

# Implementation Of School Principals in Marketing Mix as An Effort to Increase the Number of New Students in Private Junior High Schools

## (A Qualitative Study in Yamisa Junior High School and Soreang Putera Junior High School, Bandung Regency)

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### Abstract

The research aims to examine and describe the implementation of planning, organization, execution, supervision, constraints, and solutions of school principals in the marketing mix as an effort to increase the number of new students through management theory and the 4P marketing mix theory (Product, Price, Place, and Promotion). This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach, and data is collected through observation, interviews, and documentary analysis. The findings reveal that: (1) the implementation of planning has been carried out through programs, facilities, tuition fees, promotions, and school policies, although it lacks support from technology-based promotional media, (2) the implementation of organization has been in line with various school activities and resources but is not optimally supported by the expertise of educators, (3) the implementation of execution has been through socialization, communication, coordination, and motivation, but has yet to effectively capture the interest of the community, (4) the implementation of supervision has been through program control and program evaluation, though it's not fully supported by the professionalism of educators, (5) the constraints faced by school principals are limited budget and promotion; their solutions involve utilizing contingency funds and maximizing school resources.

The zoning system and the COVID-19 outbreak have led to the emergence of issues regarding the enrollment of new students or *Penerimaan Peserta Didik Baru (PPDB)*, particularly for private middle schools as reported in the daily news "Pikiran Rakyat" on July 9, 2020:

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic and the enrollment of new students (PPDB) in public schools being close to the new academic year, the situation for PPDB in private schools is concerning. On average, private middle schools are still admitting dozens of new prospective students even though public middle schools have already announced the results of their enrollment. (Source: <https://www.pikiran-rakyat.com/pendidikan/pr-01590327> downloaded on June 15, 2021).

The issues faced by private schools are not solely related to meeting educational management standards, but they are compounded by government policies concerning the enrollment system for new students. This means that for less developed schools at present, there's additional work beyond improving quality – they also have to innovate in recruiting students to ensure the school's ongoing growth. The competition for new student admissions fundamentally occurs at every level and type of education, ranging from elementary and middle schools to higher education institutions, because new students are a primary asset for schools.

Numerous schools have experienced a decline in the number of new students and lack of development. As stated by Dayat, M. (2019:299), he provides the following statement:

"Many educational institutions, especially private ones, are facing significant challenges in finding potential students. As a result, numerous educational institutions have seen a decline in the number of applicants from year to year. Furthermore, some educational institutions have even had to close due to a lack of students, as they are unable to cover the monthly operational expenses of the school."

The occurrence of the COVID-19 disaster and the zoning system has contributed to a decrease in the number of new students enrolling in private schools each year, leading to an imbalance between student intake and the operational costs of educational activities. Nevertheless, it's important to acknowledge that many private schools have managed to position themselves as favorites or top-notch institutions with a good reputation in the community.

Intense competition has driven educational institutions to become more competitive in the market and to develop marketing strategies as a practical and strategic step. The competition among educational institutions, coupled with the relatively low public interest in private schools, can pose a threat to the existence of private schools. Moreover, local governments planning to implement new policies related to increasing quotas for public schools alongside the implementation of zoning systems could create additional challenges and issues for private schools, especially those with limited school resources. This situation is highlighted in the news article from *Jabar Ekspres*:

"The Zoning System for New Student Admissions (PPDB) at the junior high school level in the Bandung district is deemed unfavorable for private schools. Some private junior high schools are facing a shortage of students, especially with the news from the Bandung district education office regarding the forthcoming PPDB policy for junior high schools." (Source: <https://jabarekspres.com/berita/2017/07/21/> accessed on June 15, 2021)

Considering these issues, for many private schools, it's necessary to take strategic steps to compete and align themselves with other schools, becoming community favorites, attracting a large number of students, and maintaining good management. Therefore, in the process of recruiting new prospective students, schools can implement the appropriate marketing mix to sustain their

existence and even progress towards improvement in the future.

The marketing mix is not a new concept for educational institutions. While it originated in the for-profit business world, gradually, this marketing concept has been adopted by educational institutions due to similarities in service-related issues and customer satisfaction. The marketing mix concept, whether applied in education or business, aims to win the competition among institutions that operate in the service sector. Like a corporation, an educational institution offers an educational service that is presented to parents of prospective students as its consumers.

According to Kotler (2005:75), the marketing mix "is a set of marketing tools that the company uses to pursue its marketing objectives in the target market." Companies make marketing mix decisions based on the variables within it. This is used to create the product being offered, determine pricing, provide information to consumers, and decide where the offering can be accessed. Kotler classifies the marketing mix into four elements, often referred to as the "4Ps": (1) Product (goods or services), (2) Price (cost or fees), (3) Place (location), and (4) Promotion.

In the context of education, the four elements of the marketing mix involve the product (school programs), price (educational costs), place (school location or facilities), and promotion (school marketing).

School marketing mix is a school's strategy to market or provide information to the community about the school, its advantages, and other relevant information needed by parents or prospective students. This strategy aims to create a positive impression on the parents of prospective students or the students themselves. Promotion is a part of the marketing mix concept. According to Soetojo (2002) as cited by Dayat, M. (2019:314), 'promotion is the activity of introducing a product, convincing the buyer with the hope of persuading them to voluntarily purchase the product'. School

promotion involves activities that inform, persuade, attract community interest, and help individuals choose a school based on the offered advantages.

As a corporate educational institution, the organization functions in the service industry, producing graduates of quality as products that can be presented to parents or the public. However, successful promotion isn't merely reliant on a single element of the marketing mix; it requires support from other elements as well. These include a commitment to graduate quality, highlighted learning programs, a comfortable and strategic environment, affordable tuition fees accessible to various societal segments, and competent staff. Therefore, implementing the marketing mix should also align with goal achievement, well-planned strategies, measurable targets, and a managed process through stages of management.

The implementation of the marketing mix concept involves management and its stages. According to Terry's definition of management:

"Management is achieving predetermined goals through the effort of others. Management is a consistent process of planning, organizing, implementing, and controlling to achieve goals by empowering others and utilizing other resources." (as cited in Sukarna, 2011:3)

According to Rokayati (2014:2), management as a science possesses several distinct characteristics: (1) the presence of a group of individuals, consisting of two or more people; (2) the existence of cooperation within that group; (3) the involvement in a process or effort; and (4) the presence of objectives. Management serves as a mechanism and process to achieve goals. In its implementation, there are several consistent, systematic, and measurable stages that need to be carried out: planning, organizing, implementing, and supervising, which are conducted by a group of individuals through teamwork to achieve objectives with maximum resource support. Similarly, the marketing management concept according to

Philip Kotler and Armstrong states, "Marketing management is the process of analyzing, planning, implementing, and controlling various activities (programs) to gain profitable exchange with target buyers in order to achieve organizational objectives" (Alma, B., 2014:131).

Based on the above-mentioned problem background, the issues related to the marketing mix for new students in schools, specifically for private junior high schools in Bandung Regency, involve several aspects that the writer views as the root causes, including: (1) limited operational budget for schools, (2) increasing competition among schools, (3) inadequate human resource support, (4) insufficient or inadequately targeted promotion, and (5) high educational costs. Therefore, to attract new students and generally to develop the school, concrete actions are required on the part of the school to implement the marketing mix through a management process. Hence, the general purpose of the research is to examine, analyze, and describe the principal's implementation of the marketing mix as an effort to increase the number of new students in private junior high schools in Bandung Regency. The specific objectives include gaining an overview of the planning implementation, organizational implementation, execution implementation, supervision implementation, as well as the challenges and solutions faced by the school principal in the marketing mix effort to increase the number of new students in junior high schools in Bandung Regency.

## Method

This research employs a descriptive qualitative approach to examine and describe the findings of the implementation of the school principal's efforts in the marketing mix to increase the number of new students, based on the actual conditions during the research conducted at private junior high schools in Bandung Regency. Data collection techniques encompass interviews, observations, and

documentary studies, guided by research grids and instruments designed by the researcher. The research was conducted at SMP Yamisa and SMP Soreang Putera in Bandung Regency, with participants including the School Principal, Vice Principal for Student Affairs, Teachers, and Students. Data analysis involves data reduction, data display, and drawing conclusions from the researcher's perspective.

## Results and Discussion

### The Implementation of Marketing Mix

The principals of junior high schools in Bandung Regency have planned a marketing mix to increase the number of new students through educational and instructional programs, educational facilities, educational costs, and school promotion activities. The planned educational and instructional programs align with each school's developed curriculum, based on both the national curriculum and local curriculum. The national curriculum includes both the independent curriculum and the K13 curriculum. In contrast, the local curriculum can differ among schools, often depending on the school's specialized programs in fields such as religion, arts, or other areas. These differences pertain to the individual school's vision, mission, objectives, and the unique programs that become their strengths.

For schools under foundations that offer religious boarding school education, the local curriculum and specialized programs tend to focus on religious aspects, such as scriptural studies, memorization, religious practices, and other religious activities. Conversely, schools not offering religious boarding school education have their own specialized programs, often in non-religious fields like dance or vocal arts. While there might be religious activities, they are not prioritized in terms of allocated hours and curriculum content. Schools determine their specialized programs based on the available resources, aiming to attract new students

through these programs. These programs align with the school's vision and mission to shape students' competencies in attitude, knowledge, and skills through the curriculum and programs developed by each school. This integration involves both general subjects and subjects specific to the local curriculum within intracurricular, extracurricular, and co-curricular activities.

In terms of facilities and infrastructure, junior high schools in Bandung Regency have adequate resources such as classrooms, multipurpose fields for practical activities, and other facilities. On average, each school has at least 10 classroom buildings to accommodate the expected number of students. The provided facilities ensure the comfort of students and teachers during the teaching-learning process, reflecting the school's readiness to carry out educational activities and meet national standards for educational infrastructure. The educational costs range from Rp. 700,000 to Rp. 1,800,000. The determination of these costs is a strategic move in the competitive landscape among schools and aims to attract parents by setting fees that are affordable for the local community. The payment mechanism can also be structured in installments to ease the burden on parents. Formal promotional activities are carried out at the beginning of each year, involving visits to other schools, presentations to teachers and prospective students, distributing brochures to the community, and using banners. However, not all junior high schools in Bandung Regency have an official school website, leading to partial use of internet-based promotions.

Terry defines planning as "the determination of tasks that must be carried out by a group of individuals to achieve objectives" (Siswanto, 2016:16). The marketing mix concept in this research emphasizes product, place, price, and promotion. Therefore, the school principal's planning in the marketing mix involves the principal's policy to determine tasks that need to be executed by teachers and staff to increase the

number of new students through outstanding educational programs, available facilities, affordable educational costs, and school promotion to raise awareness about the school.

The principals of junior high schools in Bandung Regency have formulated policies based on their roles and responsibilities concerning instructional programs, facilities, educational costs, and promotional activities. Although some principals don't possess full autonomy in school management due to the dependence on the school foundation's policies. The school principals in private junior high schools in Bandung Regency make policies regarding curriculum-related instructional programs, defining the school's specialized programs, outlining operational procedures, establishing the school's organizational structure, managing facilities, and finances. However, decisions regarding building acquisition can be the foundation's prerogative, and financial management might not be fully within the principal's control. These policies provide clear guidance and direction to the school community, aligning with the school's vision and mission. They prepare the school for its needs and set achievable goals based on previous experiences and evaluations. The process of planning the marketing mix involves consultation, typically held at least at the beginning of each semester, with meetings involving deputy principals, teachers, school staff, school supervisors, and even parents.

Based on the aforementioned explanation, the implementation of the school principal's planning in the marketing mix at junior high schools in Bandung Regency involves: (1) Programs, including educational and instructional programs as well as emphasized programs; (2) Place, ensuring the availability of facilities to provide a safe and comfortable environment for education and learning; (3) Price, determining educational costs that are generally affordable for the community; (4) Promotion, encompassing promotional activities conducted by each school.

These policies provide guidance for implementation and goal achievement, particularly in the curriculum and resource management, despite the principal's authority not being fully comprehensive. However, planning isn't maximally supported by promotional media like school websites.

### **The Implementation of Organizational Mix Marketing**

Organizing by the school principal within the marketing mix to increase the number of new students in junior high schools in Bandung Regency is categorized based on the area of activity or form of activity and human resources competencies. Regarding instructional programs, learning activities comprise both in-class and out-of-class activities, encompassing intracurricular, extracurricular, and co-curricular activities, involving teacher resources, facilities, budget, and regulations in line with the 8 national education standards. Intra-curricular activities include classroom teaching involving teachers and students, facilities, and learning resources to achieve academic competencies for each subject, teacher, and student. Similarly, extracurricular activities like talent and interest development and mandatory curriculum parts are included for each student.

Organizing in-class and out-of-class instructional programs is done by the school principal due to the diverse activities that require varying time, place, and resources. These activities are organized through an academic schedule. In the area of facilities, it's not just about preparing or conditioning facilities but also involves improvement and procurement efforts that require human resources and budget. In the financial domain, the principal organizes the operational budget for school activities and human resources for budget planning and on-site budget usage operations. Similarly, for school promotion activities that involve budget allocation and human

resources. School promotion activities encompass more than just creating brochures and banners, including direct visits to the community.

In organizing educational and instructional activities, junior high schools in Bandung Regency generally have a school organizational structure led by the principal, including deputy principals responsible for the curriculum, public relations, facilities, human resource development, student affairs, and administration. However, not all schools have the same number of deputy principals, as it depends on the number of study groups in each school. The organization of curriculum-related matters is delegated to the deputy principal in charge of the curriculum and the subject teachers. They organize it through syllabi, lesson plans, teaching materials, and methods developed by the teachers.

Junior high schools in Bandung Regency are supported by competent and qualified human resources in line with the standards of middle school education. Most teachers hold at least a bachelor's degree (Strata 1 or S1), and some even possess a master's degree (Strata 2 or S2). This applies to both educators and staff. Similarly, administrative staff members typically have at least a bachelor's degree since some also serve as teaching staff. However, some teachers and staff do not have appropriate educational backgrounds. The competence standard is based on their ability and experience in fulfilling tasks in their assigned areas, such as facilities and budget management.

Management of facilities follows established standards, including provision, maintenance, archiving, and reporting, to ensure optimal utilization. Financial management includes school financial administration tasks related to budget planning, budget realization, and reporting. Promotion activities involve the media used, assigned personnel, and the budget. Competence standards applied to human resources within the school's organizational structure and as subject teachers are not only based on academic

qualifications but also experience and capability to perform tasks. This applies to promotion activities as well, where only a subset of staff members is assigned, sometimes involving students.

Based on the above discussion, the implementation of organizing by the school principal within the marketing mix in junior high schools in Bandung Regency has been carried out through the grouping of activities and human resources based on each instructional program, facility management, financial management, and school promotion activities. However, the organization of activities has not reached its maximum potential due to a lack of support from competent human resources. This is because some education and educational staff members in the school's organizational structure are positioned based on academic qualifications and their ability to perform tasks.

### **Marketing Mix Implementation**

The implementation of the marketing mix to increase the number of new students in junior high schools in Bandung Regency is carried out through socialization, communication, coordination, and motivation. The principals of junior high schools in Bandung Regency conduct socialization of instructional programs both internally and externally through meetings, announcements, or notifications via written media related to school programs after the planning and organizing processes. Socialization is not limited to academic activities or instructional programs; it also encompasses facilities, budget activities, as well as community outreach in the context of school promotion and new student enrollment periods.

The principals of junior high schools in Bandung Regency socialize activities to the entire internal school community about academic plans and operational budget plans for each semester to vice principals, teachers, homeroom teachers, and staff members. For external parties, such as parents, students, the school foundation, and supervisors, the school administration communicates academic

activities through letters or online media to garner support and alignment with the functions of each party.

In terms of communication, the principals of junior high schools in Bandung Regency engage both the internal and external stakeholders of the school. Communication with the internal school community includes vice principals, teachers, homeroom teachers, and administrative staff. Communication with the internal stakeholders generally occurs before or after the socialization of the school's planned activities, often in the form of draft proposals, and similarly with the school foundation before final decisions are made. This communication is essential to ensure alignment and readiness of resources for the planned educational activities in terms of timing, types of activities, required resources, and allocated budget. As a result, decisions made and communicated to the school's external stakeholders are considered final decisions.

In order to achieve the effectiveness of the implemented programs that have been established and communicated, the principals of junior high schools in Bandung Regency coordinate with vice principals, administrative staff, homeroom teachers, supervisors, and the school foundation for schools under the foundation. This coordination aligns with their respective roles to support and oversee the implementation of school programs. In terms of teaching and learning activities, the vice principals are involved in ensuring that teachers have lesson plans, conduct teaching processes, perform evaluations and assessments, supported by the required facilities according to the teachers' instructional design and the availability of operational budget. However, for schools under foundations, there are generally limitations on authority in terms of educational facility procurement and budget management. The coordination carried out by the school principal is more of a notification and proposal for needs that are beyond the scope of school management. In

terms of promotional activities, the school principal coordinates with the IT staff, assigned teams, and other school principals who are the targets of promotion for the provision of promotional facilities and recruitment of new students.

To achieve the effectiveness of program implementation, the principal of junior high schools in Bandung Regency provides motivation, especially to school members directly involved in program implementation. This motivation includes consistent monthly salary payments, position allowances, additional financial incentives, and other budgetary support based on their respective workloads. These motivational measures are intended to provide a sense of security for teachers and staff in carrying out their work by ensuring a reasonable standard of living in accordance with the school's and foundation's capacity. Assistance is also sought through school operational support for improving the welfare and competence development of teachers. Additionally, apart from the School Operational Assistance (BOS) funds, the school's operational budget can be supplemented by the number of new students enrolled, which contributes to school development and the well-being of the school community.

Based on the above discussions, the implementation of the school principal within the marketing mix in junior high schools in Bandung Regency is carried out through socialization, communication, and coordination with supervisory authorities, parents, the school foundation, as well as motivating vice principals, teachers, and staff. This approach aims to support school programs, attract community attention, and draw the interest of new students through instructional programs, facilities, budget allocation, and school promotion. However, the marketing mix has not reached its full potential due to limitations in operational budget management

and is not maximally supported by programs that align with community interests.

### **Implementation of Marketing Mix Monitoring**

Supervision by the school principal within the marketing mix to increase the number of new students in junior high schools in Bandung Regency is implemented through program control, program evaluation, and solutions to program obstacles. The principal of junior high schools in Bandung Regency exercises program control over instructional activities through supervisory measures assisted by vice principals, homeroom teachers, school supervisors, and involving parents. This process spans from planning, execution, to evaluation and assessment, covering both academic and non-academic areas. The control extends to facilities and operational budget management in alignment with the initial planning, occasionally involving contingency funds to address unforeseen budget shortfalls. Program control is essential to ensure that activities adhere to the original plan, as deviations can adversely impact the effectiveness of teaching and learning, achievement of student graduation standards, and even the school's reputation if offered programs do not match their implementation.

The principal of junior high schools in Bandung Regency carries out evaluations at the end of each semester or academic year to assess the overall effectiveness of the programs. This routine practice involves evaluating academic activities, the achievement of student competency standards, the effectiveness of teaching and learning processes, both for curricular and extracurricular activities. Beyond evaluation, planning for the next semester's academic activities is also undertaken. Towards the end or beginning of the year, a comprehensive evaluation takes place regarding the management of school activities according to short-term and long-term programs. This involves evaluating and preparing for the admission of new



students based on current year inputs, as well as developing strategies to address obstacles encountered by the school in the previous year.

Based on the above discussions, supervision by the school principal within the marketing mix in junior high schools in Bandung Regency involves program control through supervision across various program areas and teaching processes, facility availability, budget management, and promotional activities. Furthermore, program evaluation is conducted to measure the attainment of set goals. However, the supervision aspect falls short in fully controlling the marketing mix programs due to insufficient professionalism in the human resources sector, leading to suboptimal teaching and learning activities.

### **Obstacles and Solutions to Implementation in the Marketing Mix**

The programs planned and organized by the principals of junior high schools in Bandung Regency, in their implementation, still face challenges in achieving optimal results in attracting new students based on the respective school's curriculum and flagship programs. Despite holding an "A" accreditation, some schools are still outperformed in student recruitment by "B" accredited schools. In general, the challenges faced by junior high schools in Bandung Regency that hinder the maximization of marketing mix programs can be attributed to: (1) suboptimal effectiveness of teaching and learning, (2) limited community interest in flagship programs, and (3) suboptimal promotional activities.

The suboptimal effectiveness of teaching and learning, or the implementation of instructional programs, is caused by: (1) inadequate support from competent and professional human resources; not all teachers understand both the "merdeka" curriculum and the implementation of the Curriculum 2013, lack of discipline among teachers in delivering lessons, cultivating students' attitudes and skills, shortage of religion teachers,

and insufficient operational budget for activities.

(2) Limited community interest in flagship programs, particularly in the field of arts. Despite having an "A" accreditation, schools experience a decline in new student enrollment compared to schools that have religious-focused flagship programs despite holding a "B" accreditation. (3) Suboptimal promotional activities, including the fact that some schools have not fully utilized online platforms like official school websites, which are crucial for disseminating information to the community on a wider scale, especially during the pandemic when gatherings are restricted and remote work is prevalent.

The principals of junior high schools in Bandung Regency have taken steps to address these challenges, both during the process and afterward, as part of future improvement agendas. Some of these steps include: (1) Enhancing teaching and learning effectiveness through strategies such as assigning vice principals to cover for absent teachers, involving foundation teachers for religious subjects due to their expertise, utilizing available classrooms for additional learning space through foundation proposals, requiring teachers to enhance their competencies through teacher forums, seeking additional funding or contingencies to cover budget shortfalls, including teacher salaries, through foundation funds and school operational aid. (2) To counteract community disinterest in flagship programs, reducing tuition fees, especially compared to rival schools and nearby public schools. This is due to the availability of facilities to support these programs, which are unique to the school and not commonly available elsewhere. (3) Solutions for promotional activities involve engaging in specific events that involve a wide audience in addition to the routine promotional activities at the beginning of each year. These solutions are the school's effort to overcome challenges within the limitations of school authority and operational budget constraints, while also setting future plans as part of long-term strategies.

Based on the discussion, the challenges faced by school principals in the marketing mix efforts to increase the number of new students in junior high schools in Bandung Regency are centered around the lack of support in operational budget due to limited funding or authority for development management, and the absence of resources for facilities and infrastructure to support school promotion activities. The steps taken as solutions include resorting to contingency funds for operational activities and utilizing the educational department's media for school promotion through Dapodik (an integrated educational data system).

## Conclution and Recommendation

### Conclusion

The school principal's role in the implementation of the marketing mix to increase the number of new students in private junior high schools in Bandung Regency is based on the four components of the marketing mix: educational and instructional programs, educational facilities and infrastructure, tuition fees, and promotional activities. This implementation is carried out in accordance with management theory through the processes of planning, organizing, implementing, and supervising. However, in practice, it has not yet fully maximized the increase in the number of new students as expected due to constraints related to human resources and school operational budget.

### Recommendation

Based on the conclusions, the researcher recommends that the Foundation grant the school principal greater autonomy in managing and developing the school. The school principal should be more innovative and actively develop the marketing mix by leveraging technological media for promoting the school.

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