations of parents and students, and compete with other leading schools (Najiha & Munastiwi, 2022).

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the study, it can be concluded that the educational marketing strategy implemented at SDN 10 Pantoloan has a very important role in building a positive image of the school in the eyes of the public. The use of social media as a marketing tool has proven effective in introducing positive activities carried out at the school. However, the biggest challenge faced by this school is the limited facilities that can support teaching and learning activities. Nevertheless, SDN 10 Pantoloan strives to improve the school's image through consistent promotions, including utilizing social media and word of mouth, which are very effective in building public trust in the quality of education offered.

In the future, SDN 10 Pantoloan needs to continue its efforts to improve the quality of facilities and teaching in order to meet community expectations and compete with other leading schools. More structured education marketing and improving the quality of services will further strengthen the school's positive image. Thus, SDN 10 Pantoloan is expected to attract more prospective students, as well as strengthen its position in the education market of Palu City, making it the main choice for parents and prospective students looking for quality education at affordable costs.

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