



Emotional branding moderation on marketing mix selection of college in the Covid-19 pandemic period



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ABSTRACT

This study of college services consumers aims to determine several aspects of the service marketing mix of the decision to choose college x in Purwokerto, Indonesia. Furthermore, this study uses emotional branding moderation on aspects of the marketing mix on the selection decision. Emotional branding aspects were studied to determine customer emotional involvement, pride, emotional relationships, and expectations of the selected educational service products. Using a questionnaire with a Linkert scale, the study explored information from 300 student respondents who registered at college x in Purwokerto, Indonesia. Furthermore, the questionnaire data received were processed using the Smart-PLS 3.0 analysis tool. The results of the analysis of emotional branding were unable to moderate the relationship between promo si, price, place, process, and customer service to choose college x in Purwokerto, Indonesia during the Covid-19 periods. Promotions and places or locations. Other aspects do not affect. This condition indicates the importance of promotion and proximity to location when choosing a tertiary institution during the Covid-19 period. Promotion needs to be improved at tertiary institutions x in Purwokerto Indonesia, as done through online media and social media. Research on emotional branding of College services has not been done much. This research complements the information and adds to the repertoire of research on the emotional branding, brand equity, and emotional brand service products.

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Introduction

The impact of the global Covid-19 pandemics on the micro and macroeconomic sectors in Indonesia is extraordinary. There is an increase in unemployment of around 2.9 million in the labor sector, up to the heaviest prediction of 5.2 million people due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic (Kompas, 2020). The data comes from the formal sector, while people who lose their informal sector income will undoubtedly be more. This situation causes people's purchasing power to decline, both for goods and services includes College services. In general, it is predicted that there will be fundamental changes to determine College institutions during the Covid-19 period. Society may consider several factors in choosing a university, among others: cost factors, distance factors, location and safety, lecture methods. Several studies use the marketing mix theory as a determining variable in the decision to choose a university. The general questions specific factors such as lecture methods. Concern about the safety factor if consumers choose universities is also higher. Pe Scan has conducted a preliminary survey to capture these issues. The preliminary survey was aimed at randomly prospective new students through a simple google form survey in February-March 2020. Respondents filled in randomly from several districts in Central Java with the highest percentage, namely 19.4% from Banyumas Regency. Other information with the highest percentage is that respondents earn 3-5 million rupiah (63.5%) and have permanent jobs in the formal sector (64%). The preliminary survey results showed that the child, not the parent decided to elect College. In general, parents still wish to continue their education for their children. Information about colleges and related matters is mostly obtained from children.

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The results of the preliminary survey are incomplete and cannot be used as empirical data. However, the initial information becomes a small indication for this research to focus on new students. This research uses the marketing mix to determine the decision to choose a college for new students. Research on the effect of the marketing mix on the decision to choose a university has been carried out in the scope of College. (Yusuf, 2014); (Sunardi et al., 2016); (Syam et al., 2019); (Wulandini S, 2017); (Prabowo & Sriwidadi, 2019). To complement the previous research recommendations and be used as a source of information for College decision making, this study added a moderating variable to the emotional branding variable. Emotional branding is a strong consumer-brand relationship built from experience, brand image, an empathetic understanding of inspiration, customer aspirations that create emotional bonds. (Thompson et al., 2006). Emotional branding is important to research in service marketing because service products are directly felt and involve the customer's emotional side. Emotional branding has a positive relationship and buying behavior. Emotional branding plays a major role in purchasing behavior and customer loyalty, such as Pakistani soft drink research (Riaz & Ahmed, 2017), fashion brands (Kim & Sullivan, 2019), Dominos pizza at Jammu University (Ankita, 2018). Instead, Karnowati (2020) found the emotional branding does not affect the decision to purchase folding bicycles.

In the service sector, research on staff service branding, creating a library atmosphere increases library visits. (Komariah et al., 2016), a significant positive effect of emotional branding to brand loyalty restaurants in Jakarta (Dewanti et al., 2011), experience sensory perception, motivation, and vision significantly to consumer loyalty Garuda Indonesia in Jakarta, Surabaya, and Bali (Devina & Andreani, 2015).

The process of selecting educational services involves a personal element in the process. The personal emotional elements include trust, pride, and hope (A. Hasan, 2010). Therefore, it is essential to see how emotional branding is considered in the marketing strategy for College services. In summary, this study focuses on the variable promotion, price, place, process, and customer service as part of the marketing mix of products and services, and emotional branding moderation variables to examine the effect of choosing a university.

Literature Review

Looking at university service users' behavior by looking at consumer behavior (Philip Kotler, 2012) is a study of how prospective students choose, decide to buy services, or register as new students at a college to suit their wants and needs. By understanding consumer behavior in College services, College marketing techniques are adapted to a relaxed and flexible approach by paying attention to the marketing mix (Ansah, 2017); (Natalia, 2018). The 4P marketing mix model provides an overview of the product mix, price of an organization, and a combination of promotion planning to be closer to customers on a distribution basis and a well-considered customer channel of contact (Novela et al., 2018). The 4P marketing mix consists of 4P Marketing Strategies: Product, Price, Place (Location), and Promotion (Promotion) (Philip Kotler, 2012); (Keller, Kevin Lane, Kotler, 2016). In-service marketing, the marketing mix is added with three more elements: people, process, and customer service (Doni, 2016).

Making consumer purchasing decisions is a process of selecting from several alternatives and solving problems that consumers have, then consumers can evaluate these various choices and determine the attitude to be taken next. A company needs to be familiar with the purchasing decisions made by a consumer in order to maximize sales of its products (Ernawati, 2019). This strategy also applies to service products. Service products have unique characteristics, namely services (Keller, Kevin Lane, Kotler, 2016). The characteristics of service products, according to Philip Kotler & Keller (2009), are:

- i. Intangibility (intangibility)
- ii. Inseparable (inseparability)
- iii. Diversity (variability)
- iv. Not durable (perishability)

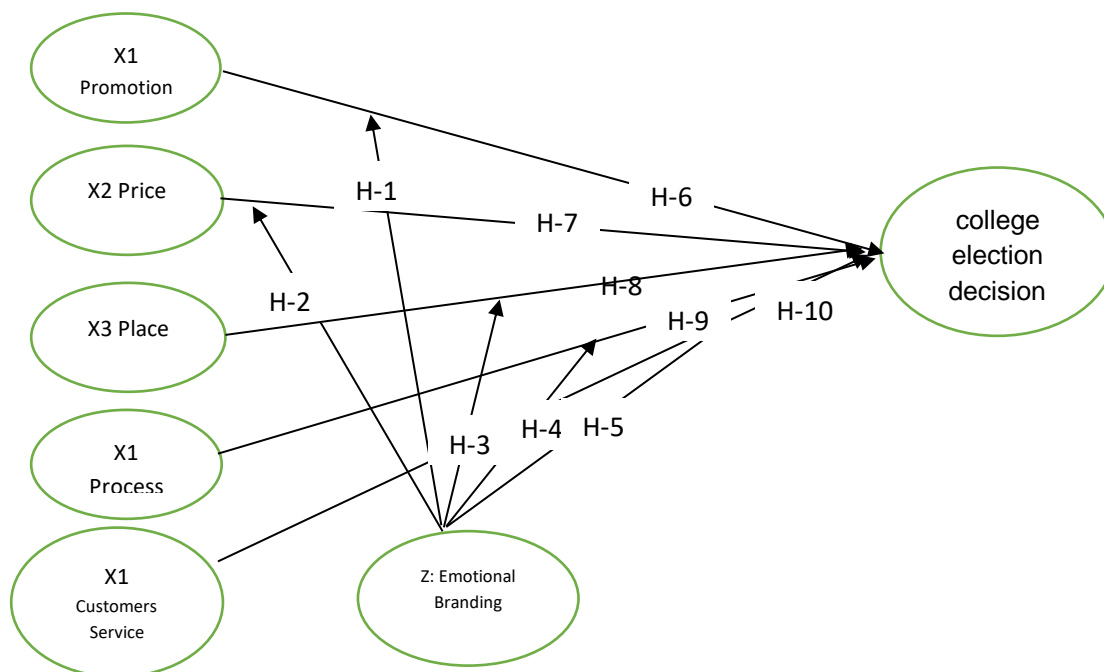
Due to the characteristics of these services' marketing, it is concluded that the factors of people, process, and customer service are significant and determine the decision to use service products. (Abdelhady et al., 2019) so that this study adds these variables to represent the marketing mix besides place and price. This study took 5 (five) marketing mixes to determine their purchasing decisions for College services.

Emotional branding becomes part of the theory congruity (self-congruity theory). This theory states that consumer behavior is determined by congruence resulting from psychological comparisons between product image and consumer self-image. This comparison results in low and high congruence categories. High congruence occurs when consumers feel the product image fits with their self-image. Kongruitas themselves affect consumers through motives of self-concept (self-concept motives), such as the need for consistency (and need for consistency) and pride (self-esteem) (Sirgy, 2018). The brand position contains core values which consist of emotional and rational dimensions. The rational dimension is built through the product, while the emotional dimension is built through the brand strategy (Sirgy, 2018).

Emotional branding is defined as deep, long-term, and intimate consumer engagement. Emotional relationships are related to the brand, benefit satisfaction, trust, and emotional experiences (Morrison & Crane, 2007). Research on emotional branding aims to explore emotions in creating strong brand attachments (Akgün et al., 2013), how brands form bonds, friendships, and love (Rossiter & Bellman, 2012). Emotional branding involves expectations of the product. Therefore it is necessary to know customer satisfaction

after enjoying the product (Jamwal & Soodan, 2014). In the advanced phase, intense emotional experiences lead to impulsive buying of products even though product information has ultimately not been received (Fioretti, 2016). Feelings and beliefs create emotional attachments and have an impact on buying behavior (T. Hasan, 2008).

Emotional branding is generated from building the right emotions, amazing imagination and five sensory experiences of consumers so that unconscious communication and relationships occur with companies (Riaz & Ahmed, 2017) which in turn influence consumer decisions to purchase products. Memorable emotional experiences connect consumers with the product emotionally and passed on in the social behavior of consumers. Emotional branding, a product created by a college to attract consumers emotionally, can be developed by increasing pride, providing memorable experiences and creating trust from potential consumers so as to encourage consumers to buy college services. Research conducted (Muthiah & Budi, 2019) shows that emotional branding has a positive effect on purchasing decisions. The results of the study (Senthilkumar, 2018) show that emotional branding has a significant effect on purchasing decisions. This research, the emotional branding aspect, is associated with 5 (five) marketing mixes to see its effect on decision making in College services. Furthermore, the research is formulated in the following framework:



with hypothesis:

- H1: Emotional branding moderates the relationship between promotion and college selection decisions*
- H2: Emotional branding moderates the relationship between price and college selection decisions*
- H3: Emotional branding moderates the relationship between place and college selection decisions*
- H4: Emotional branding moderates the relationship between process and college selection decisions*
- H5: Emotional branding moderates the relationship between customer service and college selection decisions*
- H6: Promotion has a significant positive effect on college selection decisions*
- H7: Price has a significant positive effect on college selection decisions*
- H8: Place has a significant positive effect on college selection decisions*
- H9: Process has a significant positive effect on college selection decisions*
- H10: Customer service has a significant positive effect on college selection decisions*
- H11: Emotional Branding has a significant positive effect on college selection decisions*

Research and Methodology

Methodological Procedures

Research Samples

Quantitative research with primary data uses a sample of new students from private universities 'x' in Purwokerto, Indonesia, during the early period of the registration process. The number of respondents was 300 people who filled out the questionnaire through

Google Forms media. The questionnaire consists of questions that are measured with a Likert scale of 1-5. To represent new college students 'x' as many as 3,000, if it is calculated by the formula Slovin (1993), as follows:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + Ne^2}$$

N is the population, and e is the error margin of 5%, the sample size is 300 samples.

Data analysis method

This study uses partial regression analysis (Partial Keast Square/PLS) to test the ten hypotheses proposed. Each hypothesis will be analyzed using SmartPLS 3 .0 software to test the relationship between variables. PLS is a multivariate statistical technique that compares multiple dependent variables and multiple independent variables (Jogiyanto, 2011). Moderation variables affect (strengthen or weaken) the relationship between the dependent and independent variables (Sugiyono, 2013).

The steps of Partial Least Square (PLS) are as follows (Jogiyanto, 2011) : designing structural models, designing measurement models, defining latent construct relationships with indicators, constructing path diagrams for visualizing the relationships between indicators, estimating models, and evaluating models (goodness of fit) and the last is hypothesis testing and interpretation. The PLS Assessment Criteria are as follows:

Criteria	Explanation
Structural Model Evaluation	
R2 for endogenous variables	R2 of 0.67, 0.33, and 0.19 for endogenous latent variables means that the models are " good," " moderate," and " weak."
Estimated path coefficient	The estimated value of the path relationship produces a significant value with the bootstrapping procedure.
F2 value	The value of f2 0.2 means weak, 0.15 means medium, and 0.35 means large
Evaluation of Reflective Measurement Model	
Loading factor	The value must be above 0.70
Composite Reliability	The value must be above 0.60
Average Variance Extracted	The value must be above 0.50
Discriminant Validity	The square root value of AVE must be greater than the correlation value between latent variables.
Cross Loading	Each indicator block's value has a higher loading for each latent variable measured compared to the indicator for other latent variables.
Evaluation of Formative Measurement Models	
The significance of the weight value	The estimated value of the formative measurement model should be significantly assessed from the bootstrapping process.
Multicollinearity	VIF value below 10

The study used promotion, price, place, process, and customer service variables as test variables for the influence of choosing college x in Purwokerto. The following is a description of each variable:

Buying decision

Before deciding to buy there to use products, goods, and services, consumers have prior considerations and stages. (Philip Kotler & Keller, 2009). This applies to the decision to enroll in College, and prospective new students take various stages such as seeking information, making various considerations before finally deciding to become users of College services.

Promotion

Promotion is an activity and material which, in its application, uses techniques under the control of the seller/producer, which can communicate interesting persuasive information about the products offered by the seller/producer, either directly or through parties that can influence purchases (Sunardi et al., 2016). PT x has many media for promotion, such as billboards, social media, mass media, user info. It is necessary to evaluate which of these promotional media are the most effective. Evaluation is part of the discussion of this research. Promotion variables in this study are described in indicators of easy access to information, attractive promotions, promotions as sources of information for new college students x. (Philip Kotler, 2012).

Price

Pricing is an important matter. The company will do this with full judgment because pricing can affect total revenue and expenses. Price is the main determining factor for the position and must be decided according to the target market, product mix and services, and competition (Prabowo & Sriwidadi, 2019). Research supporting policymaking at PT x needs to find an appropriate pricing

strategy or financial policy during the Covid-19 pandemic based on new students' information. Indicators of price variables in this study are the cost component, the comparison of costs with other universities, and scholarship information. (Philip Kotler, 2012).

Place (location or distance)

The place's reach is something that must be considered carefully, strategic places certainly have better opportunities for public access, but the cost of the place must also be taken into account as a consequence of easy access to consumers (Syam et al., 2019). In connection with the pandemic, information on distance and location considerations in determining College institutions needs to be explored. This information is part of the research discussion. The place variable indicators in this study are the domicile distance of new students to college x, easy access, universities' strategic location, and easy access to transportation (Philip Kotler, 2012).

Process

Service or product quality is highly dependent on the process of delivering services to consumers. Given that the driving force of service companies is the employees themselves, to ensure the quality of service (quality assurance), all company operations must be carried out following standardized systems and procedures by competent, committed, and loyal employees to the company they work. (Prabowo & Sriwidadi, 2019). The college education process can be briefly translated into an administrative process, a learning process, and an evaluation process. During the Covid-19 pandemic, it was necessary to evaluate the College process with a new paradigm, namely online. This study's process variable indicators are the new student registration process, new student knowledge about the online learning process in tertiary institutions x. (Philip Kotler, 2012).

Customer service

Customer service is the core of service products (Abdelhady et al., 2019). How can universities provide quality, serve students in the learning process and get benefits from the process? This process involves all university facilities and resources. Service indicators in this study are service registration process as new students, ease of access, friendliness of the staff, etc. (Philip Kotler, 2012)

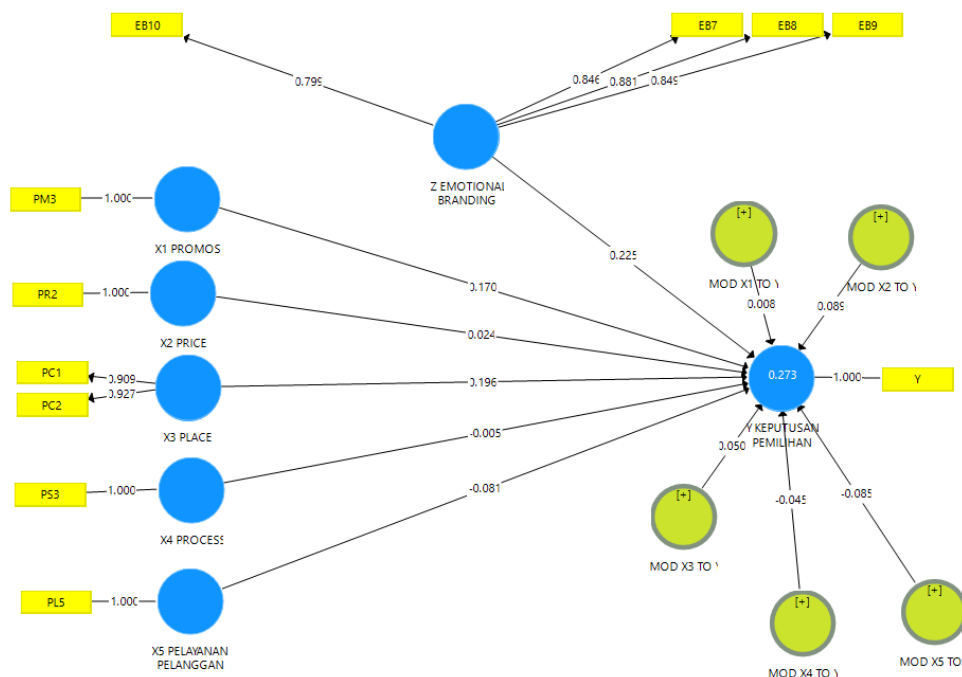
Emotional Branding

The moderating variable emotional branding service products are built from several emotional attachment criteria: positive experiences, positive expectations, relationships, and pride. (Morrison & Crane, 2007); (Rossiter & Bellman, 2012). Indicators of emotional branding variables in this study include the experience of new students with college x before registering, personal relationships, knowledge of the university's vision and mission, university pride, and expectations of College.

Result and Discussion

Validity

In the validity test, indicators with a correlation value of less than 0.500 must be removed from the model because they are considered unreliable and insignificant. After that, the model will be re-estimated. From the picture below, it can be seen that all indicators in the variables have a correlation value of more than 0.500, so that they can be used as a measuring tool.



Discriminant Validity Test

Discriminant validity refers to the degree of mismatch between attributes that should not be measured by the instrument and the variable's theoretical concept. Discriminatory validity can be said to be sufficient if the AVE value is more significant than 0.5. The discriminant validity test used is the Fornell-Lacker test.

Test	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
MOD X1 TO Y	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
MOD X2 TO Y	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
MOD X3 TO Y	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
MOD X4 TO Y	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
MOD X5 TO Y	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
PROMOTION X1	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
X2 PRICE	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
X3 PLACE	0814	0.821	0.915	0843
X4 PROCESS	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
X5 CUSTOMER SERVICE	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
Y ELECTION DECISION	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
Z EMOTIONAL BRANDING	0.865	0867	0.908	0.712

Based on the data in the table above, it can be seen that the average value of the variance extracted from all these variables is more significant than 0.5. Thus, it can be said that all variables have met the discriminant validity.

Composite Reliability Test

The composite reliability test was conducted to test the reliability of the research variables. Based on the data in the table below, it can be seen that the reliability value of the composite promotion, price, place, process, and customer service is higher than 0.700. Thus, these variables are considered reliable.

Uji	Composite Reliability
MOD X1 TO Y	1.000
MOD X2 TO Y	1.000
MOD X3 TO Y	1.000
MOD X4 TO Y	1.000
MOD X5 TO Y	1.000
X1 PROMOTION	1.000
X2 PRICE	1.000
X3 PLACE	0.915
X4 PROCESS	1.000
X5 CUSTOMER SERVICE	1.000
Y ELECTION DECISION	1.000
Z EMOTIONAL BRANDING	0.908

Model Structure Analysis

The structural model analysis is performed by evaluating the path coefficient parameters' estimated results and their level of significance. Besides, the results of the path coefficient significance test for each variable can be seen in the table below:

Test	T Statistics (O / P Values STDEV)
MOD X1 TO Y -> Y SELECTION DECISION	0.113 0.910
MOD X2 TO Y -> Y SELECTION DECISION	1,127 0.260
MOD X3 TO Y -> Y SELECTION DECISION	0.646 0.518
MOD X4 TO Y -> Y CHOICE DECISION	0.767 0.444
MOD X5 TO Y -> Y SELECTION DECISION	1,665 0.097
X1 PROMOTION -> Y SELECTION DECISION	2,065 0.039
X2 PRICE -> Y ELECTION DECISION	0.313 0.755
X3 PLACE -> Y ELECTION DECISION	2,396 0.017
X4 PROCESS -> Y SELECTION DECISION	0.077 0.939
X5 CUSTOMER SERVICE -> Y ELECTION DECISION	1,491 0.137
Z EMOTIONAL BRANDING -> Y ELECTION DECISION	2,773 0.006

Hypothesis Test Results are as follows

The results of the analysis of emotional branding cannot moderate the relationship between promo, price, place, process, and customer service to the college selection decision, so H1 to H5 are rejected. Price, Process, and Customer Service do not affect the decision to choose College institutions, so that H 7, H9, and H10 are rejected. In comparison, H6 accepted because the analysis's test results show that promotion significant positive effect on college selection decision. Significant positive results are also obtained from the H8 analysis test, which states that place has a significant positive effect on choosing a university.

The hypothesis test results show that the marketing mix of promotion and place or location significantly influences the decision on the selection of products and services for College x in Purwokerto. So far, emotional branding has not moderated some elements of the marketing mix in consumer decision making. The indicators used to represent emotional branding in this study include direct experience of new students related to college x in Purwokerto, personal relationships with elements of College, pride as a new student at college x in Purwokerto, optimism, and hope for college x and hope as part of college x.

The results showed that emotional branding with the indicators as above did not significantly moderate new students' decision to join college x in Purwokerto. With information from this research, universities can evaluate positive experiences, positive expectations, positive relationships and build pride for prospective service users. (Rossiter & Bellman, 2012). Increased emotional branding aspects are attached to building College emotional brands to increase the number of students. Incubator facilities in developing EEPs for the formation of EM and subsequently creating young Indonesian entrepreneurs.

Conclusions

This study shows that the decision on the selection of educational service products at college x in Purwokerto during the pandemic was influenced by aspects of promotion and place or location. During a pandemic, the X gen c ar campus carried out promotions online and through social media. Prospective customers get information about the university through the media when they restrict themselves to their respective homes. The aspect of place or location is of significant importance when deciding to choose a university. Aspects of location distance, ease of transportation, and strategic location aspects are among the primary considerations for choosing a university during the pandemic.

Emotional branding as a moderating variable has not influenced several variables for college selection decisions x. The results of the study were different from the research conducted by (Savira et al., 2020) namely emotional branding effect on purchases. The results of the study confirm Karnowati's research (2020) that emotional branding does not moderate the marketing mix in purchasing decision making. The concept of high congruence towards the image of College, emotional involvement both experiences, self-pride, and expectations of consumers of educational services in tertiary institutions x must be developed for the future. There are many research conclusions on the importance of building emotional branding for a product brand (Sirgy, 2018); (Morrison & Crane, 2007); (Akgün et al., 2013) and (T. Hasan, 2008).

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