The Effect of Image and Promotion on the Decision to Choose a University with Attitude as an Intervening Variable in Students of Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Pertanian Agrobisnis Perkebunan

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ABSTRACT

The decision to choose a university is an important decision that must be made because it involves the future. Several studies indicate that image and promotion factors affect people in choosing higher education institutions. Attitude is also an important factor so that students continue to take and complete their studies on time. This study aims to examine the effect of image and promotion on the decision to choose higher education institutions mediated by student attitudes. The data in this study were obtained from the results of filling out the questionnaire by 314 respondents, all of whom were students of the Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Pertanian Agrobisnis Perkebunan. The data from the research results were then analyzed both descriptively and quantitatively to determine the image, promotion, attitude and decision to choose a university and to determine the effect of image and promotion on the decision to choose a university mediated by student attitudes. Quantitative analysis was performed using SEM with the Smart PLS 3.0 analysis tool. The results showed that directly, image has a positive and significant effect on attitude. Promotion has a positive and significant effect on attitude. Image has a positive and significant effect on decision to choose. Promotion has a positive and significant effect on decision to choose. Indirectly, image has a positive and significant effect on decision to choose mediated by attitude and promotion has a positive and significant effect on decision to choose mediated by attitude.

INTRODUCTION

Along with the increasingly competitive times, the business world is a world without national borders, anyone who has the ability to survive will definitely win and those who lose will be eliminated by competition. Likewise, businesses in the service sector, which inevitably have to implement a marketing strategy so that they exist if they don't want to be crushed by the times. Managers of Higher Education (PT), especially Private Universities (PTS), as institutions that provide higher education in Indonesia, especially in North Sumatra, must improve themselves. Regulations, advances in information technology, resources and current competition, including the presence of foreign universities and foreign chancellors will cause "victims" if the manager of the university is not professional in implementing the higher education service business marketing strategy.

The Yayasan Pendidikan Perkebunan (YPP) is present to establish and manage universities in Indonesia including the Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Pertanian Agrobisnis Perkebunan (STIPAP) in Medan City. As a foundation that is engaged in higher education, especially higher education in the field of plantations, it

participates in building the nation through universities to advance human resources. Apart from the Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Pertanian Agrobisnis Perkebunan in Medan City, the Yayasan Pendidikan Perkebunan also established and manages the Politeknik Perkebunan LPP Yogyakarta. In its marketing strategy, the Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Pertanian Agrobisnis Perkebunan must be able to make student decisions to choose a university owned by the foundation.

Student decisions in choosing higher education are determined by the service marketing strategy of an institution called a college. According to Abdullah and Tantri (2016:35), to deal with the decreasing number of applicants and increasing costs, universities are currently using marketing to find students and funds. They define their target market more clearly, improve their communication and promotion, and better respond to Student needs and wants.

According to Alma (2016:374), if a private university has tried to carry out marketing activities, which are consumer-oriented, then all staff personnel, both lecturers and administrative staff, must live up to the mission and core business well. With the marketing approach, it forces lecturers and personnel involved in PTS to analyze intra and extra-curricular activities, educational facilities, teaching and learning environments and so on, so that their activities are always focused on improving service quality.

From the data it can be explained that every school year the number of students who decide not to vote after being declared graduated increases, so this indicates that students are not fully convinced of the college. This phenomenon should be of concern because the number of students who passed the selection but decided not to choose a university tended to increase, in the last 4 years as many as 82 prospective students decided not to choose a university even though they had passed and were entitled to attend lectures.

Consumer decisions in choosing higher education institutions can be seen from several studies such as Desy (2016) with the independent variable brand image, location and facilities on student decisions to choose universities. Suryani's (2018) research discusses brand image and education costs on student decisions in choosing study programs.

Image affects attitude. Consumers tend to form images of brands, shops and companies based on their inferences obtained from marketing and environmental stimuli. The definition of image according to Jefkins in Triyaningsih and Triastity (2016:65) is the impression of a person or individual about something that appears as a result of their knowledge and experience. So, an important goal of a marketing strategy is to effect the perception of a brand, store or company. So, marketers must consistently build a company's image to effect consumer attitudes, which in the end, it is hoped that the positive attitude of the consumer will become a consumer's decision to purchase products, both goods and services. Tamaka research (2013) shows that image has a positive effect both partially and simultaneously on consumer attitudes. On the other hand, Wijaya (2008) research shows that image has no effect on attitudes. The results of Kanthi (2018) research show that image has a significant positive effect on consumer decisions but on the contrary based on the findings of Lubis and Hidayat (2017) that image has no effect on consumer decisions.

Promotion can also affect attitudes. According to Kotler and Keller in Erdawati (2014:155), promotion is an effort made by marketers to communicate with target markets. The role of promotional activities is very important and must be able to show in an appropriate way so that the information conveyed can be accepted and understood by the public who are expected to become consumers for the company. Promotion as one of the variables in the marketing mix is very important for companies to implement in marketing service products. Good promotional activities can affect consumer attitudes so

that consumer attitudes become positive attitudes towards a product and it is hoped that with a positive attitude it can effect consumers to purchase goods or services for a product. Susanto and Astuti (2013) show that promotion has a positive and significant effect on attitudes. On the other hand, Yanti (2012) shows that promotion does not significantly affect consumer attitudes. Then, based on Ismanto (2017) found that promotion has a positive and significant effect on consumer decisions. On the other hand, based on the findings of Mulyati *et al.* (2016) stated that promotion has no effect on consumer decisions.

According to Hasan (2012:225) consumer attitude is an important factor that will effect consumer decisions. Attitude is a tendency that is learned to respond consistently to a given object, such as a brand (Sudaryono, 2016:68). The consumer's belief and choice of a product or service is the attitude of the consumer. Several things related to attitudes towards certain products will affect whether consumers buy or not. A positive attitude towards a certain product will allow consumers to make purchases of that product, but on the other hand a negative attitude will prevent consumers from making a purchase. In this case, attitudes greatly effect consumer behavior so that students as consumers must have a positive attitude or like in choosing a university. According to Kuriyah and Cahyani (2015) that attitude has a significant positive effect on consumer decisions, but on the other hand, Widiyanto and Prasilowati (2015) found that attitudes have no significant effect on consumer decisions.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study was conducted to test the proposed hypothesis using a research method that has been designed in accordance with the variables to be studied in order to obtain accurate results. This type of research is descriptive quantitative. This study aims to determine and analyze the effect of image and promotion on the decision to choose higher education institutions with attitude as an intervening variable through data collection and quantitative analysis (questionnaire) and testing with structural equation modeling (SEM) using smartPLS software. The nature of this research is a causality research which explains the causal relationship between variables through hypothesis testing. This is in accordance with the research objectives, namely to explain the causal relationship that occurs between exogenous variables and endogenous variables by conducting hypothesis testing.

The research was conducted at the Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Pertanian Agrobisnis Perkebunan (STIPAP), Willem Iskandar Street, Pancing, Medan Tembung, Medan City, North Sumatra. When this research was conducted in December 2019-January 2020.

The population of this study were all students of the Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Pertanian Agrobisnis Perkebunan (STIPAP), totaling 1,470 students. Using the sample slovin formula by Umar (2019), there were 314 respondents.

Data analysis in quantitative research is based on a statistical approach. The analytical method used in this research is SEM analysis with data processing using a partial least square computer program.

Path analysis is a further development of multiple and bivariate regression analysis. Path analysis wants to test regression equations involving both exogenous and endogenous variables at the same time so as to allow testing of intervening variables. In addition, path analysis can also measure the direct relationship between the variables in the model and the indirect relationship between the variables in the model. By correlating the exogenous construct several times, this illustrates the "share" of the effect on the endogenous construct. Exogenous constructs are also called source variables or independent variables that are not predicted by other variables in the model. Endogenous constructs are factors that are estimated by

one or several other endogenous constructs, but exogenous constructs can only have a causal relationship with endogenous constructs.

RESULT
Analysis of Direct Effects, Indirect Effects and Total Effects

Analysis of direct effects (path coefficients) and indirect effects aims to determine the strength between constructs, both directly and indirectly, namely the direct effect of image and promotion variables on attitude variables, direct effect of image and promotion variables on the variable of choosing decision and the direct effect of attitude variables on variables. the decision to choose. Indirect effect, namely the effect of image and promotion variables on the variable of decision to choose intervening by the attitude variable.

Table 1. Direct Effects (Path Coefficients)

Information	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P Values
CI -> KM	0.304	0.299	0.061	4.965	0.000
CI -> SI	0.622	0.620	0.041	15.210	0.000
PR -> KM	0.162	0.166	0.057	2.873	0.004
PR -> SI	0.100	0.104	0.044	2.258	0.024
SI -> KM	0.458	0.463	0.049	9.397	0.000

Source: Research Results, 2020 (Processed Data)

Table 2. Indirect Effects

Information	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P Values
CI -> KM	0.285	0.287	0.037	7.661	0.000
PR -> KM	0.046	0.048	0.021	2.210	0.028

Source: Research Results, 2020 (Processed Data)

Table 3. Total Effects

Information	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P Values
CI -> KM	0.589	0.587	0.044	13.250	0.000
CI -> SI	0.622	0.620	0.041	15.210	0.000
PR -> KM	0.208	0.213	0.056	3.735	0.000
PR -> SI	0.100	0.104	0.044	2.258	0.024
SI -> KM	0.458	0.463	0.049	9.397	0.000

Source: Research Results, 2020 (Processed Data)

Direct Effects

The direct effect between variables is the effect that occurs based on the results of calculations between the research variables. The original sample estimate value, it is found that the highest value that effect the decision to choose (KM) is the attitude (SI) which is equal to 0.458. This shows that attitudes have a higher effect on the decision to choose than the effect between image on the decision to choose (0.304) and the effect between promotion on the decision to choose (0.162).

Also based on the original sample estimate value, it is found that the highest value that effect attitude (SI) is the image (CI) which is 0.622. This shows that image has a higher effect on attitude than the effect between promotion on attitude (0.100).

Indirect Effects

The indirect effect includes the presence of an intervening variable in the calculation. The indirect effect is generated from the multiplication of the direct effect of the independent variable on the intervening variable on the dependent variable. The two variables that effect the decision to choose (KM) indirectly, namely image and promotion, the one with the greatest effect is image because it has the highest original sample estimate value of 0.285 compared to the promotional variable. Thus, image is the most dominant variable in influencing the decision to choose a university which is mediated by the attitude variable. While the promotion variable is not dominant, namely the original sample estimate, which is the smallest amounting to 0.046.

Total Effects

The total effect is the overall effect of the independent variables on the dependent variable by including direct and indirect effects. Total effect is the sum of direct effects with indirect effects. The total effect can be described as follows:

a.That the relationship between image (CI) and decision to choose (KM) is significant with a T-statistic of 13.250 (>1.96). The original sample estimate value is positive, which is 0.589 which indicates that the direction of the relationship between image (CI) and decision to choose (KM) is positive.

b.That the relationship between image (CI) and attitude (SI) is significant with a T-statistic of 15.210 (>1.96). The original sample estimate value is positive, namely 0.622 which indicates that the direction of the relationship between image (CI) and attitude (SI) is positive.

c.That the relationship between promotion (PR) and decision to choose (KM) is significant with a T-statistic of 3.735 (>1.96). The original sample estimate value is positive which is equal to 0.208 which indicates that the direction of the relationship between promotion (PR) and decision to choose (KM) is positive.

d.That the relationship between promotion (PR) and attitude (SI) is significant with a T-statistic of 2.258 (>1.96). The original sample estimate value is positive, which is 0.100 which indicates that the direction of the relationship between promotion (PR) and attitude (SI) is positive.

e.That the relationship between attitude (SI) and decision to choose (KM) is significant with a T-statistic of 9.397 (>1.96). The original sample estimate value is positive, which is 0.458 which indicates that the direction of the relationship between SI and KM is positive.

Based on the original sample estimate value, it is found that the highest value that effect the decision to choose (KM) is the image (CI), which is 0.589. This shows that image has a higher effect on the decision to choose than the effect between promotion on the decision to choose (0.208).

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

The results showed that directly, image has a positive and significant effect on attitude. Promotion has a positive and significant effect on attitude. Image has a positive and significant effect on decision to choose. Promotion has a positive and significant effect on decision to choose. Indirectly, image has a positive and significant effect on decision to choose mediated by attitude and promotion has a positive and significant effect on decision to choose mediated by attitude.

Based on the above conclusions, some suggestions are given as input and evaluation material for higher education institutions as well as for further researchers who want to develop similar research, including:

1.For the Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Pertanian Agrobisnis Perkebunan, to strengthen the decision to choose a college for prospective students, things that must be considered include:

a.The image of higher education that is already good in the eyes of the community must be maintained and guarded. Do not let the good image decrease due to mistakes made by the management, lecturers and STIPAP students themselves. It is recommended that managers improve STIPAP's image by increasing the accreditation status of B to A.

b.Promotion of tertiary institutions to be further enhanced through advertisements and public relations activities that support the good STIPAP image. It is recommended that managers form a team to manage websites and social media such as Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.

c.A very positive student attitude must also be maintained so that the positive attitude of students towards higher education becomes the motivation for students to complete their education on the STIPAP campus on time. It is recommended that managers form a positive attitude and a sense of pride

studying at STIPAP by creating student activities and events so that students have a sense of belonging.

d.The decision to choose a tertiary institution is an important decision made by a prospective student regarding a person's career and future. The decision to choose STIPAP as a tertiary institution must be the manager's attention so that more prospective students register. For this reason, the factors of a good image, effective promotion and positive consumer attitudes must be maintained and improved. It is recommended that the manager add to the existing departments in STIPAP such as the Agribusiness and Agricultural Socio-Economic Department.

2.Students of the Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Pertanian Agrobisnis Perkebunan are expected to have a like and proud attitude towards the university. This attitude is expected to be a spirit of learning in completing studies on time and contribute to the progress of the alma mater, especially scientific activities and sports and arts activities.

3.For further researchers, this research can continue by adding other variables that can effect the decision to choose a university or by modifying the research model. Further research can also be done by adding research samples so that more data will be analyzed.

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