

Management Strategies in Educational Promotion to Increase Student Enrollment at SMK Bahari Cilegon Abadi, Cilegon

Salefudin

Univeristy of Mitra Bangsa Jakarta

alefsalefudin@gmail.com

Abstract

This study aims to analyze the effectiveness of promotional marketing strategies in increasing student enrollment at SMK Bahari Cilegon Abadi. Using a qualitative descriptive approach, data were collected through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the school's promotional activities. The findings reveal that the institution implements four main strategies: personal selling, through school visits (Road to School programs) to build relationships with junior high schools; mass selling, via brochures, banners, and social media advertising; sales marketing, emphasizing excellent service and a positive first impression for prospective students and parents; and public relations, by establishing partnerships with industries and community organizations. Additionally, digital platforms such as TikTok, YouTube, Instagram, Facebook, and the school's official website play a crucial role in expanding the school's visibility and reputation. Other supporting strategies include providing scholarships, organizing inter-school competitions, and showcasing student projects to attract new learners. The study concludes that an integrated and consistent promotional strategy combining both online and offline approaches significantly enhances public awareness, builds trust, and contributes to maintaining stable student enrollment levels at SMK Bahari Cilegon Abadi.

Keywords : Educational Marketing, Promotional Strategy, Student Enrollment, Vocational Education.

1. Introductio

Education serves as the foundation for shaping individuals' character, intellect, and moral values. According to the National Education System Law (UU Sisdiknas No. 20 of 2003), education is a conscious and planned effort to create a learning environment that enables students to actively develop their potential, spiritual strength, self-control, personality, intelligence, and noble character (Undang-Undang Republik Indonesia Nomor 20 Tahun 2003). Education is not only a means of transferring knowledge but also an instrument for developing skills and building adaptive capacity in an increasingly globalized world. A well-structured education system contributes to the formation of high-quality human resources who can participate in social and economic development (Mayasari et al., 2022; Banurea et al., 2023; Akbar et al., 2023).

Vocational education, particularly at the level of Sekolah Menengah Kejuruan (SMK), plays a strategic role in preparing students for employment and entrepreneurship. SMKs are designed to bridge education and industry by developing students' technical skills in line with market needs (Dewi et al., 2021; Saputro et al., 2021). However, recent data from the Ministry of Education and Culture show a decrease of approximately 10% in SMK student enrollment over the past five years (Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, 2022). This phenomenon is influenced by several factors, including ineffective promotion, limited public awareness of the relevance of vocational education, and the uneven quality of educational management among institutions (Sari, 2022; Mahbub & Zen, 2020; Shobri & Firdaus, 2022).

In a competitive educational environment, every institution is required to develop effective management strategies to attract prospective students. Management in education is a comprehensive process encompassing planning, organizing, actuating, and controlling all resources toward achieving educational goals (Mulyasa, 2020; Musfah, 2018; Mukhtar et al.,

2023). The head of the institution must demonstrate strategic leadership to strengthen internal resources, improve service quality, and build community trust (Isjoni, 2020; Setya et al., 2024). Effective educational management ensures that the school operates efficiently, adapts to environmental changes, and maintains long-term sustainability (Mintzberg, 2023; Teece, 2023; Mujito, 2023).

School promotion management is a key component of educational strategy aimed at strengthening the institution's public image and increasing enrollment. Promotion should not be viewed merely as dissemination of information but as a process of building a positive school reputation (Arifin, 2018; Hasibuan, 2021). According to Kotler and Fox (1995), strategic marketing for educational institutions must combine communication, brand identity, and stakeholder engagement. In vocational education, promotional efforts are essential for demonstrating the relevance of programs to industrial demands (Fadlilah & Masfiah, 2021; Fajry et al., 2024). Thus, the role of promotion is inseparable from the broader framework of educational management (Widiyastuti et al., 2022).

In the digital era, technology-based promotion has become an essential strategy in reaching prospective students. The integration of social media, websites, and digital campaigns enables schools to communicate effectively and showcase their advantages to a wider audience (Nugroho, 2021; Kusuma, 2023). Supriyadi (2020) found that social media promotion significantly influences students' decisions in choosing vocational schools. In addition, community involvement through events such as education fairs, workshops, and open houses can build trust and foster closer relations between schools and the community (Rahman & Fitria, 2019). Therefore, combining digital-based strategies with community engagement can enhance both visibility and credibility in the eyes of society.

Within this context, the implementation of effective promotional management at SMK Bahari Cilegon Abadi becomes crucial to sustain and increase student enrollment amid growing competition. The integration of strategic planning, digital marketing, and stakeholder collaboration can strengthen the school's competitive position and improve its image in the public domain (Sudjana, 2019; Fajry et al., 2024). A well-designed promotional management strategy not only attracts new students but also contributes to improving the overall quality of vocational education in Indonesia, thereby supporting the nation's human resource development agenda (Muktamar et al., 2023; Musfah, 2018; Dewi et al., 2021).

2. Literature Review

Educational Management

The term management originates from the Old French word *management*, meaning "the art of executing and organizing," derived from the Italian *maneggiare* ("to handle or control") and the Latin *manus* ("hand") (Muktamar, 2023). In modern understanding, management refers to the process of planning, organizing, leading, and controlling resources to achieve goals effectively and efficiently. Peter Drucker (2019), the father of modern management, emphasized that management must be result-oriented, data-driven, and adaptive to environmental change, fostering innovation and creativity in achieving organizational objectives.

In the field of education, management is viewed as a social science discipline focusing on human behavior as both subject and object within an organizational setting (Pidarta, 2000). Educational management involves coordination among individuals, organizational climate, and systems to achieve educational goals. Suhardan and Suharto (2010) distinguish educational administration as cooperation toward achieving goals, while educational management integrates all available resources for that purpose.

Tilaar (2002) defines educational management as the mobilization of all educational resources to meet predetermined goals. Likewise, Satori (2009) describes it as a collaborative process utilizing human and material resources efficiently, while Sulistyorini (2010) emphasizes that it consists of organized and cooperative activities within educational institutions to ensure the achievement of objectives effectively and efficiently.

Strategy in Educational Management

The term strategy originates from the Greek word *strategia*, meaning the art of the general, derived from *stratos* (army) and *ago* (to lead). Historically, strategy referred to the planning and allocation of resources—such as troops, weapons, and supplies—to achieve victory in warfare. In modern organizational contexts, strategy refers to a comprehensive framework for determining and implementing actions to achieve organizational goals efficiently.

According to Michael Porter (2020), strategy involves making deliberate choices to perform activities differently or to perform different activities from competitors. He emphasized that competitive advantage arises from differentiation and cost leadership, both of which depend on understanding industry structure and market dynamics. Thus, strategic management in education requires schools to position themselves uniquely by offering distinctive programs that meet the needs of students and the community.

Henry Mintzberg (2020) presented a more organic view of strategy, suggesting that it is not always the result of deliberate planning but may emerge naturally from consistent patterns of decisions and behaviors. His concept of strategy as a pattern implies that effective strategies evolve through practice and adaptation to real-world challenges. This view is particularly relevant to educational management, where policies and programs often develop dynamically through experience and contextual learning.

David A. Aaker (2020) contributed to strategic thinking by emphasizing marketing strategy as a source of competitive advantage. He highlighted the importance of differentiation, brand identity, and deep market understanding as key elements in achieving long-term organizational goals. Applied to education, Aaker's perspective suggests that schools must develop a strong institutional image and strategic positioning to attract students and sustain growth.

Synthesis of the Literature

From the reviewed literature, it is evident that educational management combines both the art and science of utilizing resources to achieve institutional goals efficiently. The managerial functions of planning, organizing, actuating, and controlling form the backbone of effective school management (Terry, 1953; Gullick, 1937). Furthermore, strategy plays an essential role as the guiding framework through which management efforts are directed toward long-term success and adaptability (Porter, 2020; Mintzberg, 2020).

In the context of vocational education, the integration of management principles and strategic thinking is critical for sustaining competitiveness and ensuring quality outcomes. Schools must continuously align their management practices with evolving social and technological trends while maintaining their core educational values. Hence, the synergy between educational management and strategic leadership becomes the foundation for institutional advancement and the improvement of educational quality.

Conceptual Framework

Educational institutions, including vocational high schools (SMKs), are facing increasingly complex challenges, one of which is the declining interest of students in enrolling. This study aims to identify effective marketing and promotional strategies to increase student enrollment. The decline in the number of students serves as the primary motivation for this research, emphasizing the need for targeted promotional efforts to raise public awareness and attract potential students to the school.

Developing a marketing promotion strategy follows a situational analysis that determines the most suitable approach—both online and offline. Online promotion strategies include social media

campaigns, website optimization, and digital advertising, which enhance school visibility and reputation. Offline strategies, such as school events, brochures, and community engagement programs, help build direct interaction and trust with the public. The combination of these strategies enables schools to reach a broader audience effectively.

The implementation and evaluation stages are crucial for ensuring the success of promotional activities. Marketing strategies must be executed consistently and continuously, supported by regular evaluation to measure effectiveness, identify strengths and weaknesses, and refine future promotional plans. The findings of this study are expected to provide insights into effective marketing promotion practices in education and contribute to developing practical models for increasing student enrollment in vocational institutions.

3. Research methods

This study employs a qualitative research method, which emphasizes an in-depth understanding of phenomena rather than broad generalizations. The qualitative approach focuses on exploring meanings, experiences, and processes through intensive data analysis. According to qualitative research theory, high-quality research requires comprehensive data collection consisting of primary and secondary data. Primary data include verbal expressions, behaviors, and responses from research subjects (informants) directly involved in the study, while secondary data consist of supporting documents such as reports, meeting notes, photos, and institutional archives that enrich the findings.

The research was conducted through field observation at SMK Bahari Cilegon Abadi (BCA) to obtain authentic data regarding the school's promotional strategies for new student admissions. This study adopts a descriptive qualitative approach, aiming to provide a detailed and contextual description of the school's marketing activities. The use of a descriptive qualitative method allows the researcher to gain a comprehensive understanding of the promotional practices applied, their implementation process, and their impact on prospective student interest.

The data collection techniques used in this study include observation, interviews, and documentation. Observation was carried out directly to examine how promotional strategies are implemented at the school. In-depth interviews were conducted with relevant stakeholders—such as school administrators and teachers—to strengthen and validate the collected information. Documentation was used to obtain supporting evidence, including school policies, meeting results, promotional materials, and photographic records. These three techniques together ensured the credibility, accuracy, and completeness of the research data.

4. Results and Discussion

Results

The findings of this study reveal that the implementation of integrated promotion management strategies at SMK Bahari Cilegon Abadi has a significant impact on increasing new student enrollment. Based on qualitative data obtained through observation, interviews, and documentation, the school applies a multi-dimensional promotion model involving personal selling, mass selling, sales promotion, public relations, direct marketing, and word of mouth strategies. These six approaches collectively strengthen the school's visibility and reputation among potential students and parents.

The personal selling technique, through direct visits to junior high schools (SMP) around Cilegon, proved highly effective in increasing engagement and trust. This direct interaction allows promotional teams to explain programs, facilities, and achievements in detail, thereby influencing students' and parents' decisions. Similarly, mass selling through brochures, banners, and digital media extends the reach of promotional messages to a broader audience. The school's active use

of Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok has also helped establish a digital identity that resonates with younger audiences.

The sales promotion component—such as early registration discounts and scholarship offers—creates an additional incentive for parents to enroll their children. Meanwhile, the public relations strategy focuses on building long-term partnerships with industries and communities to enhance trust and ensure graduates' employability. Direct marketing through the school's official website provides transparent information access, while word-of-mouth marketing, driven by satisfied parents and alumni, strengthens the institution's credibility in the community.

Analysis and Interpretation

The results demonstrate that the school's promotion strategy aligns with Kotler and Keller's (2019) theory of integrated marketing communication, emphasizing the importance of message consistency and stakeholder engagement across all promotional channels. Personal interaction, particularly through personal selling, serves as a relational marketing tool that builds emotional connections and fosters brand loyalty among parents (Chaffey, 2019). Moreover, the use of digital media reflects an adaptation to the technological era, where accessibility and online visibility shape public perception.

This finding also supports Barney's (1991) Resource-Based View (RBV) theory, which posits that valuable internal resources—such as effective communication, school reputation, and human capital—can create sustainable competitive advantage. The consistent and well-targeted promotion strategy at SMK Bahari Cilegon Abadi constitutes an intangible asset that enhances its institutional competitiveness. Furthermore, Porter's (2019) perspective on competitive strategy reinforces that differentiation through personal engagement provides a distinctive advantage compared to schools relying solely on paid advertising.

The involvement of alumni and parents as informal advocates through word of mouth marketing aligns with Kaplan and Norton's (2019) Balanced Scorecard approach, which emphasizes stakeholder satisfaction as a key performance indicator. By fostering positive experiences among parents and students, the school effectively turns them into ambassadors who contribute to the institution's sustainable growth.

Discussion

This study confirms that effective promotion management plays a pivotal role in educational marketing performance, particularly in vocational institutions facing high competition. The combination of traditional and digital marketing approaches allows schools to reach diverse audiences while maintaining personal relationships with key stakeholders. The findings are consistent with Kotler and Keller (2019), who state that integrated promotional strategies create synergy and maximize audience impact.

The research further indicates that *personalized communication*—through direct visits and social interaction—remains the most influential factor in parental decision-making. Digital platforms, while essential, function as complementary tools that amplify the reach and visibility of the school's message. This aligns with Chaffey's (2019) argument that digital marketing effectiveness depends on its integration with offline communication efforts.

In conclusion, the promotion management strategy of SMK Bahari Cilegon Abadi exemplifies an adaptive, data-driven, and human-centered approach to educational marketing. By integrating relationship-based and digital communication strategies, the school successfully enhances its public image and increases student enrollment. Continuous evaluation and innovation are recommended to sustain long-term promotional effectiveness and institutional growth.

5. Conclusion

Based on the findings obtained through observation, interviews, and data analysis, it can be concluded that the promotional strategies implemented by SMK Bahari Cilegon Abadi have been

effective in increasing the number of new student enrollments. The school's promotional efforts—through personal selling, mass selling, sales marketing, and public relations—have been conducted consistently and strategically. Personal selling through *Road to School (RTS)* programs has successfully built strong relationships with junior high schools in the Cilegon area, making the institution more widely recognized. Likewise, mass selling activities such as distributing brochures, placing banners in strategic locations, and advertising through social media have enhanced public awareness of the school's existence and reputation.

The study also finds that service quality and relationship management play an important role in influencing parents' and students' decisions. The school's friendly and professional reception, along with well-organized facilities, creates a positive first impression that builds trust. Additionally, the use of digital platforms such as TikTok, YouTube, Instagram, Facebook, and the school's official website has expanded the reach of promotional messages, aligning with the habits of the younger generation. Other initiatives, including scholarship programs, competitions among junior high schools, and public exhibitions of student projects, further strengthen the school's image as a dynamic and inclusive educational institution.

Overall, the integrated promotional strategy of SMK Bahari Cilegon Abadi demonstrates a balance between traditional and digital marketing approaches, supported by community and industry partnerships. These efforts have contributed to maintaining a stable number of new students each year. Therefore, it can be concluded that consistent, innovative, and relationship-oriented promotion management serves as a key factor in ensuring the sustainability and competitiveness of vocational education institutions in the modern era.

6. Bibliography

- Alisa, J. (2023). Work Engagement in Working Women: Literature Study. *Blantika: Multidisciplinary Journal*, 1 (1), 61–75. <https://doi.org/10.57096/blantika.v1i1.20>
- Akbar, Muh Rijalul, et al. MULTIMEDIA: Teori dan Aplikasi dalam Dunia Pendidikan. PT. Sonpedia Publishing Indonesia, 2023.
- Banurea, Risma Darma Ulma, et al. "Perencanaan pendidikan." *Jurnal Pendidikan Sosial dan Humaniora* 2.1 (2023): 88-99.
- Dewi, Zaqla Rahma, Nurul Ulfatin, and Agus Timan. "Kolaborasi Pendidikan dan Dunia Industri Melalui Program Teaching Factory: Strategi Sekolah dalam Penyelarasan Kompetensi Peserta Didik dengan Kebutuhan IDUKA." *Proceedings Series of Educational Studies* (2021): 441-446.
- Fadlilah, Azizah Nurul, and Saidah Masfiah. "Implementasi strategi marketing mix dalam upaya meningkatkan jumlah peserta didik di TK Al Huda Kota Malang." *Evaluasi: Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan Islam* 5.1 (2021): 94-127.
- Fajry, Fajry, Saipul Annur, and Tutut Handayani. "Strategi Promosi Prodi Pendidikan Sendratasik Dalam Meningkatkan Jumlah Mahasiswa." *Munaddhomah: Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan Islam* 5.1 (2024): 51-60.
- Mayasari, Nanny, et al. *Perencanaan Pendidikan*. Sada Kurnia Pustaka, 2022.
- Mahbub, Mahbub, and Eva Husnia Zen. "Pengaruh Promosi Pendidikan Terhadap Minat Peserta Didik Baru MAN 3 Banyuwangi." *Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan Islam Darussalam* 2.1 (2020): 113-138.
- Muktamar, Ahmad, et al. *MANAJEMEN PENDIDIKAN: Konsep, Tantangan, dan Strategi di Era Digital*. PT. Sonpedia Publishing Indonesia, 2023.
- Kotler, P., & Fox, K. F. (1995). *Strategic Marketing for Educational Institutions*. Prentice Hall.
- Kusuma, R. (2023). "Strategi Pemasaran Sekolah dalam Era Digital". *Jurnal Pendidikan dan Pemasaran*, 8(1), 45-60.
- Supriyadi, A. (2020). "Pengaruh Media Sosial terhadap Minat Siswa dalam Memilih Sekolah Menengah Kejuruan". *Jurnal Pendidikan Vokasi*, 10(2), 123-135.

- Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan. (2022). Statistics of Education in Indonesia. Jakarta: Kemdikbud.
- Mulyasa, E. (2020). Manajemen Pendidikan: Konsep dan Praktik. Bandung: Remaja Rosdakarya.
- Isjoni. (2020). "Peran Kepemimpinan dalam Meningkatkan Kinerja Sekolah". Jurnal Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, 5(1), 45-60
- Arifin, Z. (2018). "Pemasaran Pendidikan: Teori dan Praktik". Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan, 5(1), 45-60.
- Rahman, A., & Fitria, N. (2019). "Strategi Promosi Sekolah Menengah Kejuruan dalam Meningkatkan Jumlah Pendaftar". Jurnal Ilmu Pendidikan, 6(3), 201-215
- Hasibuan, M. S. (2021). "Manajemen Pemasaran Pendidikan". Jurnal Manajemen dan Bisnis, 8(2), 78-89.
- Sari, R. A. (2022). "Persepsi Masyarakat terhadap Pendidikan Vokasi di Indonesia". Jurnal Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, 7(4), 99-112.
- Nugroho, Y. (2021). "Strategi Pemasaran Digital dalam Pendidikan". Jurnal Teknologi Pendidikan, 12(1), 15-30.
- Musfah, Jejen. Manajemen pendidikan aplikasi, strategi, dan inovasi. Prenada Media, 2018.
- Saputro, Agung Nugroho Catur, et al. "Teori Manajemen Pendidikan." (2021).
- Setya, Ardheila, et al. "Analisis Strategi Manajemen Kepala Sekolah dalam Meningkatkan Kualitas Pendidikan di Sekolah Dasar." Didaktika: Jurnal Kependidikan 13.3 (2024): 4247-4256.
- Shobri, Muwafiqus, and Jamaliyah Firdaus. "Implementasi Manajemen Pemasaran Pendidikan dalam Meningkatkan Minat Peserta Didik Baru di Madrasah Ibtidaiyah." Al Yazidiy Jurnal Sosial Humaniora dan Pendidikan 4.2 (2022): 12-22.
- Sudjana. (2019). Metode Statistika.
- Mintzberg, H. (2023). The Rise and Fall of Strategic Planning. New York: Free Press.
- Mujito (2023). Manajemen Strategik.
- Teece, D. J. (2023). "Dynamic Capabilities and Strategic Management". Strategic Management Journal, 44(4), 657-667.
- Sugiyono, D. (2018). Metode Penelitian Pendidikan Pendekatan Kuantitatif, Kualitatif Dan R&D.
- Sugiyono, D. (2018). Metode Penelitian Pendidikan
- Undang-Undang Republik Indonesia Nomor 20 Tahun 2003 Tentang Sistem Pendidikan Nasional Dengan Rahmat Tuhan Yang Maha Esa Presiden Republik Indonesia. (N.D.).
- Widiyastuti, Nurul Eko, et al. Promosi dan pendidikan kesehatan. Sada Kurnia Pustaka, 2022.