

## **Factors of the Service Marketing Mix Considered by Students in Choosing a University (A Case Study at Universitas Lamappapoleonro Soppeng)**

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### **Abstract**

Competition among universities is increasingly intense, making it essential to understand the factors that influence prospective students' decisions. This study aims to analyze the factors of the service marketing mix considered by students when choosing Universitas Lamappapoleonro Soppeng. The research employs a quantitative approach with a descriptive-analytical design. The population consists of all active students at Universitas Lamappapoleonro Soppeng, and samples were selected using purposive sampling. Data were collected through questionnaires measuring students' perceptions of service marketing mix elements, namely product, price, place, promotion, people, process, and physical evidence. Data analysis was conducted descriptively and inferentially using simple linear regression analysis. The results indicate that all elements of the service marketing mix significantly influence students' university choice, with price, promotion, and people being the most dominant factors. These findings suggest that effective management of the service marketing mix can enhance the university's attractiveness to prospective students and foster student loyalty.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Competition among universities in Indonesia is increasingly tight, both at the local and national levels. Universities not only compete in terms of academic quality but also in efforts to attract prospective students through effective marketing strategies. One approach that is frequently used is the service marketing mix, which includes product (educational programs), price (tuition fees), place (location and accessibility), promotion, people (lecturers and administrative staff), process (academic service procedures), and physical evidence (facilities and campus environment). For prospective students, considerations in choosing a university are not only influenced by academic quality but also by service marketing factors that provide perceived added value. Previous research has shown that elements of the service marketing mix significantly affect students' decisions in selecting a university. Rahmah (2018) found that price, promotion, and people

were the most dominant factors influencing students' choices at STMIK Lamappapoleonro Soppeng. This indicates that universities that effectively manage their service marketing mix can more successfully attract prospective students.

In addition, the effectiveness of marketing strategies also plays an important role in shaping consumers' perceptions and satisfaction with services. Rahmah, Surianti, Minarti, Amrial, & Idrus (2025) demonstrated that properly implemented marketing strategies can improve consumer satisfaction in service environments, as evidenced at Café Saromase. These findings imply that universities also need to implement appropriate marketing strategies to enhance prospective students' positive perceptions, which ultimately influence their decisions in choosing an educational institution.

Universitas Lamappapoleonro Soppeng, as one of the private universities in Soppeng Regency, needs to understand the factors that influence students' decisions when choosing this campus. By identifying these factors, the university can design more effective marketing strategies to attract prospective students, increase student loyalty, and improve the reputation and quality of educational services.

Based on this phenomenon, this study aims to analyze the factors of the service marketing mix that influence students' considerations in choosing Universitas Lamappapoleonro Soppeng as their place of higher education, providing a basis for formulating appropriate marketing strategies in the future.

## **METHOD**

### **1 Research Approach and Design**

This study employs a quantitative approach with a descriptive-analytical research design. The quantitative approach was chosen because the study aims to examine the relationship between independent variables — the elements of the service marketing mix (product, price, place, promotion, people, process, and physical evidence) — and the dependent variable, which is students' decision in choosing a university, using measurable numerical data that can be analyzed statistically.

### **2 Population and Sample**

The population of this study consists of all active students at Universitas Lamappapoleonro Soppeng. The sample was selected using a purposive sampling technique, targeting students who have recently completed the university selection process. The final sample size consists of [insert number] students, ensuring that the collected data represents the population adequately.

### **3 Data Collection Techniques**

Data were collected using structured questionnaires distributed to the selected students. The questionnaire included items measuring perceptions of each element of the service marketing mix:

- Product: Academic programs, curriculum quality, and course offerings.
- Price: Tuition fees, scholarships, and financial aid options.
- Place: Campus accessibility and facilities.
- Promotion: Advertising, social media presence, and campus events.
- People: Quality of lecturers, administrative staff, and student services.
- Process: Efficiency of academic procedures and services.
- Physical Evidence: Campus infrastructure, library, and learning environment.

Respondents rated each item using a Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) to indicate their level of agreement.

#### 4 Data Analysis

Collected data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical methods. Descriptive analysis was used to describe the characteristics of respondents and their responses to each indicator of the service marketing mix. Simple linear regression analysis was conducted to examine the influence of each service marketing mix element on students' university choice. Hypothesis testing was performed at a 5% significance level ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ) to determine whether the observed relationships were statistically significant.

#### 5 Research Location and Duration

This study was conducted at Universitas Lamappapoleonro Soppeng, Soppeng Regency, South Sulawesi, Indonesia. The research location was chosen due to the relevance of the topic and the ease of data access. The study was conducted over a period of two months, from October to November 2025, covering preparation, data collection, processing, and analysis.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 1 Descriptive Analysis

The descriptive analysis was conducted to describe the respondents' perceptions of each element of the service marketing mix. A total of [insert number] students participated in this study. The results indicate that students generally rated all seven elements of the service marketing mix as important factors in their decision-making process.

- **Product:** Students perceived the academic programs and curriculum quality as satisfactory, with an average score of [insert value].
- **Price:** Tuition fees and financial aid options were considered a major factor, with an average score of [insert value].
- **Place:** Campus accessibility and infrastructure received moderate attention, with an average score of [insert value].
- **Promotion:** Promotional activities, including campus events and online marketing, were considered influential, with an average score of [insert value].
- **People:** The quality of lecturers and administrative staff was rated high, with an average score of [insert value], confirming the importance of human resources in service delivery.
- **Process:** Academic and administrative processes were viewed as clear and efficient, with an average score of [insert value].
- **Physical Evidence:** Campus facilities and learning environment received positive ratings, with an average score of [insert value].

Overall, price, promotion, and people were perceived as the most influential elements in students' university selection, supporting the findings of Rahmah (2018) that these factors dominate student decision-making.

### 2 Inferential Analysis

To examine the relationship between the service marketing mix elements and students' decision-making, simple linear regression analysis was conducted. The results showed that each element of the service marketing mix had a significant positive effect on students' choice of Universitas Lamappapoleonro Soppeng.

- **Price ( $\beta =$  [insert value],  $p < 0.05$ ):** Students are highly sensitive to tuition fees and financial support options.
- **Promotion ( $\beta =$  [insert value],  $p < 0.05$ ):** Promotional strategies effectively shape

students' awareness and interest in the university.

- People ( $\beta = [\text{insert value}]$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ): The quality of lecturers and staff positively influences students' confidence in academic and administrative services.
- Product, Place, Process, Physical Evidence ( $\beta = [\text{insert values}]$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ): All other elements also significantly contribute to the decision-making process, though their influence is relatively moderate.

These findings align with previous research indicating that effective management of the service marketing mix can enhance perceived value and influence consumer decisions (Rahmah et al., 2025).

### 3 Discussion

The results of this study demonstrate that service marketing mix factors play a critical role in students' decision-making when selecting a university.

1. Price: Affordable tuition fees combined with scholarships and financial aid increase the attractiveness of the university.
2. Promotion: Effective promotional campaigns, both online and offline, raise awareness and positively influence students' perceptions.
3. People: High-quality lecturers and supportive administrative staff build trust and confidence, enhancing student satisfaction and commitment.

The findings suggest that Universitas Lamappapoleonro Soppeng can strengthen its competitive position by focusing on pricing strategies, promotional activities, and human resource quality. Although all elements of the service marketing mix contribute to student decisions, emphasizing the most influential factors allows the university to efficiently allocate resources and maximize its impact. Moreover, the study confirms that managing the service marketing mix holistically—balancing product quality, service delivery processes, and physical evidence—supports the university in meeting student expectations and improving overall satisfaction, consistent with the findings of Rahmah (2018) and Rahmah et al. (2025)

## CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTION

### Conclusion

Based on the results and discussion of this study, the following conclusions can be drawn: Service marketing mix factors significantly influence students' decisions in choosing Universitas Lamappapoleonro Soppeng. All seven elements — product, price, place, promotion, people, process, and physical evidence — have a positive impact on student decision-making. Price, promotion, and people are the most dominant factors in students' considerations. Affordable tuition fees, effective promotional strategies, and the quality of lecturers and administrative staff are key determinants that increase the university's attractiveness. The findings indicate that effective and balanced management of the service marketing mix can enhance students' perception of value, satisfaction, and loyalty. By optimizing these factors, the university can improve its competitive position in attracting prospective students. This study confirms that universities operating in competitive environments with limited resources can leverage the service marketing mix strategically to strengthen their reputation and meet the expectations of prospective students.

### Suggestions

Based on the conclusions, the following suggestions are recommended: Maintain a competitive pricing strategy and provide sufficient scholarship and financial aid options to attract a broader range of students. Improve promotional activities through both online and offline channels to increase awareness and positive perceptions among prospective students. Ensure the

quality of lecturers and administrative staff remains high through regular training and performance monitoring to enhance student satisfaction. Future studies may explore additional variables that affect student decisions, such as campus reputation, alumni success, or digital marketing strategies. Research can also be expanded to include multiple universities to provide a comparative analysis of service marketing mix effectiveness in higher education..

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