

The Effect of Online-Based Relational Marketing Strategy on Service Value and Student Trust at University

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ABSTRACT

Student trust has a vital role in college success and increases when the value of the services offered has a high quality, forming an image. Moreover, a competitive academic environment becomes important to create a value formation process. This study analyzes the relational marketing strategy, service value, and student trust through an explanatory survey method. Furthermore, it determines the effect of relational marketing strategy on service value and student trust in private colleges in West Java, Indonesia. The data were collected from 391 respondents through a questionnaire. The first part of the questionnaire aimed to collect data related to the respondents' demographic characteristics, such as gender, address, and reasons for selecting a college. Data analysis was conducted using path techniques to explain the relationship and influence between manifest and confirmatory variables. The results showed that the relational marketing strategy and service value are in a good and fairly good category. Meanwhile, student trust is in the fairly good category, and the relational marketing strategy has a significant effect on service value at private colleges in West Java. The conclusion and implications of this study are that the relational marketing strategy has a positive and significant effect on service value. In this technique, the qualities of empathy and dependability are more prominent. Apart from that, the honesty, sincerity, and commitment of higher education institutions in increasing the value of services with the care and friendliness of lecturers and education staff are also appropriate according to students.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Several elements play a role in the difference in educational achievement globally, such as geographical constraints, gender bias, financial hardship, and limited buying power (Meloche et al., 2020). Hence, individuals with financial means are the ones who can fully benefit from educational opportunities, particularly at the college level (ChanLin et al., 2012). To ensure societal and national advancement in the era of globalisation, education must align with the workforce needs. It is essential to tackle the obstacles that hinder specific groups from accessing education, like enacting measures to advance gender equality and offering financial assistance to those in need. Ensuring equal access to

education for all individuals can lead to a more skilled and diverse workforce, which in turn can drive economic growth and innovation in societies.

Many college graduates have not got a job, indicating that trust in the quality of college services has not fully met the expectations of companies (Yang et al., 2012). This situation then forms a new paradigm in society that students who enter college are still questioned for their quality and competence (Nadeem et al., 2020). Previous studies showed that the standards of industry demands and employment opportunities are the basis for carrying out their activities. Learning services are experiencing rapid development in Taiwan and are promoted as voluntary activities for students' cognitive development and growth (Erdoğan & Ergun, 2016). There are numerous ways to enhance college services, including the quality of teachers, educational staff, facilities and curriculum, and various other learning aids. In adapting to the demands of industry and employment opportunities, college managers continue to improve the quality of services, including online-based services using software in the academic and other fields, even with the consequences of high costs and prices (Hidayat et al., 2020). Furthermore, colleges are also exploring partnerships with industry leaders to provide students with practical experience and networking opportunities. By continuously evolving and innovating their services, colleges can better prepare students for the ever-changing demands of the workforce.

According to Snijders et al. (2020), lecturers, education personnel, libraries, educational technology, consulting bureaus, sports activities, career counselling, religious activities, and alumni organisations enhance the service value of a college. Clear communication is essential to fulfil client needs and is associated with effectively managing individual operations, incorporating technological advancements into every service. Educational institutions should utilise Internet/online-based information technology for service management to meet students' expectations and build confidence (Li & Shang, 2020). The college institution is reputable for maintaining high-quality services, programmes, instructors, and online services. Thus, establishing service value with an effective marketing approach can be achieved by cultivating enduring relationships with students (Alwashdeh et al., 2020).

Student trust has a vital role in college success and increases when the value of the services offered has a high quality, forming an image. Moreover, a competitive academic environment becomes important to create a value formation process (Haryanti & Pribadi, 2019). By applying appropriate technology, quality service values are formed through study programs, friendly educational staff, and administrative services. This will develop student trust, and then a high commitment from college is needed to produce graduates who can compete in the global world (Casais et al., 2020). Trust is considered a critical success factor in customer relationships and electronic commerce, relating to honesty and reliability in relationships and transactions (Sürücü et al., 2019). Brand equity is created when a product is easy to recall and recognize, as well as excellent in quality. Like college management, student trust will be formed from the value of the services provided (Santos et al., 2020). Therefore, it is crucial for colleges to prioritize building trust with students through the quality of their services. This will ultimately contribute to the development of brand equity and the success of graduates in the global market.

Providing value and happiness to consumers is critical to a company's ability to deliver services. Value is the consumers' estimation of the overall product's ability to satisfy their needs. A product's value to a customer is intrinsically linked to the costs the customer should bear to reap the benefits. The value of services at colleges is achieved through good and appropriate marketing strategy planning to create trust (Maund et al., 2020). Customers will return to the service when they are happy with the relationship the company has formed with them and may even recommend it to coworkers, family members, or close friends, all of whom utilize the service for different objectives (Melancon & Dalakas, 2018). Meanwhile, the college's service value is formed by some efforts made by the institution in building long-term relationships with students and other academics.

Marketing strategy is a fundamental concept to attract and retain customers in an organization (Brown et al., 2020). Relational marketing in building, maintaining, and improving good customer relationships is an essential aspect of the service business that can be implemented in a college. This approach is widely accepted in the academic and professional worlds to strengthen consumer loyalty and

build solid relationships (Sun et al., 2020). It is an important factor in increasing the value of services and loyalty, which has implications for student trust and is recognized as a key component of marketing orientation and delivering superior value. Hence, it is important to take the best marketing approach to build long-term relationships and attract new customers (Frempong, Chai, Ampaw, Amofah, & Ansong, 2020). Building and creating new value with customers and sharing lifelong benefits with them is significant for the company because relational marketing creates Service Value and Customer Loyalty (Clifton et al., 2020).

A company successfully offers products/services to customers when it can provide value and satisfaction. The value customers gain from a product is linked to the costs they should incur, thus, it is both personal and unique (Rita et al., 2019). In their operations, colleges promote their products, including teaching, research, and community service, also known as the *Tri Dharma* of Higher Education (Wang & Huang, 2019a). The services provided can be seen in various fields, from buildings to facilities and quality lecturers (Nkouedjo et al., 2020) Therefore, an attractive college with a good image before the public needs to have quality lecturers and academic qualities. Qualified lecturers have scientific competence, mastery of teaching methods, emotional control, and discipline in carrying out their responsibilities (McNeil & Young, 2019).

Several colleges have implemented academic programmes utilising advanced educational technology tools and high-caliber instructors (Echchakoui & Ghilal, 2019). This suggests that colleges in rural locations are not of lower quality compared to those in urban ones. Thus, parents can equip their children with a suitable and ample education to prepare them for the future challenges of life. Multiple research have shown that the Relational Marketing strategy positively influences service values, leading to consequences for student trust. The marketing mix and relationship approach impact the service value and student trust implications, according to experts (Bedi et al., 2017). Moreover, the calibre of education offered by colleges in remote regions might enhance students' overall growth and achievements. Educational institutions must prioritise establishing trust with students by using successful marketing methods.

The conceptual model of this study acknowledges the impact of relational marketing strategy on service value and its partial implications for student trust, leading to the following hypothesis formulation: Research shows that the relational marketing strategy influences service value at colleges in West Java, Indonesia, which in turn affects student trust at colleges in the same region. Furthermore, the research seeks to explore how service value mediates the connection between relational marketing strategy and student trust. Through analysing these connections, the study aims to offer valuable perspectives on improving trust among students in higher education institutions in West Java, Indonesia.

2. METHODS

Descriptive analysis is used to explore information related to the behavior of the causative factors, while quantitative analysis is intended to reveal the behavior of study variables. A comprehensive answer to the problem will be obtained using these two analytical techniques. The quantitative analysis tested the conceptual model using the Partial Least Square (PLS) method (Wang & Huang, 2019b). Meanwhile, the data collection method used is a survey approach, representing individuals who are students at colleges in West Java, Indonesia (Li et al., 2020).

The sample characteristics and the instrument to test hypotheses were developed based on the conceptual model. Data were collected from 391 respondents through a questionnaire based on the previous literature. The first part of the questionnaire aimed to collect data related to the respondents' demographic characteristics, such as gender, address, and reasons for selecting a college (reported in Table 1). The distributed questionnaires aimed to measure constructs related to various components, including the relational marketing strategy variable, measured by 13 statements. The service value and student trust were calculated using 16 and 14 statements. The statement is assessed using a 5-point Likert scale, where 1 and 5 indicating strongly disagree and strongly agree on (Wu et al., 2018). All survey statements were tested on a sample of 25 college students to obtain the validity and reliability of the

reports. Based on the test results, the relational marketing strategy, service value, and student trust variables were declared valid and reliable with Cronbach's Alpha values of $r: 0.66$, $r: 0.95$, and $r: 0.89$, respectively (Roy et al., 2017).

Data collected from self-administered surveys were coded in SPSS 24 and AMOS 24 for further analysis. Most of the statements are adapted from studies of different cultures; therefore, factor analysis was conducted. The main objective of the EFA is to understand the underlying factor structure without imposing any limitations on the results. Subsequently, a two-stage path analysis was carried out to test and analyze the hypotheses. In the first stage, the measurement model was validated with confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). The second stage tested the structural model to examine the relationship between the various variables considered. Furthermore, the characteristics of the respondents are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Characteristics of Respondents

| Demographic Characteristics | Item | Frequency | Percentage |
|-----------------------------|------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Gender | Male | 187 | 48 |
| | Female | 204 | 52 |
| Address | Banjar Regency | 13 | 3 |
| | Garut Regency | 149 | 38 |
| | Sumedang Regency | 99 | 26 |
| | Tasik Regency | 60 | 15 |
| | Tasik City | 54 | 14 |
| | Other regencies/cities | 16 | 4 |
| Reasons to Select College | Own desire | 185 | 47 |
| | Parents' Desire | 65 | 17 |
| | Invited by Friends | 73 | 19 |
| | Family Recommendation | 63 | 16 |
| | Others | 5 | 1 |

The sample is part of the number and characteristics possessed by the population. The sample that the researcher will use is 30 students consisting of 15 male students and 15 female students.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Relational Marketing Strategy

The Relational Marketing Strategy, which is formed by 4 dimensions with 13 indicators, states that: The dimension of trust (X.1) as measured by 4 indicators has a loading factor value of 0.99, with an R2 value of 0.01. The dependency dimension (X.2), as measured by 3 indicators, has a loading factor value of 0.25 with an R2 value of 0.98. Dimension of empathy (X.3), as measured by 3 indicators, has a loading factor value of 0.48 with an R2 value of 0.27. The reciprocal dimension (X1.4), as measured by 3 indicators, has a loading factor value of 0.25 with an R2 value of 0.93.

According to the findings, the relational marketing strategy consisting of 4 dimensions excels in the Trust dimension and ranks second in the Empathy dimension. Students' confidence in integrity, dedication, and colleges' focus on enhancing the quality of their services have been widely recognised. Students have also experienced other aspects, such as the support and approachability of professors and staff.

3.2. Service Value

The service value variable formed by 4 dimensions with 16 indicators states that the product value dimension (Y.1), measured by 5 indicators, has a loading factor value of 0.79 with an R2 value of 0.37. While the dimensions of service value (Y.2), as measured by 5 indicators, have a loading factor value of 0.92 with an R2 value of 0.15. Employee value dimensions (Y.3), as measured by 3 indicators, have a

loading factor value of 0.97, with an R2 value of 0.07. The image value dimension (Y.4), as measured by 3 indicators, has a 0.91 loading factor value, with an R2 value of 0.20.

Based on these results, the service value formed by the 4 dimensions shows the highest marks in the employee value dimension and the second highest in the service value. Then, the attractiveness of students and the community towards the type of program, Accreditation Predicate, and Technical Services developed by colleges have been outstanding in that they become the basis for students to assess a college. Another aspect is employee value, which pertains to the appearance, skills, and attitudes of employees who serve in environments where students feel comfortable and can therefore develop trust in college institutions. Meanwhile, product value and image dimensions need to be improved because they are synergistic.

3.3 Student Trust Variable

The student trust variable formed by 3 dimensions with 14 indicators states that the honesty (z.1), credibility (z..2), and good action (z.3) measured by 4, 4, and 6 indicators have loading factor values of 0.90, 0.96 and 0.82 with an R2 value of 0.18, 0.086 and 0.37, respectively.

Student Trust, which is formed by 3 forming dimensions, shows that the highest results are in good actions, and the second-highest is credibility. Most students have good actions towards the college they select (Y. Wang et al.,2021). Therefore, good quality learning and service will indirectly show good actions toward their college. The honesty dimension is the smallest, but it is an essential factor in forming trust among students. Each dimension of student trust needs to be carried out correctly and synergistically to achieve the goal of the college (Pandey & Deshwal, 2018).

3.4 Relational Marketing Strategy Effect on Service Value

The results of testing the relational marketing strategy on the value of services can be seen in Table 2.

Table 2. Relational Marketing Strategy Variable Partial Test Results (ξ_2) on Service Value (η_1)

| Path Coefficient | t-count | t-table | Hypothesis Criteria | Conclusion |
|------------------|---------|---------|---|--|
| 0.530 | 5.941 | 1.984 | Reject H_0 when $t_{count} > t_{table}$ | H_0 is rejected , and there is a significant effect of Relational Marketing strategy on Service Value. |

Based on Table 2, the path coefficient analysis of the Relational Marketing strategy is 0.530, then the value of $t_{count} = 5.941$ was obtained by taking the α significance level of 5%, the value of t_{table} or $t_{0,05,391} = 1.984$. Since $t_{count} = 5.941 > t_{table} = 1.984$, then the hypothesis H_0 is rejected, and the alternative is accepted. The results prove that the relationship marketing strategy has a positive effect on the value of services, hence hypothesis 1 is proven.

3.5 The Service Values Effect on Student Trust

The results of the Service Value test on Student Trust can be seen in the table below:

Table 3. Partial Test Results of Service Value Variables (ξ_1) on Student Trust (η_1)

| Path Coefficient | t-count | t-table | Hypothesis Criteria | Conclusion |
|------------------|---------|---------|---|--|
| 0.71 | 18.331 | 1.984 | Reject H_0 If $t_{count} > t_{table}$ | H_0 is rejected , there is a significant effect of service value on student trust. |

Based on Table.3, the service value strategy path coefficient on student trust is 0.71. The value of $t_{count} = 18.331$ by taking the α significance level of 5%, then the value of t_{table} or $t_{0.05.391} = 1.984$.

Since $t_{count} = 18.331 > t_{table} = 1.984$, then the hypothesis H_0 is rejected, and the alternative is accepted. The results prove that the value of services has a positive effect on student trust, thereby, hypothesis 2 is proven.

Discussion

Relational Marketing Strategy Effect on Service Value

Based on the hypothesis testing, the Relational Marketing Strategy significantly affects Service Value. The variety and quality of college study programs are directly proportional to the Service Values. This is because the study programs offered by the private college are not of optimal quality. They should be able to compete with other public and private colleges in West Java with good credibility. A relational marketing strategy will affect the value of higher education services when executed properly. Meanwhile, effective service marketing requires the management of consumer trust, as they typically purchase before attempting the service (Fu et al., 2020). A company's efforts will positively impact its customers' perceptions when they are satisfied with their efforts.

Customer relationship development is a Relational Marketing Strategy activity that facilitates and increases linkages with companies and suppliers, thereby creating an exchange of value. Companies should be able to attract new customers from competing companies. Consequently, they should ensure that consumers feel valued and important to spread the word regarding their experiences. This is also supported by the opinion of expert judgment, which states that the marketing mix and relational strategies can form a high service value. The more precise and varied the strategy, the higher the value received. Moreover, Relational Marketing Strategy has a positive and significant effect on Service Value. It is a determinant variable in maintaining the capability of a college because the right relational marketing strategies can form the high value of services. This strategy has a positive and significant effect on Service Value. There will be a higher College Service Value when the institution takes more measures to address the issues that students confront (Purwantono et al., 2021). As a result, in the age of competition in West Java Province, the service value is a key variable in preserving college capability.

The Service Values Effect on Student Trust

Based on the results of hypothesis testing, the value of services affects student trust. Each college needs to prioritize the value or attractiveness of the study programs offered, especially the quality of the learning (Nhan et al., 2020). Graduates of private colleges in West Java should be able to compete in the world of business or work and become superior and competent, which are selling points for college. Student trust will rise when college services are of high quality. A company successfully offers products/services to customers when it can provide value and satisfaction. Value is a consumer's estimation of the entire product's ability to satisfy their needs.

Customer value compares the perceived benefits of a product and the costs that should be incurred. A business should adapt to the shifting needs of its customers by offering services that reflect the changing value of its business (Lee & Miozzo, 2019). Meanwhile, value is personal and unique because it relates to the benefits customers receive from a product and the costs that should be incurred. Customer value describes the relationship between products and customers, such as understanding what they want with the services offered to meet their needs compared to the costs incurred.

This is also supported by the opinion of expert judgment, which states that the service value in college is related to the extent to which their students. Consumer expectations have not yet been exceeded by the quality of the services given by private institutions in West Java. To increase the value of services, colleges should improve the quality of study programs by having regional characteristics and increasing the accreditation prerequisite (Echchakoui & Ghilal, 2019).

The superior value received by students comes from the services provided by the institution. Superior quality will be felt when it is communicated with the market. Increasing a positive impression can be created by advertising or other marketing communications and cost advantages. Students who have a positive view of the quality of the institution's services are more likely to be satisfied with the

value they receive (Wu et al., 2018). Hence, the College Institution has high profitability, growth, and market share, which then student trust will grow and develop (Wang & Huang, 2019b). As a conclusion, private colleges in West Java can better serve their communities and potential students when their administrators can plan and offer educational options that live up to high standards. Moreover, it should meet every standard of implementation that the government has set to form superior values.

4. CONCLUSION

West Java's private colleges have successfully implemented a Relational Marketing Strategy. Colleges have earned a positive reputation among students and the community. The institution's attentiveness to students' challenges and readiness to address them by offering effective solutions is evident. There are weaknesses in the services not aligning with what is offered and the education staff not being as welcoming as expected. The service quality of private colleges in West Java is relatively high, indicating that it has been established well. College institutions have well-developed learning facilities and students have experienced the flourishing non-academic services offered. Nevertheless, there are certain drawbacks, such as the range of study programmes available and the unattractive appearance of some staff. The level of Student Trust in private colleges in West Java falls inside the reasonably good category, suggesting that students have a high level of trust in these institutions. Nevertheless, there are certain flaws, including the absence of transparency from academics while giving assessments. Furthermore, the university has failed to fully address the needs of student services. Relational marketing strategy positively and significantly impacts service value. This strategy emphasises the virtues of empathy and reliance. Students find college institutions' honesty, seriousness, and commitment to enhancing service value, together with the care and friendliness of lecturers and education personnel, to be appropriate. The service value positively and significantly impacts student trust. With the university's dedication to enhancing learning facilities and non-academic services for students, student trust in the institution will be established. This study's limitation is the exclusive analysis of online relational marketing strategies' impact on service value and student trust without comparing them to other marketing strategies like focus strategies, differentiation, or low-price strategies. Additionally, no analysis was conducted in this study.

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