

Research Articles

Marketing Management of Islamic Boarding Schools in Enhancing Public Trust at Darul Hikmah Islamic Boarding School, Tulungagung

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Abstract: The management of educational institutions has a strategic role in determining the direction of growth and sustainability of the institution. The success of this management is highly dependent on the administrator's ability to analyze the external environment, understand the position of competitors, optimize internal potential, and formulate superior strategies that are able to maintain competitiveness without ignoring the fundamental values of education. In this context, the application of marketing management becomes an important need. This study aims to analyze marketing management in increasing public trust in the Darul Hikmah Islamic Boarding School in Tulungagung. This study uses a qualitative phenomenological approach with data collection techniques through interviews, observations, and documentation. Data analysis is carried out through data condensation, data presentation, and drawing conclusion/verification. The results of the study indicate that the marketing strategy of the Darul Hikmah Islamic Boarding School in Tulungagung in building public trust is implemented through four main elements: (1) Product – offering quality educational services with character strengthening, implementing the curriculum of the Ministry of National Education, Ministry of Religious Affairs, local content, and superior extracurricular programs; (2) Price – affordable registration and administration fees and adjusted to the economic conditions of the community; (3) Place – the location of the Islamic boarding school is strategic, easy to reach, and has a conducive learning environment; and (4) Promotion – conducted through visits to elementary schools, installation of promotional media (billboards, banners, brochures), publication of extracurricular achievements, and utilization of social media such as Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and the Islamic boarding school's official website.

Keywords: Marketing management; Product; Price; Place; Promotion.

Received: September 17, 2025

Revised: October 15, 2025

Accepted: November 10, 2025

Online Available: November 17, 2025

Curr. Ver.: November 17, 2025



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1. INTRODUCTION

In today's era of global competition, territorial boundaries between countries are increasingly blurred, creating a world order without sovereign boundaries. This situation has given rise to increasingly fierce competition in various aspects of life, including education. Managing educational institutions can no longer be done conventionally, but rather requires more professional and adaptive managerial skills so that educational outcomes can meet market demands, both at the national and international levels. (Haryanti et al., 2018) Educational management plays a crucial role because the progress and development of an institution depend heavily on the administrator's ability to analyze the external environment, identify competitors, and consider internal potential and competencies. Furthermore, effective strategy formulation is necessary to enable institutions to compete healthily without neglecting the core values and goals of education, supported by the implementation of appropriate marketing strategies.

Marketing for educational institutions (madrasas) is absolutely necessary (Junaris & Haryanti, 2022). *First*, as a non-profit institution engaged in educational services at various levels, it is important for managers to assure the public and "customers" such as students, parents, and other related parties that the educational institution they manage still has existence and credibility. *Second*, the institution must be able to demonstrate that the educational services provided are truly relevant to the needs and expectations of the community. *Third*, effective marketing efforts are needed so that the types and forms of

educational services offered can be widely known and understood by the public. *Fourth*, this strategy aims to maintain the sustainability and attractiveness of the institution so that it is not abandoned by the community or potential prospective students (P. Kotler, 2017).

The phenomenon at the Darul Hikmah Islamic Boarding School in Tulungagung demonstrates that amidst modern technological developments, public concern about children's behavior without a foundation in religious education is growing. This has prompted parents to choose Islamic boarding schools as educational institutions that emphasize not only academic knowledge but also moral development. Therefore, Islamic schools are required to become educational institutions that meet community expectations through the support of educators, parents, and the surrounding community. In this context, marketing management plays a crucial role in building the image and trust of Islamic schools. Through the continuous process of formulating, implementing, and evaluating marketing strategies, institutions can grow and compete. The societal paradigm towards education has shifted, from merely a social aspect to the view that educational institutions are entities that need to be managed professionally like organizations or corporations.

Marketing educational services requires a sound strategy to increase users at an educational institution. The elements of a marketing strategy consist of 7 Ps, namely the 4 traditional Ps: *Product*, *Price*, *Place*, *Promotion*, and the 3 Ps in service marketing: *People*, *Physical evidence*, and *process* (Jahari & Syarbini, 2013). This strategy is adapted from the business world, where marketing focuses on customer satisfaction, based on the underlying principle that failure to meet customer satisfaction is a marketing failure. If an institution wants to build a positive image and attract public interest, it needs to develop an effective marketing strategy to attract prospective students and parents to use the educational services offered. As a form of responsibility for these marketing activities, madrasas must strive to maximize the management and quality of their educational institutions to instill trust and added value in the eyes of the public.

Service is the process of providing services (*service delivery*) from the service provider to the customer. Service quality cannot be assessed from the producer's perspective but must be assessed from the customer's perspective, namely customer satisfaction (Yusniar Permanasari & Haryanti, 2023). Customer satisfaction is a reflection of quality service. According to Kotler (2012), Customer satisfaction is considered achieved if the service provided meets their expectations, while the service will be deemed poor if it fails to meet those expectations. This means that students, as customers at the madrasah, assess service quality based on a comparison between their perceptions of the service received and their expectations of the service that should be provided.

The quality of educational services is influenced by several main factors, namely: (1) Respect for students, which reflects the attitude and performance of educators in providing services; (2) Teacher knowledge, namely the ability and understanding of teachers in conveying material to students; and (3) The physical environment of educational institutions, which includes the availability and comfort of facilities in classrooms and the madrasa environment. (Saepudin et al., 2016). Islamic boarding school facilities play a crucial role in supporting the effectiveness of the learning process, including classrooms, libraries, laboratories, places of worship, and learning media. The quality of educational services is influenced by the availability of these facilities and teacher performance. However, a gap remains between theory and practice, with students often dissatisfied due to unattractive facilities and learning methods, and teacher performance that falls short of expectations.

Thus, it is necessary to re-evaluate the provision of facilities for students. The quality of academic services in Islamic boarding schools is essentially an effort to provide services in the form of fulfilling the academic needs of students that are able to meet or even exceed their expectations, thus creating an effective and quality learning process. This is in line with the opinion of Min & Khoon (2013) who explained that "*service quality is higher than the expected level, a customer is satisfied with the service received*." (service quality is higher than the expected level, the customer is satisfied with the service received).

Therefore, administrators need to be able to understand the concept of educational marketing as a crucial prerequisite for maintaining and developing the institution. Each educational unit must continuously revitalize its strategy to adapt to environmental dynamics and competitive levels, in line with its internal potential (Qomar,

2007) . The inability of educational institutions to respond to external opportunities and threats can reduce competitiveness and hinder performance. If this condition is not addressed promptly, the sustainability of the educational institution could be threatened (Alma, 2008)

The focus of education management today needs to shift from simply providing educational services to building relationships with "education customers." In this context, students and parents are positioned as customers who exhibit high levels of loyalty to the institution, making it difficult for them to switch to other institutions. This loyalty is reflected in behaviors such as continuing to use the educational services offered, trying various programs or other services from the institution, recommending the institution to others, and remaining loyal despite attractive offers from competitors. (Arianto & Febrian, 2022) . This type of customer is the main target of every educational institution, and this can be achieved through the implementation of effective educational marketing management strategies.

This strategy is adapted from the business world, but tailored to the philosophical values of education as a non-profit institution. Essentially, educational institutions function to provide services to consumers. both students and the wider community who act as stakeholders. The parties served certainly expect satisfaction through various aspects, such as the availability of adequate facilities, professional teaching staff, the use of technology, and a comfortable learning environment. All of these aspects lead to the main goal of educational marketing, namely providing services and delivering educational services to consumers in a way that can achieve maximum satisfaction. (Sutisna, 2012) .

This study aims to determine marketing management in increasing public trust in the Darul Hikmah Islamic Boarding School in Tulungagung. The novelty of this study lies in the integrative approach that combines the concept of modern *service marketing with the principles of Islamic values in educational management*, thus providing a new perspective on how Islamic educational institutions can build customer loyalty (students and guardians of students) through marketing strategies based on spirituality and service quality. In addition, this study also offers an empirical contribution by examining the relationship between educational marketing strategies and community trust in the context of modern Islamic boarding schools that are adapting to social and technological changes.

2. RESEARCH METHODS

This research is categorized as field research *because* data collection was conducted directly at the location where the event being studied occurred. The goal is to obtain factual and up-to-date information related to the problem being studied, while also verifying or comparing it with previously available data and materials. (Fitri & Haryanti, 2020) . Judging from the characteristics of the data, this research is a qualitative research, namely research that aims to deeply understand various phenomena experienced by research subjects, such as behavior, perception, motivation, and actions. This approach is carried out holistically through descriptions in the form of words and language, in a natural context, and utilizing various natural methods to gain a comprehensive understanding (Moleong, 2013) .

Case studies also attempt to describe a particular setting, object or event in depth (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998) . This opinion is supported by (Yin, 2002) Case study was chosen as a research strategy because it is able to answer the questions *how* and *why* , *especially when the research focuses on contemporary phenomena in a real-life context*. In this study, a case study approach is used to examine the implementation of the madrasah principal's strategy in developing talents and interests, as well as to obtain in-depth data regarding marketing management in increasing public trust in the Darul Hikmah Islamic Boarding School in Tulungagung . Through this case study design, researchers are expected to be able to explore real experiences and information relevant to the research focus .

The data collection procedure in this study includes three main techniques, namely **participant observation** , **in-depth interviews** , and **documentation** . Through participant observation, researchers were directly involved in activities at the Darul Hikmah Islamic Boarding School in Tulungagung to observe natural phenomena and record data systematically. **In-depth interview techniques** were used to dig for broader and deeper information regarding marketing management strategies in increasing public trust, by involving informants such as the madrasah principal and other related parties. Meanwhile, **documentation** was carried out by collecting various supporting documents

such as photographs, madrasah archives, interview transcripts, as well as historical data and the institution's development, to complement and strengthen the research results.

According to Haryanti (2019) Data analysis is the process of systematically compiling and processing data from interviews, field notes, and various other sources obtained by the researcher. This stage involves reviewing, grouping, and organizing data into organized units, which are then synthesized, identified for patterns, and interpreted. The goal is to ensure that the collected data can be easily understood and presented systematically according to the research focus. Because this research uses a case study approach, the data analysis process is carried out through three main stages, namely: (1) data condensation, (2) data presentation, and (3) drawing and verifying conclusions . (Miles et al., 2014)

3. RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The implementation of madrasa marketing includes various routine activities carried out continuously over time to effectively realize the marketing plan. Kotler & Keller (2018) Marketing is a social process in which individuals and groups obtain what they need and want through creating, offering, and exchanging products of value with others. In other words, marketing is the process of exchanging value or ownership rights over goods, services, or money to meet human needs. In the context of educational institutions, service marketing can be implemented through various strategies aimed at increasing public trust in Islamic boarding schools .

Product

Islamic boarding school products are all forms of services or programs offered by the madrasah to its customers with the aim of meeting their needs and expectations. Interviews with the madrasah principal revealed that the madrasah's marketing success depends heavily on its ability to produce high-quality, highly competitive graduates. The community will value the madrasah more if it can produce superior graduates with noble character through a well-managed educational process.

Meanwhile, the results of the interview with the Deputy Public relations demonstrated that in addition to improving the quality of academic products , Islamic boarding schools also strengthen their products through character education, which emphasizes the cultivation of morals and values. This program is designed to ensure that students not only excel academically but also develop good personalities and contribute to society. Thus, the madrasah's products encompass various aspects, such as character-building programs, an integrated curriculum between the Ministry of National Education and the Ministry of Religious Affairs, as well as local content and extracurricular activities that support the development of students with character and competence.

The results of this study are in line with those of Arifin et al., (2020). states that a *product* is anything that can be offered to the market to attract attention, be acquired, used, or consumed to satisfy consumer needs and desires. Products are a key component in the marketing mix because they play a central role in attracting market interest. In general, a product can be understood as any form of offering that can provide value and satisfaction to consumers by fulfilling their needs and desires . According to Kotler (2012) Products are all forms of offerings provided in the market with the aim of fulfilling and satisfying consumer needs and desires .

The results of this study are in line Wiwitan & Yulianita (2017) A product is anything a producer offers to the market to meet consumer needs or desires, whether in the form of goods, services, actions, individuals, places, organizations, or ideas. A product will have more value if it has advantages over similar products, because the product is essentially a consumer's perception of the results produced by the producer and is the main basis for making purchasing decisions. Meanwhile, Hanaysha (2017) defines A product is understood as a comprehensive concept encompassing both objects and processes that provide specific value to consumers. In more detail, Keegan explains that a product is a collection of various attributes, services, and symbolic meanings that can provide satisfaction and benefits to users or buyers.

In the context of educational services, Islamic boarding schools' products include services that encompass the institution's reputation, future prospects, and the variety of programs offered. Competitive Islamic boarding schools are those that provide high-quality education and opportunities for students to develop according to their interests

and needs. Thus, educational products can be defined as all forms of services offered to the community to meet their needs and expectations.

Price

The registration administration fee is low, depending on the socio-economic conditions of the community. The Islamic boarding school fees are set . monthly and yearly. The results of this study align with Fandy Tjiptono's (2015) statement that to achieve success in marketing goods or services, companies need to set prices appropriately. Pricing is entirely an internal company policy, but various supporting factors must still be considered. Perceptions of price—whether it is considered expensive, cheap, or reasonable—are relative to each individual, influenced by their background, environment, and personal circumstances.

The results of this study strengthen the opinion Yoo (2000) Consumers often view price as an important external indicator for assessing a product's quality or benefits. High-priced products are generally associated with better quality and tend to be more resistant to price competition than low-priced products. Price plays a crucial role because it directly impacts a company's profits and sustainability, as well as determining the direction of its marketing strategy. Furthermore, price elasticity also influences demand levels and sales volume. There are three main indicators in pricing: (1) affordability, (2) price commensurate with product quality, and (3) price commensurate with consumer benefits. (Junaris & Haryanti, 2022) .

Pricing for Islamic boarding schools requires careful consideration, including service quality, target audience, and market conditions. A well-designed pricing strategy can provide a competitive advantage for Islamic boarding schools in marketing their educational services. Currently, the perception of high or low educational costs is relative, depending on the quality provided. Low fees are not always attractive if not accompanied by good service quality, while high fees are only acceptable if commensurate with proven quality. Typical fees charged at Islamic boarding schools include tuition fees, construction costs, extracurricular activities, and other operational costs. The more programs and activities that support the institution's performance, the greater the funding requirements.

Place (location)

The Islamic boarding school's location is strategic and easily accessible, with smooth transportation routes and minimal traffic congestion. The surrounding environment is also peaceful, ensuring a conducive and comfortable learning environment. Distribution channels (marketing, trade, or distribution channels) refer to the intermediary channels or networks, whether managed directly by marketers or independent parties, that serve to distribute products or services from producers to consumers. (Amron, 2018) . The number of intermediaries involved in a distribution channel varies greatly. According to Putranto et al., (2021) Distribution channels have several levels based on the number of intermediaries involved, namely: 1) Zero-level channel, where marketers directly sell their products without intermediaries (also known as direct marketing channels). 2) One-level channel, where marketers utilize one type of intermediary. 3) Two-level channel, where there are two types of intermediaries used, and so on for higher levels.

Promotion

Promotion is carried out through visits to elementary schools/Islamic elementary schools, installation of billboards and banners, distribution of Islamic boarding school brochures, extracurricular activities that result in achievements or appearances at various events, as well as through social media such as Facebook, websites, Instagram, and YouTube. Promotion is any form of communication that aims to inform, persuade, or remind the public about products offered by organizations, individuals, or households. (Hasan, 2017) .

Promotion is a key element in the success of a marketing strategy. Even if a product is high quality, if consumers are unaware of or doubt its benefits, it will not be purchased. The purpose of promotion is to inform, influence, convince, and remind target consumers about the company and its marketing mix. (Haryanti & Baqi, 2019) .

Promotional activities can be conducted through various electronic and print media, such as TV, radio, the internet (Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, Instagram), newspapers, magazines, billboards, brochures, and the like. These promotions are usually focused on specific moments, such as events, achievements, or routine activities carried out by Islamic boarding schools, such as mutual cooperation, ceremonies, or exercise.

(Untari & Fajariana, 2018) . Another approach that Islamic boarding schools can take is to involve alumni in continuously promoting their alma mater to the community, as testimonials from those who have been involved are considered more convincing. Furthermore, promotion can be done directly through community activities, such as holding community service events or outreach to schools in the area surrounding the Islamic boarding school.

activities should be based on the intention of worshiping Allah SWT and implementing the Shari'ah, with the aim of providing benefits and welfare to the wider community, not for personal interests or certain groups. The Prophet sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam emphasized trading ethics in accordance with Islamic principles, where Muslims are prohibited from committing false acts and are required to carry out economic activities honestly and with mutual pleasure, as regulated in the word of Allah Ta'ala.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَأْكُلُوا أَمْوَالَكُمُ God willing تَرَا ضٍ مِنْكُمْ وَلَا تَقْتُلُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ بِكُمْ رَحِيمًا (29)

Meaning: "O you who believe, do not consume your wealth among yourselves in a false way, except by trading with which you are mutually pleased. And do not kill yourselves, indeed Allah is Most Merciful to you . " (Q. S. An-Nisa verse 29).

This verse explains the general laws regarding transactions, particularly in trade and buying and selling. Previously, we discussed muamalah transactions related to property, such as the property of orphans or dowries. In this verse, Allah forbids believers from exploiting or taking another person's property in a wrongful manner, that is, in a way that is not in accordance with Islamic law. Transactions are permitted as long as they are conducted with the principle of mutual consent and sincerity. Furthermore, Allah also forbids suicide, whether against oneself or others. All of these provisions are given as a form of Allah's mercy, for He is Most Merciful to His servants.

According to the Koran, according to the instructions in QS. Al-An'am: 143, which means:

نَبُؤُونِي بِعِلْمٍ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ - ١٤٣ ...

"Tell me (based on knowledge) if you are indeed the right people." (QS Al-An'am: 143)

This verse emphasizes that goodness must be conveyed based on knowledge, data, and facts, so that product or service explanations are more convincing. Consuming halal and good things in accordance with Sharia (Islamic law) supports human piety, provided that the ingredients are halal, the process is clean (thaharah), and the presentation is Islamic. In general, this principle teaches that economic activities must be carried out in accordance with Sharia, paying attention to product quality, being impartial, and prioritizing the common good. The goal is not simply profit, but also obedience to Allah SWT, reducing harm, and avoiding wrongdoing in transactions.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the research and discussion, it can be concluded that the marketing management of the Darul Hikmah Islamic Boarding School in Tulungagung in building and increasing public trust is implemented through four main strategies in the *marketing mix concept* . First, from the product aspect , the madrasah offers quality educational services with character building programs, the implementation of the curriculum from the Ministry of Education and Culture, the Ministry of Religious Affairs, as well as relevant local content, accompanied by various extracurricular activities to develop student potential holistically. Second, the price aspect *is* implemented with an affordable administration and registration fee policy and is adjusted to the socio-economic conditions of the community. The cost structure of educational services is also made flexible with monthly and annual payment systems. Third, from the place aspect , the location of the madrasah is in a strategic area, easily accessible, free from traffic jams, and has a calm and conducive learning environment for educational activities. Fourth, the promotion strategy *is* carried out through various activities, such as visits to elementary schools or Islamic elementary schools, installing billboards and banners, distributing brochures, publishing extracurricular achievements at various events, and utilizing social

media such as Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and the official Madrasah website as a means of information and communication with the community.

The results of this study have important implications for the development of Islamic educational institution management, particularly in the implementation of effective marketing strategies to increase public trust. The findings indicate that the implementation of *marketing mix elements*—including product, price, place, and promotion—can be done without neglecting Islamic values and educational goals. Theoretically, this study enriches the study of the integration between educational management and religious-based marketing concepts. Practically, the results of this study can serve as a reference for other Islamic educational institutions in designing marketing strategies that emphasize service quality, cost flexibility, location convenience, and achievement-based promotions and digital media to gain public trust. Furthermore, from a policy perspective, this study emphasizes the need for support from the government and related institutions in improving the managerial capacity of Islamic boarding schools through educational marketing training, digitizing institutional information, and strengthening the image of Islamic educational institutions so they can compete healthily in the modern era.

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