Increasing Vocational Education Decisions Through Social Media, and Price Reduction Through Brand Trusts

Tezar Arianto¹, Sri Mulyono², I Putu Sugih Arta³, Sabaruddin Chaniago⁴, Nasib⁵*

¹Universitas Muhammadiyah Bengkulu
²Institut Daarul Qur’an
³IAHN Gde Pudja Mataram
⁴Politeknik Unggul LP3M
⁵STIE Mahkota Tricom Unggul

Corresponding author. nasibwibowo02@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

The main objective of this research is to analyze the direct and indirect effects of social media and price reduction on vocational college decisions through brand trust. This research was conducted at the Polytechnic Unggul LP3M as a private college in the vocational field. The target population and sample were 275 respondents who were chosen to be the research samples. Media for collecting data used was questionnaire which were distributed and filled directly by 275 respondents. The results show that social media has a direct significant effect on brand trust and vocational college decisions. Price reduction has no direct significant effect on brand trust and college decisions. Brand trust has a direct significant influence on college decisions. Furthermore, social media has an indirect significant influence on college decisions through brand trust. Finally, price reduction does not have an indirect effect on college decisions through brand trust. The implications of the findings in this study indicate that Facebook as a social media is good in building trust of candidate new students in obtaining reliable sources of information in comparing the advantages of one college to another. Then the price reduction makes the candidate new students have negative image due to the quality of education.

Keywords: Social Media, Price Reduction, Brand Trust, College Decisions

1. INTRODUCTION

Competition in Indonesia for vocational education is getting more stringent, it means it is more competitive between one polytechnic and another (Rocbadi, 2018). People more understand that vocational education is the answer to the needs of the world of work (Wurianto, 2018). Education in higher education is expected not only to increase the knowledge of a student, but also to be able to increase skills of work (Siswandi, 2020). Then in this transparency information era makes candidate new students are easy to get information of advantages possessed by Universities to be compared (Nuralam, 2019). So that it is not uncommon for candidate new students to have references and motivations in determining the best campus they want (Hidayat, 2017).

The decision in determining which universities to choose after a lot of offers from vocational education is one of the important things that must be considered, especially for candidate new students (Ahmad, 2017). If a candidate student chooses college with low quality, of course this will be a regret in the future (Akhlq, 2017). Before deciding which campus to choose, a candidate new student should be active in finding sources of information (Agbo, 2015). However, when candidate new students are not active in finding sources of information, so candidate new students are very easy to be persuaded to enter certain universities (Fadli, 2020).

Trust in vocational colleges will be obtained when the expected values are achieved (Imronudin, 2015). Building trust in customer value is very important (Yani, 2020). Trying to give the value of students' expectations must be done by management in order to build trust in universities (Nupus, 2018). The expectation of the students to get a good quality education as well as their hopes to have program for industrial visits, internships and student learning programs. This expectation and hope not only belongs to students but also parents (Setyowati, 2019). If those hopes able to be executed by management, of course,
students’ confidence in the college they choose will continue to be positive.

Nowadays, social media has been widely used by private universities in building their brands to be go public (Metellus, 2013). Private universities usually have a particular department that is in charge of social media (Valencia-Arias, 2018). The existence of messages or comments, both positive and negative, will be used as evaluation material for management to see the expected values of students (Rouvalis, 2017). However, the use of social media will not always be able to increase student confidence. Negative messages are also often used by competitors to bring the reputation of universities down (Bano, 2019). In addition, the problem of the security of university data also has a risk of being misused by irresponsible parties (Mensah, 2016). Because the essence of using social media is expected to make the dream of successful life of the students comes true (Canche, 2014).

Education costs is often complained by candidate new students who want to continue their education (Khotimah, 2020). Candidate students who come from underprivileged families will always prioritize universities that provide price reduction packages for education costs (Taylor, 2011). Providing price reduction for tuition fees for candidate new students has been widely used by private universities. These costs include education costs, training certification programs, construction, semester exams and so on (Lee & Yu, 2018). However, price reduction of tuition fees cannot guarantee the increase of the decision to continue their study (Amelia, 2018). The candidate new students worry when there is price reduction of tuition fee in first year, there will be additional cost in the coming year.

This research is different from previous research conducted by (Nur, 2018) which only directly verified social media on purchasing decisions. This study involves brand trust as an intervening variable. This research is very important, especially for private universities that focus on vocational education. So that the results of this study are expected to be used as a consideration for making decisions at the managerial level.

2. METHODOLOGY

This type of research is causal research (cause and effect). This research was conducted at the Polytechnic Unggul LP3M which is located at Jl. Iskandar Muda No. 3 CDEF Medan. It was done from March 2020 to August 2020. The target population in this study were 3rd semester active students with academic year 2019. It used accidental sampling with 275 respondents. The variables of this study consist of independent variables which are social media and price discounts. While the dependent variable is vocational education decisions. Then the variable brand trust is as the intervention. Collecting data used a questionnaire with a Likert scale. Data analysis used path analysis. It means to find out the direct and indirect effects of social media variables and price reduction on college decisions through brand trust. Data analysis was using SPSS version 22.

3. RESULT

Respondents in this study were 275 people. The results of the descriptive analysis based on the gender, 163 people are female (59%) and 112 people (41%) are male. Then based on the age, there are 167 people (61%) whose age 17-19 years, there are 87 people (32%) whose age 20-21 years, and there are 21 people (8%) whose age 22-24 years. Furthermore, based on the class, there are 117 people (43%) from morning regular class, there are 89 people (32%) from afternoon regular, and there are 69 people (25%) from executive class.

Based on the table above, the results of the direct influence analysis of the the social media and price reduction on the brand trust can be drawn as follows:

Source: primary data processed (2020)

Figure 3: Results of Research Data Processing

Based on the results of data analysis, it shows that social media has a significant influence on university brand trust. So that hypothesis 1 which stated that social media has a significant effect on brand trust is accepted. The implication of the findings which is item 3 about the use of social media through Facebook will be able to increase the confidence of candidate new students. Whatever social media which is used, it must be managed properly so that every comment on social media accounts can be responded wisely, especially by the management. The purpose of this complaint is generally from active students who have received academic services. If there is any comment about universities which is not responded wisely, then it will not increase brand trust but will make the brand trust of universities becomes worse, especially for
candidate new students. Hypothesis number 2 mentions that the use of Instagram had a small correlation in increasing brand trust. However, because it has only a small correlation, it must be removed from efforts to build brand trust. The use of Instagram may be a protective part of the element of increasing brand trust. The results of this study are in line with the results of research conducted by (Walton, Lees, & Stevenson, 2017) (Darshan, 2018)(Soffic, 2019). When universities are able to maintain their social media, this will have an impact on increasing the brand trust for candidate new students. It needs strong commitment, especially by management and foundations, to make social media as a pillar in establishing communication, especially for candidate new students who want to find sources of information on vocational education.

Furthermore, the variable of price reduction does not have a direct effect on brand trust. So, this result rejects hypothesis 2 which states that price discounts have a significant effect on brand trust. The results of this study are not in line with the results of research conducted by (Wu, 2015)(Ali, 2017)(Saragih, 2018)(Purwanto, 2019)(Hartono, 2020) which states that a price reduction will be able to increase the brand trust of a brand. Then the results of this study are in line with the results of research conducted by (Lee & Yu, 2018)(Purbasari, 2019) which states that the more price reduction given by a University, the lower the quality in the minds of public. The university is seen as a cheap one. The quality of education becomes more negative. The implications of the findings in this study indicates that candidate new students of a private vocational universities want concrete quality evidence of the graduates from those universities. The existence of a collaborative program with the industrial world provided a strong sense of confidence for candidate new students. The existence of apprenticeship ties with the job guarantee program showed more real value for the quality of the University.

The third hypothesis in this study stated that brand trust had a direct significant influence on the college decision is accepted. Building brand trust can be done (Juhanda, 2018)(Chao, 2019)(Mahilza, 2020). The trust from candidate new students is important thing before providing the expected value of students. Maintaining a commitment to continue to provide the best is a must for management at private universities. Vocational education is not just an agreement between universities and the industrial world. MoU that is made should be executed well on the field. The goal is to enable every student possesses any skills required in the world of work. Vocational education not only transfer academic knowledge but also skills and team work ability as they are demanded in the industrial world.

The results also show that social media has a direct significant effect on college decisions. The 4th Hypothesis in this study is accepted. Social media in universities can be used as the main source of information for candidate new students who are still hesitant in determining which private university to choose. The results of this study also support the results of previous research which states that the development of social media is able to encourage college decisions for a candidate new student (Khatib, 2016)(Gupta, 2020)(Sembringer, 2020). Social media at private universities should also be used as material for management evaluation providing customer value. It is not only candidate new students who can use social media as a source in seeking excellence or the advantages in particular private universities but also for graduates of private universities also still get benefits of using social media as a source of information for job vacancies as a result of collaboration between universities and the world of industry.

The fifth hypothesis which states that price reduction has a direct influence on college decisions is rejected. This proves that price reduction in tuition fees will not encourage candidate new students to decide to study in college. The results of this study are in line with (Gomes, 2012)(Amelia, 2018) (Fadli, 2020). The implications of the findings in the study show that in order to improve a student's college decision, management of private universities foundations provide scholarship to outstanding students. Providing scholarships for underprivileged by the foundation is not expected by candidate new students. However, if scholarships are given, especially to students who have good achievements, scholarships either from foundations or from the universities are highly expected by every student. This is due to the fact that to get the scholarship, a student must be declared outstanding compared to other students. Universities are classified as service businesses. Services cannot be seen in physically, but services can be felt, people can have the value of their benefits. By providing price reduction on products, it is true that price reduction has a direct influence on consumer purchasing decisions. So, this research is not in line with the results of research conducted by (Aydin, 2012)(Tumbuan, 2015)(Aprilia, 2020).

Hypothesis number 6 states that social media has a significant and direct effect on college decisions through brand trust is acceptable. These results indicate that the student's decision in choosing a college starts from interesting social media. Advertisements that are shared are very useful, especially for candidate new students. Thus, the research results are also relevant to the results of previous research conducted by (Erdogmus, 2016)(Laksamana, 2018)(Hasan, 2019) states private universities are able to provide brand trust to candidate new students with advantages compared to others. Then this will have a strong impact on college decisions. These advantages are shared through optimizing the use of social media, which is the first step in providing information to all those who have an
interest and concern for the quality of vocational education.

**Social Media and Price Reduction on College Decisions Through Brand Trust**

Based on the results of data processing, it can be seen that social media has an indirect influence on college decisions through brand trust. The results of this study support the results of previous research (Stagno, 2012; Bilgin, 2018; Choi, 2020) which states that when social media exists in universities can be managed properly, social media makes candidate new students have references in determining the advantages of a university. Then this will be very helpful for candidate new students to determine which universities have the most advantages compared to others. To ensure that social media in private universities have a valid level of information sources, a strong commitment, especially management, is needed in ensuring that every post that will be sent provides a clear source of information.

The price reduction in this research does not have an indirect effect on college decisions through brand trust. The findings show that the provision of price reduction for tuition does not have an indirect influence on college decisions through brand trust (Nilowardono, 2018). In this case, universities do not need to have some serious efforts in formulating policies in improving college decisions for new students. The most important thing that needs to be done is to build price perceptions for candidate new students (Rommy, Moh, & Nur, 2018). The perception of cheap education costs will make a cheap impression on everyone.

The results of this study have the implication that college decisions for candidate new students are more likely to seek source of information through Facebook as one of means of social media Facebook. Providing valid information before sharing on Facebook social media, of course it must be managed properly and correctly. Furthermore, the strategy that has been taken, especially in providing price reduction for tuition fees so far is not quite right. Respondents expect that the scholarships given are not from the foundation but from the Higher Education as the compensation of the academic achievements by students. Scholarships for underprivileged individuals gives negative impression of the quality of education that will be obtained.

**IV. CONCLUSION**

Directly, social media has a significant effect on brand trust. Price reduction does not have a direct effect on brand trust. Social media has a direct influence on vocational college decisions. Price reduction does not have a direct influence on vocational college decisions. Brand trust has a direct influence on vocational college decisions. Social media has an indirect influence on vocational college decisions through brand trust. Price reduction does not have an indirect influence on vocational college decisions through brand trust.

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