



## **POSITIONING AND DIFFERENTIATION OF EDUCATION SERVICES**

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### **Abstract:**

Marketing management of educational services carried out by educational institutions will be able to increase public interest in the educational services offered. To be able to realize this, educational institutions need a strategy so that this can be achieved. The strategies needed include positioning and differentiation related to educational services. This article aims to discuss everything related to positioning and differentiation of Islamic education services. The method used in this paper is a literature review or literature study which contains theories that are relevant to the problems that will be discussed, the study is explained regarding the concepts and theories used based on available literature, from books and articles that has been published in a scientific journal. The results of this article regarding positioning and differentiation of educational services are that these two things can be said to be two interrelated things, because positioning is a positioning for educational institutions to show their position to the wider community with a good and positive image and worthy of their services being used, while differentiation is about the methods or strategies used by educational institutions to be able to provide a more unique difference from competitors or other educational institutions, so that this difference can attract the interest of consumers (the public) who are then interested in using the services of educational institutions.

**Keywords:** *Positioning, Differentiation, Services, Education*

### **INTRODUCTION**

The development of marketing of educational institutions in recent years has been very encouraging, educational institutions seem to be competing to offer various advantages to the public. We can see that when the agenda for accepting new students approaches, schools are aggressively distributing brochures, pamphlets, putting up banners, even conducting outreach through social media and print media, there are even educational institutions that are willing to carry out outreach by visiting schools. (Indra Setyanto, et al, 2021). In order to win the competition in the world of education, it is very important for an educational institution to implement the right strategy in order to build an image and trust for the wider community, especially for the local community, because currently there is a change in the community's mindset in looking for the best school for its children. his daughter. Most people no longer think about distance, cost and status of public or private schools. All of that is no longer the main reason for choosing a school. Parents are willing to travel long distances as long as the school is of good quality. Cost is no longer the main issue because the costs offered will be proportional to the services and facilities provided. In marketing Islamic education services, there are two things related to marketing educational services, namely positioning and differentiation of educational services. This article was written to explain and describe matters relating to positioning and differentiation of educational services.

## **RESEARCH METHODS**

The method used is literature review or literature study which contains theories that are relevant to the problems to be discussed. The study describes the concepts and theories used based on available literature, from books and articles that have been published in scientific journals. Literature review functions to build concepts or theories that form the basis of studies in a research study. (Sujarweni, 2014) This method is carried out as a step to describe and elaborate on matters related to positioning and differentiation of educational services.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Understanding Positioning and Differentiation of Education Services**

Positioning can be interpreted as an effort to instill an image and create a positive impression or perception in the minds of users of educational services so that the programs offered by educational institutions have their own characteristics that can differentiate them from other educational institutions. Positioning must include a value proposition, a strong reason why the target market should "choose" the institution's offering. Positioning itself acts as a liaison between the programs owned by the madrasah and potential users of educational services. Positioning is related to the way the madrasa positions its educational institution in providing services that are different from other madrasahs. Positioning will also make it easier for consumers to differentiate service products from one institution to another. (Atika, 2016) Positioning is an effort made by educational institutions to provide a good and positive image to the public.

Positioning is something that is done to the minds of potential consumers, namely impressing the product on the minds of potential consumers through communication. According to Heirmawan Kartajaya, "Positioning is the strategy for attracting your customers confidently", namely an effort to orient customers in a credible manner. Heirmawan believes that positioning is a being strategy, nothing but our efforts to balance and gain customer trust. (Hermawan, 2004) According to Kotleir, positioning is the act of designing the company's offer and image so that it emulates its unique position (compared to competitors) in customer behavior. target. (Philip, 2004) Positioning is the characteristics and branding of real products that make it easier for service users to implement service programs between one institution and another. (Afidatun, 2015)

From the various definitions above regarding the positioning of educational services, it can be said that positioning is a position improvement for educational institutions. Positioning in the context of educational services can be interpreted as a strategy to determine how educational institutions balance the identity of their institutions through the advantages they have that differentiate their service products compared to competitors in the consumer market (society). The positioning of an educational institution must be perceived positively by displaying superior values, where the institution must provide concrete evidence and produce output that is in line with the expectations of educational service users, so that service users are not disappointed with the promises made by the educational institution.

Positioning and differentiation are two parts that can be said to be interrelated in the marketing of educational services. Differentiation is a concept adopted from marketing which aims to create differentiation from other companies. According to the language, *diffeireinitiasi* comes from the word *diffeireint*, which means different from others, different, and out of the ordinary. According to the term, differentiation is the act of designing a differentiation which means to differentiate the company's offer from competitors' offers. As for differentiation, the product offered is different from one or more competitors, through a method or many methods that can be assessed by customers, thereby influencing customer choices. Differentiation is making it easier to provide a strong enough value in goods for customers and it is hoped that customers will be aware that this value exists, which then means that the final benefit must be able to influence customer decisions. (Dwi, 2014) So, the purpose of this differentiation can be seen easily recognized in the size or If it is easily matched or calculated by customers, an effective competitive advantage strategy will occur.

According to Kotleir, who provided the definition of differentiation, differentiation is the

act of designing a differentiation set which means to differentiate a company's offering from competitors' offers. Meanwhile, according to Payne, differentiation is a company's ability to effectively differentiate itself from its competitors by providing greater value to its customers. Unlike Craveins, he uses the term competitive advantages to describe the term differentiation. According to him, competitive advantages are advantages offered by institutions to consumers by conveying superior value through prices that are cheaper than other institutions and unique advantages that are not just cheap prices. (Musyafa, 2010)

Based on the objectives described above, the investment strategy can be concluded that the investment strategy is how an institution can provide a unique offering that is more unique than that of competitors, so that the consumer experience is iliki higher value. As for the efforts made by the school to create and provide excellence in educational services that are not provided by other schools towards stakeholders, especially students and guardians, it is hoped that this initiative will attract the interest of prospective students and can provide significant advantages.

#### Development of Positioning and Differentiation of Education Services

Positioning as part of a marketing strategy in gaining the community share of users of personal services is absolutely necessary for personal institutions to balance the identity or brand of an institution, especially considering the large number of independent institutions today which make individual institutions seem to be in a condition of standing on the crowd (beirdiri). in mutually imprecise conditions) . Positioning is something that is done to the minds of potential consumers, namely by placing the product in the minds of potential consumers through communication. According to Kotler, there are at least three steps in carrying out positioning, namely as follows.(1.)Identify possible advantages that can be displayed in relationships with competitors.(2.)Select the strongest or most prominent advantages.(3.)Effectively convey these advantages to market targets.

The first and second steps are post-intention steps and the third step is the communication step. Before carrying out the three steps above, according to Kotler, an organization or company must first identify who its potential customers are. In order to identify potential customers, a market idea is needed, which includes a segmentation and targeting targets. So, to determine the position, the steps that must be taken are:(1) Market identification (segmentation and targeting). (2) Meinginalii advantages.(3) Select the strongest or most prominent advantages.(4) Establish positioning.

Meanwhile, Heirmawan Kartajaya said that there are several things that are needed to balance the right position, namely: (1.)Positioning must be implemented positively by users of educational services and become the reason for choosing that individualized institution. Therefore, the position must identify superior values. The positioning used by the institution must be able to convince the public that the programs offered by the institution are truly good, so that service users will be convinced to choose the institution. (2.)Positioning must be able to enhance the strength of the individual institution and provide competitive advantage because this is the main point for increasing the credibility of the owned individual institution.(3.)Positioning must have its own unique characteristics so that users of individualization services can differentiate innovation from other competitors. So it can become an independent attraction for users of personal services.(4.)Positioning must be sustainable and always relevant to the needs that will be faced by the institution as challenges change in the individual environment. Based on the explanations above, once a position is established, an appropriate communication strategy is needed so that the position established by the individual institution can be considered credible. To see the position's credibility, it can be done by analyzing the marketing mix. Positioning strategy is a combination of marketing program strategies that are used to describe the position desired by the management of marketing targets.

In order to face the highest levels of competition, schools must be able to provide programs that are not just quality, but programs that also have distinctive values as characteristics of the school's competitive advantage. The creation of educational programs and services must be designed based on an accurate analysis of the environmental balance surrounding the school. For this reason, according to Bagley, the

school must know what the student's parents think, how the school intends to make decisions, and what the school wants from the school. In difeireinsiasii there are also several sources of difeireinsiasii According to Ariief, Rahayu & Thoyiib, there are several sources of difeireinsiasi, namely the following.

Product differentiation, physical products are things that have the potential to become products. Companies can customize their products based on specialty, 7 performance qualities, conformity quality, durability, reliability, ease of repair, style and design. (2.) Service differentiation, the main service objectives are ease of service, dedication, installation, maintenance and improvement.(3.) Personality development, there are a number of characteristics that indicate a trained personality, namely personal ability, politeness, credibility, dependability, responsiveness and communication.(4.)Channel distribution, in carrying out channel distribution, the company can carry out strategies based on exclusive distribution, exclusive distribution and intensive distribution. (5.)Image creation, companies can express images through symbols, written media and visual audio as well as atmosphere.

#### Determining the Positioning of Educational Services

To create a unique and valuable position in the eyes of consumers, it must be based on the superiority of the product or service which will later be introduced to potential consumers as an identity or branding institution. The determination of excellence to become a position can be based on several of the following things.(1.)Position planning is based on attributes This positioning is carried out by highlighting product attributes that are superior to those of its competitors. According to Fandy Tjiptono, marketing is based on characteristics, namely how to associate a product with specific attributes, characteristics, special characteristics or benefits for customers. The selection of attributes that will be used as a positioning basis must be based on the following 6 criteria. (Fandy, 2014)( 1)The degree of importance (importance), meaning that the attribute is very valuable in the eyes of customers.(2) Uniqueness, meaning that this attribute is not offered by other companies. It could also be that these attributes are more clearly appreciated by the company compared to its competitors. (3) Communicability, meaning that these attributes can be communicated simply and clearly, so that customers can understand them. (4) Preceptive, meaning that the attribute cannot be imitated by its competitors.

Affordability, meaning that target customers will be able to afford the benefits or unique attributes. Any additional costs for special characteristics are viewed as worth the added value.(1) Profitability, meaning that the institution can achieve greater value by highlighting these benefits. (2.) Positioning is based on benefits. Positioning is based on Benefits. This method means that the product is positioned as a leader in a specific benefit or is more closely linked to the greater benefits that a product provides. According to Kotleir, the position is based on the advantages that the product has in satisfying the needs, desires and desires of consumers.(3.)Determining the position according to its use and use. This method is carried out by highlighting a set of use and use values. Marketing based on the use or implementation of the product can involve multiple marketing strategies, although each addition to the strategy does not mean that it will involve difficulties and risks. Often a usage-based positioning strategy is used as a second or third position designed to balance the market.(4.)Positioning based on use, this means posing the best product for a number of user groups or in other words, the product is more targeted at a community or more. Or in other words positioning according to usage is done by associating the product with the product's personality or user type.(5.)Positioning is based on competitors, that is, it is related to the position of competitors with first competitors. Often this type of marketing campaign is to convince consumers that a product is better than the market leader's target market for that specific product. The product as a whole emphasizes its brand name strongly and is positioned as better than its competitors. (6.)Positioning based on product categories. This method is carried out by positioning the product as a leader in product categories. Positioning means changing or replacing a particular product type, for example in "kopiiko" perfume which is positioned as kopii in the form of a peirmein, not a kopii flavored peirmein. (7.)Price-based positioning, namely positioning that seeks to create the appearance or image of high quality through high prices or vice versa, using low prices as an indicator

of value. Here the product is positioned to provide the best value.

In fact, the term positioning or positioning was first popularized by two advertising executives, Al Ries and Jack Trout. According to the theory of positioning, it is not what is done to the product, but what is done to the mind of the consumer. Positioning balances the perception of organizations or institutions in target markets that are relative to competitors, therefore as one part of marketing strategy, positioning is a very important activity in the formulation of marketing strategy and planning.

#### Dimensions of Educational Services Differentiation

Differentiation of educational services are related to educational institutions (schools), the concept of differentiation means efforts made by schools to create and provide excellence in educational services that are not provided by other schools to stakeholders, especially students and guardians of students. It is hoped that this initiative will attract the interest of prospective students and can provide significant advantages. The dimensions of the existence of differentiation will be described as follows. (1.) Dimensions of Personal Services

Personal services can be categorized as non-profit services, therefore the dimensions of excellence of personal services can be classified in five main dimensions, namely: (a.) Reliability, namely the ability to deliver promised services in a timely, accurate and satisfactory manner. Some examples are: offering a curriculum that is in line with the expectations of society (paying attention to academic competence and developing moral aspects), an easy and enjoyable learning process, a fair learning process, service and providing facilities to balance interests and talents. (b.) Responsiveness (Responsiveness), namely: the willingness/willingness of the staff to help customers and provide responsive service. Having customers wait for unclear reasons can give rise to negative perceptions of quality. In this way, the school principal, teachers and employees must be accessible and friendly, existing facilities (library, computers, labs and sports rooms) must be easily accessible to all school members. If a complaint occurs, it will be responded to quickly and professionally by stakeholders. (c.) Assurance (Assurance), includes knowledge, competence, politeness, respect for customers, the existence of trustworthy characteristics from leaders, teachers and employees. For example, the entire board of teachers shows competence in their field, the reputation of the school is good in the eyes of the community, the attitude and behavior of all levels ensures a professional attitude and politeness. In addition, there is also a guarantee of student achievement, both academic and non-academic.

(d.) Sympathy, conveys ease in carrying out relationships, good communication, personal attention, and understanding the needs of customers. For example, teachers want to know the names of their students, BP can actually act as a counselor, every teacher can be contacted easily if students experience difficulties in learning. (e.) Prove it directly, including infrastructure, teachers and employees, and communication facilities. For example, in the form of a good building, adequate library facilities, beautiful classrooms, sports facilities, classroom facilities, student dormitories and so on.

From the characteristics of this educational service, a school can determine the superiority of its educational service among other schools. Of course, the discipline that has been determined cannot forget the basic needs (primary demand) of students and guardians, namely academic mastery in accordance with the basic competencies that have been determined. (2.) Strategy for the Implementation of Personal Services

Strategy is supposed to be able to determine the differentiation of individual services, because this particular thing cannot be separated from the concept of strategy management (strategy management) that is itself. According to Yusanto and Wiidjajakusuma, the use of this strategic management concept is due to the fact that this integration has a number of advantages, namely: (a.) Strategic management incorporates dynamic environmental forecasting efforts as well as external considerations in formulating and implementing organizational plans. (b.) Strategic management has a large-scale and broad scope of management processes. (c.) Strategic management provides a set of strategic decisions and actions to achieve company goals

d. Strategic management connects three key factors, namely the environment, resources, and hopes and goals. (e.) Strategic management is considered the pinnacle of perfection of the management process. (Muhammad, 2013)

Based on the description above of strategic management, it can be concluded that the field of Islamic educational services can be tied quite closely to strategic management, this means that strategic management focuses on efforts to improve management, marketing, finance or accounting, production or operations, refinement and balancing, as well as systems inform computers to achieve organizational success. Therefore, it can be concluded that strategic management is a management process which includes planning, directing, organizing and controlling the company's decisions and actions to achieve the goals and objectives that have been set.

## CONCLUSION

Positioning in the context of educational services can be interpreted as a strategic strategy for how an educational institution balances the identity of its institution through the advantages it possesses which make its service products comparable to competitors in consumer (society) market. Positioning is also related to the way the madrasah implements its educational institutions in providing services that are different from other madrasahs. Meanwhile, the creation of an individualized service is an effort made by an individualized institution to facilitate the creation of a strong enough value in goods or services for customers or communities that use the customized service and it is hoped that these customers will be aware that this value exists, which in turn, the final benefit must be able to impact the future. community decision . Based on the above statement, it can be concluded that positioning and differentiation are two things that are mutually related in the marketing of individual services, because positioning is a strategy carried out by an individual institution to provide an image of the position of the individual institution itself. for the community that the educational institution it builds has something a good and positive image for the use of its services, while the creation of an individual service is a method or strategy carried out by an educational institution so that the image or thing that is demonstrated to society has a value that is different from that of other individual institutions. If these two strategies have been carried out as well as possible by educational institutions, then it can make it easier for the community to assess which individual educational institutions are worthy of using their services.

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