



MARKETING MANAGEMENT OF ISLAMIC EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS IN ACCEPTING NEW STUDENTS AT THE SA'ADATUDDARAIN ISLAMIC BOARDING SCHOOL, TAHTUL YAMAN VILLAGE, JAMBI CITYs

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ABSTRACT

This study was motivated by the increasing competition among Islamic educational institutions in attracting new students, thus requiring a focused marketing management strategy that remains based on Islamic values. The Sa'adatuddarain Islamic Boarding School, Tahtul Yaman Village, Jambi City, faces challenges in managing its new student admission system in order to remain attractive to the community. This study aims to analyze the marketing management strategies implemented, identify supporting and inhibiting factors, and examine their implementation based on the 7P marketing mix concept. This study uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive method. The research subjects consisted of the Head of Administration and teachers at the boarding school. Data collection techniques were carried out through interviews, observation, and documentation. Data analysis used the Miles and Huberman interactive model, which included data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing, with validity testing through triangulation. The results of the study indicate that marketing strategies are carried out through the strengthening of flagship programs, promotion based on direct communication and social media, improving the quality of human resources, and strengthening the image of the institution based on Islamic values. The elements of product, promotion, human resources, and process are the dominant aspects in attracting new students.

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini dilatarbelakangi oleh meningkatnya persaingan antar lembaga pendidikan Islam dalam menarik minat peserta didik baru, sehingga diperlukan strategi manajemen pemasaran yang terarah dan tetap berlandaskan nilai-nilai keislaman. Pondok Pesantren Sa'adatuddarain, Kelurahan Tahtul Yaman, Kota Jambi, menghadapi tantangan dalam mengelola sistem penerimaan santri baru agar tetap diminati masyarakat. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis strategi manajemen pemasaran yang diterapkan, mengidentifikasi faktor pendukung dan penghambat, serta mengkaji implementasinya berdasarkan konsep bauran pemasaran (marketing mix) 7P. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan metode deskriptif. Subjek penelitian terdiri dari Kepala Tata Usaha dan guru pesantren. Teknik pengumpulan data dilakukan melalui wawancara, observasi, dan dokumentasi. Analisis data menggunakan model interaktif Miles dan Huberman yang meliputi reduksi data, penyajian data, dan penarikan kesimpulan, dengan uji keabsahan melalui triangulasi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa strategi pemasaran dilakukan melalui penguatan program unggulan, promosi berbasis komunikasi langsung dan media sosial, peningkatan kualitas sumber daya manusia, serta penguatan citra lembaga yang berlandaskan nilai Islam. Unsur produk, promosi, sumber daya manusia, dan proses menjadi aspek dominan dalam menarik minat santri baru.

Kata kunci: *Manajemen Pemasaran, Pendidikan Islam, Penerimaan Santri Baru, Marketing Mix 7P, Pesantren.*

INTRODUCTION

The development of Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia shows an increasingly competitive dynamic, especially in the context of accepting new students. Data from the (Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia 2022) shows that the number of Islamic boarding schools continues to increase every year, which has an impact on the increasingly fierce competition in attracting public interest. In this situation, Islamic educational institutions can no longer rely solely on their traditional reputation, but need to implement structured and strategic marketing management.

Marketing management in the context of education is understood as the process of planning, implementing, and evaluating strategies aimed at building a positive image and increasing public trust in educational institutions (Shiroth and Citraningsih 2023). Educational marketing is not merely promotion, but includes service value management, institutional communication, and sustainable social relations. This is reinforced by (Indriani et al. 2021), who state that educational marketing strategies play a significant role in shaping public perceptions of the quality of Islamic educational institutions.

From a service marketing perspective, the marketing mix concept, which includes product, price, place, promotion, people, process, and physical evidence, provides a relevant analytical framework for understanding the marketing strategies of educational institutions (Kotler and Keller 2021). This approach is increasingly relevant to be applied in Islamic educational institutions, as stated by (Jannah, Hidayati, and Badrudin 2023) that the management of educational service marketing in Islamic boarding schools contributes to improving the image and loyalty of the community. In addition, digital marketing strategies are also an important part of responding to changes in community behavior in the digital era (Arifin, Artanto, and Rahman 2023).

Several previous studies have discussed educational marketing strategies in Islamic madrasahs and schools (Jaenal Mutakin, Tihami, and Qurtubi 2024), but studies that specifically analyze the implementation of the 7P marketing mix in the context of accepting new students at local community-based Islamic boarding schools are still relatively limited. In fact, Islamic boarding schools have unique characteristics that not only offer academic services but also nurture religious values and character.

The Sa'adatuddarain Islamic Boarding School in Tahtul Yaman Village, Jambi City, is one of the boarding schools that has survived and remains popular among the community amid competition from other educational institutions. However, there has been no empirical study that comprehensively analyzes how marketing management strategies are applied in the process of accepting new students at this boarding school.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study design. A qualitative approach was chosen because this study aims to gain an in-depth understanding of marketing management practices in a real-world context, specifically in the process of accepting new students at the Sa'adatuddarain Islamic Boarding School in Jambi City. (Creswell and Poth 2018) explain that qualitative research allows researchers to explore meanings, processes, and social dynamics that cannot be measured quantitatively. A case study design was used because this study focused on one institution as a unit of analysis that was studied in depth and contextually (Yin 2018).

The research location was at the Sa'adatuddarain Islamic Boarding School, Tahtul Yaman Village, Jambi City. The location was chosen based on the consideration that this

boarding school is an Islamic educational institution that still exists and has an independently managed new student admission system. The research subjects were determined purposively, namely those directly involved in the management and implementation of the new student admission marketing strategy. The main informants in this study were the Head of Administration and Islamic boarding school teachers, who were considered to have a deep understanding of the policies, planning, and implementation of the marketing strategy.

Data collection techniques were carried out through in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and documentation. Interviews were conducted in a semi-structured manner to explore information about promotional planning, the implementation of new student admissions, and the communication strategies applied. Observations were conducted to directly observe the administrative service process, the physical condition of the pesantren, and the interaction between the management and the students' guardians. Documentation was used to supplement the data in the form of brochures, registration forms, and archives of new student admissions. According to (Moleong 2021), this combination of techniques allows researchers to obtain comprehensive and contextual data.

Data analysis was carried out interactively through the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing as stated by (Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña 2019). The analysis process was carried out from the beginning of data collection to the final stage of the research. To maintain data validity, this study applied source and technique triangulation techniques and rechecked information with informants to ensure data consistency. The principle of trustworthiness in qualitative research as stated by (Lincoln and Guba 1985) was used as a reference in maintaining the credibility and validity of the research findings.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

1. Marketing Strategy in New Student Admission

Findings show that the marketing management strategy implemented by Pondok Pesantren Sa'adatuddarain in accepting new students is carried out through planned administrative preparations and value-based communication. Based on interviews with the Head of Administration, the admission process begins with scheduling registrations, preparing brochures, and disseminating information through social media and community networks.

This boarding school offers an integrated education system that combines a diniyah curriculum and formal education. The main values conveyed to prospective parents are character development, discipline, and daily religious guidance. Interviews with teachers show that the boarding school consistently emphasizes moral development as its primary institutional identity.

Observations made during the study show that student activities are structured, including classroom learning, congregational prayers, and dormitory supervision. These activities are part of the educational values offered to the community.

2. Promotion Implementation

Promotional strategies are carried out through brochures, banners, Facebook, and WhatsApp groups. Information is usually disseminated before the start of the academic year.

However, field data shows that most parents obtain information about student admissions through alumni recommendations and community networks. Word of mouth appears to be the dominant channel of promotion.

Observations also show that Islamic boarding schools do not yet have a dedicated

digital marketing team. Social media management is still handled by administrative staff in a simple and unsystematic manner.

3. Admission Process and Service

The registration process includes filling out forms, submitting administrative documents, a Quran reading test, and a short interview. Administrative services are handled directly by the boarding school staff.

Observations show that the registration process is simple and transparent. Parents receive direct explanations about tuition fees, daily activities, and institutional regulations. The service approach is friendly and communicative.

4. Role of Human Resources

Human resources play a significant role in marketing activities. The Head of Administration and teachers actively provide explanations to parents and prospective students. Communication is conducted openly to prevent misunderstandings.

The results of the observation show that interactions between individuals are polite and persuasive, reflecting the institutional culture of the pesantren.

5. Physical Environment

The physical facilities include classrooms, dormitories, a mosque, and administrative offices. Although the infrastructure is not categorized as modern, the environment is clean and well-maintained.

Parents generally observe the dormitory and classroom conditions before making enrollment decisions. The religious atmosphere and orderly environment create a positive initial impression.

To provide a clearer overview of the implementation of marketing management in the admission process, the findings are summarized based on the 7P marketing mix framework as follows:

Tabel 1. Implementation of 7P Marketing Mix in Student Admission at Pondok Pesantren Sa'adatuddarain.

Marketing Mix Element	Empirical Findings
Product	Integrated diniyah and formal education; emphasis on character building and daily religious supervision
Price	Affordable tuition with transparent cost explanation to parents
Place	Strategically located in Tahtul Yaman; accessible for surrounding community
Promotion	Brochures, banners, Facebook, WhatsApp, and dominant word-of-mouth communication
People	Active involvement of administrative staff and teachers in direct communication with parents
Process	Simple registration procedure: form completion, document submission, Qur'an reading test, and interview
Physical Evidence	Clean dormitories, classrooms, mosque, and structured religious environment

The table shows that the most dominant elements observed in the field are people, process, and promotion, which are closely related to trust-building within the community.

Discussion

The findings show that the marketing management strategy implemented by Pondok Pesantren Sa'adatuddarain reflects the characteristics of service marketing in Islamic educational institutions. The application of the 7P marketing mix shows that the pesantren does not rely on aggressive promotional tactics, but rather emphasizes value-based educational services and community trust.

From a product perspective, the pesantren offers an integrated diniyah and formal education system with a strong focus on character building. In service marketing theory, the product element refers not only to tangible offerings but also to the values and experiences provided to consumers (Kotler and Keller 2021). In this case, Islamic boarding schools place moral development and religious supervision as their core value proposition. These findings are in line with (Shiroth and Citraningsih 2023), who argue that marketing in Islamic educational institutions should be rooted in strengthening the identity and values of the institution, not merely commercial considerations.

Regarding promotion, the dominance of word-of-mouth communication shows that social trust plays a central role in influencing enrollment decisions. Although digital platforms such as Facebook and WhatsApp are used, recommendations from the community remain more influential. These findings support the research by (Jannah et al. 2023), which found that the image and credibility of Islamic boarding schools significantly influence public loyalty and interest. In addition, (Arifin et al. 2023) noted that digital marketing in Islamic educational institutions often functions as a complementary tool rather than a primary promotional strategy. Therefore, the marketing approach of Islamic boarding schools can be categorized as trust-based marketing, where relational communication is prioritized over digital intensity.

Process elements also contribute significantly to parents' decision-making. Simple and transparent registration procedures reflect the efficiency and clarity of services. According to (Kotler and Armstrong 2021), a clear service process increases customer satisfaction and perceived quality. This is reinforced by (Indriani et al. 2021), who emphasize that the quality of administrative services in educational institutions directly affects the image of the institution. Findings show that first impressions during the admission process are very important in building long-term trust.

The most dominant element observed in this study is people. The active participation of administrative staff and teachers in communicating with parents strengthens interpersonal trust. (Jaenal Mutakin et al. 2024) highlight that loyalty in Islamic education services is greatly influenced by direct human interaction and personalized communication strategies. In the context of Islamic boarding schools, respectful and transparent communication reflects institutional values and strengthens credibility.

On the other hand, physical evidence plays a supporting role in shaping public perception. Although the facilities are not categorized as modern, cleanliness, orderliness, and a religious atmosphere provide a sense of security for parents. In service marketing theory, physical evidence serves as a tangible indicator that reduces uncertainty in intangible service offerings (Kotler and Keller 2021). The findings show that physical infrastructure does not need to be luxurious, but it must reflect the seriousness and attention of the institution.

1. Theoretical Implications

This study contributes to the development of marketing management theory in Islamic education by demonstrating that the 7P framework operates differently in community-based pesantren contexts. The dominant elements are people, process, and promotion through trust networks, rather than price competition or large-scale digital campaigns. The findings enrich

the discourse on value-based and trust-based marketing within religious educational institutions.

2. Practical Implications

Practically, pesantren managers may consider strengthening structured digital marketing without eliminating relational communication patterns that already function effectively. Developing simple digital branding strategies while maintaining community engagement could enhance institutional competitiveness without compromising its identity.

3. Research Limitations

This study focuses on a single pesantren, which limits the generalization of findings to other Islamic boarding schools with different scales and management systems. Additionally, the study primarily uses qualitative data, which emphasizes depth over statistical generalization. Future research may expand the scope by comparing multiple pesantren or incorporating quantitative approaches to measure the effectiveness of specific marketing elements.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the implementation of marketing management in the admission of new students at Pondok Pesantren Sa'adatuddarain reflects a value-based and trust-oriented strategy within the 7P marketing mix framework. Among the seven elements, people, process, and promotion through community networks emerge as the most dominant factors influencing enrollment decisions. The pesantren does not rely primarily on aggressive digital campaigns or price competition but instead emphasizes character education, transparent administrative processes, and interpersonal communication to build long-term community trust.

The findings contribute to the development of marketing management theory in Islamic educational institutions by demonstrating that the 7P framework operates contextually in community-based pesantren settings. Trust, institutional identity, and relational engagement appear to play a more significant role than commercial marketing intensity. This study enriches the discourse on educational service marketing by highlighting the importance of value alignment between institutions and community expectations.

Practically, pesantren administrators are encouraged to strengthen structured digital communication strategies while maintaining the relational and community-based approach that has proven effective. Integrating professional digital branding with value-centered messaging may enhance competitiveness without compromising institutional identity. Future research may expand the scope by comparing multiple pesantren across different regions or employing mixed-method approaches to measure the effectiveness of specific marketing elements quantitatively. Such studies would provide broader generalization and deepen understanding of marketing dynamics in Islamic educational institutions.

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