

Research Article

## Hacking Marketing Recovery Potential through the Educational Marketing Dimension Using a Fishbone Diagram

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**Abstract:** This study is driven by the stagnation in student enrollment at a creative industry-based school that offers strong differentiation but has not effectively optimized its educational marketing strategy. The primary objective is to analyze the factors contributing to the stagnation and to develop a marketing recovery model grounded in educational marketing dimensions. The study utilizes a Fishbone Diagram to explore elements such as social media promotion, animation film works, facilities and infrastructure, and the curriculum. A descriptive qualitative approach is employed, utilizing in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation. The data analysis involves data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing with cause-and-effect mapping. The results highlight that the primary cause of stagnation is the lack of synergy between the educational marketing dimensions. An integrative model that leverages creative differentiation is proposed as a strategic solution to revitalize marketing efforts and enhance student enrollment. This research provides actionable insights for improving the marketing strategy of the school.

**Keywords:** Differentiation; Education; Fishbone; Marketing; Recovery.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Competition among vocational education institutions in the era of digital disruption has increased significantly. Technological transformation, accelerated industrial digitalization, changing characteristics of the digital generation, and industry demands for creativity and technology-based competencies mean that educational institutions can no longer rely solely on academic quality. Schools are required to build strong positioning and differentiation in the education market to remain relevant, competitive, and sustainable. In this context, educational marketing is no longer understood simply as promotional activities or information publications, but rather as an integrative strategy that connects the institution's internal quality with public perception, trust, and decisions.

The changing educational landscape in the digital era has also altered the decision-making patterns of prospective students and parents. Information about schools is widely accessible through digital platforms, social media, and various other online communication channels. This makes transparency and openness a necessity and intensifies competition among educational institutions. Schools that strategically manage digital communications have a greater opportunity to build brand awareness and trust than those that rely solely on conventional approaches.

From a marketing management perspective, positioning and differentiation are key to an organization's success in winning the competition. Positioning is the effort to instill a unique image and value in the minds of the target market, while differentiation is the organization's ability to offer unique, valuable, and difficult-to-imitate attributes. In the context of creative economy-based vocational education, differentiation becomes even more crucial because the main selling point lies not only in the formal curriculum, but also in the work, innovation, creativity, and relevance of graduate competencies to industry needs.

Creative economy vocational schools have distinct characteristics compared to conventional schools. The differentiation lies in their output, project-based learning

Received: January 23, 2025  
Revised: February 27, 2025  
Accepted: March 13, 2026  
Online Available: March 16, 2026  
Curr. Ver.: March 16, 2026



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processes, technology integration, and proximity to the creative industry. Educational outcomes are no longer understood solely as diplomas, but as tangible competencies that can be measured through work and portfolios. Therefore, educational marketing in creative schools must be able to communicate the quality of the process and outcomes concretely so the public can understand the value offered.

The creative economy vocational school in this study emphasizes its strengths in animation and the creative industry, supported by modern infrastructure and an industry-based curriculum. Conceptually, the combination of student animation work, professional facilities, and an adaptive curriculum represents a strong form of strategic differentiation. This differentiation should be a key selling point in education and establish a clear positioning as a creative industry-based educational institution.

From the perspective of educational marketing theory, several important dimensions influence an institution's competitiveness, including marketing communications, educational products, tangibles, and curriculum differentiation. Marketing communications in the digital era are realized through social media promotions that demand consistency, quality content, audience segmentation, and strong storytelling. Educational products are reflected in student output, in this context, animated films as the school's creative identity. Tangible evidence is realized through modern infrastructure that supports industry-based learning. Meanwhile, an industry-based curriculum is the core value proposition because it determines the relevance of graduates to the needs of the workforce.

Normatively (*das sollen*), schools with strong differentiation, modern facilities, and industry-based curricula should have significant student growth and superior market positioning. Clear internal strengths should translate into public trust and increased enrollment interest. However, empirically (*das sein*), student enrollment has stagnated over several enrollment periods. This situation indicates a gap between the school's internal potential and the effectiveness of its marketing strategy. In other words, the problem lies not in the lack of differentiation, but rather in the suboptimal integration of educational marketing dimensions into a consistent and targeted communication strategy.

This stagnation raises fundamental questions about the true root of the problem. Is the school's internal quality inadequate, or is there a lack of synergy in educational marketing management? Has social media promotion been able to fully represent differentiation? Has animated work been positioned as a symbol of competitive advantage? Have modern facilities been communicated as proof of professionalism? And has an industry-based curriculum been emphasized as a guarantee of future competency?

Previous studies in educational marketing have generally used the 7Ps marketing mix approach or SWOT analysis to formulate strategies to improve school competitiveness. This approach contributes to mapping strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. However, these approaches are often descriptive in nature and fail to deeply identify the cause-and-effect relationships between marketing dimensions. As a result, the resulting strategies tend to be general and fail to address the root causes of problems systematically.

It is in this context that the use of a Fishbone Diagram (cause-and-effect diagram) becomes relevant. Fishbone diagrams allow for systematic mapping of interrelated factors, allowing for deeper identification of the root causes of problems. This approach helps view student enrollment stagnation not as a single phenomenon, but as the result of the interaction of various dimensions that have not yet been integrated. The use of Fishbone in the context of educational marketing recovery, particularly in creative economy vocational schools, is still relatively limited and represents a novel contribution to this research.

The novelty (*state of the art*) of this research lies in the integration of educational marketing dimensions—social media promotion, animated film works, infrastructure, and industry-based curriculum—which are systematically analyzed using a Fishbone Diagram to identify the root causes of stagnation and formulate a marketing recovery model. This research does not only stop at mapping problem factors, but offers an integrative model based on creative differentiation as an educational marketing recovery strategy oriented towards long-term positioning.

The marketing recovery model formulated in this study emphasizes that successful educational marketing requires more than simply increasing promotional intensity, but also requires systemic integration between the quality of internal and external

communications. Social media promotion must be a strategic communication channel that consistently conveys differentiation. Animated works should be positioned as symbols of the school's competence and creative identity. Facilities and infrastructure should be communicated as tangible evidence of service quality. An industry-based curriculum should be emphasized as the primary value proposition that addresses students' future needs.

Thus, this research has both theoretical and practical relevance. Theoretically, this study expands the study of marketing recovery in education by placing creative differentiation as a central factor and integrating it within a cause-and-effect analysis framework. Practically, this study provides strategic recommendations for managing educational marketing in creative economy vocational schools to build a strong positioning and sustainable student growth.

Based on the above description, the purpose of this study is to analyze the factors causing student enrollment stagnation through cause-and-effect mapping based on a Fishbone Diagram and to formulate a marketing recovery model based on the integration of educational marketing dimensions in creative economy vocational schools. This research is expected to provide conceptual, methodological, and practical contributions in developing educational marketing strategies based on creative differentiation in the era of digital disruption.

## 2. THEORETICAL REVIEW

### Marketing Theory

Marketing is a social and managerial process in which individuals and organizations create, communicate, and exchange value to satisfy needs and wants through mutually beneficial relationships with customers (Kotler & Keller, 2016). In the context of education, marketing is not interpreted solely as a commercial activity, but rather as an institutional strategy to build the value, image, trust, and attractiveness of educational institutions in the eyes of the public (Hemsley-Brown & Oplatka, 2015). Modern marketing theory emphasizes three main principles, namely value creation, brand equity, and relationship marketing, which are relevant to be applied in educational institutions, especially vocational high schools based on creative industries. In service marketing, including educational services, the concept of the marketing mix has developed from 4P to 7P, consisting of Product, Price, Place, Promotion, People, Process, and Physical Evidence (Booms & Bitner, 1981).

- a. A product is the core service offered to consumers. In education, the main products are learning services, graduate competencies, and curriculum.
- b. Price is the cost that consumers must pay to obtain educational services, including tuition fees and other supporting costs.
- c. Place is the location and accessibility of educational services, both physically and digitally.
- d. Promotion is a communication activity carried out by schools to convey values and advantages to the community.
- e. People (Human Resources) are all parties involved in providing educational services, such as teachers, education staff, and school management.
- f. Process is the mechanism and flow of providing educational services, including the learning process and administrative services.
- g. Physical Evidence (Physical Evidence) is the facilities and infrastructure that are real evidence of the quality of educational services.

The 7P concept is very relevant in this study because the four main focuses of Marketing Recovery at SMK Raden Umar Said Kudus, where Social Media Promotion as the Promotion dimension, Animated Film Works as the Product Dimension, Facilities and Infrastructure as the Physical Evidence Dimension, and curriculum as the Process Dimension and this is an integral part of the marketing mix elements of educational services.

In the service marketing literature, marketing mix elements are understood as dimensions that shape an institution's marketing strategy (Booms & Bitner, 1981). In the educational context, marketing dimensions encompass key aspects that influence prospective students' perceptions and decisions, such as communication, academic product value, physical environment, and curriculum relevance (Kotler & Fox, 1995; Ivy, 2008; Alam & Noor, 2022). Therefore, this study uses the term "educational marketing

dimensions" as the title to replace four analytical perspectives derived from the service marketing mix and adapted to the context of creative vocational schools. In this study, the term "dimensions" is understood as a conceptual aspect that represents the grouping of educational marketing factors based on the dominant functions that influence prospective students' perceptions and decisions.

#### Recovery Theory in the Context of Educational Organizations and Institutions

Recovery is a systematic process carried out by an organization to restore conditions, performance, and public trust after experiencing a decline due to crisis, environmental change, or strategic mismatch (Pearson & Clair, 1998).

In service organizations, recovery focuses not only on internal improvement, but also on restoring external perceptions and trust (Coombs, 2007).

Recovery theory initially developed in the study of crisis management and organizational recovery, particularly after a crisis of trust, a decline in performance, or changes in the external environment. Recovery is defined as the process of restoring an organization to a more adaptive, competitive, and sustainable state.

In the context of educational institutions, recovery includes:

- a. Reputational Recovery , namely restoring and strengthening the institution's image in the eyes of the public.
- b. Operational Recovery , namely the adjustment of internal systems, resources, and educational services.
- c. Market Recovery , namely the restoration of public interest and trust in educational institutions.

Recovery is not only reactive, but also proactive by utilizing innovations and communication methods that are relevant to current developments.

#### Marketing Recovery Theory

Marketing recovery is a strategic process undertaken by an organization to restore its market position, image, and stakeholder trust through an adaptive and value-based marketing approach after experiencing a decline in performance or stagnation (Bilson Simamora, 2001). In the context of education, marketing recovery is an integrated effort by educational institutions to restore and increase public interest through strengthening marketing communications, service quality, and differentiation of institutional excellence (Hemsley-Brown & Oplatka, 2015). Marketing recovery focuses on systematic efforts to restore, strengthen, and improve the institution's position through adaptive, creative, and value-based marketing strategies.

In education, Marketing Recovery aims to:

- a. Restoring public trust in institutions.
- b. Strengthening the school brand through positive narratives and tangible evidence of performance.
- c. Increasing the attractiveness of schools amidst competition among educational institutions.

In this study, marketing recovery is analyzed through four main perspectives: social media promotion, animated film works, infrastructure, and curriculum. These four perspectives are not understood as causally influencing variables, but rather as analytical categories used to map the root causes of problems in school marketing.

#### Fishbone Diagram (Cause-Effect Diagram / Ishikawa Diagram)

diagram , also known as a cause-and-effect diagram or Ishikawa diagram, is a visual tool used to identify, explore, and structuredly display all possible causes of a specific problem or effect. Developed by Dr. Kaoru Ishikawa in the 1960s, this diagram is one of the seven basic tools of quality control. Its strength lies in its ability to organize ideas logically and encourage comprehensive thinking, thus assisting in the process of root cause analysis.

Dr. Kaoru Ishikawa, a Japanese quality theorist, introduced this diagram as a method for identifying the causes of problems in the shipbuilding industry. The goal was to visualize the relationship between an effect (problem) and all possible causes. Since then, this diagram has been widely adopted in various sectors, including manufacturing, services, healthcare, and education, due to its effectiveness in problem analysis and process improvement. A fishbone diagram resembles a fishbone, with the "head" of the fish representing the problem or effect being analyzed, and the "spine" extending to the left. From this spine, "main bones" emerge, representing the main cause categories. From each main bone, "sub-bones" branch off to represent specific causes within that category.

Purpose and Benefits of Using a Fishbone Diagram:

- a. **Root Cause Identification** : This diagram allows researchers to systematically identify all potential causes that contribute to the problem under study, preventing a focus on only surface symptoms.
- b. **Comprehensive Visualization**: Presents cause-and-effect relationships in a clear and easy-to-understand visual format, facilitating communication and discussion within a team or with a supervisor.
- c. **Facilitate Brainstorming**: Encourage creative and collaborative thinking to discover as many potential causes as possible without preconceived notions.
- d. **Structuring Thought**: Helps organize complex ideas into logical categories, reducing confusion and ensuring all areas are considered.
- e. **Data-Driven Decision Making**: By understanding the root of the problem, researchers can formulate more targeted and effective recommendations or solutions.
- f. **Process Analysis Documentation**: Serves as a visual record of the root cause analysis session, which can be reviewed and updated in the future.

In practice, Dr. Ishikawa recommends using general categories to organize potential causes. These categories are often referred to as the 4Ms, 5Ms, 6Ms, or 8Ps, depending on the industry context and the type of problem being analyzed. The selection of these categories is crucial to ensure comprehensive coverage:

1. **4M (Manufacturing)**:
  - a. **Man (Human)**: Includes factors related to the operator, employee, or individual involved (e.g., lack of training, fatigue, inadequate skills).
  - b. **Machine (Equipment)**: Relating to the equipment, machinery, or technology used (e.g., machine failure, incorrect calibration, obsolete equipment).
  - c. **Materials (Raw Materials)**: Refers to the raw materials, components, or supplies used (e.g., poor raw material quality, material defects, improper storage).
  - d. **Method (Method/Procedure)**: Concerning the work procedures, instructions, or methods applied (e.g., unclear procedures, non-standard methods, incorrect work sequence).
2. **5M (Adding Measurement)**:
  - a. **Adding Measurements**: Factors related to the measurement system, calibration, or data (e.g., inaccurate measuring instrument, reading error, invalid data).
3. **6M (Adding Mother Nature/Environment)**:
  - a. **Adding Mother Nature/Environment**: External or environmental factors that cannot be completely controlled (e.g., temperature, humidity, lighting, pollution).
4. **8P (Service/Marketing)**: This category is more often used in the service or marketing sector.
  - a. **People (Orang)**: Similar to 'Man' in 4M, focus on individuals.
  - b. **Process (Proses)**: Similar to 'Method' in 4M, focuses on workflow.
  - c. **Physical Evidence**: The physical environment in which the service is provided, supporting products.
  - d. **Product**: The quality or features of the product/service itself.
  - e. **Place (Place)**: Location or distribution channel.
  - f. **Promotion**: How services/products are marketed.
  - g. **Price (Price)**: Pricing strategy.
  - h. **Productivity**: Efficiency in providing services.

### 3. RESEARCH METHODS

This research is a qualitative study with descriptive-analytical specifications that aims to deeply understand the phenomenon of stagnant student numbers and formulate a marketing recovery strategy based on the dimensions of educational marketing. The approach used is a case study. school vocational education that has differentiation in animated film works, modern infrastructure, and industry-based curriculum. Primary data was obtained through in-depth interviews with the principal, management team, public relations team, productive teachers, and industry partners, while secondary data was obtained through direct observation and documentation studies of school documents, social media promotional content, and student admission data. Data collection techniques were carried out triangulation to increase the validity of the findings. Data analysis was carried out through the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions interactively. To identify the root causes of stagnation and the cause-and-effect relationships between dimensions of educational marketing, Fishbone Diagram was used as an analytical tool that maps causal factors based on the categories of social media promotion, animated film works, infrastructure, and curriculum, thus obtaining the formulation of an integrative marketing recovery model based on creative differentiation.

### 4. RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### Research result

The results of the study show that promotional activities in schools vocational economy Creative has evolved to keep pace with the dynamics of digital communication, utilizing various channels, particularly social media, as the primary medium for reaching prospective students and parents. Digital platforms are utilized through the publication of student animated films, documentation of project-based learning activities, information on new student admissions, and publication of school achievements and activities. Quantitatively, uploads have been routine for a certain period, but qualitatively, they do not yet fully reflect an integrated marketing communications strategy based on differentiated positioning.

The findings indicate that digital promotion remains operational and not fully strategic. Published content tends to be informative, but does not fully build a larger narrative about the school's identity as a center for creative industry education. Post consistency remains fluctuating and is not structured according to a systematic content calendar. Communication planning is not based on clear segmentation analysis, such as separating messages for junior high school students, parents, and industry partners. As a result, promotional messages tend to be general and do not specifically address the needs and concerns of each audience segment.

As a creative industry-based school, visual strength and storytelling should be key strengths in marketing communications. Students' animated films, with their strong visual and narrative qualities, have the potential to become powerful branding tools. However, observations indicate that these films are not all packaged in a strategic storytelling format, such as showcasing the behind-the-scenes creative process, the students' journey from zero to completion, or the impact of the work on industry readiness. The potential for emotional engagement that should be fostered through creative storytelling has not been optimally utilized.

Beyond the creative aspect, exposure to modern infrastructure is also suboptimal. The school boasts an animation studio, production space, state-of-the-art technology, and learning facilities that meet industry standards. However, the visualization of these facilities in digital promotions is still limited to documentation of activities, not packaged as physical evidence that confirms the quality of educational services. In the context of school selection decisions, perceptions of the learning environment and the sophistication of facilities are crucial factors influencing the confidence of parents and prospective students. When facilities are not strategically displayed, these advantages are not fully conveyed to the market.

In terms of curriculum, research found that schools have developed industry-based curricula that are adaptive to technological developments and the needs of the workplace. Project-based learning, collaboration with industry, and integration of cutting-edge technology are part of the learning system. However, the narrative about this curriculum has not been fully communicated as a competitive advantage for promotion. Information

regarding the curriculum's advantages remains descriptive and administrative in nature, not presented as a guarantee of future competency and graduate job readiness.

Based on in-depth interviews with management and the promotions team, it was discovered that the school's internal focus is primarily directed at improving the quality of learning and product production, while its marketing communications strategy has not been developed in a parallel and systematic manner. This creates a gap between internal quality and external perception. The school possesses strong differentiation, but this differentiation has not yet translated into optimal market positioning.

The research also identified several supporting factors that strengthen the school's marketing potential. The primary contributing factor is the quality of the animated films, which have met industry standards, in terms of visuals, production techniques, and storylines. These films not only serve as learning outcomes but also represent student competencies. Furthermore, the support of modern infrastructure legitimizes the quality of the learning process. An industry-based curriculum relevant to job market needs also provides significant appeal, especially to parents considering their children's career prospects.

The school's image as a creative educational institution is also a supporting factor. Its identity as a creative industries school provides a clear differentiation from other, more mainstream schools. This differentiation serves as a strategic asset in establishing a unique positioning in the vocational education market.

However, the study also identified inhibiting factors contributing to the stagnation in student enrollment. The first inhibiting factor is the suboptimal integration of social media promotion strategies. Published content does not consistently reflect differentiation. The second factor is the lack of communication planning based on audience segmentation. Promotional messages have not been specifically tailored to the needs and characteristics of the target market. The third factor is the suboptimal use of animated works as a strategic branding tool. Works that should serve as icons of differentiation have not been packaged within a strong branding narrative. The fourth factor is the lack of a unified narrative between curriculum differentiation, facilities, and student output, resulting in a partial perception of school excellence.

Through mapping using a Fishbone Diagram, these factors were grouped into four main dimensions: social media promotion, animated film production, infrastructure, and curriculum. A causal analysis revealed that the root of the problem lies not in the school's internal quality, but rather in the lack of strategic integration of educational marketing dimensions. In other words, the stagnation in student enrollment is more influenced by managerial issues in communication and strategic integration, rather than weaknesses in the educational product itself.

Fishbone diagrams help identify systemic relationships between factors. For example, a lack of content planning results in suboptimal exposure of products and facilities. A lack of audience segmentation results in inaccurate delivery of differentiated messages. A lack of integration between curriculum narratives and products results in a school's weak positioning in the market. All of these factors are interconnected and form a system that influences the effectiveness of educational marketing.

On the other hand, the research results show that the potential for marketing recovery in schools vocational economy The creative potential is enormous. The school has a clear differentiation and is relevant to the needs of the ever-growing creative industry. The strength of animation as a unique identity provides a significant opportunity to build a school brand based on creativity and technology. Support from modern production facilities strengthens the legitimacy of learning quality. An industry-based curriculum that adapts to technological developments ensures the future relevance of graduates.

Marketing recovery potential can be optimized through consistent and planned digital marketing communications integration. Developing a content calendar based on a positioning strategy is the first step in establishing message consistency. Strengthening student-driven storytelling can increase emotional engagement and strengthen the school's creative image. Professionally visualizing infrastructure and facilities can build perceptions of quality and public trust. Emphasizing the curriculum as the primary value proposition will strengthen parents' confidence in their children's future prospects.

Furthermore, integration across educational marketing dimensions needs to be achieved within a single, overarching narrative that affirms the school's identity as a center for superior creative industry education and is relevant to future needs. This narrative must

be consistent across all communication channels, both digital and offline, to establish a strong and sustainable positioning.

With this integrative approach, a school's creative differentiation not only becomes an internal advantage but also translates into publicly recognized market value. Marketing recovery, in this context, is not simply defined as increasing student enrollment in the short term, but as a strategic process for building long-term reputation, positioning, and competitiveness.

Overall, the research results confirm that schools vocational economy Creative schools have a strong foundation for marketing recovery. The main challenge lies not in the quality of educational products, but rather in integrating all dimensions of educational marketing into a systematic, consistent strategy based on creative differentiation. With this integration, the school's vast potential can be optimized to achieve sustainable student growth and strengthen its position as a leading creative industry school.

## Discussion

Research findings show that social media promotion in schools vocational economy The creative education program has been operationally quite active, but strategically, it has not been fully integrated with the school's positioning as a creative industry-based vocational education institution. The school has utilized various digital platforms to convey information about new student admissions, document learning activities, and showcase students' animated films. However, these activities are still predominantly informative and documentary in nature and have not been fully developed within a systematic integrated marketing communications framework oriented toward creating strong, differentiated perceptions in the minds of the audience.

From a marketing management perspective, marketing communications is an essential part of the promotional mix, building a gradual process from awareness, interest, desire, to action, as described in the AIDA model. This model emphasizes that communication success is determined not only by message frequency but also by consistency, clarity of value proposition, and relevance of the message to the needs of the target market. In the context of education, the complexity is even higher because what is being marketed is not a tangible product, but rather an intangible, long-term educational service that has significant future implications for consumers, especially parents and prospective students.

The research results indicate that the awareness stage has been relatively achieved through exposure to digital content showcasing school activities and student work. However, the interest and desire stages have not been fully addressed through a strategic narrative that explicitly emphasizes the school's creative differentiation. Published content does not always connect animated works, industry-based learning processes, modern facilities, and career prospects within a cohesive messaging framework. As a result, audiences recognize the school as a creative institution but do not fully understand the unique value proposition that sets it apart from other schools.

Kotler and Keller emphasize that effective marketing communications must be able to consistently convey value propositions through various communication channels. In the context of schools vocational economy Creative, the primary value proposition lies in the integration of animation work, an industry-based curriculum, and professional production facilities. However, research shows that messaging delivered through social media has not been fully designed to emphasize its positioning as a creative industry-based animation school with a clear and sustainable competitive advantage.

In the digital era, social media serves not only as a channel for information distribution but also as a space for interaction and brand engagement. Digital marketing communication theory emphasizes the importance of content consistency, audience segmentation, storytelling, and cross-platform message integration. Consistency of posts plays a role in building credibility and public expectations, while audience segmentation ensures messages are tailored to the characteristics and needs of the target market. This study found that audience segmentation has not been specifically mapped, resulting in promotional messages being general and not fully addressing the psychological needs of parents or the career aspirations of prospective students interested in the creative industry.

The power of storytelling as a means of creative differentiation has also not been optimally utilized. As an animation-based school, the ability to construct visual and emotional narratives is a core competency that should be reflected in the branding strategy.

Effective storytelling can transform animated works from mere academic output into symbols of institutional identity and representations of the school's creative values. When these narratives are not designed within a long-term branding framework, the potential for differentiation is less than optimal in influencing market perception.

From a service marketing perspective, education falls into the high-involvement service category, requiring in-depth consideration due to its long-term impact on consumers' futures. Lovelock and Wirtz explain that in high-involvement services, communication must be able to reduce perceived risk by providing tangible cues and a compelling value narrative. In the context of this research, student animation work, production studio facilities, documentation of the learning process, and industry partnerships can serve as physical evidence that strengthens public trust.

When external communications aren't fully integrated with internal differentiation, a gap emerges between actual quality and perceived quality. This gap contributes to student enrollment stagnation, as the market doesn't fully understand and appreciate the school's strengths. Therefore, the primary issue isn't low internal quality, but rather the suboptimal transformation of quality into perceived value through consistent strategic communications.

The research also confirms that animated films and industry-based curricula are the core of school differentiation. In Porter's theory of competitive advantage, differentiation occurs when an organization is able to offer unique attributes that are valued by the market and difficult for competitors to imitate. In the context of creative vocational education, animated films are not merely academic assignments but rather a representation of students' technical competence, creativity, and industry standards. These works reflect the quality of the learning process and serve as indicators of graduates' work-readiness.

This differentiation has great potential as a source of sustainable competitive advantage if managed within an integrated system. Porter emphasized that competitive advantage depends not on a single activity, but on the alignment (strategic fit) between activities within an organization's value system. This study found that promotional activities, product differentiation, physical facilities, and curriculum are not yet fully integrated into a mutually reinforcing strategic system. Each dimension operates, but has not yet been synergized within a cohesive positioning narrative.

Positioning as a creative school based on the animation industry should be firmly embedded in the minds of consumers. Positioning is an effort to instill a unique image and value in the perception of the target market. However, positioning will only be effective if differentiation is communicated consistently and relevant to the audience's needs. Research findings indicate that an industry-based curriculum that adapts to technological developments, including the integration of artificial intelligence and project-based learning, has not yet been fully positioned as a guarantee of future competency.

From an educational marketing perspective, the core product is not just a diploma, but rather the competencies, learning experiences, and job-readiness of graduates. Parents and prospective students are essentially purchasing a future and career opportunities, not just three years of learning services. Therefore, an industry-based curriculum must be packaged to address job market needs and the challenges of the digital era. When curriculum differentiation is not communicated as a primary value proposition, its potential market appeal is suboptimal.

The infrastructure dimension also plays a crucial role in building quality perceptions. In the service marketing mix (7Ps), physical evidence is a crucial element in reducing consumer uncertainty. Animation studio facilities, production rooms, and modern technology are tangible evidence of the quality of educational services. However, research shows that exposure of these facilities in digital promotions is not optimal and is not fully linked to curriculum differentiation and student output. This reduces the power of physical evidence in building trust and a professional image.

Conceptually, these findings strengthen the argument that differentiation in creative education must be integrative, encompassing product output, learning processes, industry relevance, and physical evidence of facilities. Fragmented differentiation will weaken positioning and hinder student growth. High internal quality without strategic communication will result in under-positioning in the market, a condition where an organization's strengths are not fully understood or appreciated by consumers.

The use of a Fishbone Diagram in this study provides a significant methodological contribution. The Fishbone Diagram allows for a systematic mapping of the cause-and-effect relationships of various factors influencing student enrollment stagnation. Through this approach, social media promotion, animated works, infrastructure, and curriculum factors are mapped within a single analytical framework that demonstrates the interdependence between dimensions. This mapping demonstrates that the problem does not exist in isolation but rather results from the interaction of various factors that have not yet been integrated.

Methodologically, this approach aligns with strategic management principles, which emphasize the importance of a comprehensive analysis of internal factors before formulating a recovery strategy. The mapping results indicate that stagnation is not caused by low academic quality or a lack of facilities, but rather by a lack of synergy between dimensions of educational marketing. This condition reflects a misalignment between internal resources and external communication strategies.

From a strategic management perspective, this misalignment hinders the conversion of internal advantages into market advantages. Porter emphasized that organizational activities must reinforce each other within a coherent system. When promotions are conducted without emphasizing the differentiation of the product and curriculum, positioning becomes unclear. Conversely, when differentiation is not consistently communicated, the market lacks a clear picture of the school's unique value.

The marketing recovery model formulated in this study emphasizes the integration of four main dimensions: social media promotion as strategic communication, animated films as differentiated products, infrastructure as physical evidence of quality, and an industry-based curriculum as the core value proposition. This integration forms an educational marketing system based on creative differentiation that is oriented towards long-term positioning.

This model aims not only to increase student numbers quantitatively, but also to build sustainable growth by strengthening reputation and professional image. With a clear and consistent positioning, schools not only attract prospective students but also build loyalty, positive word of mouth, and long-term public trust.

Theoretically, this study broadens the perspective of marketing recovery in education by positioning differentiation as a central factor, not merely an additional element in the marketing mix. Methodologically, the use of a Fishbone Diagram demonstrates that cause-and-effect analysis can be effectively adapted in the context of educational marketing. Practically, this model can serve as a strategic framework for creative vocational schools in building sustainable competitiveness amidst the increasingly competitive education industry.

Thus, marketing recovery is not simply an effort to improve promotions, but rather a process of aligning internal value systems with external communication strategies. When creative differentiation is packaged within an integrated and consistent narrative, the school's positioning is strengthened, public trust is increased, and student growth can be achieved sustainably.

## 5. CONCLUSION

Stagnation in the number of students in schools vocational economy The creative aspect is caused by the lack of integration of educational marketing dimensions, including social media promotion, animated film works, infrastructure, and industry-based curriculum into a consistent, positioning-oriented communication strategy. Although the school has strong differentiation as a creative industry-based institution with modern facilities and a curriculum relevant to industry needs, this advantage has not been fully converted into a strong perception of value in the education market. Through Fishbone Diagram analysis, this study identified that the root of the problem lies in the lack of synergy between educational marketing dimensions, not in the institution's internal quality. Therefore, a marketing recovery model based on the integration of creative differentiation is a strategic solution that can strengthen positioning, increase competitiveness, and encourage sustainable student growth.

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