

## The IMC Model in Vocational Education Business at Polytechnic Caltex Riau to Strengthen Brand Positioning

Edi Tri Prayitno<sup>1</sup>, Ringgo Eldapi Yozani<sup>2</sup>, Rummyeni<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1,2,3</sup>Universitas Riau

e-mail: [ediprayitno@gmail.com](mailto:ediprayitno@gmail.com)<sup>1\*</sup>; [ringgo.eldapi@lecturer.unri.ac.id](mailto:ringgo.eldapi@lecturer.unri.ac.id)<sup>2</sup>; [rummyeni@lecturer.unri.ac.id](mailto:rummyeni@lecturer.unri.ac.id)<sup>3</sup>

\*Corresponding author

### ABSTRACT :

Brand positioning is an effort to position the perception of a brand for consumers. The strength of brand positioning has the power to drive consumers to provide more value than competitors, which can be supported by the Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) model. This research is based on efforts to improve and strengthen the brand positioning held by Polytechnic Caltex Riau. This is supported by the achievement of student admissions to Polytechnic Caltex Riau, which has shown a positive trend over the past five years amidst intense competition among vocational higher education institutions. This study explores how the IMC implemented by Polytechnic Caltex Riau can help strengthen brand positioning. The research method used in this study is qualitative, with data collection conducted directly and indirectly, and the sample selection technique is purposive sampling. The results of the research analysis found that the Integrated Marketing Communication of Polytechnic Caltex Riau is divided into two categories: the high category (Sales Promotion, Advertising, Sponsorship, Exhibitions, Merchandising, Social media, and Website) and the low category (Direct Marketing, Public Relations, Packaging, and Selling and Sales Management). The implementation process of marketing communication activities at Polytechnic Caltex Riau has seven layers of marketing tools, which the researcher refers to as the wafer layer marketing communication model. It is hoped that the IMC model used by Polytechnic Caltex Riau, which has seven stages in marketing communication activities including the Report, student admission announcement, Socialization, Follow Up, Engagement Program, Workshop, and Goes to School Program, can be used by other campuses to strengthen the brand positioning of vocational higher education institutions.

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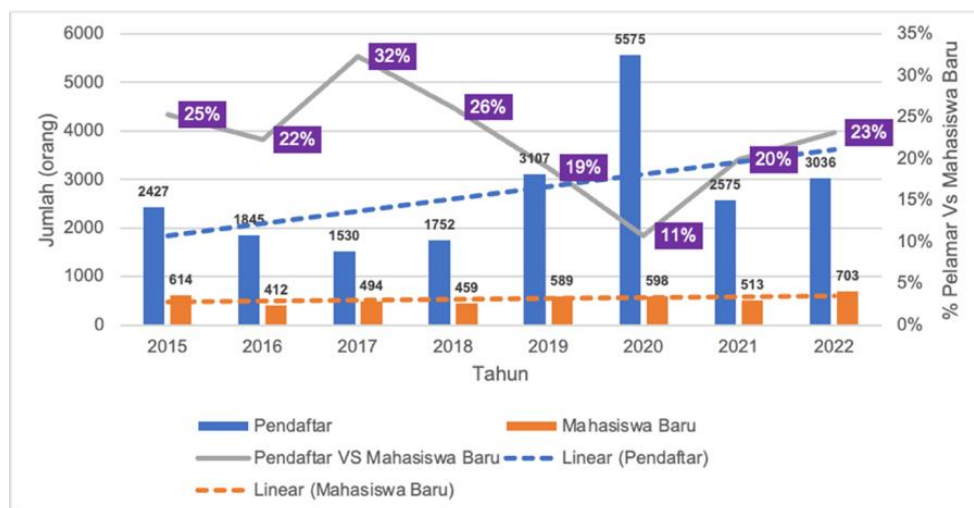
### KEYWORDS

brand positioning, IMC, new student enrollment, vocational

## INTRODUCTION

Competition to attract new students in higher education is fiercely competitive, not only between private Higher Education Institutions (PTS) and Public Higher Education Institutions (PTN), but also among PTS themselves. Therefore, PTS is required to compete and strive to attract the interest of prospective students. The role of marketing is crucial in the education business, and understanding the market based on demographics greatly influences marketing strategies (Ariwibowo, 2019). The significant national-scale challenges faced by PTS, along with their advantages, often lead to extensive marketing activities reaching into various regions, which presents its own obstacles for PTS in local areas.

Vocational education is a higher education program that focuses on preparing a skilled workforce in their respective fields. In terms of curriculum, vocational education tends to prioritize application over theory, with a minimum of 60% practical learning and 40% theory. One of the Vocational Higher Education institutions in Riau Province is the Caltex Riau Polytechnic. The positive achievement of Caltex Riau Polytechnic in new student admissions (Figure 1), which increases every year, serves as evidence of successful marketing efforts amidst high competition for the attention of prospective students, amidst the declining new student admissions experienced by other higher education institutions, such as the Association of Indonesian Private Universities (APTISI) in the Region X Higher Education Services Institute (LLDIKTI) covering Riau, Jambi, West Sumatra, and the Riau Islands, where a decline has occurred (Sastra, 2023).



Source: (Polytechnic Caltex Riau, 2023)

**Figure 1 New Student Admission Achievement of Politeknik Caltex Riau 2015-2022**

Polytechnic Caltex Riau has implemented IMC strategies in its new student admissions, including: (a) advertising through print media in newspapers, radio, outdoor media such as banners and billboards; (b) exhibitions held both within and outside of Pekanbaru city, usually in crowded areas; (c) offering discounts to attract and increase the re-registration rate of prospective new students, with discounts starting from 1 million rupiahs; (d) socialization roadshows by the new student admission team divided into several regions according to

prioritized areas, including Pekanbaru City, Duri and Dumai City, Rokan Hilir, West Sumatra, North Sumatra to the Riau Islands; (e) robotic workshop events for high school students, sports competitions, leadership training and workshops; (f) maximizing social media presence on various platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok to disseminate information about new student registration; (g) sponsorship, where Polytechnic Caltex Riau also provides assistance to schools that are considered the highest contributors to the achievement of their new student admissions.

The activities mentioned above are efforts to maximize the marketing mix, which consists of actions and tactics carried out to achieve the organization's goals as planned. Therefore, the marketing mix is a strategic tool that helps marketers better understand what a product can offer and how to plan successful product offerings (Marc Lim, 2023). In addition, various forms of the marketing mix also support the implementation of Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC). IMC involves planning and executing all types of messages, such as advertisements and promotions chosen for a brand, service, or company, to meet general communication goals, particularly to support a single "positioning." The key to IMC's success lies in the planning process and the ability to deliver messages consistently (Yulianto, 2021). Therefore, it is crucial to take a perspective to define the effectiveness of original marketing communication and related key ideas to create further exploration in marketing communication (Sahem, 2023). Brand positioning is the promise offered by a brand, product, or company to customers to build and gain trust from them. Another opinion, according to Hermawan Kertajaya (2006), suggests that positioning is an effort to influence the minds of consumers with our company's offerings.

Marketing research at private universities regarding IMC or the marketing mix with models or strategies to measure its impact has been conducted previously. The first study aim of understanding how IMC conducted by Public Relations (Humas) contributes to brand awareness and public image. The results of this research showed that the implementation of IMC, particularly through media, can enhance marketing communication activities and attract public attention (Sasciki, 2022). The second study utilized IMC as a strategy to describe the issues faced in achieving declining new student admissions in terms of applicants over the years at universities. The research findings indicate that IMC strategies can be a solution to declining applicants, and another finding from this research is that input from acquaintances (word of mouth) is considered the most effective in addressing the issues faced in this case (Ratnawuri et al., 2020). The third study utilized IMC as a marketing communication tool to address the decline in interest. The research results showed that IMC, involving collaboration with external parties such as media and activities, had an impact on the position of educational institutions experiencing issues (Ardiansyah et al., 2023).

To analyze the phenomenon occurring at Caltex Riau Polytechnic, this study utilizes the marketing communication mix concept from "The Marketing Communication Mix" by PR Smith and Zee Zook, which includes 11 marketing communication tools (Smith & Zook, 2011). In addition to using this concept, the study also incorporates additional analysis using the IMC concept by Dwi Sapta, which discusses three basic elements: the Discovery Circle, focusing on

analysis aimed at exploring the external environment (market, consumers, and competitors); the Intent Circle, addressing issues and benefits; and the Strategy Circle, which contains steps for developing brand strategy and tactics (Watono & Watono, 2011). The previous studies have not yet conducted an analysis regarding the implementation of the IMC model in strengthening brand positioning at private vocational colleges. Considering the dynamics of marketing in private vocational colleges present unique challenges compared to public institutions. Therefore, through the increasing achievement of Caltex Riau Polytechnic in new student admissions, which has shown an upward trend every year, it strengthens its positioning as a vocational campus in Pekanbaru.

## RESEARCH METHOD

This study involves field research, which is research conducted directly with respondents. Therefore, to obtain data, various methods are needed, including qualitative methods with a case study approach to analyze the issues. This involves combining data collection methods such as interviews, archival research, document analysis, and questionnaires. A case study is a research strategy focused on understanding the dynamics present within a single setting. Data collection techniques are conducted both directly and indirectly. Direct data collection is through interviews, while indirect data collection includes observation of documentation (meeting minutes, social media, print media, and other supporting documents). The interview model used is structured interviewing.

The research subjects consist of predetermined interviewees, categorized into two groups: 6 internal interviewees and 2 external interviewees. The criteria for selecting internal interviewees in this study are their proficiency in the issues and their responsibility for the IMC implementation process to enhance brand positioning at Caltex Riau Polytechnic, such as the marketing team, public relations department, service department, and new student admission team. Meanwhile, external interviewees are individuals who have applied and are planning to enroll at Caltex Riau Polytechnic (prospective new students). The list of interviewees is presented in Table 1.

**Table 1 Research Participant Data**

No	Nama	Keterangan
1	AIM	New Student Admission Team
2	FAN	Public Relations Department
3	GNR	Front Office
4	AFA	Administration Staff
5	MWY	Information Systems Department
6	MSZ	Chairperson Admission Staff
7	PMD	Parents of New Students
8	ARO	New Students

Source: (Researcher, 2023)

The interview data is considered the primary data in this study, while the observation and document study serve as additional data (secondary data) for analysis. Interviews are conducted face-to-face with the participants in a single room, where the purpose and objectives of the interviews are explained. The duration of the interviews ranges from 45 to 60 minutes per participant. Observations are conducted both directly and indirectly. Direct observation involves attending marketing activities such as education exhibitions, registration services, and campus socialization events. Indirect observation includes monitoring social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, the website of Caltex Riau Polytechnic, and documents from meetings held during the new student admission period from October 2022 to August 2023.

The data analysis process begins with data reduction, which involves selecting and summarizing interview results to draw conclusions. This is followed by data display, where information is systematically organized to derive conclusions from the research findings. Finally, conclusions are drawn based on the analyzed data (Miles et al., 2014). The author also ensures the validity of the data obtained in this study by checking it using the triangulation technique. This technique involves combining various data sources and comparing them to test, compare, and verify the data results (Sugiyono, 2020).

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## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In the initial discussion of this research, Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) was employed using 11 marketing communication tools, including sales promotion, direct marketing, advertising, public relations, sponsorship, exhibition, packaging, merchandise, selling and sales management, social media, and a website (Smith & Zook, 2011). The research results indicate that there are two types of IMC categories used by Polytechnic Caltex Riau to strengthen its brand positioning as a private vocational campus, namely high-level IMC and low-level IMC. Below is an explanation of these two categories:

### 1. High-level IMC

The high-level IMC of Caltex Riau Polytechnic Caltex Riau includes *Sales Promotion, Advertising, Sponsorship, Exhibitions, Merchandising-Packaging, Social Media* dan *Website*.

#### a. Sales Promotion

Sales promotion, is one part of marketing communication commonly used by companies to market products or services. According to Hermawan (2015) sales promotion is a form of direct persuasion through the use of various incentives that can be arranged to stimulate

immediate product purchases and/or increase the quantity of goods purchased by customers. Meanwhile, according to Abdurrahaman (2015) in Sitorus & Utami, (2017) sales promotion is a short-term incentive to encourage the purchase or sale of products or services. Discounts can influence consumers to decide on purchasing or using specific services. The strategy employed by Polytechnic Caltex Riau to influence its prospective new students includes waiving the registration administrative fee and providing discounts on admission fees. These discounts encourage prospective new students or visitors to try taking the entrance exam directly at exhibitions or events, with the hope that upon passing, they will receive voucher discounts.

*"The discounts from the voucher activities conducted by PCR every year contribute significantly to new student enrollment. In 2023, we received around 115, or almost 20%, of new students who used these discount vouchers." (Interview Results with Mutia Sari Zulvi, during the interview on November 16, 2023).*

b. Exhibition

Exhibition opening activities conducted by Caltex Riau Polytechnic are quite effective in increasing the dissemination of information (Figure 2). Exhibition activities also have a significant impact on an individual's knowledge and experience in viewing a product or service, thus exhibitions can change a person's perspective in making decisions (Lu & Lange, 2024). Sales promotion is also conducted during exhibition activities, and this collaboration aligns with the findings of research conducted by Biemans (2023) which explains that marketing collaborations can accelerate access to information. This combination is one form of customization in marketing communication, which is a competitive advantage (Du et al., 2023).



Source: (Polytechnic Caltex Riau, 2023)

**Figure 2 The Distribution of Fee Discounts at Exhibition Events**

c. Advertising

Advertising is one of the promotional tools, typically used to direct persuasive communication to target buyers and the public, where the presentation form of this advertisement is non-personal (Djasmin, 2011). According to Kotler & Amstrong, (2008)

advertising is any form of non-personal presentation and promotion of ideas, goods, or services by a particular sponsor that must be paid for. Additionally, according to Tjiptono, (2008) advertising is one of the most widely used forms of promotion by companies in promoting their products. The media used by Caltex Riau Polytechnic in advertising are as follows: (a) print media, using newspapers and magazines; (b) electronic media, radio, and television; (c) outdoor media, banners, and billboards. One example of outdoor advertising, such as (Figure 3), by Caltex Riau Polytechnic, is packaged with a different concept, featuring a simple visual appearance, and posing questions to the public.

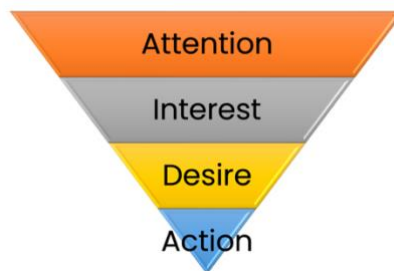
*“There are two types of advertising. The first one focuses on digital media, including Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, and YouTube. The next type of advertising involves electronic media such as radio and television. Additionally, PCR also utilizes conventional media like banners and billboards for specific occasions, each with a different concept to attract attention”. (Interview Results with Fajar Arief Kurniawan, November 6, 2023).*



(Source: Admission Team, 2023)

**Figure 3 Interactive Billboards of Polytechnic Caltex Riau**

If we look at the advertising concept through the AIDA model (attention, interest, desire, action), Caltex Riau Polytechnic applies it to capture the attention of the public audience. A good advertising message will capture attention (attention), cultivate interest (interest), stimulate desire (desire), and ultimately lead to action (action). Figure 4 illustrates that the AIDA model concept at least directs towards creating quality messages to consumers, making them aware, and determining actions (Kotler & Amstrong, 2008).



Source: (Kotler & Amstrong, 2008)

**Figure 4 AIDA Model**

The message crafted by Caltex Riau Polytechnic through the billboard grabs attention at the initial level because it is significantly different from typical product (service) billboards, thereby prompting action from the public by eliciting responses via social media. This message successfully transforms outdoor media communication, initially one-way, into a two-way interaction due to audience actions. Effective message management in advertising through media by institutions can also provide insights and influence the audience's decision-making process regarding products and services (Salonen et al., 2024).

d. Merchandising – Packaging

Merchandising and packaging at Caltex Riau Polytechnic are divided into two categories: institutional souvenirs and marketing activity souvenirs. Institutional merchandise is given to guests visiting Caltex Riau Polytechnic, while marketing merchandise is distributed to the public with the aim of introducing the campus (Figure 5).

*"In terms of souvenirs, we also provide souvenirs to high school students, guests, or parents, so they can learn about PCR campus from the items we distribute. Our souvenirs usually include t-shirts, goodie bags, pens, keychains, fans, calendars, name-tag lanyards, agenda books, stickers, and many more. It usually depends on what is trending at the time, while institutional souvenirs are usually more exclusive." (Interview Results with Andi Irwanto, November 6, 2023).*



Source: (Polytechnic Caltex Riau,, 2023)

**Figure 5 Souvenir of Politeknik Caltex Riau**

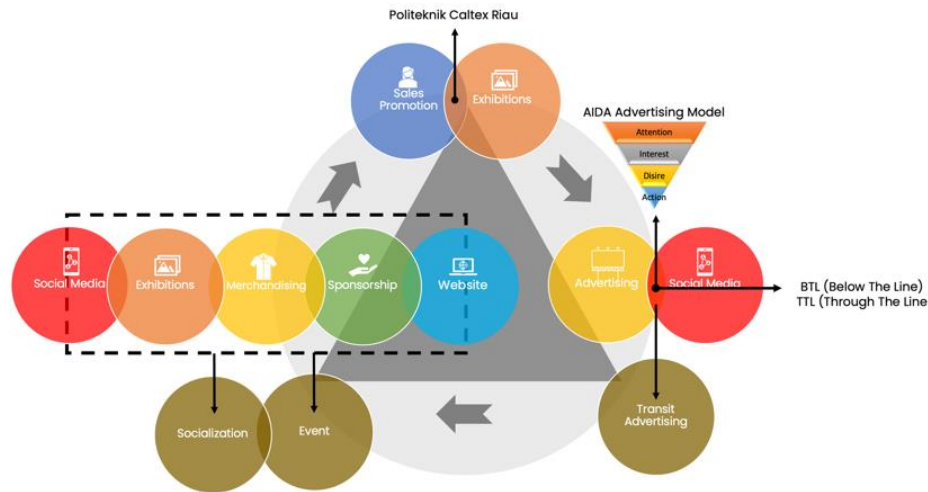
e. Social Media

The next component of Caltex Riau Polytechnic's IMC is social media. The social media platforms used by Caltex Riau Polytechnic include Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube. However, among these social media platforms, Instagram is the most dominant in terms of usage. As stated by the interviewee:

*"Currently, Instagram is the most accessed by both students and prospective students. However, we are starting to focus on TikTok in the middle of this year." (Interview Results with Fajar Arief Kurniawan, November 6, 2023).*



High-category marketing communication tools are maximized through the integration of other tools for greater effectiveness by Polytechnic Caltex Riau. Based on analysis, the following model is implemented by Polytechnic Caltex Riau.



(Source: Research Findings, 2023)

**Figure 6 High-Category Marketing Communication Tools of Polytechnic Caltex Riau**

In Figure 6 show that all marketing communication tools are interconnected, so from this relationship, new marketing communication tools such as socialization, events, and derivatives of advertising such as transit advertising can be generated. Maximizing advertising in transit spaces conducted by Caltex Riau Polytechnic is considered quite effective in maximizing public spaces at certain moments, in line with research conducted by Hanifah & Yanuar, (2020) which explains that transit advertising can influence consumers in strengthening product brand positioning. The utilization of the internet as a digital marketing activity and social media is also carried out by Caltex Riau Polytechnic, as both have an influence and increase users with the current dominance of society that cannot be separated from digital media (Fardan & Yozani, 2023).

## 2. Low-level IMC

The low-category IMC (Integrated Marketing Communication) of Caltex Riau Polytechnic includes Direct Marketing, Public Relations, and Selling and Sales Management. Within the low-category IMC, there is a division where Direct Marketing intersects with Public Relations and Selling and Sales Management.

### a. Direct Marketing – Public Relation

During a session to open the new student admission channel, Caltex Riau Polytechnic's team employed direct marketing three times. Initially, direct marketing is utilized to express gratitude for participating in the selection process. Following this, it serves as a reminder of the selection status, and finally, it concludes with a follow-up process. Direct marketing involves

direct interaction with individual consumers, carefully targeted to elicit immediate responses and establish long-term customer relationships. This method utilizes direct mail, telephone, direct response television, email, the internet, and other means to communicate directly with specific consumers (Kotler & Armstrong, 2008).

*"We utilize SMS blasts and other similar methods to reach out to prospective new students, aiming to streamline the process. With a single blast, hundreds to thousands of numbers can be reached. Additionally, by using a third-party service, the name "Poltek Caltex" can appear in the SMS, demonstrating that the information is genuine and not fraudulent. (Interview Result with Gita Nataria, November 16, 2023).*

Direct marketing, or direct marketing, at Caltex Riau Polytechnic emphasizes the telemarketing process, which utilizes telecommunication networks either through direct calls or broadcasts to all consumers and potential consumers. The strength of direct marketing lies in persuading effectively without intimidating potential customers, allowing them to decide to continue their studies.

Caltex Riau Polytechnic also utilizes public relations to enhance the vocational campus's image. The strategy employed involves disseminating releases to the media whenever there are events. The increase in brand image due to the abundance of published news positions Caltex Riau Polytechnic as a campus with a high level of publicized activities. Public relations has proven effective in enhancing the institution's brand image (Nursakti & Zulfiningrum, 2023).

*"One of the roles of public relations is to help PCR be known as one of the institutions by preparing press releases when there are achievements or academic achievements of PCR, media, and digital service processes. The next step, after there is a release, is usually sent to the media that cooperate with us. Sometimes PCR also calls the media when there are events, such as seminars, graduations, and others." (Interview Result with Fajar Arief Kurniawan, November 6, 2023).*

#### b. Selling & Sales Management

Capacity-building activities are conducted to align the team's perceptions. As a private polytechnic that still relies on the achievement of new student admissions, these activities are important considering that Polytechnic Caltex Riau usually changes its team members every year. Sales activities in this context are efforts made by the new student admissions team, considering that Polytechnic Caltex Riau is in the education sector (service). It is considered successful when prospective new students decide to enroll and join Polytechnic Caltex Riau as new students. However, the process of convincing these prospective students to join and enroll involves several marketing management processes by the team. The team conducts socialization processes, promotions, and discussions to persuade both prospective students and parents to join Polytechnic Caltex Riau.

This research also utilizes the IMC Dwi Sapta Model to analyze Polytechnic Caltex Riau's efforts to strengthen brand positioning. There are three discussions in this IMC model: the Discovery Circle, the Intent Circle, and the Strategy Circle.

a. Discovery Circle

The Discovery Circle is a section that discusses the conditions in the environment of Polytechnic Caltex Riau, which include internal and external factors such as direct and indirect competitors. A market review of Polytechnic Caltex Riau as a vocational campus perceived to be expensive is conducted, and the name "Caltex" adds exclusivity in terms of branding. As expressed by the parents of prospective new students in the following interview.

*"From the beginning, PCR has been known as a campus with expensive fees. Initially, before I personally visited the campus to inquire, the tuition fee information was in the tens of millions. Sometimes, that discouraged me from studying here. I was also unsure about the availability of scholarships. But after finding out that the tuition fee is around \$6 million and there are no other significant differences compared to other places, I reconsidered." (Interview Result with Putri Madhona, November 12, 2023).*

Brand review is also part of the Discovery discussion, which involves evaluating a brand. One of the actions taken by Polytechnic Caltex Riau is the evaluation and monitoring of achievements and programs that have been implemented. Evaluation is carried out by teams involved in the process of admitting new students on a regular basis.

*"Usually, as a team, we don't delve too deeply into it; it's more about learning on our own how to evaluate for the future. Especially in the front office handling admissions, we have to learn from past experiences, learning to handle complaints if there are any objections." (Result of Interview with Gita Nataria, November 13, 2023)*

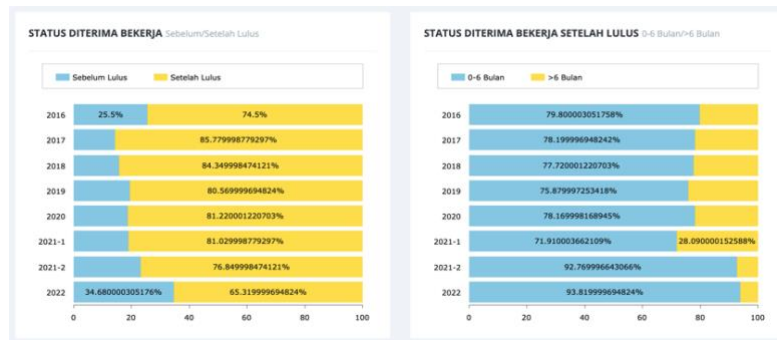
b. Intent Circle

In this section, there are two discussions: the advantages and disadvantages of a brand or product. One advantage of Polytechnic Caltex Riau is its alumni's employment rate before graduation. Politeknik Caltex Riau has a relatively high employment rate for its graduates, with an average of about 34–38% of alumni securing jobs before graduation ceremonies (Figure 7). This is certainly a significant advantage and is used as a selling point for prospective new students.

*"The advantage of Polytechnic Caltex Riau is its relatively good employment rate. On average, the employment rate of graduates who secure jobs before graduation, based on tracer studies, is around 34%. This serves as a strong branding point for PCR as a vocational campus." (Result of Interview with Ardianto, February 6, 2024).*

The employment of graduates from Polytechnic Caltex Riau clearly positions it as a vocational campus aligned with its goal of producing job-ready graduates. This advantage also

adds positive branding value to Polytechnic Caltex Riau in attracting new students with its fast-track employment opportunities.



Source: (kbp.pcr.ac.id, 2023)

Figure 7 The percentage graduates of Polytechnic Caltex Riau

In addition to advantages, there are also weaknesses experienced by the Politeknik Caltex Riau team. One of the biggest ones is the limitation of human resources, with numerous marketing activities taking place simultaneously. This constraint arises because all those involved in the team are teaching staff and educational personnel with their own primary jobs, resulting in the prioritization of marketing activities being divided.

*"The biggest obstacle is time, which needs to be flexible. Apart from the PMB team, we are also teaching staff at PCR, so our mobility must be high. This requires excellent teamwork to ensure that this committee is not just for a month or two, but for a year. Of course, teamwork is prioritized. Additionally, the second challenge is still convincing the students because it's a private campus; usually, students prefer public universities first." (Result of Interview with Ardianto, February 6, 2024).*

### c. Strategy Circle

It involves the steps the brand will take to achieve its goals, including identifying the target audience. The target audience for Polytechnic Caltex Riau is divided into several regions, one of which is dominated by the city where Polytechnic Caltex Riau is located, which is Pekanbaru.

*"The new students of Polytechnic Caltex Riau come from various schools in the province of Riau, and Pekanbaru still dominates the number of schools and new students. Additionally, areas such as Duri (Bengkalis), Dumai, Kab. Rokan Hilir, and Siak are strategic areas for Polytechnic Caltex Riau." (Result of Interview with Mutia Sari Zulfi, November 16, 2023).*

The new student admission program begins with sending reports of students to schools. In 2023, a total of 334 schools out of 776 students entered Polytechnic Caltex Riau (Figure 8). The delivery of this information is also in line with and is part of Polytechnic Caltex Riau's function as an educational institution oriented towards public service, a function of

humanitarian management, one of which is to convey information and evaluate programs (Qanita, 2023). The next process is the delivery of information materials for the opening of new student admissions through the invitation route called the Regional Excellent Student Selection (PSUD) to all schools whose data has been received by Polytechnic Caltex Riau, along with an authorization letter to conduct the socialization process.



Source: (Admission Team, 2023)

**Figure 8 Distribution of New Students Polytechnic Caltex Riau**

Socialization activities are conducted in schools located in areas considered to be the main bases of strength and contributors to most incoming students. Another process involves following up with schools that have received information and undergone socialization sessions. Engagement with schools is also carried out through other means; Polytechnic Caltex Riau has an engagement school program that involves organizing and assisting schools with activities such as student and teacher training.

The first stage occurs after the closure of new student admissions, starting from August to February, which is the preparation stage. The second stage occurs after the national exam results are announced, from March to June, and the third stage is from June to August, as explained in (Figure 8) below.



Source: Research Findings, 2023

**Figure 9 The Stages Activities of Polytechnic Caltex Riau**

The author attempts to analyze using the managerial function approach proposed by G.R. Terry (1958) in Sukarna (2011),, which identifies four functions in achieving goals: planning, organizing, acting, and controlling. All stages of the process were analyzed by the researcher

to categorize them based on the functions of organizational management. The first stage represents planning by Polytechnic Caltex Riau, involving team formation, program planning, and budgeting. The subsequent categories fall under organizing, encompassing the first, second, and third stages, as coordination among all programs planned from the first stage is necessary for success. Actuating and controlling also apply to all three phases at Polytechnic Caltex Riau, resulting in the following schematic analysis.

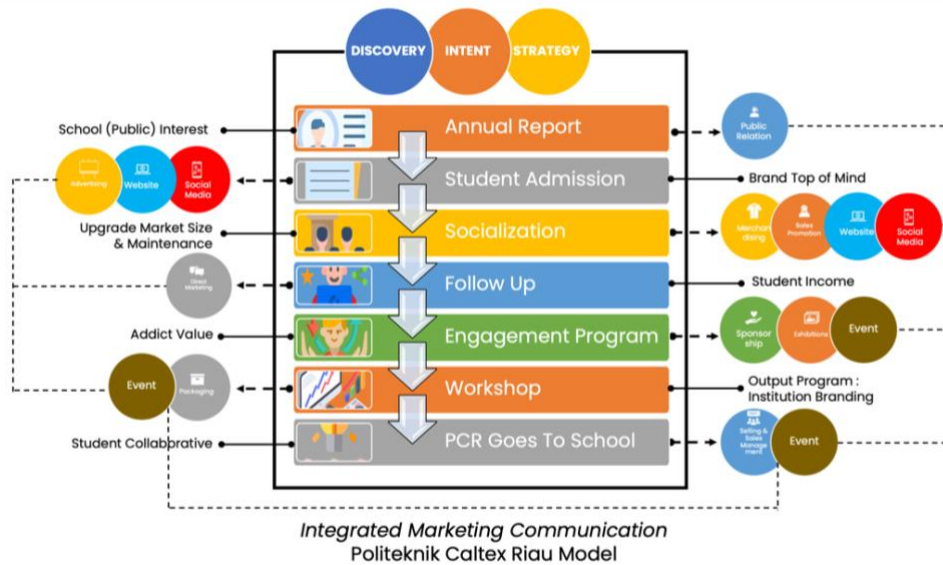
The initial program of socialization involves marketing teams visiting schools spread across various regions to inform them about Polytechnic Caltex Riau, one of which is the new student admission route through the Regional Superior Student Selection (PSUD). Apart from socialization, the prominent agenda discussed by the team is related to exhibitions. Exhibition activities are not only conducted within the city but also extend outside the city and province. Scholarships and Open Houses also receive attention from the team based on the agenda's outcomes, with scholarships garnering significant attention as Polytechnic Caltex Riau manages scholarships, which are among the attractions for prospective students.

Marketing activities also illustrate how Polytechnic Caltex Riau strengthens its position as a vocational campus in Pekanbaru. Finally, there are activities packaged with workshops and student visits to schools, known as "PCR Goes to School." Student visits to influence prospective students in schools are conducted, and Polytechnic Caltex Riau also engages in training activities in foster villages as a form of community influence. Influencer activities are considered more credible in delivering messages, making them more trusted and well-received (van der Bend et al., 2023). Collaboration between influencers and marketing communication activities is seen as an effective marketing alternative (Syed et al., 2023).

The series of activities carried out by Polytechnic Caltex Riau is conducted every year with additions to maximize and adapt to the conditions. This marketing communication model or concept is considered effective based on the results obtained by the New Student Admission Team.

*"For example, there's an activity called 'PCR Goes to School' carried out every year where students are sent back to their original schools or regions to convey information about Polytechnic Caltex Riau, including current programs, scholarships, and other aspects. Usually, students from their own schools are better accepted and closer to their juniors." (Andi Irwanto, in an interview on November 6, 2023).*

The implementation of IMC at Polytechnic Caltex Riau involves a model that is executed annually by combining more than one marketing communication tool to be more effective and efficient in attracting new students. Every year, adjustments are made based on evaluations by the team and responses to the dynamic market conditions, including additions or modifications to marketing activities. The development of marketing communication aligns with the importance of understanding consumer behavior, and the relationship between IMC and media can result in new outputs in marketing communication (Rehman et al., 2022).



Source: (Research Findings, 2023)

**Figure 10** Marekting Communication Model of Polytechnic Caltex Riau

The marketing communication model of Politeknik Caltex Riau consists of interconnected layers. These layers of marketing communication activities are composed of several levels, so the marketing communication model implemented by Politeknik Caltex Riau, based on the author's analysis, can be interpreted as the Wafer Layer Marketing Communication Model. In (Figure 10), this wafer layer marketing communication model illustrates the levels, with at least seven tiers in each activity complementing each other as organized by Politeknik Caltex Riau to attract prospective new students.

## CONCLUSION

The implementation of Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) at Polytechnic Caltex Riau to strengthen its brand positioning as a vocational campus in Pekanbaru indicates that there are two categories of IMC, namely high and low, in its application. The high category includes the implementation of IMC sales promotion, advertising, sponsorship, exhibitions, merchandise packaging, social media, and a website. For the low IMC category, it consists of direct marketing, public relations, and selling and sales management. Polytechnic Caltex Riau combines various marketing communication tools (mix tools) for more effective and efficient recruitment of prospective students and to strengthen its brand positioning as a vocational campus.

Other findings indicate that Polytechnic Caltex Riau has its own model of activities and marketing strategies. There are seven stages in the marketing communication activities, including the annual report, student admission announcement, socialization, follow-up, engagement program, workshop, and go-to-school program. These stages are implemented in collaboration with all stakeholders, reducing efforts and increasing effectiveness in achieving new student admissions.

Based on the analysis and findings of this research, the author can recommend several

aspects related to marketing communication associated with IMC as a reference for the development of communication science, particularly in the field of marketing communication, which is rapidly evolving with digital technology. Thus, in the future, it can be continued with different perspectives to obtain more comprehensive results in communication science. It is also possible that the discovery of new models can be implemented in various sectors with the aim of maximizing better outcomes.

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