The Potential of Promotional Media as A Marketing Instrument for Open and Distance Higher Education: A Segmentation Study

Rahmat Budiman[1], Gunawan Wiradharma[1], Meirani Harsasi[1], Kurnia Endah Riana[1], Yasir Riady[1]
[1]Universitas Terbuka, Indonesia
Corresponding E-Mail: budiman@ecampus.ut.ac.id

Abstract: This research identifies market segments among university students based on media promotion usage. It examines the impact of media promotions on the choice of programs and institutions of open and distance university institutions. This study used a quantitative methodology, and the population studied consisted of all currently enrolled Universitas Terbuka students throughout Indonesia, with a total sample of 2,250 people. In this research, market segmentation has been carried out using the cluster method, which includes demographic, geographic, psychographic, and behavioral segments. The demographic segment that is assessed age and gender of students, recent graduates, and income; The geographic segment is mapped to the origin of the UT regional offices; the psychographic segment includes reasons for studying and choosing UT; and the behavioral segment from which information is first and most effective. This research implies that the results can be used as a reference in supporting higher education promotion. The Novelty of this study is that no other studies have compared the potential of promotional media as a marketing instrument for open and distance higher education.

Keywords: Marketing Instrument, Open and Distance Higher Education, Segmentation, Promotional Media

A. Introduction

There is increasing competition between businesses and institutions, especially higher education institutions, and each university is constantly trying to improve its institutions quality by using its advantages (Van Vught & Westerheijden, 1994; Altbach & Knight, 2007). The choice of students for diploma-level vocational programs is one of the factors that cause the decline in the interest of prospective new students (Moodie, 2008; Ziguras & McBurnie, 2011). This problem is separate from the fact that finding a job is becoming increasingly more challenging as a university degree is expensive and takes a long time to obtain (Betts et al., 2000; Dworkin, 2005). As a result, people tend to look for the quickest and most direct route to employment in difficult times.

The education system in Indonesia is diverse, ranging from traditional education systems where educators and learners are directly and continuously involved to open and distance education systems in which learners learn freely and separately from educators (Darmayanti et al., 2007; Lase, 2019). The distance

education system organized by Universitas Terbuka (UT) differs from the conventional education system of other universities because of this system (Wiradharma et al., 2021; Belawati, 2002).

Since the establishment of UT in 1984, even people in rural areas of the outermost, remote, and foremost regions can access higher education (Jalil, 1994; Zuhairi, 2001). It aligns with UT's mission to provide world-class higher education to all levels of society through open and distance learning (ODL) programs (Rustiono, 2018; Maulida et al., 2021). UT aims to help students who need help to complete university studies due to economic, regional, or demographic constraints (Nugraheni & Pangaribuan, 2006; Sembiring, 2018). UT strives to be the best in offering educational services through an open, distance higher education system (PTTJJ) adapted to industrial and technical developments (Mulyana & Ayuni, 2014; Sudarwo et al., 2020).

The open education system means that anyone can study at UT regardless of the year of high school graduation (SMA/SMK/MA through C Package), age, or length of study (Mulyana & Ayuni, 2018 & Tantri, 2018). Not surprisingly, UT students come from various backgrounds. The age group includes those aged >44, 40-44, 35-39, 30-34, 25-29, and 25 years at UT. In addition to age, UT students work in various fields, such as teachers, Military/Police, local government/ministry civil servants, private, and self-employed. Many students at UT are not only students but also work, care for their families, and run businesses. This campus accepts students from all social groups (Setyo Kuncoro et al., 2013; Wiradharma, 2021). UT can meet the diverse needs of higher education at all socio-economic levels. The open and distance higher education system provides education services that can be accessed anywhere and anytime (Rustiono, 2018; Suteki, 2021).

The government has mandated UT to increase the education participation rate (APK) through distance education (Irwansyah, 2018; Darojat & Budiman, 2021). UT gets a mandate and challenge from the government, namely providing access to higher education and one million students so that Indonesia's APK increases. Thus, it is necessary to increase the number of students with marketing activities through socialization and promotion (Prihandoyo, 2016; Jasrial et al., 2019).

Since the Covid-19 pandemic, UT is no longer the sole provider of distance higher education because all universities inevitably organize online lectures and eventually, other universities provide distance learning programs (Rovai & Downey, 2010). Of course, facing this competition requires strategies to strengthen UT's existence. The number of universities that finally organize Open and Distance Learning requires UT to carry out attractive and targeted marketing activities to increase the number of students and not lose competition with other campuses.

The use of promotional media as a marketing tool for higher education is an attractive proposition due to positive past experiences in the business sector on the marketing effects of promotional media and the high adoption rate of promotional media by the younger generation (Constantinides & Zinck Stagno, 2011; Dwivedi, 2021). Improved communication, customer engagement and increased brand loyalty have been identified as a result of this form of marketing. It is reasonable to assume that engagement with promotional media applications as part of university

marketing can increase enrollment numbers and help prospective students make more informed decisions regarding their study options and university selection. However, more is needed to know about how future students use promotional media and its impact on their decision-making process, course and university choices (Almadhoun et al., 2011; Hemsley-Brown & Oplatka, 2006).

Research conducted by Asril et al. (2015) shows that the best new student promotion technique in each region based on the resulting cluster is to deploy a promotion team to each region. Similarly, the findings of Ramadhani (2013) support the findings of this study. Each regional cluster is generated by sending an admissions team aligned with the most desirable study programs and conducting promotions based on students' academic potential by aligning the promotion mix in each cluster. The analytical Hierarchy Process (AHP) can also be used to determine the place because prospective students, especially private students, can be promoted, as stated by Zufria (2018). An AHP approach was used to evaluate several alternative locations to find possible venues for promotion and marketing. The location with the largest global potential was recommended for further consideration.

Since UT students are diverse, special strategies are needed, one of which is the issue of market segmentation. Market segmentation aims to describe the different types of homogeneous groups present in a heterogeneous market to assist in the design stage of target marketing strategies (Tynan & Drayton, 1987; Wedel & Kamakura, 2000). Market segmentation is crucial for an organization so that UT can market its products perfectly and on target. Market segmentation allows for more targeted marketing. Market segmentation can also help companies focus on more profitable markets (Kara & Kaynak, 1997; Yankelovich & Meer, 2006).

Kotler & Turner (1997) define consumer market segmentation as follows: 1) Geographic segmentation, today many businesses customize their products, promotions, and sales efforts to each region, even cities. 2) Demographic segmentation, separating markets into categories based on criteria such as age and gender. This segmentation is the most common demographic criteria used to classify customers. One factor is that product demand, desire, and usage rates are often closely related to demographic variables. 3) Psychographic segmentation divides people into categories based on social class, lifestyle, or psychological traits. Psychographic differences exist within the same demographic group. 4) Behavioral segmentation separates buyers into groups based on their knowledge, attitudes, usage, or reactions to a product.

Based on previous research, many things can be done by universities to develop promotional strategies used by universities to increase the interest and number of prospective new students. The Novelty of this research is that it conducts segmentation regarding the media used to determine their choice of open and distance universities. This research will determine communication techniques and conduct promotions based on student segmentation to get the right marketing strategy. It needs to be done considering that UT students have different characteristics when compared to students from other campuses because UT is an open and distance higher education.

B. Method

Research methods are a set of norms and procedures for activities used by disciplinary actors in conducting their studies. Researchers conduct systematic investigations to increase the number of known facts and conduct systematic and planned investigations to study specific problems that demand solutions (Sugiyono, 2015). This study used quantitative methodology, and the population studied consisted of all currently enrolled UT students throughout Indonesia, with a sample size of 2,250 people. The sampling approach used was proportional stratified random sampling, defined as "sampling proportionally or in homogeneously and randomly stratified elements". The questionnaire issued online and used as the main data source was the main source of information for this investigation. The univariate analysis method was used along with other methods to analyze the problem of segmenting UT students based on geographic, demographic, psychographic, and consumer behavior segmentation.

C. Results and Discussion

Results

Segmentation Analysis

1. By Demographic Segment

Based on the research results regarding the demographic segments of UT students, the following can be seen:

Based on the age and gender of the respondents, the results are shown in Table 1 below:

Table 1. Demographic Segments by Age and Gender

Age	Male	Female	Total
16-20	117	380	497
21-30	275	757	1.032
31-40	179	352	531
>40	75	115	190
Total	646	1.604	2.250

Source: Processed by researchers

From the table above, it can be seen that there are 497 students for the age range 16-20 years, with details of 117 men and 380 women; there are 1032 students for the age 21-30 years, with details of 275 men and 757 women; there are 531 students for the age 31-40 years with details of 179 men and 352 women; and there are 190 students for the age > 40 years with details of 75 men and 115 women. The most interesting from the data is that there are far more female students than male students, namely 1,604 versus 646 students, with the largest age group in the 21–30 year range. In addition, the data also shows evidence that students are diverse, from young to mature ages, because UT organizes open higher education.

Based on the previous education of UT students, the results are shown in Table 2 below:

Table 2. Demographic Segment Based on Previous Education

Last Education	Total
Senior High School (SMA)	1.032
Vocational High School (SMK)	560
Madrasah Aliyah (MA)/ Boarding School	129
Diploma	100
Graduate of Bachelor Degree (S1)	414
Unfinished Bachelor Degree (S1)	15
Total	2.250

Source: Processed by researchers

From the table above, it can be seen that the UT students' latest education in a row from the largest are SMA graduates of 1,032 people, SMK of 560 people; S1 of 414 people; Madrasah Aliyah / Islamic Boarding School of 129 people; Diploma of 100 people; and Unfinished S1 as many as 15 people. It shows that high school graduates dominate UT students.

Demographic segments based on UT student income obtained results as in Table 3 below:

Table 3. Demographic Segment Based on Student Income

Income	Total
< 1.000.000	1.394
1.000.000 - 3.000.000	517
3.000.001 - 5.000.000	223
5.000.001 - 10.000.000	86
> 10.000.000	30
Total	2.250

Source: Processed by researchers

Based on the table above, it can be seen that out of 2,250 students based on income < 1 million were 1,394 people; 1-3 million were 517 people; < 3-5 million were 223 people; < 5-10 million were 86 people; > 10 million were 30 people. From these results, it can be seen that most UT students' income is <1 million.

2. Geographic Segment

The results of the Geography Segment analysis can be seen through the number and percentage of UT students in almost every provincial capital in Indonesia; the results are shown in Table 4 and Table 5 below:

Table 4. Analysis of Geography Segments of UPJJ UT Origin

Origin UPBJJUT	F	Origin UPBJJUT2	F 3	Origin UPBJJUT 4	F 5	Origin UPBJJUT6	F 7
Ambon	21	Jakarta	66	Palembang	41	Surabaya	55
Banda Aceh	8	Jambi	41	Palu	71	Tarakan	10
Bandar Lampung	236	Jayapura	87	Pangkal Pinang	1	Ternate	7
Bandung	32	Jember	59	Pekanbaru	12	Yogyakarta	79
Banjarmasin	278	Kupang	9	Purwokerto	35	Pontianak	134
Batam	10	Layanan Luar Negeri	3	Samarinda	106	Palangkaraya	49
Bengkulu	54	Malang	232	Semarang	80	Makassar	1
Bogor	65	Mataram	43	Serang	18	Majene	8
Denpasar	6	Medan	142	Solo	42	Kendari	4
Gorontalo	1	Padang	22	Sorong	18	Manado	64

Note: F(Frequency) Source: Processed by researchers

Table 5. Percentage of Geography Segments of UPJJ UT Origin

Origin of Regional UT	Frequency
Banjarmasin	12.36%
Bandar Lampung	10.49%
Malang	10.31%
Medan	6.31%
`Pontianak	5.96%
Samarinda	4.71%
Jayapura	3.87%
Semarang	3.56%
Yogyakarta	3.51%
Hammer	3.16%
Jakarta	2.93%
Bogor	2.89%
Manado	2.84%
Jember	2.62%
Surabaya	2.44%
Bengkulu	2.40%
Palangkaraya	2.18%
Mataram	1.91%
Solo	1.87%
Jambi	1.82%
Palembang	1.82%
Purwokerto	1.56%
Bandung	1.42%
Padang	0.98%
Ambon	0.93%
Serang	0.80%

Sorong	0.80%
Pekanbaru	0.53%
Batam	0.44%
Tarakan	0.44%
Kupang	0.40%
Banda Aceh	0.36%
Majene	0.36%
Ternate	0.31%
Denpasar	0.27%
Kendari	0.18%
Overseas Services	0.13%
Gorontalo	0.04%
Pangkal Pinang	0.04%
Makassar	0.04%

Source processed by researchers

From the results of Tables 2 and 3, it can be seen that of the 2,250 students who became respondents; the largest was from the Banjarmasin UT Distance Learning Implementation Unit (UPBTT), as many as 278 students with a percentage of 12.36% and the smallest came from the UT Distance Learning Implementation Unit (UPBTT) from Makassar, Pangkal Pinang, and Gorontalo as much as 0.04%. For more details about the percentage of students per UPBTT UT per city can be seen in the graph below:
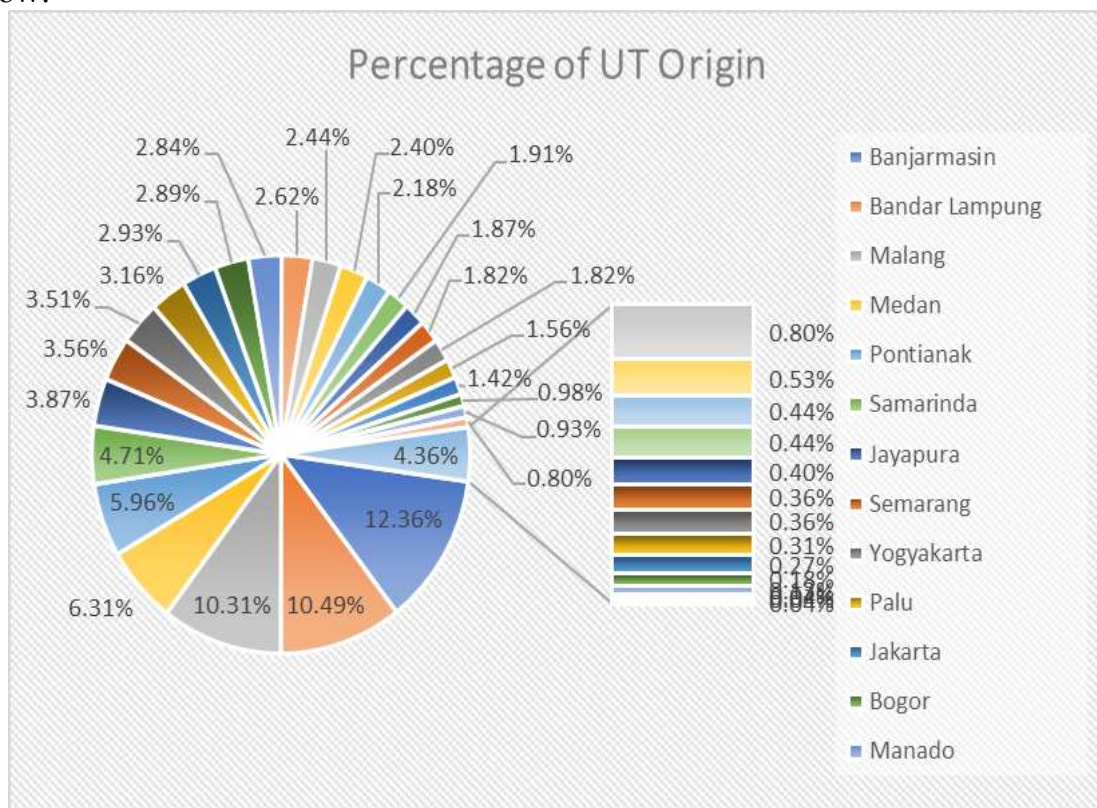

Figure 1. Graph of UBPTT UT Origin Percentage

3. Psychographic Segment

The results of the Psychographic Segment Analysis on UT students can be seen below:

The student's reasons for pursuing education at an open university can be seen in Table 6 below.

Table 6. Psychographic segments based on reasons for pursuing education

Reason for pursuing education	Total
Obtaining a degree	45
Occupying free time	134
Increasing knowledge	1.305
Job demands or career development	139
Family encouragement	46
Increasing income/salary	313
Gaining job security	268

Source: processed by researchers

Based on the table above, it can be seen that for the psychographic segment, the reasons for studying to obtain a degree are 45 people, filling spare time as many as 135 people, increasing knowledge as many as 1,305 people, job demands and career development as many as 139 people, family encouragement as many as 46 people, increasing income/salary as many as 313 people, and obtaining job security as many as 268 people. It can be indicated that the reason UT students pursue education is due to increasing knowledge by 1,305 people.

The student's reasons for choosing to study at the UT can be seen in Table 7 below:

Table 7. Psychographic Segments Based on Students' Reasons for Choosing to Study at UT

Reasons for studying at UT	Total
Affordable Cost	300
Flex Time	661
Difficulty accessing universities in the neighborhood	177
No time for face-to-face lectures	542
Good quality	231
Receive a scholarship	339

Source: processed by researchers

Based on the results of Table 7, the student's reasons for choosing to study at UT are affordable costs for as many as 300 people; flexible time for as many as 661 people; the difficulty of access for as many as 177 people, not have time for face-to-face lecture 542 people; good quality 231 people; and get scholarships as many as 339 people. From these results, it can be indicated that, in general, students choose to study at UT because of flexible time and not having time to meet face to face.

4. Behavioral Segment

The results of the behavioral segment analysis for UT students can be seen in the table below:

The results of the behavioral segment of UT students according to how they first got information about UT can be seen in the table below:

Table 8. Behavioral Segment according to the source of first Information About UT

Where did you first get information about UT?	Total
Come to the UT Regional Office	155
Radio Advertising	4
Social Media Advertising	120
Mass Media Advertisement (Newspaper, Brochure)	4
Outdoor Media Advertising (Posters, Banners, Billboards)	60
Family/friends	1.564
Promotion of UT employees who come to the institution/school	101
Exhibition/Event	6
Webinar/Seminar	4
UT Website	72
UT Social Media	132
Website Advertising	10
Agency/School	18

Source: processed by researchers

Based on the results of the behavioral segment analysis in Table 8, it is obtained that the first source of UT students getting information about UT is the most from family or friends, namely 1,564 people, and the least is through radio advertisements, mass media, and seminars, each of which only amounts to 4 people.

The results of the behavioral segment of UT students in getting effective forms of information can be seen in the table below:

Table 9. Behavioral Segments of Effective Forms of Information

The most effective form of information	Total
Come to the UT regional office	18
Social Media Advertising	1.286
Mass Media Advertisement (Newspaper, Brochure)	14
Outdoor Media Advertising (Posters, Banners, Billboards)	177
Family/friends	307
Promotion of UT employees who come to the institution/school	200
Exhibition/Event	32
Webinar/Seminar	69
Television Advertising	42
Website Advertising	105

Source: processed by researchers

Based on Table 9 above, it can be seen that the most effective form of information for UT students to get information is through advertisements on social media for as many as 1,286 people, while the least is through mass media advertisements, such as newspapers and brochures, with only 14 people. It shows that UT students generally know more about UT through social media advertisements, which have become a trend today.

Discussion

This study aimed to investigate the influence of promotional media on the decision to pursue a particular course of study at open and distance public higher education. This information could form the basis for a marketing strategy that includes using promotional media as marketing media selection. Although marketing promotional media is still a relatively new field, it is increasingly attracting the attention of marketers and researchers. The use of promotional media has already been tested by a public open and distance higher education institution. However, the number of studies on social media marketing and its effectiveness still needs to be improved, and there needs to be more information available on the suitability of social media as a marketing tool for higher education marketing in general. It still needs to be possible to talk about a comprehensive promotional media marketing strategy in Indonesia despite the efforts made by open and distance higher education institutions to include promotional media in their marketing efforts. In most cases, these efforts are exploratory; research or evaluation of these activities has yet to be published. Marketers must first understand the market structure and student behavior to develop an effective social media marketing strategy for open and distance higher education institutions. This study assists marketers in understanding the market structure and student behavior.

As a first objective, the researchers wanted to identify market segments of university students in Indonesia based on their engagement in social media-related activities. Cluster analysis was used to conduct market segmentation. In this study, cluster-based segmentation resulted in segments that included demographic, geographic, psychographic, and behavioral segments. In the demographic segment for age and gender, the largest number is in the 21-30 year range with 646 female students and 1,604 people, with UT students dominated by SMA graduates with the most income at <1 million. The geographic segment for UT students mostly comes from Banjarmasin, who filled out the questionnaire with as many as 278 students, with a percentage of 12.36%. The psychographic segment includes the reasons for taking education, where the biggest reason is to increase knowledge for as many as 1,305 people. In comparison, the reason for choosing UT is because of flexible time for as many as 661 people. Finally, the behavioral segment includes the first time UT students get information about UT, namely through information from family or friends, as many as 1,564 people, while effective information in getting information about UT is through social media advertisements.

The use of social media as a promotional medium was to determine the influence of social media on the choice of university courses and specific institutions. Following the data analysis findings, students ranked social media as the most

influential information channel influencing their choice of study program and university. As social media is very popular among young people, this finding directly supports what is expected given the high prevalence of social media among young people (Hamm et al., 2015). This study provides an interesting insight into the internet behavior of potential students and lays the foundation for future research. The survey should have shown how important social media is for information and study advice. The survey revealed that recommendations from family, friends and acquaintances come into play to influence students' university and study choices. The function of social media, particularly social networks, in connecting prospective students with these parties while seeking study information and assistance is an interesting research topic. Given the prevalence and relevance of social media among young people, it is reasonable to assume that some input from family, friends and acquaintances occurs through this channel. We all know social media is great for viral marketing and word of mouth. If this assumption is correct, the real impact of social media on student selection may be much greater than depicted in the table. Based on this research, open and distance higher education marketers should be proactive on social media. Successful distance and open higher education marketing requires more than just a social media presence. Recruitment officers should actively use social media in their marketing mix, analyze students' online behavior, and welcome consumers as social partners. Open and distance higher education marketers must be willing to spend resources on this communication.

D. Conclusion

Since the Covid-19 pandemic, UT is no longer the only institution that organizes distance higher education. Almost all universities have begun to develop distance learning methods by utilizing all their advantages. For open university to remain competitive and have an advantage in competing, it must carry out attractive and targeted marketing activities to increase student admissions. One of the things UT does is use promotional media as a marketing instrument. It is necessary to do market segmentation before setting the target market to be more precise. In this study, market segmentation has been carried out using the cluster method, which includes demographic, geographic, psychographic, and behavioral segments. The demographic segment assessed is the age and gender of students, the last graduation, and income; The geographic segment is mapping the origin of UT regional offices; the psychographic segment includes the reasons for pursuing education and the reasons for choosing UT; and the behavioral segment of where they first get information and the most effective information.

E. Acknowledgement

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