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Managing Consumer-Based Marketing and Brand Equity in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in West Sumbawa Regency (KSB) Indonesia

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Abstract:
The external marketing study in this research is to illustrate how private HEIs are perceived by potential customers based on the messages conveyed by private HEIs in building their image, as well as its influence on the intention to choose. This study aims to obtain a description of knowledge about the marketing mix stimulus received by prospective students in areas that have just come out of the category of disadvantaged areas, how the stimulus builds a private HEIs image, and how stimulus and image ultimately affect students' intention to choose private HEIs. The target of this research is the study of HE-based external marketing strategies for customers.
Prospective students who were sampled in this study were high school students. The unit of analysis in this study is the 3rd grade high school students as prospective customers. The reason for this choice is because they are the ones who will continue their studies to university and they are the main target of HEIs. The method of measuring variables in this study is done through assessing consumers' perceptions of marketing strategies by private HEIs that are accepted by potential consumers, private HEIs brands, and Students' Intention to Choose private HEIs. Data was collected through answers to questionnaires containing the opinions of 100 prospective customers regarding these variables. The findings of this study are BE private HEIs has a significant effect on students' intention to choose private HEIs, but 7P has no significant effect on students' intention to choose private HEIs. However, this study also proves that marketing stimuli (7P) have a significant effect in building BE a private HEIs. So that to increase the interest of prospective students, private universities must strengthen their BE, which can be done through the application of marketing stimuli (7 P), and private HEIs can focus investment and communication efforts on resources that can be maximally utilized.

Keywords: Marketing stimuli (7P), brand equity, intention to choose, higher education institutions

1. Introduction

The existence of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in disadvantaged areas has a very important role because HE is the key in producing quality human resources (HR). Quality human resources is the main key to strengthen the competitiveness of a nation. The role of private HEIs in helping the Indonesian government produce quality HR is actually very large, because 70% of graduates in Indonesia are produced by private HEIs and private HEIs who are able to reach all corners of Indonesia. Therefore, the existence of private HEIs in remote areas of Indonesia must always be maintained both in terms of quality and the operational sustainability of private HEIs themselves.

The research of Prabowo, et al (2017) proves that prospective students in Indonesia prefer public HEIs over private HEIS, because the image of the public HEIs is a quality and the graduates will get jobs easily. This condition is quite worrying for the local private HEIs, because it will have an impact on the number of potential customers who are interested, and can disrupt the operations of local private HEIs whereas on the other hand the existence of local HEIs is expected to be able to assist the government in improving local HR. This condition is actually also experienced by HEIs in the world with increasingly intense competition at the global level. As a result, they began to adopt marketing-oriented strategies to differentiate themselves from their competitors (Lim, 2018). Brand is used to build an image and identity that is different from others that can be accepted and recognized in society (Ahzam and Ahmad, 2020). In order for a brand that is built to be understood, accepted, and recognized, the brand needs to be communicated to the public. The marketing mix is one of the core concepts that plays an important role in determining strategic positions and communicating the desired brand offering and promising to target markets, and the use of formal marketing strategies formally tested on HEIs can strategically and effectively manage certain organizations and product brands (Lim. 2018).

The literature examining the relationship between marketing mix and brand aspects dimensions of branding in HEIs and their relationship to the intention to choose HEIs is still very limited.

Ivy (2008) points out that traditional marketing mix is not the best way to approach HE marketing and introduces new marketing mix elements (7P) that are empirically validated for HE - namely, prominence, prospectus, programs, prices, people, premium, and promotions. Lim (2018) examined the impact of the seven elements of HEIs marketing mix on Corporate brands and Product brands in HEIs, and concluded that HEIs marketers can strategically use marketing variables that can be controlled to build HEIs brand image in their target markets. Mourad, et al (2019) states that HEIs brand equity (BE) influences the selection process, as a differentiating tool for competitors and as a risk reduction tool, so it is very important for HEIs to always build and manage its brand image. Prabowo, et al (2017) found that 4 marketing mix was able to build BE private HEIs in Indonesia. Prabowo, et al (2015) BE private HEIs significantly influence the intention to choose HEIs. In an effort to expand knowledge about marketing strategies in HE and to close the gaps that have been identified, this study aims to broaden previous research by investigating the relationship between marketing mix from Ivy (7P), BE and its influence on intention to choose private HEIs by prospective students in West Sumbawa Regency (KSB) Indonesia which is an area that has just come out of the category as a disadvantaged area in Indonesia.

1.1. Marketing Mix in HE

Many authors have recognized the important role of marketing in recruiting new students (Cubillo et al., 2006; Maringe and Foskett, 2002). Aaker (2009) argues that marketing strategies can involve a variety of functional area strategies including positioning, price, distribution, and global strategies. Marketing shows that all consumer or customer decisions are used as a basis for decision making (Basu, 2000). Customer satisfaction is the life blood of a company that must flow continuously, because it provides several benefits (Tjiptono, 2002).

Gronroos in Kotler, (2010) states that the concept of service marketing involves several elements in the implementation of marketing activities that are not only in terms of external marketing but also internal marketing and interactive marketing. External marketing describes the normal activities carried out by companies in preparing, setting prices, distributing and promoting services to customers. While internal marketing describes the work done by the company to train and encourage its internal customers, namely customer liaison employees and service support employees to work as a team in order to provide satisfaction to customers. Interactive marketing describes employee expertise in handling customer relationships. In marketing services, the quality of service is determined by the performer of the service. Consumers who enjoy services and assess service quality are not only from the perspective of their technical quality, but also based on their functional quality.

Product is anything that can be offered to the market to be considered; owned, used or consumed that can satisfy the wants or needs of the market. Tjiptono (2002) states that, 'Prices can be set on a demand basis. Zeithaml and Bitner (1996) state that 'Location / distribution factors contained in service marketing consist of: types of channels, intermediaries, outlet locations, transportation, storage and managing channels'. It also said that the promotion factors contained in service marketing consisted of: salespeople or services, number of selections, training, incentives, targets, types of media and advertising, as well as promotional mix (advertising, sales promotion, personal selling, and publicity. Lupiyoadi (2001), states that in the marketing of services, people / participant functions as a service provider greatly influencing the quality of services provided. Process according to Lupiyoadi (2001) is a combination of all activities generally consisting of procedures, work schedules, activities and routine things, where: services are produced and delivered to consumers. Whereas physical evidence is the environment where the service is delivered and where the service provider with the consumer interacts along with all the other components that support the realization or communication of the service.

Ivy (2008) suggests that traditional marketing tools are historically grouped into 4Ps (products, prices, places and promotions), 5Ps (adding people) and 7Ps (adding facilities and physical processes) are considered to be insufficient to capture the marketing distinctiveness in HE.

- Prominence - EIs image (e.g. Reputation of academic staff, university reputation through league tables or press reviews, and content and sophistication of the institution's website in showing the reputation and status of schools);
- Prospectus - direct marketing through printed promotional materials that are used to communicate information about higher education brands and offers to target markets (e.g. Prospectuses and direct mail);
- Program - curriculum-related aspects of university degrees (e.g. range of choices and majors);
- Price - fees charged for university admission (e.g. tuition fees, flexibility in paying tuition fees, flexibility in teaching approaches);
- People - interactions between staff and students at the university (e.g. availability of personal contact with graduates, open days, or information nights);
- Premium - incentives that add special value to the offer (e.g. availability of on campus accommodation, total amount of credit for the degree, opportunities for international student exchange, diversity of student races, level housing requirements, class size);
- Promotion - standard mass advertising through traditional media to communicate information about higher education brands and offers to target markets (e.g. media advertising, publicity, electronic media).

1.2. Brand Equity in Higher Education

Keller (1993), defines BE as the effect of a brand which is the consumer's response to marketing activities

associated with a particular product. The stronger the BE of a product, the stronger its appeal to consumers to consume the product and ultimately will lead to product purchasing decisions (Durianto, et al, 2004). The customer-based BE approach will look at BE from the consumer's point of view. The rationale of the customer-based BE model reveals that the strength of a brand lies in what has been seen, read, heard, learned, thought, and felt about a particular brand so far (Kotler and Keller, 2007). Aaker (1991) built BE models on five dimensions, including brand awareness, brand association, perceived quality, and brand loyalty. The availability of information about the university affects the level of awareness and perception of the university's brand. Advertising increases university brand awareness, marketing information about these services creates brand awareness and recognition as well as brand knowledge and finally BE (Davies and Ellison (1997), Keller (1993). Therefore, creating the right communication tool is the key to improving the university's brand position and managing its BE (Sharma, Rao, and Popli 2013; Pinar et al. 2014)). 4 P of the private HEIs marketing mix felt by prospective students turned out to have a significant effect in building BE private HEIs. The BE dimensions used in this study are brand awareness, brand association, perceived quality, and brand loyalty (Prabowo et al (2017)). Hence, this research hypothesizes a positive significant relation between marketing mix and BE on the other:

H1: The amount of marketing mix conducted by private HEIs has a positive impact on its BE as perceived by its customers (students).

1.3. Students' Intention to Choose HEIs

Every marketing effort that leads to consumer behavior will be positively related to BE (Yoo, B., et al. (2000)). So that the effects of marketing can directly influence purchasing decisions, or influence through BE. Prabowo, et al (2017) found that the product is the most dominant marketing mix indicator in developing BE private HEIs in Indonesia, and the most dominant BE indicator is customer perception of all qualities or advantages of private HEIs that are expected. Prabowo, et al (2015) shows that the key to the sustainability of the education business is through strengthening BE HEIs. It was found that word of mouth (WOM) and viral WOM significantly built BE Indonesian private HEIs and BE private HEIs significantly affected decision to choose HEIs.

Students' Intention to Choose HEIs in this research approached through the interest in buying a product. Durianto, D. et al (2004) said that buying interest is something related to consumers' plans to buy certain products. Planning to buy products according to Kottler and Armstrong (2008) consists of Attention: attention to the product, Interest: product interest, Desire to own the product and Action to take action to buy the product. According to Thamrin, (2003) buying interest is part of consumer behavior in consuming and is the tendency of respondents to act before a buying decision is actually implemented. Accordingly, the researchers formulate the following hypotheses:

- H2: BE of private HEIs as perceived by its customers (students) is impact to students' intention to choose private HEIs
- H3: The amount of marketing mix (7P) conducted by private HEIs as perceived by its customers (students) is impact to students' intention to choose private HEIs

2. Method

Data is taken through questionnaire distribution which contains statements about consumer-based research variables. The unit of analysis of this study is 12th grade high school students in KSB. The reason for this selection is because 12th grade high school students are prospective students who will continue their studies to higher education. A total of 100 questionnaires were distributed to 12th grade high school students in KSB.

Indicator of marketing stimuli refers to the HE marketing strategy from Ivy (2008) referred to as 7P, namely Prominence (PROMi), Prospectus (PROS), Programs (PROG), Prices (PRICE), People (PEOPLE), Premium (PREM), and Promotion (PROM). The BE variable of HEIs refers to the five dimensions of Aaker, including brand awareness (BAW), brand association (BAS), perceived quality (PQ), and brand loyalty (BL). The variable of students' intention to choose private HEIs is measured through indicators of purchasing decisions from Kottler and Armstrong (2008), namely attention (ItCPHE1), interest (ItCPHE2), desire (ItCPHE3), and action (ItCPHE4). Indicators of all variables are measured through five alternative answers that refer to the Likert scale technique, namely Strongly Disagree (1), Disagree (2), Neutral (3), Agree (4), and Strongly agree (5). Modeling to test the effect of 7P variables and brand equity on students' intention to choose HEIs was carried out with a Structural Equation Model (SEM) model using the SmartPLS program.

3. Result

3.1. West Sumbawa Regency (KSB) Overview

KSB is one of the ten regencies/cities in the West Nusa Tenggara Province (NTB). KSB is the result of the division of Sumbawa Regency in 2003 based on Law No. 30 of 2003 concerning the Establishment of the KSB. The KSB has just been excluded from the category of underdeveloped region in Indonesia based on the Decree of the Minister of Villages, Development of Disadvantaged Regions, and Transmigration of the Republic of Indonesia No 79 of 2019 concerning the Establishment of the alleviation of Disadvantaged Regions in 2015-2019. the location of the KSB is quite strategic because it is the 'Gate' from Lombok Island to Sumbawa Island.

There are 22 high schools in the KSB with an average graduate of around 1,500 students per year, and there is one Private HEIs (PTS) namely Cordova University (UNDOVA) which is the only HEIs in the region. Thus, UNDOVA should have the potential and opportunity to develop and contribute to the development of HR in the KSB. In the area directly adjacent to the KSB area there are several other private HEIs such as the University of Samawa Sumbawa Besar, Sumbawa University of Technology, IISBUD Samawa Rea, STKIP Paracendikia NW Sumbawa, and others. In total, in NTB Province

there are around 58 private HEIs spread across 2 (two) large islands, Lombok and Sumbawa. The many choices of HEIs, both public and private with various Departments / Study Programs, have become one of the causes of the tendency of high school graduates at KSB to continue their studies at HEIs outside KSB.

3.2. Top of Mind PTS at KSB

In this study respondents consisting of high school students were asked to name which private HEIs was considered the most qualified private HEIs, had affordable costs, graduates quickly get job, and were the most desirable. Based on the findings of the data obtained, private HEIs that are of the highest quality, have affordable costs, graduates quickly get job, and are the most desirable by respondents as Top of Mind are as illustrated in figure 1, 2, 3, and 4 below.
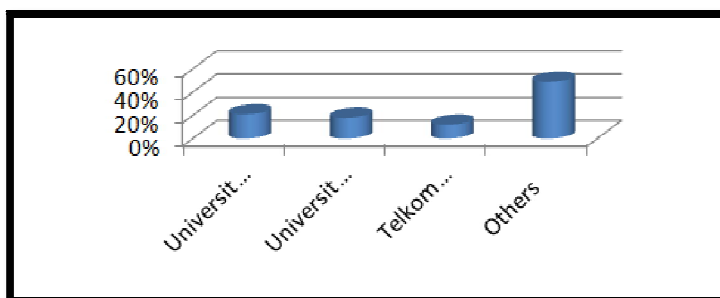

Figure 1: The First Choice as a Private Heis Quality

As many as 21% of respondents said that the first private HEIs they remembered as a quality private HEIs was UNDOVA. Whereas for private HEIs occupying the second position in respondent's memory is UTS by 18%, third position is Telkom University Bandung by 12%, and the remaining 49% mention other HEIs.
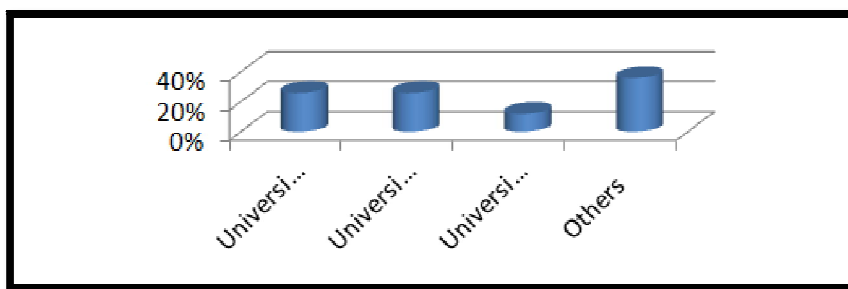

Figure 2: The First Choice as Private HEIs with Affordable Costs

UNDOVA and UTS were equally mentioned the first time by respondents as private HEIs with affordable costs with a value of 26% each. The next position is UNDIKMA which was first mentioned by 12% of respondents as private HEIs at the first affordable cost. Another part (36%) mentions other private HEIs.
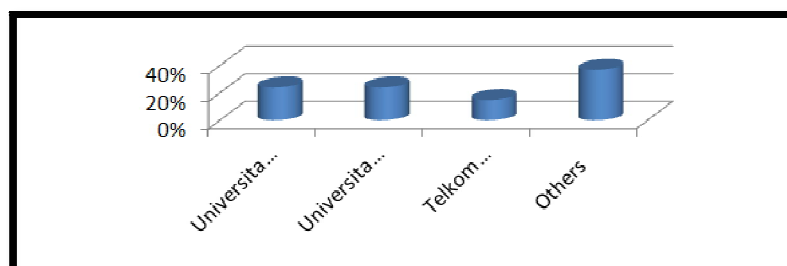

Figure 3: First Choice as Private Heis with Graduates Who Quickly Get a Job

The private HEIs that was first mentioned by respondents as private HEIs whose graduates quickly got job were UNDOVA (24%) and UTS (24%), and subsequently followed by Telkom University Bandung, which was first mentioned by 15% of respondents.
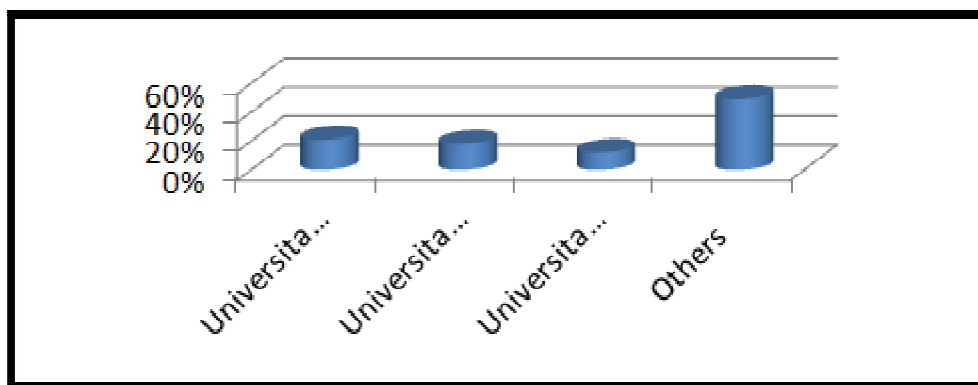
Figure 4: The First Choice as the Most Interested Private Heis

UNDOVA became the most commonly mentioned private HEIs for the first time as the most preferred first choice private HEIs (21%), followed by UTS (18%), and the third position was UNDIKMA (12%).

3.3. The Evaluation Model of Measurement (Outer Model)

Testing the validity of indicators of each research variable (7P, brand equity, and Interest to study in HE), as well as testing the validity and reliability of all research variables is carried out using the Evaluation Model of Measurement (Outer Model). Figure 5 shows the value of the validity of each indicator to the construct variable shown by the value of the loading factor of each indicator.
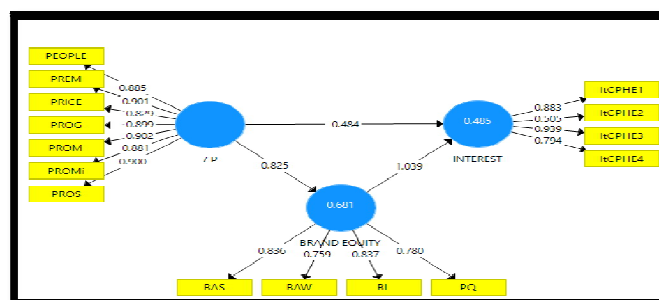

Figure 5: Students' Intention to Choose Heis in KSB (Model 1)

An indicator with a loading factor value ≥ 0.7, is declared valid forming a research variable (Chin, W. 2010). Figure 5 shows that almost all indicators of the 3 research variables have a loading factor ≥ 0.7, which means that the indicators are valid construct variables. Only one indicator that has a loading factor value of 0.505 is the information search indicator (ItCPHE2). So that the information search indicator (ItCPHE2) is excluded from the model, and the model becomes like in Figure 6 below.
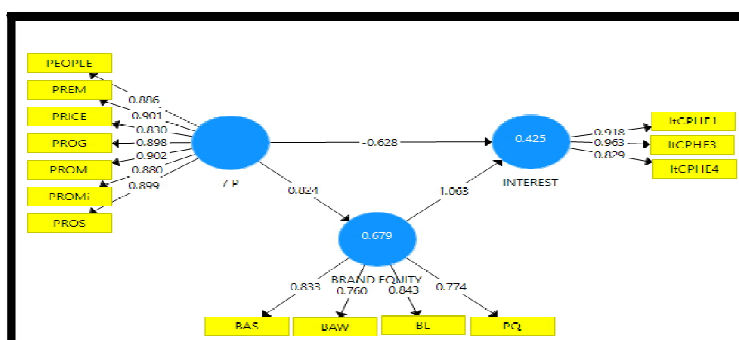

Figure 6: Students' Intention to Choose Heis in KSB (Model 2)

All indicators in model 2 (Figure 6) have a loading factor value ≥ 0.7 so that all indicators can be declared valid forming their respective construct variables. Then the validity and reliability tests are performed on all construct variables. Ghozaly (2016), said that a construct variable can be said to be valid if it has an Average Variance Extracted value > 0.5 and a Composite Reliability value > 0.6. Table 1 shows that all construct variables (7P, brand equity and students' intention to choose HEIs) are valid and reliable.

	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted
7P	0.954	0.962	0.784
Brand Equity	0.818	0.879	0.645
Students' Intention to Choose HEIs	0.888	0.898	0.819

Table 1: Construct Reliability Dan Validity (Model 2)

3.4. Evaluation of Structural Models (Inner Model)

Evaluation of structural models (Inner Model) is used to test the significance and calculate the value of R2. Table 2 shows the results of the significance tests from model 2, where the BE variable is significantly influences the variable of interest to continuing studies in, HE. This finding accepts hypothesis 2 which states that BE of private HEIs as perceived by its customers (students) is impact to students' intention to choose private HEIs. That table 2 also shown that marketing mix variable (7P) is not significantly influences the variable of students' intention to choose HEIs, it means that hypothesis 3 is rejected. But the 7P variable is significantly influences the BE variable, and it means that hypothesis 1 is accepted. But from that table also shows that the 7P variable does not significantly affect student's intention to choose private HEIs. Thus, the model becomes model 3 (see figure 7). Model 3 significance test results, can be seen in table 3.

Variable		Standard deviation	t-statistic	p-values
7P →	Brand Equity	0.064	16.844	0.000
7 P →	Students' Intention to Choose HEIs	0.410	1.161	0.127
Brand Equity →	Students' Intention to Choose HEIs	0.296	3.020	0.000

Table 2: Test the Significance of Model 2

Variable		Standard Deviation	t-statistic	p-values
7P →	Brand Equity	0.048	17.899	0.000
Brand Equity →	Students' Intention to Choose HEIs	0.085	7.933	0.000

Table 3: Test the Significance of Model 3

To assess the effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable, the value of R2 is used. Figure 7 shows the effect of BE on students' intention to choose private HEIs is indicated by an R2 of 0.328 (32.8%), while the effect of 7P on BE is 0.681 (68.1%). This means that 32.8% of students' intention to choose HEIs is influenced by BE, while 68.1% of BE is influenced by 7P.
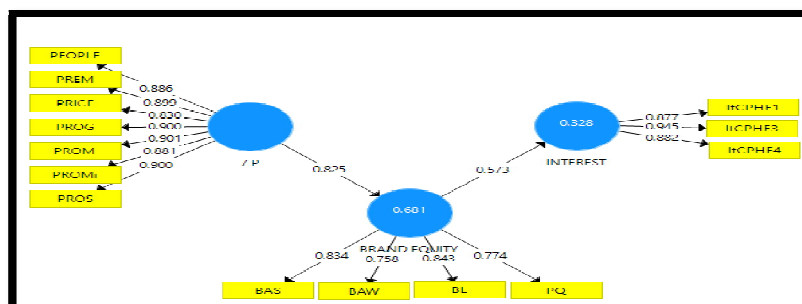

Figure 7: Students' Intention to Choose Heis (Model 3)

To test the goodness of fit of this model the SRMR, d_ULS, Chi-Square, and NFI values are used with the critical limit criteria determined by Djikstra, et al (2015). From table 4, it can be seen that the model meets 2 criteria, namely SRMR and Chi square, so it can be concluded that model 3 can be accepted as a good model.

Table 4. The Result of Goodness Test of Fit Model 3

Goodness of Fit Index	Saturated Model	Estimated Model	Cut off value
SRMR	0,151	0,168	<0.950
d_ULS	2.395	2.969	<0.950
d_G	2.529	2.566	<0.950
Chi-Square	324.739	331.047	High value
NFI	0,537	0,528	>0.90

Table 4: The Result of Goodness Test of Fit Model 3

4. Result

The findings of this study are that BE has a significant effect on students' intention to choose private HEIs. This fact is in line with Vukasovič, Tina (2015) who said that the brand is a significant influence on the selection of a university. Jalilvand, M R, et al (2011) found that BE has a significant direct effect on purchase intentions. Whereas Doostar, M, et al (2012) stated that the dimensions of BE have a direct impact on purchasing decisions. Jalilvand, M R, et al (2011) also said that brand awareness is able to build intimacy and is a signal of commitment, quality as a tool of differentiation. The level of familiarity in a brand, the interaction between familiarity in a brand, influences consumer purchase intentions (Hemsley-Brown, J, et al. 2016). So, the brand awareness effect must not be underestimated.

Other findings from this study are that 7P does not have a significant effect on students' intention to choose private HEIs, but 7 P has a significant effect in building BE. This finding is in line with the opinion that the role of various marketing efforts in building strong BE is very important (Yoo, B, et al, 2000). Other findings from this study are that 7P does not have a significant effect on interest in students' intention to choose private, but 7 P has a significant effect in building BE. This finding is in line with the opinion that the role of various marketing efforts in building strong brand equity is very important (Yoo, B, et al, 2000). The frequency of advertising is one source of BE (Chattopadyay, D and Sivani, 2010). BE can be strengthened through the implementation and management of marketing businesses (Nigam, A and Kaushik, R, 2011). Prabowo, HA and Farida (2015) found that BE from private HEIs was influenced by WOM and viral WOM. Hemsley-Brown, J, et al (2016) say to lead to high reputation, HEIs can focus investment and communication efforts on the resources that can be most utilized because of the inherent strength. This is reinforced by the opinion of Beneke, J.H. (2011) who say a proactive attitude in maximizing the attractiveness of the HEIs brand can recruit desired students. Whereas Hemsley-Brown, J and Goonawardana, (2007) explain that competition encourages HEIs to focus on articulating and developing their brands clearly.

When asked directly without being given a reminder about quality private HEIs, 21% of respondents mentioned the KSB local private HEIs namely UNDOVA. Furthermore, UNDOVA was mentioned as private HEIs with affordable costs, private HEIs with graduates who is quick to get a job, and private HEIs that is the most desirable by 26%, 24%, and 21% of respondents respectively. This fact can be interpreted as less than 25% of respondents accept private HEIs that they first remember as quality private HEIs, affordable, quick to get a job, and the most desirable is UNDOVA. This means that UNDOVA as a KSB local private HEIs is considered a top of mind PTS by 20% of respondents consisting of high school students at KSB. However, this condition also means that almost 80% of respondents mentioned that private HEIs is the most qualified, the most affordable cost, has graduates who are quick to get a job, and the most desirable is private HEIs outside the KSB area. This means that UNDOVA as a local private HEIs still has a low level of brand awareness in its own region, because almost 80% of respondents who are high school students in their region, still remember more other private HEIs outside the KSB area. In other words, it can be said that when prospective students in private HEIs will continue their studies to HE, 80% of them remember private HEIs outside KSB to be considered for selection. So, it can be concluded that UNDOVA as a local private HEIs still has low brand awareness even though the effect of brand awareness cannot be underestimated in influencing the interests of prospective students to continue their studies.

Another finding that needs to be considered is the invalid interest indicator forming the prospective student interest variable in the KSB to choose private HEIs. If we pay attention to the explanation from Kotler and Armstrong (2011), the indicator of interest can be interpreted as a potential consumer interest in existing information media. This explanation can be interpreted that prospective students have no interest in media information about HEIs available in the community. In conditions where consumers are reluctant to search for information, the role of brand awareness is very important because brand awareness is the memory of consumers or potential consumers about the product. the highest brand awareness position size is top of mind, so it is urgent for UNDOVA as a local PTS in KSB to be able to improve the position of top of mind in high school students. In order to increase brand awareness in its prospective students, UNDOVA as a local PTS in the KSB region can make communication efforts by highlighting the resources that are considered the best. this is consistent with the opinion of Hemsley-Brown, J., et al (2016) that HEIs do not have to achieve excellence in all resources but can focus their investment and communication efforts on the most exploitable resources, where the use of interactive social media has very strong and positive effect. UNDOVA can utilize the interactive use of social media as a marketing communication effort. It is recommended that UNDOVA establish an intensive relationship with prospective students in its area through this media. because according to Qi B. and Mackie L (2014) social media brings opportunities for brand awareness; and many HEIs in the world have alluded to the concept of using social media to communicate with potential students. This was confirmed by Deborah Wiltrout from the Department of Admissions Marketing at the University of Maryland who noted that building strong institutional brands was in fact the key to attracting customers into a relationship (Pulley, 2003). Whereas Thomson, (2002) said the brand of HEIs can be used to send strong signals to potential students about the quality and credibility of the institution.

5. Conclusion

The findings of this study are marketing stimuli (7P) have a significant effect in building BE a private HEIs, and BE private HEIs have a significant effect on students' intention to choose private HEIs. However, this study also proves that 7P has no significant effect on students' intention to choose private HEIs. So, it is recommended to private HEIs for building their BE through marketing activities intensely. Private HEIs do not have to achieve excellence in all resources but can focus their investment and communication efforts on the most exploitable resources. the use of interactive social media is recommended because it has very strong and positive effect.

6. Acknowledgement

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