

Customers' Preference on Selecting an English Course in Pare Kediri in Pandemic Era

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Abstract: Pandemic era have run almost 2 years. And it has affected many things in the educational system around English Course, Pare. Many customers of English course Pare started to consider many things to choose the best English course. Based on those problems, this study attempts to investigate the customer's perception on their preference of English course. The population of the research as respondents is 48. The sample of the research is 30 experienced alumni of English course who joined the course during pandemic in Pare. To design of this research, descriptive qualitative is chosen. To derive the valid data, Delphi method is applied. This result of this study is expected to provide the evidence of the customers' perception on their preference of English course. It is showed that some factors affect to the customer's perception on their preference of English course in Pandemic era.

Keywords: Customers' preference, English course, pandemic era.

1. Introduction

Pandemic era is not a disease that we have experienced before, and it has shattered all our economic systems, supply chain infrastructure, and opportunities to travel (Bito et al., 2021; Nicole et al., 2020). Based on Goodell (2020) pandemic era made many sectors suffered. Quarantines, lockdown, entry bans, and border closures happened in everywhere. It has created a fundamental shift in how customers chose something. In the other hand, lifestyles and daily behavior also changed during this period (W. Setyawan, 2020; Wen et al., 2020). It also affected to the customers preference.

Although the lifestyles and daily behavior have change, the English course is still interesting for learners in pandemic era. It can be seen in Pare, Kediri. There are still a lot of students who want to join at English courses although it does not occur as usual. They must consider many things before joining to the English course. It happens because of the world is not yet free from this virus (Riestyaningrum et al., 2020; W. H. Setyawan & Nawangsari, 2021).

Directorate (2021) defines course as a process of learning about knowledge or skills organized in a short time by an institution that is oriented towards the needs of the community and the business/industry world. English course is a non-formal education that aims to help the community improve their competence or communication skills in English. As a means of international communication, English must be mastered actively or passively,

verbally and in writing, because in this modern era, information and technology are loaded with English. Facing these challenges, the community must prepare themselves to become potential human resources, especially in the field of communication, namely by using English. It means that the role of English Course in Indonesia indicates a progress.

However, more than 4620 courses play important role in Indonesia. Each of English course brings their own characteristics. It is used to persuade the customers in order to join with the English course. For example, there are more than 150 English courses in Pare, Kediri now. Almost all of them provide some benefits to the students after they join to the English course. Many customers as learners have been learning for many objectives, but most of them is to support their competency for academic purposes, such as for studying abroad.

The community's need for the importance of English course to encourage people to fulfill their needs in sharpening skills (ability) in English. Likewise, English course compete with each other and offer programs to assist the community in offering English course services (Sulistiyo, 2016). This wave creates a new challenge to the English course in order to offer good service every time. This way chosen is to prevent the negative customers' preference to select the English course.

The purpose of this research is to describe in depth the customers' preference on selecting an English course in pandemic era. This result of this research can be interpreted as the broad view to know what is the greatest factors affect to the customers' preference.

2. Material and Methods

2.1 Marketing Theories

Marketing is defined as an art and science for choosing a target market and constructing a relationship that is beneficial to the consumers (Kotler & Armstrong, 2013). To strength that definition, (Kotler & Keller, 2016) states that marketing is an art and science for choosing a target market and gaining, maintaining, also increasing the number of prime consumers.

2.2 Marketing Education

Marketing education is highly desirable for organizations and Nations to make a success of their endeavors. The marketing education is used to equip the students and practitioners with the knowledge to drive the organizations to achieve the objectives of institution which could be to satisfy the customers or make profits (Adesoga & Sunday, 2020; Hastuti & Setyawan, 2021).

Adding the explanation above, (Adesoga & Sunday, 2020) says that Marketing Education is the aspect of education that focuses on the process of obtaining knowledge or receiving formal instruction in the principles and techniques of marketing leading to an academic qualification in marketing such as certificate, ordinary diploma, higher diploma, bachelor's degree, master's degree and doctorate degree in Marketing.

In another words, it can be seen as the acquisition of knowledge, skills and experience that enables the individual to identify customers' preference with a purpose to fulfill their satisfaction and profit.

2.3 Factors Influence Education Marketing

There are some factors influencing education marketing. Based on (Seehanate, 2017) says that there are 7 factors influence education marketing namely product, price, place, promotion, personal, process, and product evidence.

2.4 Methods

Based on (Sugiono, 2016) research method is defined as the scientific way to gain the data with specific purpose. In this research, the author used qualitative method with a descriptive research approach. The research method used in this research is qualitative research method with descriptive approach.

In this research, the scope of the research object determined by the author in accordance with the issue to be studied is about the investigation of customer perception on their preference of English Course. The population is 48 people. And, the sample of this research is 30 experienced alumni of English course in Pare who joined the course.

The instrument used in this research was open and closed questionnaire to collect the data from the alumni who joined the course during pandemic. Open-ended questionnaire here is to take a holistic and comprehensive look at the customers' preference because open-ended responses permit respondents to provide more options and opinions, and giving the data more diversity. While, closed questionnaire was used to investigate the seven dominant factors to the customers' preference based on the theory.

The analytical method used in this research is descriptive analysis using Delphi method. It aims to determine the extent to which experts or lay people agree about a given issue and with each other and in areas where they disagree, achieve a consensus opinion.

3. Results

The data collected from open-ended questionnaires distributed to the respondents were analyzed under the preference on selecting English course in Pare during pandemic. This questionnaire is adopted from (JUE, 2020). This section explains customers' preference on selecting English course in tabular form below.

Table 1. Do you think that deciding the distance of the location of English course with public facilities is important? Why?

Deciding the distance of the location	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	27	90%
No	3	10%
Total	30	100 %

Table 1 above indicates that out of the 30 respondents, 27 (90%) of them agreed that they decided the distance of the location of English course with public facilities, while 3 (10%) respondents answered no to the questions. They said that they did not decide the distance of the location when choosing the English course. This shows that respondents who decided the distance of the location are the majority.

Table 2. Is your chosen English course based on the value for money? Tell me briefly!

Value for money (economic, efficient, and	Frequency	Percentage (%)
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effective)		
Yes	24	80%
No	6	20%
Total	30	100 %

Table 2 above indicates that out of the 30 respondents, 24 (80%) of them agreed that they chose the English course based on value for money, while 6 (20%) respondents answered no to the questions. They said that they chose the English course only from the quality of the English course not based on the value for money. This shows that respondents who chose the English course based on the value for money is majority.

Table 3. Is brand become one of the factors when choosing the English course? Explain it!

Brand (name of course)	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	12	40%
No	18	60%
Total	30	100 %

Table 3 above indicates that out of the 30 respondents, only 12 (40%) of them agreed that they chose the English course based on the brand (name of course), while 18 (60%) respondents answered no to the questions. This shows that respondents who chose no for choosing brand as one of the factors of choosing English course is majority. They said that they chose the English course did not based on the brand of the English course but they prefer to choose the quality of the course itself rather than choose the brand name.

Table 4. What kinds of merchandise selection that you want during taking an English course?

Merchandise selection	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Pen	4	13,33%
Earphone	4	13,33%
Bag	6	20%
T-shirt	4	13,33%
Certificate	4	13,33%
Tumbler/bottle	2	6,67%
Hat	2	6,67%
Book	4	13,33%
Total	30	100 %

Based on table 4 above, it indicates that out of the 30 respondents, 4 (13,33%) of them selected the English course because of they wanted to get a pen, 4 (13,33%) of them selected the English course because of they wanted to get an earphone, while 6 (20%) of them selected the English course because of they needed a bag to support their course. In addition, 4 (13,33%) of the respondents selected English course because of they need a t-shirt in order to show their identity, 4 (13,33%) of them need a certificate, each of tumbler/bottle or hat got 6,67% from the respondents. And the last, 4 (13,33%) of the respondents selected the English course because of they need to get a book.

Table 5. Is parking availability affect to you when decide the English course? Explain more!

Parking availability	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	21	70%
No	9	30%
Total	30	100 %

Table 5 above indicates that out of the 30 respondents, 21 (70%) of them agreed that parking availability is needed. It was because of they need safety place to park their motorcycle when taking an English course. While 9 (30%) of them answered no to the questions. It meant that they did not need parking area while doing course.

In addition to that, the result of closed questionnaire gathered from the respondents' information were presented and analyzed. The view of the respondents was examined based on the followings:

Table 6. The seven dominant factors influence to the customers' preference

No	Factors	%
1	Fee	13%
2	Promotion	5%
3	Reputation/Branding	13%
4	Tutor qualification	20%
5	Program	17%
6	Method	21%
7	Place	11%

Based on the table 6 above, it can be seen that there are 7 dominant factors influence to the customers' preference on selecting English Course in Pare during pandemic. The data showed that the method is the first factors influence to the customers' preference. Almost 21% of customers agreed that method became one of the reasons why the customers chose that English course.

Next, the second dominant factor to the customers' preference is tutor qualification. It got 20% of the customers perception. It meant that higher tutor qualification higher the belief of the customers to the English course. It would be very different if the tutor of English course was not in bachelor degree.

The third factor that influence to the customers' preference on selecting the English course during pandemic is program. Program meant that it was a plan or efforts of the English course to be carried out. The best program which was brought by the English course, it would be one of the factors that influence to the customers' perception on selecting the English course.

The following factors influence to the customers' preference on selecting English course are branding and fee. Both of them got 13% of the customers' view. It meant that on selecting an English course, most of the customers considered more about the fee and brand. They thought that lower the fee offered by the English course, the English course

would get more students. In addition, better the brand of the English course, it would be very easy to be found by the customers.

The last factors which influence to the customers' preference on selecting an English course were place and promotion. Each of those factors got 11% and 5%. It meant that place is important thing that must be considered by the customers before entering the English course. And, promotion was also needed by the owner of the English course to be it would be recognized by ordinary people.

4. Discussion

The findings obtained from the questionnaire was presented and analyzed. From the questionnaire, the findings of the study focused on the customers' preference on selecting English course. On the issue of deciding the distance of the location an English course with public facilities, the findings clearly indicate that the majority of respondents agreed that they need public facilities around the English course. This is similar to the theory from (Budiman & Samani, 2021; Dengah et al., 2014) which state that location is the most important thing that customer consider while selecting something.

In terms of value for money, the findings uncovered the majority of respondents thought about value for money while selecting the English course. They agreed that value of money is one of the important things that must be considered while choosing the best English course. This is similar with (Boshoff & Gray, 2004; Rifai et al., 2020) which found that value for money is an important determinant for customer satisfaction.

However, on the reason on selecting English course based on the brand (name of the course), the findings exposed some of the respondents did not see the brand (name of the course) on selecting the course. This result does not support the previous research from Isik & Yasar (2015) and Sari & Setiawan (2021) which is stated that brand image has positive and significant impact on consumer preferences.

In term of merchandise selection, the result indicates that the respondents have the desire to get some of the benefit when selecting the English course. It is in line with the theory from Jue (2020) which states that merchandise selection can affect to the customer preference in online survey.

The last, the result revealed that parking availability is needed in order to the customer retention improve. This result support the theory from (Saber et al., 2017; Shalahuddin et al., 2021) states that parking convenience has a positive relationship with the customer retention and may encourage the Government to focus more on that particular matter, especially on the parking safety.

In order to be clear, the research revealed that there are 7 factors that influence to the customers preference. It is in line with the theory from Diamanta (2008) which states that factors which influence to the customers' preference on selecting English course are reputation and promotion, teaching staff, course fees, brochures, location of course venues, course facilities, front office staff, course building, number and length of each level, classroom learning atmosphere, and choice of course schedule.

Based on those theory mention above, this result showed that location, value for money, merchandise selection and parking availability affect to the customers'

preference strongly. While seeing the brand name of the English course was not the influential factors to the customers' preference on selecting an English course (Saptaria & Setyawan, 2021). It is implied that there are some factors that affect to the customers' preference.

5. Conclusions

The conclusion of the research entitled 'Customer Preferences' in Choosing an English Course in Pare Kediri in this Pandemic Era formulates several factors that influence customer preferences in choosing an English course, namely: the method used in the course, the qualifications of the tutors, the program provided, and then the selection of course location, the selection of English courses based on value of money, attractive merchandise availability, and availability parking spaces around the English course. This means that to be a good English course and chosen by consumers, you have to prepare a lot of things. No one English course can be said to be better, if customer retention is less than usual especially in the era of the pandemic.

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