




Research Article

The Principal's Efforts in Building Brand Image and Competitiveness in MI Al Qodir Wage Taman Sidoarjo

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Received : August 11, 2023

Revised : October 16, 2023

Accepted : December 02, 2023

Available online : February 24, 2024

How to Cite : Lutfi Firdausi, Prim Masrokan, & Agus Eko Sujianto. (2024). The Principal's Efforts in Building Brand Image and Competitiveness in MI Al Qodir Wage Taman Sidoarjo. *COMPETITIVE: Journal of Education*, 3(1), 45–57. <https://doi.org/10.58355/competitive.v3i1.49>

Abstract. Establishing Islamic Education Institutions in this era of globalization is an opportunity to face the challenges of the times. Maintaining it is even more difficult to compete with other institutions. Challenges and competition come from internal and external institutions. Challenges and competition come from internal and external institutions. Building a good perspective for (Brand image) users of institutions is one of the inevitability in building and introducing transformative Islamic educational institutions to the community in order to increase the competitiveness of Islamic Education Institutions. Through descriptive qualitative research supported by data from the field at MI al Qodir Wage Taman Sidoarjo, it was obtained that efforts to build a brand image of transformative Islamic educational institutions can be done through; 1) Market Identification 2) Segmentation and Positioning, 3) Differentiation of Education Services, and 4) Services of Transformative Islamic Education Institutions. Meanwhile, to build a brand image, this Islamic educational institution implements the theory of the marketing mix known as the 7P formula, namely; Product, Price, Place,

Promotion, People, Physical Evidence, and Process. Furthermore, to maximize the positive impact of brand image, institutions need to pay attention to supporting factors, including; a) Product Attributes or values that accompany the product, and b) Consumer Benefits of excellence or benefits obtained by consumers.

Keywords: Brand Image, Quality of Education, Competitiveness

Abstrak: Mendirikan Lembaga Pendidikan Islam di era globalisasi ini merupakan peluang untuk menghadapi tantangan zaman. Mempertahankannya lebih sulit lagi guna dapat bersaing dengan Lembaga Pendidikan lainnya. Tantangan dan persaingan berasal dari internal dan eksternal lembaga. Membangun persepsi baik bagi (Brand image) pengguna terhadap lembaga merupakan salah satu keniscayaan dalam membangun serta mengenalkan lembaga pendidikan Islam transformatif kepada masyarakat dalam rangka meningkatkan daya saing Lembaga Pendidikan Islam. Melalui penelitian kualitatif deskriptif di dukung dengan data-data dari lapangan di MI al Qodir Wage Taman Sidoarjo maka diperoleh hasil bahwa usaha membangun brand image lembaga pendidikan Islam transformatif dapat dilakukan melalui; 1) Identifikasi Pasar 2) Segmentasi dan Positioning, 3) Diferensiasi Layanan Pendidikan, dan 4) Pelayanan Lembaga Pendidikan Islam Transformatif. Sedangkan untuk membangun brand image lembaga pendidikan Islam ini melakukan Implementasi teori bauran pemasaran yang dikenal dengan rumus 7P yaitu; Product, Price, Place, Promotion, People, Physical Evidence, dan Process. Selanjutnya untuk memaksimalkan dampak positif brand image maka lembaga perlu memperhatikan faktor-faktor yang mendukung antara lain; a) Product Attributes atau nilai yang menyertai produk, dan b) Consumer Benefits keunggulan atau manfaat yang didapatkan oleh konsumen.

Kata Kunci: Brand Image, Mutu Pendidikan, Daya Saing

INTRODUCTION

In an era of globalization and increasingly fierce competition, competitiveness is a key factor in the success of an educational institution. The principal has a very important role in maintaining the competitiveness of the school and maintaining the quality of education. They must take the initiative and implement effective efforts to ensure that schools remain relevant, quality, and able to compete with other educational institutions. The sustainability of an educational institution is very dependent on its brand image. This is because a positive brand image can help increase public attraction and trust in the educational institution, so that more students want to join and parents who want to pay for their children's education at the institution (Suwandi et al., 2015).

The brand image of an institution is built in real terms by the community / consumers of the institution's programs and activities (Ali & Wahyuni, 2017). The good and bad of the institution is seen from the extent of public knowledge about the institution, in other words the community is free to give a subjective assessment of an educational institution. People are free to assess an institution from every angle of institutional management both functionally and non-functionally according to their respective perceptions.

Brand image for modern educational institutions is a very important need, because the management of institutions is not only seen from how institutions provide educational services to their students (Siagian, 2021), Furthermore, modern

educational institutions have thought about how their institutions will become institutions known by the public with special characteristics so that they become superior values. In theory, the need for brand image is in line with the management of transformative educational institutions where a leader in an educational institution must be able to influence effectively to various parties including the wider community.

Brand image has a huge influence on the success of a business. Brand image can help differentiate a product or service from competitors in the market and reinforce the positive or negative impression associated with the brand (Rosilawati, 2014). If the brand image is positive, then consumers will tend to trust and choose the products or services offered by the brand. In addition, a positive brand image can also increase consumer loyalty and make it easier for companies to introduce new products to the market. On the other hand, if the brand image is negative, then consumers will tend to avoid the products or services offered by the brand. This can hurt a business as it can reduce revenue and brand reputation (Tamba & Purba, 2023). Therefore, it is important for companies to build a strong and positive brand image through proper branding and marketing efforts. This can help companies to strengthen their position in the market and improve their overall business performance.

An institution's brand image can be both positive and negative, both of which have different effects (Khotimah, 2018). A positive brand image is a positive image or perception that consumers have about a brand or product. A positive brand image can help increase consumer loyalty, strengthen brand image, and increase consumer trust in the brand. Meanwhile, a negative brand image is a negative image or perception that consumers have about a brand or product. A negative brand image can damage brand image, reduce consumer trust, and cause a decrease in sales and profits for the company (Khasanah, 2015).

Brand image and competitiveness have a close relationship and influence each other. A strong and positive brand image can help increase a company's competitiveness in the market, while strong competitiveness can help strengthen a company's brand image (Roziqin & Rozaq, 2018). In general, competitiveness refers to a company's ability to compete in the market and achieve business goals, such as increasing sales, market share, and profits. While brand image refers to consumer perceptions of a company's brand or product. The competitiveness of educational institutions will make it easier for institutions to get the desired brand image, as well as a good brand image will increase the competitiveness of an institution. Both are an interrelated unity in the management of modern educational institutions. Brand image and competitiveness have become needs that cannot be separated from modern era education.

Educational institutions that are able to build a brand image will automatically increase competitiveness will become a large institution because it has succeeded in gaining trust in the community (Putri & Aznuriyandi, 2019). Because public trust is one of the capitals of the success of the institution. The success of brand image in addition to increasing public trust will also be able to increase the competitiveness of the institution. Therefore, public trust can be built with a good brand image and

institutional competitiveness that continues to grow in line with the progress of an educational institution.

Madrasah Islamiyah (MI) Al Qodir Wage Taman Sidoarjo is an educational institution that is able to maintain a brand image in the midst of the community. Terbukt this institution has the most students among the two closest MIs with monthly money that is retaliif more expensive than the two MIs. (MI Raudhotul Ihsan Suko, and MI Subulus Salam Bangah). Currently, MI Al Qodir has 371 students with a total study group of 18 classes. With a total Education Development Contribution (SPP) of Rp 200,000. compared to the two closest MIs which are still below Rp 100,000 per month with the number of rombel 2 parallel per class.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research is a qualitative research description of MI AlQodir Wage Taman Sidoarjo's efforts to build the Institute's Brand Image The subject of the study was the principal Wahyu Seriawan S.PdI, Chairman of the H Fuad Anwar Foundation, MM. and research informants include teachers, students, employees, and guardians. Data collection is carried out through an observation process in order to explore information related to the form of services provided to students, the practical practice of MI Al Qodir Wage Taman Sidoarjo's efforts in building Brand Image and improving quality as a way for institutional competitiveness. Data analysis techniques are carried out through data reduction, data exposure, and conclusions.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Head of Processing's Efforts in Building Brand Image

MI Al Qodir Wage Taman Sidoarjo's efforts in building the quality of institutions by promoting or building educational institutions into one of the superior educational institutions in this modern era. One of them is by building a "brand image" or brand image that is able to compete with other educational institution models. This educational institution is able to read modern developments and take an attitude of change that is a necessity for today's institutions. Changes in mindset, economic and socio-cultural become the basis for the development of this institution in building brand image to increase competitiveness.

Among the efforts of MI Al Qodir Wage Taman Sidoarjo to build a Brand Image marketing mix theory institution with the 7P formula, namely product, price, place, promotion, people, physichal evendnce, and Process are as follows(Siagian, 2021);

1. Product

Products in an educational institution's marketing mix refer to any type of service or product offered by an educational institution to prospective students who are looking for an educational program (Anam & others, 2013). Educational products can include different types of educational programs, such as undergraduate, graduate, diploma, certificate, coursework, training, and others. Products of Islamic educational institutions are educational services in the form of reputation, good quality of education, prospects, job opportunities for graduates. Graduate

competency qualifications which include knowledge, attitudes and skills become superior products for the institution. Among them won sports championships both at the sub-district and district levels, won religious activities such as calligraphy, child speeches, tahfidz activities, qiroaah, Scouting, drumband, al banjari and other extracurricular activities.

2. Price

Price in the marketing mix of educational services refers to the value or cost that must be paid by consumers to obtain educational services from educational institutions. Prices usually include different types of fees, such as registration fees, tuition fees, cost of teaching materials, transportation costs, and accommodation costs. Price is one of the important elements in the marketing mix of educational services, because it can influence the decision of prospective students or students in choosing an educational institution (Dayat, 2019). Prices that are too high can make educational institutions lose their competitiveness in the market, while prices that are too low can give the impression that the quality of educational services provided is low. In Islamic educational institutions, prices are all costs incurred to get educational services offered, such as, practicum/laboratory costs, tuition fees, building investment and others. With A accreditation and good learning quality, the tuition fee is set even though it is more expensive than the surrounding institution (amounting to 200,000 per student per month), MI is able to compete with surrounding schools, both public and private.

3. Place

Place is an important element in the marketing mix of educational services because it can affect consumer perception and satisfaction with educational services provided by educational institutions (Mukhtar, 2017). The strategic and accessible location of the school, complete and modern academic facilities, and a comfortable and conducive atmosphere can improve the positive image of educational institutions in the eyes of consumers, MI Al Qodir Wage Taman Sidoarjo educational institutions have a clear place in carrying out their activities. Islamic educational institutions must choose a strategic and nyamam location of schools / madrassas so that they can be an attraction for consumers in making their choices. MI Al Qodir Wage Taman Sidoarjo is located on Taruna street number 20 in the center of the village adjacent to the market and the grand mosque built by the community and residents of Nahdliyyin. NPSN number 60717074.

4. Promotion

Promotion in the marketing mix of educational services refers to activities carried out to introduce, promote, and increase public awareness about educational services offered by an educational institution (Nawawi et al., 2018). Promotion in the marketing mix of educational services can include various activities, such as advertising campaigns through print or electronic media, exhibition activities, public events, social activities, and others. The goal is to attract the interest and attention of prospective students or students as well as the general public towards the educational

institution. while the purpose of promoting Islamic educational institutions is to provide information and provide confidence to consumers if the Islamic educational institutions offered have benefits and advantages. The promotion of MI Al Qodir Wage Taman Sidoarjo educational institution is carried out through the website <https://misalqodirwage.wordpress.com/>, brochures and pamphlets of the institution are carried out through social media phasebook Mi Al-Qodir Wage, Intragram MIALQODIRWAGE, Youtube Mi Al-Qodir bazaar and others.

5. People

People are actors involved in the process of delivering educational services. MI Al Qodir Wage Taman Sidoarjo educational institution mobilizes human resources to build brand image, the main thing is teachers who are in accordance with qualifications and competencies (masters and bachelors) and employees in providing educational services this is a benchmark for success in building brand image. This MI was built in the middle of NU citizens and a platform to NU and Strong with the jargon of the Great Dignified Madrasa.

6. Physichal evidence

Physical evidence in the marketing mix of educational services refers to all physical or material aspects of educational institutions that can give a positive or negative impression to prospective students or students MI Al Qodir Wage Taman Sidoarjo builds an environment where this madrasah stands and directly interacts with its consumers. In building the brand image of Islamic educational institutions, physical evidence includes design, building layout, library, lapanga. Sports, UKS room Administration office, teacher and principal room, adequate classes and so on as well as other supporting physical evidence in the form of student records, report cards, and others.

7. Process

Process is a mechanism in a series of physical activities to convey processes from producer to consumer. The process in marketing educational services includes all stages from beginning to end, which involves activities that need to be carried out to identify the needs and desires of prospective students or learners, promote the educational services offered, attract interest, and serve customers well (Farida et al., 2020). In this context, MI Al Qodir Wage Taman Sidoarjo Education services, the process in question is an educational process that supports an educational process running smoothly in order to get graduate products as expected through intra and extracurricular activities.

In building the Brand Image of educational institutions, MI Al Qodir Wage Taman Sidoarjo pays attention to systematic steps in building brand image. Among the steps taken in building the institution's brand image include the following;

1. Market Identification

MI Al Qodir Wage Taman Sidoarjo educational institutions need to identify and analyze the community to determine the conditions and expectations of the

community, including educational attributes that are of interest to education consumers. In this case, educational institutions actually have advantages based on Islamic values among Nahdlyyin

2. Segmentation and Positioning

MI Al Qodir Wage Taman Sidoarjo divides community segmentation into educational target groups based on lifestyle, welfare, knowledge and insight so that the characteristics of people who have the potential to become consumers of institutions will be obtained. Thus, MI Al Qodir Wage Taman Sidoarjo is able to determine the type and form of excellence that will become the brand image of the institution. Meanwhile, in positioning by determining the characteristics of distinctive educational services and distinguishing them from other institutions in order to make it easier for the community to choose between one institution and another.

3. Differentiation of Education Services

MI Al Qodir Wage Taman Sidoarjo Differentiating educational services that are effective in seeking public attention. Educational differentiation is obtained through one of four marketing strategies as a competitive strategy, namely: a. making different offers than competitors' offers. b. Cost advantage, namely a strategy to streamline the entire cost of educational services so that the cost of education is cheaper than competitors. c. Focus is a strategy to work on a specific target of excellence. d. marketing communication of programs and activities of transformative Islamic educational institutions.

Through these methods and steps, transformative Islamic educational institutions are expected to be able to build a positive brand image in developing and advancing Islamic education. The development of modern education presents its own challenges for Islamic educational institutions to increase the competitiveness of institutions in achieving the vision and mission of the institution.

Principal's Efforts in Building Competitiveness and Service Quality

MI Al Qodir Wage Taman Sidoarjo builds competitiveness In order for service to satisfy customers, and at the same time improve the positive image of the school, a number of service behaviors are internalized and shown by educators and MI Al Qodir Wage Taman Sidoarjo in providing services to customers, among others, regarding time, service relevance, accuracy, helpful and friendly, responsive, proactive, professional, capable, and capable (Imron, 2007)

1. Related on Time

The school understands punctuality is very important in providing services to customers. The school knows the target time needed to provide services to customers. The school always strives to provide services to customers faster than the set time limit. The school if deemed necessary, spend time exceeding the stipulated time in providing services to customers.

2. Related to service relevance

MI Al Qodir Wage Taman Sidoarjo positions itself in accordance with TUPOKSI in providing services to customers. The school is aware of TUPOKSI's connection to the overall services provided. The school understands and is able to practice its TUPOKSI in the context of providing services to customers. MI Al Qodir Wage Taman Sidoarjo prioritizes the interests of customers, so that they feel satisfaction from the services they receive.

3. Related to service accuracy

MI Al Qodir Wage Taman Sidoarjo understands the work steps that must be passed before providing services. Schools use auxiliary equipment for speed and accuracy of processes in providing services to customers. The school strives to check and recheck the results of the services provided to customers. The school has a perfective sense of all the services it performs. The school has an initiative to make efforts to prevent errors / weaknesses / obstacles from service to customers.

4. Related to helpful and friendly

MI Al Qodir Wage Taman Sidoarjo realizes that his existence is very much determined by the existence of customers. The school realizes that without a customer, he will not actually have any function and role in the scope of his work. The school realizes that customers are everything, so he always thinks that his existence is to help them. MI Al Qodir Wage Taman Sidoarjo feels proud and happy, if the problems owned by students and parents have more or less been solved through the help and work he does. The school realizes that the waiter is him, so he never thinks that the customer should serve him. When providing services, madrasahs do so conscientiously. In providing services, madrasahs do so gladly. In providing services, madrasah shows a friendly, pleasant, smiling face. In providing services, the School treats those served as customers. If the madrasah has problems (personal, social, work), it is not brought to work, what else affects the way it provides services to customers.

5. Related to Responsiveness and pro-active

Madrasah always thinks and fantasizes, when he should serve customers. Not the other way around, when he stopped not providing service to customers. Madrasah realizes that the job of serving customers is his full responsibility. Therefore, when providing services do not wait for orders from their superiors. The school always thinks that what he must prioritize in providing services is the customer. Therefore, he always tries to prioritize the interests of customers in every service. Educators and education staff try so that customers who are served do not have to wait long to get service from themselves. When there are customers who are confused during the process of getting service, educators and education staff offer help, asking: how can I help? The school is always thinking and trying how to make students and parents easy in their affairs, and not vice versa, how to make them difficult. The school strives so that the problems faced by clients related to the services they get, can be resolved as soon as possible. The school tries to know the workflow of its peers, so that when

their colleagues are unavailable, they will be able to replace in providing services. When customers do not understand how to access services, madrasah tries as soon as possible to provide assistance, without continuing to wait for orders from their immediate superiors. When he has problems and difficulties in every service, he asks his superiors or colleagues, and does not just wait when his colleagues and superiors ask him. Terkait dengan Profesionalitas, kapabilitas:

Madrasah compiles a detailed schedule for the completion of its obligations, so that all the work that is its responsibility, is really planned (by design). Madrasah understands the procedures and workflows along with the soul contained by these procedures and workflows. In every service to customers, madrasah is always guided by the workflow set by its superiors. In every service, the School always seeks the fastest, most appropriate and most accurate ways, without going out of the corridors and soul of the established procedures. In carrying out every job, the School acts calmly and does not panic even when under pressure. In completing work, the School prioritizes the completeness of the work for which it is responsible, and does not solely refer to working time and hours. Regarding various problems related to their work, the School always looks for the best alternative solutions, without having to violate the corridors of rules and procedures along with the soul contained by these rules and procedures. For the work he has to complete, the School does not procrastinate (make it easy), because if it accumulates, it will reduce the quality of service he can provide. When there are colleagues who experience problems related to their work, the madrasah will help solve them, so that the work of colleagues is not neglected, and can satisfy customers. The school always strives to make continuous improvements in the quality of service (Kaizen) it provides so that customer satisfaction is increasing.

6. Training educators and education personnel

MI Al Qodir Wage Taman Sidoarjo has a regular schedule in upgrading human resources. Every Friday, various kinds of training are held for teachers and employees, one of which is training on excellent service. The agenda is under the responsibility of the Head of the madrasa. Through training related to pedagogy and excellent service, Madrasah is able to evaluate the advantages and disadvantages possessed in performing services. Excellent service training that is carried out every year can be a means of improving all educators and education staff. They are able to analyze the potential that can be developed with the characteristic capital of existing human resources, as well as evaluate shortcomings to make improvements.

Training on improving teacher competence and excellent service management provides provisions to teachers and employees on how to receive guests well, gives smiles to everyone they meet, both outsiders and insiders including fellow colleagues to school guards, and always be friendly to students. Routine training held every Saturday is a manifestation of improving the capabilities of teachers and employees in organizing education and management of educational institutions. This effort is also a step taken to provide excellent service. Madrasah strives to provide professional and capable educators and education staff in their fields through continuous skill improvement.

Excellent service training aims to understand the concept of service to all members of the agency. Service providers are trained to understand from the point of view of service users and understand 9 service points, namely: ease of access, responsibility, competence, courtesy, level of trust, speed of service, security, transparency, and professionalism. MI Al Qodir Wage Taman Sidoarjo is able to understand effective communication in order to create an attractive image for service users. Train each member to understand the characteristics of service users so that they are able to convey messages well so as to bring out service user loyalty. That way, educators and education staff are able to serve the community, especially students and guardians with appropriate and satisfying services.

7. Enabling friendly communication

One of the points of excellent service is courtesy. So school residents are accustomed continuously to be able to cultivate polite and friendly communication patterns for everyone. This starts from the communication of the head of the mdrasah to teachers and employees who are more democratic and polite, not impressed authoritarian and harsh. This is also practiced by teachers on students. Teachers are used to being friendly to students so that students are reluctant and polite. Friendly communication is also felt by parents. Parents receive a warm welcome every time they drop off and pick up school children. The picket teachers kindly and warmly greeted the parents in front of the gate.

In receiving complaints from parents or the community, MI Al Qodir Wage Taman Sidoarjo habituates teachers and employees to respond politely, not give answers with emotion, and try to dampen the atmosphere. Professionalism to immediately forward reports on the right track, accustomed to providing satisfactory feedback on complaints addressed to the school.

8. Bringing family to life

MI Al Qodir Wage Taman Sidoarjo strives to make all school residents, parents and the surrounding community as a big family of the school. In providing services, a public service institution, in this case a school, involves and pays special attention to the community, especially students and guardians into something that is valuable beyond the formalities of providing education. So it has become a necessity for education to give more attention to social relations with the community, especially parents. This is manifested in the form of madrasah concern for every party who needs help. Systematically, the school has a social fund. Every teacher, employee, student, guardian, or surrounding community is hit by a disaster, the school will provide care in the form of sympathy and material. In addition to a form of concern, the school also facilitates friendship between parents contained in the POMG (Parent and Teacher Meeting) program. This activity is carried out regularly once a month as a medium of friendship between the school and parents. Through this program, teachers are closer to parents and parents can get to know each other and get close to each other. Discussions for the good of children can be realized through the program. The POMG (Parent and Teacher Meeting) program is one of the programs that is also intended to convey every important school information. This information

can relate to school activities, as well as to the developmental conditions of students at school. Parents not only receive formal information about systems and programs, but also know their child's problems and development. WhatsApp groups are created per class and every responsible teacher is obliged to serve complaints, questions and input from parents properly.

9. Provide adequate facilities

MI Al Qodir Wage Taman Sidoarjo has built a building as a form of providing proper facilities. Facilities are built with the concept of providing a sense of comfort for school residents as well as parents and visiting guests. Building a pick-up area that is shaded and has seating, building a canopy to protect from heat and rain, are some of the techniques that have been realized to provide excellent service. Excellent service is not only carried out by school residents, but also school foundations. The contribution of the foundation management in supporting the realization of school programs is a manifestation of the foundation's concern for the concept of excellent service. The results of research in a hospital, showed that the higher the satisfaction of inpatients with care services, the lower the level of anxiety about a service. Efforts to implement excellent service provide satisfaction, especially very visible from parents. Parents are comfortable with school services and communication, so parents do not hesitate to disseminate school excellence and achievements to participate in marketing. Even some parents dare to defend and maintain the good name of the school when bad news is heard from outside.

CONCLUSION

MI Al Qodir Wage Taman Sidoarjo has built a Brand image as a transformative Islamic educational institution by not separating from the development and progress of Islamic educational institutions themselves. Through the brand image of MI Al Qodir Wage Taman Sidoarjo educational institutions, they are able to increase the competitiveness of institutions in the midst of existing competition. Among the efforts to build brand image carried out by MI Al Qodir Wage Taman Sidoarjo, among others, by conducting 1) Market Identification 2) Segmentation and Positioning, 3) Differentiation of Education Services, and 4) Services of Transformative Islamic Education Institutions.

Meanwhile, to build a brand image that is able to increase the competitiveness of transformative Islamic educational institutions is done with a marketing mix formula that is known as the 7P formula, namely product, price, place, promotion, people, physical evendnce, and Process. After transformative Islamic educational institutions find a brand image, to streamline and make brand image have a positive impact, MI Al Qodir Wage Taman Sidoarjo pays attention to factors that support Consumer Benefits or benefits obtained by consumers through the institution's excellent service.

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