Determination Of Marketing Strategy For Distance Learning In The Island

Anfas[1], Mohbir Umasugi[2], Lisda Ariani Simabur[3]

[1]Faculty of Economics (FE), Universitas Terbuka, Indonesia
[2,3]Faculty of Laws, Social and Political Sciences, Universitas Terbuka, Indonesia

E-mail: anfas_st_mm@ecampus.ut.ac.id

A R T I C L E I N F O

A B S T R A C T

This research aims to learn effective promotion strategies in attracting people on the island to learn through distance learning at UT. This research was conducted using a quantitative approach. Research data obtained from secondary data that has been available on the UT SIPELAPOR application. Based on the results of the study, it showed that the majority of students first got information about UT, namely 1,399 students (48.76%) through friends, 575 students (20.04%) through families, and 388 students (13, 52%) through the Site UT Web. From this data, it can be concluded that: (1) Word of mouth promotion strategies (WOM) are very appropriate in promoting distance learning on islands. (2) Word of mouth (WOM) can be done in two ways, first, the hearing is done by visiting directly to market segments. The second is to utilize online social media (e-WOM). This study has implications aimed at UT management in improving promotional communication through WOM. So that the target of increasing the number of students is realized. This study shows how to determine the strategy of promoting education through WOM in accordance with the characteristics and geographical conditions of UPBJJ in the archipelago in an effort to increase the number of students.

1. Introduction

Promotion is an important activity in marketing. Companies and non-profit organizations all carry out promotions to introduce the products or services they market. The difference is that in companies, promotions are carried out to achieve the target sales of products / services, while for non-profit organizations promotions are carried out to achieve the success target of the implementation of the program (Swastha, 2005).

In the world of higher education, promotion has the ultimate goal of increasing student participation. Through promotion, it is hoped that the public will become more familiar with the products of higher education, namely the study program held at the tertiary institution. Through promotion, universities can socialize the advantages and specifications of study programs offered to the public. Including introducing the advantages of the system of organizing lectures, such as organizing international class lectures, lectures with the elearning system and scholarships. Starting from Diploma, undergraduate, or Post-graduate programs (Nugroho, 2010).

Based on data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS), it appears that the Higher Education Participation Rate (GER) in Indonesia, namely the population aged 19-23 years in 2018 only reached 30.19 percent (BPS, 2018). From this data, if we compare it with data on the number of high school graduates who continue their tertiary education (public and private schools) in 2018 which is 1.8 million, then that means there are still 4.1 million Indonesians aged 19-23 years who have not continued study to higher education.

To encourage increased gross enrollment rates for higher education, the Indonesian government is developing e-learning based tertiary education. Where the State University is encouraged by the government to organize e-learning. One of them is the Open University (UT) which has long held a distance education system and has had previous experience in developing online learning. From the quality, UT is no doubt. At present UT has gained much recognition from various accreditation bodies. At

the national level, UT has obtained institutional accreditation certification from the National Accreditation Board for Higher Education (BAN-PT) and almost all study programs have been accredited A and B by BAN-PT. At the international level, UT has also obtained a certificate from the International Council for Open and Distance Education (ICDE) in the delivery of world-quality open and distance education systems (www.ut.ac.id, 5/9/2016). To guarantee the quality of service management, UT has also obtained an ISO 9001: 2015 certificate in the field of Distance Education Management (www.ut.ac.id, 2/3/2018).

Armed with UT's superiority from other State Universities, the Ministry of Research and Technology and Higher Education (Kemensistekdikti) gave the task to UT to maximize in increasing the Rough Participation Rate of Higher Education in Indonesia. To achieve this target, maximum socialization and promotion is certainly needed. This is due to the large number of Indonesian people who do not know UT well. Anfas and Zainuddin's research (2018) about secondary school students in North Maluku shows that of the 420 students who were respondents who wanted to continue their education to college, only 108 students or 23.43 percent had heard of UT. Of the 108 students, only 3 students (1.23%) were interested in studying at UT.

Based on the data and research results above, this study aims to find out effective promotion strategies in attracting the interest of people on the island to learn through distance learning at UT.

2.　Literature Review

To be optimal in marketing, universities need to pay attention to several elements in marketing (Rangkuti, 2005), namely:
1) Competitive strategies which include:
    a) Market segmentation, by identifying community groups separately. Because each group of people will have their own characteristics in choosing tertiary institutions. Their need for tertiary institutions depends very much on what kind of education model the university will offer.
    b) Targeting, which is the act of selecting one or more market segments to be included.
    c) Positioning. The aim is to build and communicate the competitive advantages of each university in the public mind as consumers of education.
2) Marketing tactics, which include:
    a) Differentiation, by building marketing strategies in various aspects owned by the university.
    b) marketing mix, which is related to the activities of introducing educational curriculum, school fees, socialization and promotion as well as university location.
3) Marketing value which includes:
    a) Trademarks, i.e. values related to the name of the university. If brand equity is well managed, universities will get at least two things:
        - First, the community will accept it. They can feel all the benefits that they get from the education they attended during college and feel satisfied because it is in line with their expectations.
        - Second, Higher Education itself gets value through the loyalty of students and alumni, so as to form broad public opinion about the competitive advantage of higher education.
    b) Service, which is the value associated with providing services to students.
    c) Process, which is a value related to the principle of tertiary institutions to make every lecturer and administrative staff involved and have a sense of responsibility in the educational process for students, both directly and indirectly.

According to Afiff (2008) university marketing is a function that universities must have in creating, communicating and conveying value, in this case information and knowledge to students and the target market community. After that, various efforts were made to manage relations with those who could all benefit the university and its stakeholders. Thus, university positioning can be done through a number of higher education service marketing mix, ranging from: products, prices, places, promotions, people, processes and physical evidence that supports the course of learning in Higher Education.

2.1　Factors That Determine Society Choosing Higher Education

To determine the university of choice for students is actually a collection of a number of decisions. Each of these decisions has a seven component structure (Kotler, 1999), which includes:
1) Decisions about the type of product. In Higher Education, the type of product offered to the public is, of course, a study program. In this case the community can make decisions about what course of study they will choose according to their ideals or expertise.
2) Decisions about the shape of the product. In Higher Education, the form of products offered to the public is, of course, the curriculum that each study program has. Of course, a good curriculum is a

curriculum that is able to answer the challenges of competitiveness in the world of work. Because it is possible that the study programs offered by several universities are the same, but the curriculum is different and has advantages in each area of expertise. People can choose according to their wishes after seeing the curriculum catalog provided by each study program.

3) Decisions about brands. In Higher Education, the brand offered to the public is certainly an education degree that will be brought by alumni after graduating from college. For example, a bachelor's degree in management at a domestic university and a foreign university will certainly be different, so that it has its own prestige in holding a degree.

4) Decisions about the seller. Consumers can make decisions where the products needed will be purchased. At the University, this is closely related to location, so that it is easily accessible by the community. Is the location in urban areas, in the suburbs or anywhere accessible because the learning system uses distance learning systems as implemented by open universities in Indonesia. In addition to locations related to sales in higher education, namely the registration system.

5) Decisions about the number of products. In Higher Education, the number of products in question is closely related to the number of study programs the university has, as well as its implementation system. An interesting phenomenon in this regard is that there are currently many universities that offer a dual postgraduate course system, which is by collaborating in offering courses in the same study programs as universities abroad. So that someone who is studying in one of the study programs in college, when he graduates, he will have two degrees at once.

6) Decisions about when to buy a Consumer. In Higher Education, the time of purchase is closely related to the time of college admission registration. In Indonesia it is usually done once a year. However, for universities that run an open education system, they usually enroll new students every semester.

7) Decisions about payment methods. In Higher Education, of course this payment method is closely related to the school fee payment system. Most colleges now have an online tuition payment system so students can pay semester tuition fees anywhere.

According to Kotler (1999), to be able to know the extent of the consumer purchasing process, there may need to be efforts such as: whether consumers need information about the product to be purchased, or may need to be encouraged to make a purchase. Through the support of available information systems can also encourage someone to make decisions, including in the case of purchases. For this reason, universities need to socialize to the public to introduce the curriculum offered by their respective study programs and education service systems. In addition, the existence of a scholarship quota offered by universities can provide a strong impetus to the community to apply to college, because the education they get is free.

2.2 Promotion mix in Education

Promotional activities not only function as a communication tool between companies and consumers, but also as a tool to influence consumers in purchasing activities in accordance with their wants and needs (Lupiyoadi and Hamdani, 2006). Based on the marketing concept above, then for the University, promotion is carried out to be able to attract the interest of the community to study at university. Promotion mix that can be done by universities (Mulyawan and Komarudin, 2012) includes;

1) Advertise, with the aim of offering educational products provided by universities so as to persuade the public to be interested in entering college. Advertise including brochures, posters, leaflets, and billboards. all use of this service tool is made so that consumers easily get the information needed in accordance with their needs and desires,

2) Personal selling, is a face-to-face communication between universities and the public to introduce educational products offered.

3) Sales promotion, is a form of direct persuasion that can attract new students. Even those who don't want to go to college can be influenced so they want to go to college.

4) Public relations, is a comprehensive communication effort from the university to influence the perceptions, opinions, beliefs and attitudes of various community groups towards the university.

5) Direct marketing, an interactive marketing system that uses one or more advertising media to produce responses and or transactions that can be measured in any location. In direct marketing, promotional communication is displayed directly to individual consumers and the aim is that these messages are responded positively by the public.

In addition to the five variables in the Promotion mix, higher education promotion strategies can also be carried out through the Word of Mouth (WOM) communication channel which is a marketing effort that triggers customers to discuss, promote and persuade other potential customers to buy a product offered by a company / non-profit organizations (Sumardi, 2009). Therefore, Kartajaya (2006) states that

the most effective promotion is through word of mouth (WOM). Satisfied customers will automatically become the most effective and convincing marketing agents than any type of advertisement. This proves that people trust information from friends or family more than advertisements or sellers. Customers will trust more close people to be trusted as a credible source than any salesperson from any company. Through WOM, most consumers' knowledge about various product brands is mainly caused by word of mouth communication. This is very useful for producers who rarely promote and are weak in communicating their products due to cost constraints, making it difficult to reach wider consumers (Sutisna, 2002).

But not all products can be promoted through word of mouth. Must have at least six elements in order to produce positive word of mouth and continue to be discussed so that it always sticks to consumers' memories (Fadillah, 2015), namely:

1) Creating a brand that is able to evoke the emotional response of consumers.
2) The brand must be able to provide something that exceeds consumer expectations.
3) Brands must have characteristics that can automatically advertise themselves or make people curious to ask.
4) A product becomes stronger when there are many users.
5) Products must be compatible with other products, especially on products that rely on technology.
6) Maintaining consumers to maintain satisfaction from the first time consumers use it. If consumers are already disappointed, they will no longer use your product and they will act like terrorists.

According to Harsasi (2006) word of mouth comes from 3 sources, namely:

1) Personal Sources. Includes friends, family, and coworkers. For example in choosing a favorite restaurant, potential customers will ask friends or family about which restaurant will be recommended.
2) Expert Sources. Required especially for the purchase of services that require high involvement. Consumers will have more trust in an expert who has information that is judged better than personal information sources. For example, in hiring a lawyer, asking for expert opinion is very necessary. This source will be more valuable when consumers do not have enough knowledge of the ideal service information that they should get.
3) Derived Sources. Used in forming expectations and coming from third sources. An example is the testimony of advertisements that direct and convince other prospective consumers related to the reliability of the product consumed.

In marketing services, such as the promotion of tertiary education, what is most important in the success of WOM is forming militant customers. This can be selected from alumni who have achievements or scholarship recipients. With the benefits they have felt while attending education, they will voluntarily promote to their family and close friends and desperately defend their alma mater if negative images emerge which damage the image of their campus.

3.   Method

This type of research is a descriptive study that aims to find out the right promotion strategy for distance learning on the islands. The research population of 2,869 originating from 3 offices of the Open University Distance Learning Unit (UPBJJ-UT), namely UPBJJ-UT Sorong, UPBJJ-UT Ternate, UPBJJ-UT Ambon. All of them were new UT students during the registration period 2018.1 to 2019.2. The entire population is sampled. The reason for choosing 3 UPBJJ-UT offices as research objects is because all three are UPBJJ-UT which have island-based working areas. Where in the implementation of distance learning system services are not the same as the mainland areas such as on the islands of Java and Sumatra. The complexity encountered is very diverse. Such as coverage, limited supporting infrastructure (telephone and internet), difficulties in transportation, and the condition of the community's learning culture which is still minimal.

Research data obtained from secondary data that has been available on the UT SIPELAPOR application. Where each semester is presented in an application about the number of students based on UT information sources. This data is filled in when students register as new students. On the registration form, prospective students are asked to fill in the first source of information they obtain about UT. Furthermore, the data will be processed and presented in tables and graphs accompanied by an explanation.

4.   Result

To increase the number of UT students, promotion is carried out with various promotional tools, namely through socialization in the form of visits to institutions and schools, posting banners, placing advertisements in mass media and others. The following are sources of information data obtained from prospective students in UPBJJ-UT whose working areas are on islands:

Table 1
Student Data Based On Information Sources

Get information from	UPBJJ-UT Sorong				UPBJJ-UT Ternate				UPBJJ-UT Ambon			
	2018.1	2018.2	2019.1	2019.2	2018.1	2018.2	2019.1	2019.2	2018.1	2018.2	2019.1	2019.2
Friend	51	59	104	309	56	102	70	159	42	69	78	300
Family	18	29	31	66	35	97	28	60	25	48	31	107
Webite	11	73	14	16	11	70	12	21	12	136	12	30
Banner	8	8	8	59	27	18	35	20	10	32	15	56
Mass media	8	7	5	10	0	0	5	5	2	2	5	7
Online news	2	2	3	4	0	1	0	1	7	1	2	10
Liflet	0	1	0	1	0	2	0	1	0	4	2	2
the other	1	2	6	7	19	4	6	3	14	5	24	18

Data source: SIPELAPOR UT

From the data in table 1 above, it shows that students at the three UPBJJ-UT, decided to study at UT after getting the first recommendation about UT, the most of which were through friends and family. Even for UPBJJ-UT Sorong and UPBJJ-UT Ambon, the increase in data is very significant each semester. Overall student data based on information sources can be presented in the following table:

Table 2
Recapitulation Of Student Data Based On Information Sources

Get information from	Number of Students per Registration Period				Total
	2018.1	2018.2	2019.1	2019.2	
Friend	149	230	252	768	1.399
Family	78	174	90	233	575
Webite UT	34	279	38	37	388
Banner	45	58	58	135	296
Mass media	10	9	15	22	56
Online news	9	4	5	15	33
Liflet	0	7	2	4	13
the other	34	11	36	28	109

Data source: SIPELAPOR UT

From the overall data, the first time students got information about UT, as many as 1,399 students (48.76%) through friends, 575 students (20.04%) through families, 388 students (13.52%) through the UT Website, 296 students (10.32)%) via Banner. Whereas through Mass Media only 56 students (1.95%), News online 33 students (1.15%), through Liflet 13 students (0.45%) and Other Sources as many as 109 students (3.80%).

4.1. Discussion

According to registration data 2019.1, the number of UT students reached 292,465 students spread across 39 UPBJJ-UT throughout Indonesia and 1 UPBJJ-UT for student services abroad. The detailed distribution of UT students can be seen in the following graph:
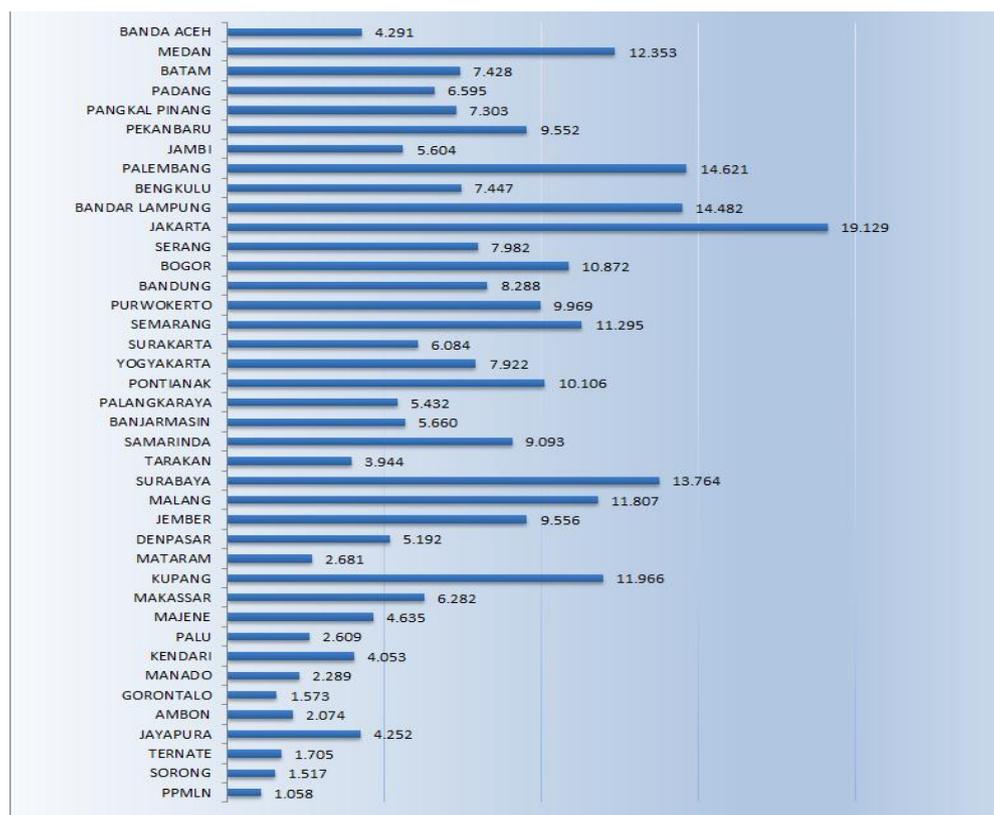
Fig 1*. Graph Students in each UPBJJ as of June 11, 2019*
Data source: https://www.ut.ac.id/ut-dalam-angka

From the above data, it shows that the average UT students in UPBJJ-UT offices on the islands are the smallest. For this reason, the socialization and promotion strategy on the islands must be in accordance with the geographical and demographic conditions of the community. In table 2, it appears that most prospective students are interested in entering UT, because of information from friends, family and the UT website. This means that the majority of UT information is obtained by word of mouth (WOM).

Word of mouth communication is the most important communication in influencing the decision to buy a product (Surapto, 2015). This is because word of mouth information comes directly from other people who describe their own personal experiences, so it is far more clear to consumers than the information contained in advertisements (Mowen and Minor, 2002). Referring to the WOM stage, UT information has entered the final stage of WOM, namely consumers (UT students or alumni) who not only talk about UT to their friends, but also sell their brand / product (in this case about lecturing at UT) to others (Sumardi, 2009). These advantages need to be utilized by UT in an effort to introduce UT to the wider community. UT's marketing strategy by word of mouth, can be done in 2 ways, namely:
1) Providing Personal Resources, that is by using marketing agents who come from UT students or alumni.

Especially for students who receive scholarships and alumni who have a strong influence in the community. This method is very suitable with the conditions of the islands in Eastern Indonesia, because:
- Geographical conditions, the eastern part of Indonesia is mostly in the archipelago which causes a very broad population distribution, so promotion through advertising is certainly not suitable because the contents of the message delivered will not reach the entire island and require a large promotional cost.
- Cultural aspects, people are still familiar with dialogical culture. Where verbal submissions are more heard and understood than through advertisements on billboards.

When referring to the UT market segment, namely people working and fresh graduates, the selection of marketing agents for the implementation of WOM must also be adjusted to that market segment. For people working, marketing agents can use alumni who have influence in government agencies in the region. This effort will have a direct impact on UT marketing, because these alumni are role models.

According to UT data, the number of UT alumni until 2019 has reached 2.1 million, so of course to find alumni who have influence in the regions is very easy because it is spread out in all walks of life.

Market share for fresh graduates, marketing agents through WOM, can be taken from UT students who have just graduated from high school and also from teachers at school. Why these two roles are important, because:

- Students who come from recent graduates can still be said to be the same age as their younger siblings who are still attending high school. So of course it is very effective if communication uses the language of young people or is termed slang, so that it is easily understood by high school students who are UT's target market. This is supported by the research results of Srisusilawati (2017), that there is an influence between the implementation of communication and purchasing decisions.

- Teachers, not only are a source of reference for students, but also a source of reference for their parents in making decisions about their children's careers (including choosing universities). Moreover, the habits of children in deciding to choose tertiary institutions in Indonesia are still influenced by their parents' wishes. This is proven by the results of Widyastuti and Pratiwi's (2013) research which shows that the higher the family's social support, the higher the stability of student decision making in their careers. Including decisions about what courses to take when going to college.

2) WOM Through Social media, that is WOM by utilizing online social media.

In chart 2 the above data, this shows that there are 15.52% of students who get UT information through the UT Website. This means they are familiar with online media. So that UT information through the UT official website must be well managed, so that it is not only a source of information for UT communities and students, but also can be a media for UT promotion. At present it is very easy to share information to various social media, so the possibility of UT information is being spread to the public via electronic WOM. This is evidenced by the results of research by Syafaruddin Z. et al., (2016), which shows the results that Electronic Communication WOM (e-WOM) created in the consumer environment also has a positive influence on consumer purchase intentions.

But what must be considered in developing e-WOM on social media is to anticipate the circulation of negative WOM. For this reason, there must be an online consumer service to accommodate dissatisfaction, complaints, criticism and suggestions from consumers before it spreads more widely, so it will be difficult to be controlled by higher education institutions (Fadillah, 2015).

5. Conclusion

Word of mouth (WOM) can be a choice of distance learning promotion strategies in the islands. This is supported by data from UT students who mostly decide to study at UT, because of information from friends and family. In addition, it has begun to develop through online media. Word of mouth (WOM) can be done in two ways, namely first, the way the audience is conducted by Personal Resources that are already available in each region. The second method uses online social media, because the UT website is now increasingly accessed by prospective students so that it can be developed into an official and trusted reference source when disseminated on social media.

6. References

[1] Afiff, Faisal (2008). *Pemasaran Universitas*. http://faisal-afiff.blogspot.com/2008/06/pemasaran-universitas-there-is-only-one.html. diunggah tanggal 12 Februari 2015

[2] Anfas dan Zainuddin, (2018). Implementasi SWOT Pada Institusi Pendidikan Dalam Meningkatkan Angka Partisipasi Kasar. *Jurnal Organisasi dan Manajemen*, 14 (1), 82-93

[3] BPS, (2018). *Angka Partisipasi Kasar (APK) Perguruan Tingga (PT) Menurut Provinsi, 2015-2018*. https://www.bps.go.id/dynamictable/2018/07/11/1522/angka-partisipasi-kasar-apk-perguruan-tingga-pt-menurut-provinsi-2015-2018.html, didownload 25 September 2019

[4] Fadillah, Dani (2015). Model Komunikasi "WOM" Sebagai Strategi Pemasaran Efektif. *Jurnal Humanika*, 15(1), 66-74

[5] Harsasi, Meirani (2006). Word Of Mouth (Wom) Dalam Industri Jasa : Kaitannya Dengan Sikap Dan Kemungkinan Membeli. *Jurnal Bisnis Strategi*, 15(1), 31-41

[6] Kotler, Philip (1999). *Menajemen Pemasaran, Analisis, Perencanaan, Implementasi dan Pengendalian*, versi Indonesia, Translated by: Jaka Wasana 6th Edition. Jakarta: Penerbit Erlangga,

[7] Lupiyoadi, R dan Hamdani, A., (2006). *Manajemen Pemasaran Jasa*. Jakarta: Penerbit CV Alfabeta.

[8] Mowen, John C dan Minor, Michael., (2002). *Perilaku Konsumen*. Alih Bahasa : Dwi Kartini. Edisi 5 jilid 1. Jakarta : PT. Erlangga.

[9] Mulyawan, Ali dan Komarudin, (2012). Pelaksanaan Aspek Bauran Promosi Pada STMIK Mardira Indonesia, Bandung.

Jurnal Computech & Bisnis, 6(1), 47-59

[10] Nugroho, Chrisdiawan S., (2010). *Analisis Pengaruh Pencitraan, Promosi, Dan Kualitas Pelayanan Terhadap Minat Kuliah Di Diploma III Fakultas Ekonomi Universitas Diponegoro*. Skripsi. Fakultas Ekonomi, Universitas Diponegoro. http://eprints.undip.ac.id/23110/1/SKRIPSI.pdf, didownload 25 September 2019

[11] Rangkuti, Freddy. (2005). *Analisis SWOT Teknik Membedah Kasus Bisnis, Reorientasi Konsep Perencanaan Strategi untuk Menghadapi Abad 21*. Jakarta: PT Gramedia Pustaka Utama

[12] Srisusilawati, Popon (2017). Kajian Komunikasi Pemasaran Terpadu Dalam Mendorong Keputusan Pembelian Jasa Perbankan. Amwaluna: *Jurnal Ekonomi dan Keuangan Syariah*, 1(1), 1-18

[13] Sumardi, (2009). Mencintai Negatif Word of Mouth. SWA, XXV(12)

[14] Sutisna (2002). *Komunikasi Pemasaran dan Komunikasi Konsumen*. Bandung : Remaja Rosdakarya.

[15] Swastha, Basu. DH., (2005). *Asas-asas Marketing*. Yogyakarta : Penerbit Liberty

[16] Syafaruddin Z. dkk., (2016). Pengaruh Komunikasi Electronicword Of Mouth Terhadap Kepercayaan (Trust) Dan Niat Beli (Purchase Intention) Serta Dampaknya Pada Keputusan Pembelian (Survey Pada Konsumen Online Shopping Zafertech.Com). *Jurnal Bisnis dan Manajemen*, 3(1), 65-72

[17] UT (2016). *UT kembali meraih Certificate of Quality dari International Council for Open and Distance Education*. https://www.ut.ac.id/en/node/866

[18] UT (2018). *38 UPBJJ-UT Terima Sertifikat ISO 9001:2015 Bidang MPJJ*. https://www.ut.ac.id/berita/2018/03/38-upbjj-ut-terima-sertifikat-iso-90012015-bidang-mpjj

[19] Widyastuti, Retno J., dan Pratiwi, Titin I., (2013). Pengaruh Self Efficacy Dan Dukungan Sosial Keluarga Terhadap Kemantapan Pengambilan Keputusan Karir Siswa. *Jurnal BK UNESA*, 3(1), 231-238