



RESEARCH ARTICLE

Optimization Strategy of Service Marketing Mix in the Development of MICE Services at Wisma Universitas Terbuka

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the implementation of marketing mix strategies in the development of MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions) services at Wisma Universitas Terbuka. The research employed a qualitative method with a descriptive qualitative approach. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, direct observation, and documentation. The findings show that several elements of the 7Ps—such as product, place, price, and physical evidence—have been implemented quite well in supporting MICE services. However, significant weaknesses were identified in the aspects of promotion, process, and human resources. These weaknesses include the absence of a digital promotion strategy, the lack of standardized service procedures, and insufficiently professional competencies among the human resources in the MICE field. This study recommends a strategic integration of marketing mix elements to strengthen brand image and service quality, with particular emphasis on digital transformation and the development of professional human resources. The results are expected to serve as a foundation for formulating marketing strategies that are both applicable and adaptive to the dynamics of the competitive MICE industry, thereby reinforcing Wisma Universitas Terbuka's position as a leading and reliable institutional MICE service provider.

Keyword: Marketing Mix, MICE Events, Service Marketing, Branding, 7Ps.

Introduction

The development of the tourism industry has produced a diversity of forms and types of experiences offered to tourists, reflecting increasingly varied tourism specifications and segmentation. This highlights the importance of tourism as an agent of change in creating attractive tourism potential. One of the tourism segments that serves as the foundation for high-quality and highly competitive tourism growth is MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conventions, and Exhibitions) tourism.

According to Shalihah (2024), MICE-based tourism has experienced significant acceleration, particularly in the last five years, in line with the dominance of technology as a capitalistic instrument that not only revolutionizes the operational patterns of the industry but also systemically shapes increasingly fragmented and differentiated tourism demand. The MICE business reflects a unique form of correlation, as its patterns are highly influenced by service users' demands in fulfilling their needs.

Rojo & Gonzalez (2024) argue that the organization of MICE business activities has broad impacts and creates a significant multiplier effect in its contribution to various sectors. The MICE business not only represents the success of an event but also contributes substantially to economic growth, especially in developing countries that are striving to strengthen the tertiary sector as a driver of sustainable development (Noor, 2020).

According to Gultom et al. (2025), Indonesia's tourism attractions hold great potential for hosting events, particularly in the context of MICE. Various MICE events that have been held in major cities such as Jakarta, Semarang, South Tangerang, and

Surabaya demonstrate the capacity and readiness of these destinations to support both national and international-scale events.

South Tangerang, known for its rapid industrial growth, is surrounded by numerous tourism players offering services, particularly in event organization. One accommodation facility that supports such activities is Wisma Universitas Terbuka, located within the main campus of Universitas Terbuka in Pondok Cabe. Owing to its highly strategic location, Wisma Universitas Terbuka has often been chosen as a venue for conferences, seminars, and other business activities.

Initially, Wisma Universitas Terbuka was intended solely to meet the internal needs of the academic community, such as hosting academic and business activities, as well as providing accommodation to support campus events. However, with the increasing demand for MICE facilities in South Tangerang and recognizing the great potential of the area, Wisma Universitas Terbuka began expanding its services and opening its doors to the public. It now caters to professional events such as conferences, workshops, corporate meetings, and small-scale exhibitions, which are offered to external clients for broader public access.

In strengthening the foundation of the MICE business, service providers are required to deliver resilient, excellent, and sustainable innovation-based services in response to the increasingly dominant role of technology (Olivia et al., 2024). However, the growing dynamics and heightened competition in the MICE industry demand that Wisma Universitas Terbuka develop MICE services that are not only competitive but also sustainability- and innovation-oriented, in order to enhance institutional competitiveness while meeting the evolving expectations of the market.

The increasingly competitive MICE business environment provides an opportunity for Wisma Universitas Terbuka to maximize its potential by improving service quality, expanding market reach, and strengthening its position within the industry. Therefore, breakthrough measures are needed to elevate its services through the adoption of strategies based on the marketing mix.

This study addresses the research gap left by Minrohayati et al. (2024), which focused on the role of service quality in enhancing customer satisfaction at Wisma Universitas Terbuka but did not comprehensively examine the application of the marketing mix strategy in the broader context of MICE service development. Accordingly, this research emphasizes the importance of adopting a service marketing mix approach as a strategic instrument to

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reinforce competitiveness and broaden Wisma Universitas Terbuka's market reach in the MICE sector.

The purpose of this study is to analyze how the marketing mix strategy can be optimized in the development of MICE services to strengthen competitiveness and foster sustainable customer loyalty. Thus, the findings are expected to serve as a foundation for reinforcing Wisma UT's business strategy in facing the dynamics of an increasingly competitive and sustainability-driven MICE industry.

Method

This research employs a qualitative method with a descriptive qualitative approach. The qualitative method used in this study aims to examine phenomena within their natural context in depth, emphasizing an understanding of the meaning behind social realities that occur naturally without any data manipulation (Abdussamad, 2021). Thus, the data presented produces credible information to support findings observed in the field.

The study was conducted on May 22, 2025, at Wisma Universitas Terbuka, Pondok Cabe, South Tangerang City, with the purpose of analyzing in depth the implementation of relevant marketing mix elements so that Wisma Universitas Terbuka can be better prepared to face increasingly competitive market conditions. Additionally, the study aims to provide solution-oriented recommendations to help Wisma Universitas Terbuka enhance its competitiveness and business sustainability in the MICE sector through relevant marketing strategies.

Data collection techniques in this study included three methods: in-depth interviews, direct observation, and documentation to support the research process. Interviews were conducted with informants directly involved in the management of Wisma Universitas Terbuka in order to obtain accurate insights regarding the application of marketing mix elements.

Informants were selected using purposive sampling, a method chosen to ensure the collection of detailed information about marketing mix strategies in supporting MICE service operations at Wisma Universitas Terbuka. The selected informants had direct roles in operational management and possessed knowledge of service marketing strategies in the accommodation and events sector.

The interviews were guided by indicators based on the marketing mix (7Ps), which include product, price, promotion, place, process, people, and physical evidence. The instrument contained open-ended and flexible questions to allow deeper exploration of informants' responses.

Once the data was collected, the researcher analyzed it in greater depth by exploring the meaning embedded in the findings holistically, with an emphasis on understanding the context, experiences, and perspectives of the informants. The data analysis stage was integral to ensuring the validity of the findings and their ability to represent the overall reality being studied comprehensively (Qomaruddin & Sa'diyah, 2024).

The results of this study are expected to assist in formulating appropriate policies regarding marketing mix strategies that can be further developed at Wisma Universitas Terbuka. Therefore, this research is intended to provide applicable recommendations for designing marketing strategies that are not only effective but also adaptive to future MICE industry trends, particularly in the context of Wisma Universitas Terbuka.

Results

The results of this study indicate that the implementation of the marketing mix components at Wisma Universitas Terbuka has not yet been fully optimized to strengthen its competitiveness as a MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions) service provider. The marketing mix serves as a validation instrument used by an entity to achieve its marketing objectives through the 7Ps: product, price, place (distribution), promotion, people (human resources), process (service delivery), and physical evidence (Mysrawati & Septrimadona, 2024).

According to Yao et al. (2023), the relationship between tourism and the MICE industry is mutually reinforcing and deeply rooted as inseparable components, since both are interconnected in a reciprocal manner. This implies that MICE, as part of tourism

activities, requires an appropriate service marketing mix to deliver the desired outcomes for service users.

The findings reveal that the optimization of the marketing mix strategy at Wisma Universitas Terbuka is only effective in certain components, while others remain underdeveloped. This imbalance suggests that the management of the service marketing mix has not been fully integrated, which hinders the achievement of marketing goals and the development of MICE service competitiveness. The components in need of adjustment must be systematically reviewed and improved to prevent obstacles in achieving Wisma Universitas Terbuka's strategic objectives in optimizing MICE services.

Among the elements requiring greater attention are promotion, people, and process. The study found that these three aspects are critical to be enhanced more comprehensively in order to meet user expectations regarding service quality at Wisma Universitas Terbuka.

In terms of promotion, the findings highlight the need for marketing development through digitalization to reach market segments more broadly. This requires strengthening social media marketing and establishing more synergistic partnerships with Event Organizers to enhance economic benefits for the service provider.

To expand market segmentation and deliver higher value to users, the marketing mix is considered a strategic instrument to formulate more targeted and value-added marketing steps (Kotler & Armstrong, 2018). The findings further indicate that the process aspect at Wisma Universitas Terbuka still requires improvement, particularly in terms of standardizing procedures, ensuring operational efficiency, and simplifying workflows. Hence, the development of a digital reservation system, along with the formulation and implementation of standardized operating procedures (SOPs) for MICE services that are internally socialized and integrated with the management system, is strongly recommended.



Figure 2. One of the meeting rooms at Wisma Universitas Terbuka

Source: Researcher's Documentation (2025)

Although Wisma Universitas Terbuka has adequate facilities to support organized MICE activities, the lack of integration in its promotional strategies has limited its exposure to wider markets. The findings of this study also reveal competency gaps among service staff, which have hindered the institution's ability to provide timely and effective responses to user needs. It was found that many staff members employed do not possess expertise in the MICE sector and come from non-hospitality backgrounds, creating barriers to delivering an excellent user experience.

Kang et al. (2023) explain that the MICE tourism sector in Asia has significant growth prospects, driven by government investment in infrastructure development. Therefore, Wisma Universitas Terbuka must also enhance its potential by improving services in an integrated manner. One strategic step is to systemically integrate marketing elements through the harmonization of the 7Ps (product, price, place, promotion, people, process, and physical evidence) to create competitive advantages and strengthen MICE service competitiveness within the higher education environment.

The researcher has developed a framework for analyzing the 7Ps at Wisma Universitas Terbuka, with the following results:

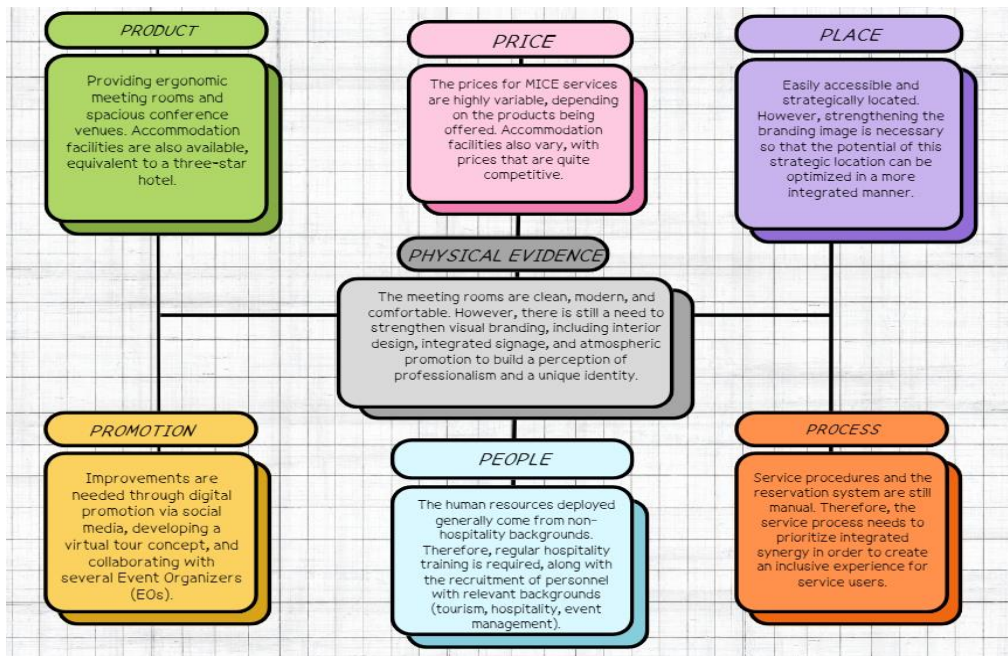


Figure 2. Analysis of the 7P Elements in MICE Services at Wisma Universitas Terbuka
Source: Processed by the Researcher (2025)

This interpretation shows that the 7Ps components of the marketing mix at Wisma Universitas Terbuka require further development—not only as promotional tools but also as a comprehensive strategy to create sustainable customer value and experiences. The findings highlight the need to strengthen brand image as the foundation of a sustainable strategy to build customer loyalty, enhance competitiveness, and reinforce Wisma Universitas Terbuka's positioning in the minds of service users.

According to Chigora et al. (2024), self-identity through proper branding can establish a perception recognized by customers toward the marketed product. This suggests that Wisma Universitas Terbuka, as a MICE service provider, must strengthen its brand image by integrating the elements of the 7Ps cohesively. Building a strong brand image will not only increase customer trust and loyalty but also expand market reach, boost competitiveness, and solidify Wisma Universitas Terbuka's position in the MICE service industry.

Overall, the research findings indicate that the implementation of the marketing mix at Wisma Universitas Terbuka demonstrates strength in product, place, physical evidence, and price, while promotion, people, and process still require improvement. The gap between service potential and marketing strategy presents a challenge that must be addressed to enhance MICE service competitiveness for both academic and external markets. The goal is to achieve a more integrated, effective, and service-quality-oriented application of the marketing mix. Therefore, Wisma Universitas Terbuka needs to strengthen the elements that remain underdeveloped by adopting more adaptive marketing strategies.



Figure 3. Auditorium of Universitas Terbuka Convention Center (UTCC)
Source : Researcher's Documentation (2025)

Discussion

Wisma Universitas Terbuka, located in Pondok Cabe, South Tangerang, is one of the facilities owned by Universitas Terbuka, consisting of several buildings—Wisma I, Wisma II, and Wisma III. Each building offers a variety of accommodation types, ranging from deluxe rooms to junior suites, all equipped with supporting facilities to ensure guest comfort. In addition to lodging, Wisma Universitas Terbuka also provides representative meeting and conference rooms, including one in Wisma I that can accommodate up to 175 participants. This combination of comfortable accommodations and complete facilities makes Wisma Universitas Terbuka an ideal choice for both academic and professional activities.

This potential would yield even greater value if Wisma Universitas Terbuka strengthened its service image. One strategic step is to consistently integrate the 7P marketing mix approach. Through comprehensive improvements, Wisma Universitas Terbuka can remain competitive in an increasingly dynamic market by fostering a strong brand image as a leading, sustainable, and professional MICE service provider.

The research findings indicate that the application of the 7Ps in the service marketing mix at Wisma Universitas Terbuka still requires further development, particularly in the MICE sector. The seven elements of the 7Ps have not yet been fully integrated to support competitive MICE services focused on user satisfaction. These findings differ from Minrohayati et al. (2024), who emphasized staff service quality in improving customer satisfaction but did not comprehensively address the broader application of a marketing mix strategy. This study therefore complements that gap by emphasizing the importance of synergy across all 7P elements in developing MICE services.

To support optimal strategies, Wisma Universitas Terbuka also needs to strengthen its brand image by enhancing professionalism in MICE services, thereby reinforcing its positioning in an increasingly adaptive sector. This aligns with (Ginting, 2022), who highlights that enriching brand image as an integral part of business services is a key strategy to expand market reach. Accordingly, Wisma Universitas Terbuka, as a MICE service provider, must strengthen its brand image while adopting a more continuous marketing mix strategy to become a leading, competent, high-quality, and sustainable MICE organizer.

Given Wisma Universitas Terbuka's significant potential in developing MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions) services, more adaptive and professional management

strategies are required. One approach is to optimize digital promotion to reach clients more effectively and to leverage technology to build reliable, integrated, and sustainable service systems. As such, the promotional aspect—currently underperforming—must be improved through more aggressive and structured digital marketing strategies, such as social media utilization, interactive websites, and partnerships with digital platforms relevant to the MICE industry.

The findings also emphasize the need to strengthen internal capacity by providing more competitive and credible human resource training, fostering service synergy that builds Wisma Universitas Terbuka's reputation as a professional and excellent MICE service provider. This suggests that with superior service synergy, trust and loyalty among users can be enhanced, boosting Wisma Universitas Terbuka's competitiveness amid the intense rivalry in the MICE industry. Thus, integrated management of service quality, effective marketing strategies, and information technology utilization will be key to ensuring the sustainability and growth of MICE services at Universitas Terbuka.

Limitation Of The Study

To conduct this research, the scope of the study is limited to the marketing mix strategies applied by Wisma Universitas Terbuka as an acceleration bridge in efforts to enhance competitiveness in the increasingly complex and competitive MICE market. This study does not address other aspects beyond the marketing mix strategy, such as hotel operational management, financial aspects, or human resources in a broader sense.

The research focuses specifically on the core elements of the marketing mix deemed most relevant in formulating marketing strategies for Wisma Universitas Terbuka, serving as an active area of study. By applying these boundaries, the study is expected to be carried out in a more targeted and comprehensive manner, so that its findings can provide tangible contributions in supporting the development of business strategies in the MICE sector at Wisma Universitas Terbuka.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The findings of this study show that the implementation of the marketing mix strategy in MICE services at Wisma Universitas Terbuka has not yet been fully optimized. The elements of product, price, place, and physical evidence have demonstrated fairly good performance, particularly in the provision of meeting facilities and accommodations. However, significant weaknesses remain in the areas of promotion, service processes, and human resources, which have not been adequately aligned with the demands of the dynamic and competitive MICE industry.

To enhance competitiveness, Wisma Universitas Terbuka needs to strengthen its promotional strategies through digitalization, such as partnerships with online platforms, leveraging social media, and reinforcing brand image with relevant content. Additionally, it is essential to build a strong brand identity so that MICE services are recognized not only as internal campus facilities but also as professional, competitive services in the broader market.

Improving human resource quality and service processes must also be a priority. This can be achieved through continuous training, certification, industry-oriented recruitment, and the development of documented standard operating procedures (SOPs) supported by information technology. Synergy between promotion, human resources, and processes is expected to create an efficient service system, customer satisfaction-oriented, and position Wisma Universitas Terbuka as a leading, trustworthy, and highly competitive MICE service provider at the regional level.

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