



Marketing Strategy of Islamic Education Institutions in increase the number of students (Case Study In SD Muhammadiyah Ponorogo)

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Abstract

This study aims to describe: 1) the marketing strategy planning of Islamic educational institutions to increase student numbers (a case study at Muhammadiyah Elementary School in Ponorogo), 2) the implementation of marketing strategies for Islamic educational institutions to increase student numbers (a case study at Muhammadiyah Elementary School in Ponorogo), and 3) the results of marketing strategies for Islamic educational institutions to increase student numbers (a case study at Muhammadiyah Elementary School in Ponorogo). The research method used was a qualitative case study. Data collection and compilation in this study included observation, interviews, and documentation. Primary data sources were obtained from observations, interviews with the principal, vice principal for student affairs, public relations officers, teachers, and documentation. The results of this study include: 1) the planning process, including establishing the PPDB schedule, determining targets, time, and location, and selecting promotional media, both online and offline. In addition, the school also offered various scholarships to attract community interest. 2) the strategy implementation was carried out sustainably through various school activities, such as kindergarten competitions, school anniversary celebrations, and flagship programs. Social media is also used as an effective and efficient promotional tool, 3) increasing the number of students, namely the number of students from 2021-2022 was 109 students, 2022-2023 was 116 students, in 2023-2024 there were 142 students, in 2024-2025 there were 127 students.

Keywords:

Marketing Strategy, Islamic educational institutions increasing the number of students

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INTRODUCTION

Currently, competition between educational institutions in Indonesia is getting tighter along with the increasing number of institutions that offer educational services,



both public and private. This condition requires every school to continue to improve the quality of its services, facilities, and marketing strategies so that it remains in demand by the community. (Rahmadani & Qomariah, 2022).

This condition is reinforced by facts on the ground, such as what happened in Ponorogo Regency, East Java. Based on data from the Ponorogo Education Office compiled by detikJatim, there are around 20 public elementary schools (SDN) that are experiencing a shortage of students. In fact, five elementary schools were recorded as not getting a single new student. Meanwhile, four other elementary schools only accept one student, namely SDN 4 Ngadirojo (Sooko District), SDN 1 Kauman and SDN Sukosari (Kauman District), and SDN 2 Nglumpang (Mlarak District). This phenomenon shows that competition in attracting public interest in an educational institution is really real and has a significant impact on school continuity. (Pebrianti C, 2024)

On the other hand, Islamic educational institutions are institutions that carry out Islamic education well and present it through planned methods. Therefore, the institution must be able to provide an atmosphere that supports the implementation of education correctly in accordance with the responsibilities given to educational institutions, such as madrassas that provide Islamic education. (Bafadhol, 2017). Educational institutions must be able to offer services that are more valuable, more quality, more affordable, have adequate facilities, and provide better services than their competitors in order to retain their clients. Remembering that marketing is the process of introducing an item to a customer in the hope that they will be interested. (Nurazizah et al., 2023).

Managers of educational institutions must find methods to market their institutions in order to attract the attention of consumers and attract other educational service providers. Of course, this requires professional management of the institution, if it is only managed carelessly, it is likely that consumers will leave it. (Duncan, 2019). Of course, the marketing strategy of an educational institution must be modified to reflect a good environment. Therefore, an educational institution is an organization that provides educational services for students and the general public. Using educational marketing to attract the attention of parents and students is a public relations goal in educational institutions. (Muhammad Saleh, 2021).

One of the school's activities, PPDB (new student admission), is part of student planning under the scope of student management. (Asri Ulfah Wulan Sari, Ali Imron, 2018). The increase in the number of students in elementary schools refers to efforts designed to increase the enrollment of new students through various marketing, promotion, and development strategies of engaging educational programs. In addition to helping educational institutions maintain their reputation in educational institutions, marketing in educational institutions aims to increase the number of learners. On the other hand, the goal of marketing is to increase sales and understand customer needs so that customers are happy and sell themselves.

In the midst of these challenges, the implementation of marketing strategies in the education sector is still often considered secondary, even though its role is very crucial to maintain the existence and growth of institutions. This gap is the basis for the



importance of research related to education marketing strategies, especially in Islamic educational institutions that have their own characteristics in the approach to value, services, and market segmentation. The reality of SD Muhammadiyah Ponorogo, located on Jalan Batoro Katong No. 6, Sultanagung, Nologaten, Ponorogo District, Ponorogo Regency, East Java, one of the Islamic-based private elementary schools that implements marketing management, this school is a private school. What is happening in educational institutions today is facing stiff competition from other schools that provide the best education. This can be seen from marketing and other processes, especially for private schools such as SD Muhammadiyah Ponorogo, which must be more competitive than other schools.

Based on an interview with the principal on December 17, 2024, the promotion strategy at SD Muhammadiyah Ponorogo is carried out continuously throughout the year, not only ahead of the admission of new students. Every school activity, both related to the curriculum and student affairs, is designed attractively so that it can be a means of indirect promotion through students and parents. In addition, the school utilizes digital media such as websites, Instagram, YouTube, TikTok, and WhatsApp to document and disseminate student activities and achievements. Various annual agendas, such as kindergarten competitions in the context of school anniversaries, leisurely walks, and participation in regional parades, are also used as a place to promote and introduce the school to the wider community.

Data on the number of students shows an increase from year to year. In 2021–2022, 109 students were recorded, increasing to 116 in 2022–2023, then increasing significantly to 142 in 2023–2024, and in 2024–2025 it decreased slightly to 127 students, but remained within the school's target range. This indicates that the school's marketing strategy is running effectively even though it is still faced with the challenge of competition with new schools.

The principal emphasized that to maintain public trust, schools always innovate, improve programs, and adapt the curriculum to the times. The author's interest in conducting this research is due to the efforts of educational institutions at SD Muhammadiyah Ponorogo in creating educational activities that are planned and carried out in good management. So in this case, the author is interested in conducting a research with the title "Marketing Strategy of Islamic Education Institutions in Increasing the Number of Students (Case Study at SD Muhammadiyah Ponorogo)". The purpose of this study is to analyze the marketing strategy of Islamic educational institutions in increasing the number of students in SD Muhammadiyah Ponorogo.

METHODS

This research uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive case study method that aims to gain an in-depth understanding of the marketing strategy of Islamic educational institutions in increasing the number of students in SD Muhammadiyah Ponorogo. Data collection techniques are carried out through in-depth interviews, observations, and documentation. In-depth interviews were conducted with internal school parties, such as the principal and staff who play a role in marketing activities, as well as external parties, namely parents of students and students. Observations are



carried out to directly observe various school activities related to marketing strategies, while documentation is used to obtain relevant written and archival data. Thus, this study seeks to comprehensively understand how marketing strategies are implemented and contribute to the increase in the number of students in SD Muhammadiyah Ponorogo.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1. Marketing Planning Strategy of Islamic Education Institutions in Increasing the Number of Students at SD Muhammadiyah Ponorogo

Marketing planning at SD Muhammadiyah Ponorogo is carried out systematically according to the stages of strategy which include: (a) the formation of the PPDB team, (b) the determination of revenue targets, (c) the preparation of promotional materials, (d) the preparation of budgets, and (e) the scheduling of promotional activities. The findings of the study show that schools strive to build good relationships between school residents, disseminate PPDB information in a planned manner, optimize internal networks, maintain communication with committees, utilize social media, and involve all elements of the school in marketing. This is in line with the view of Labaso et al. (2018) that a marketing strategy is a systematic plan to achieve organizational goals through market identification, segmentation, positioning, and promotion management. Thus, the marketing plan at SD Muhammadiyah Ponorogo has been prepared in a directed and consistent manner.

2. Strategy for the Implementation of Marketing of Islamic Education Institutions in Increasing the Number of Students at SD Muhammadiyah Ponorogo

The implementation of marketing strategies at SD Muhammadiyah Ponorogo is realized through the preparation of a structured PPDB, involving a special team from student and public relations elements. The promotional strategy is carried out through visits to kindergartens, the dissemination of print and digital media, and publications on various social media platforms. All teachers and staff play an active role in disseminating information, with the support of the IT team who manage the promotional content. Kotler (2012) explained that the marketing mix consists of 7 elements: product, price, place, promotion, people, physical evidence, and process. Alhaddad & Bulian (2020) emphasized the importance of integrating these seven elements in facing competition. SD Muhammadiyah Ponorogo has implemented the 7Ps comprehensively:

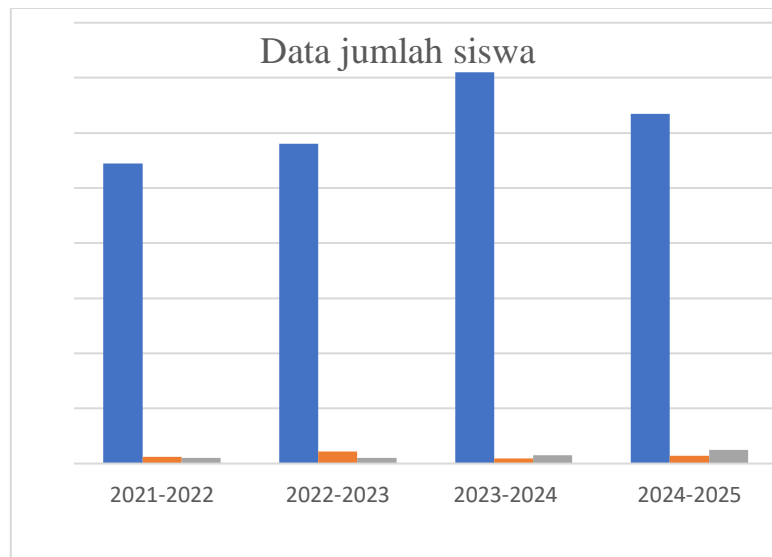
- a) Product: quality Islamic education services.
- b) Price: flexible tuition fees with scholarships.
- c) Place: strategic location that is easy to reach.
- d) Promotion: a combination of direct and digital promotions.
- e) People: the involvement of the entire school community and committees.
- f) Physical Evidence: complete facilities (air-conditioned classrooms, laboratories, library, mosque, extracurricular spaces).
- g) Process: professional and systematic implementation of promotions and PPDB.

3. The results of the marketing strategy of Islamic educational institutions in increasing the number of students at SD Muhammadiyah Ponorogo

The results of the study showed that the marketing strategies implemented have been effective in increasing the number of students and strengthening the image of the school.

1. Increase in the number of students

Active promotional strategies through social media, visits to kindergartens, and the distribution of brochures have an impact on increasing the number of registrants. The data on the number of new students is shown in the following table:



Despite a slight decline in the last year, the number of students is still stable and close to the target set by the school.

2. Strengthening the School's Image

Promotional content that highlights outstanding achievements, activities, and programs creates a positive image. The school is known as a favorite institution in Ponorogo, active, creative, and has strong Islamic values.

3. Formation of Cooperation Networks

The visit to around 15 kindergartens in Ponorogo expanded the network of cooperation with early childhood education institutions, supporting the sustainability of PPDB.

4. Synergy of All School Elements

Marketing strategies are not only carried out by the public relations team, but also involve teachers, staff, committees, parents, and students. This forms a promotional culture that blends into daily school activities.



Overall, the marketing strategy of SD Muhammadiyah Ponorogo shows the integration between planning, implementation, and results, according to Labaso's marketing strategy theory, Kotler's marketing mix concept, and the integration of the marketing mix according to Alhaddad & Bulian. This strategy makes schools remain superior, trusted by the community, and competitive in the midst of competition from basic education institutions.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the research that has been carried out and the discussion that has been described previously, it can be concluded that the marketing strategy of educational institutions in increasing the number of students in detail is as follows.

First, the planning strategy is carried out systematically involving all elements of the school, ranging from principals, teachers, staff, public relations teams to students. Careful planning is the main key in a school marketing strategy, the planning made includes, PPDB team makers, determining targets, time and place, then determining promotional tools both online and offline. In addition, the school also provides various forms of scholarships, including achievement scholarships, foundation scholarships, and cadre scholarships. The marketing strategy is designed to be able to achieve the PPDB target, besides that all marketing activities are carried out with a solid team with the division of tasks so that this marketing strategy is not only a promotional event but also forms the good name of the school and increases the competitiveness of the institution in the community.

Second, the implementation strategy is implemented in a planned and sustainable manner with online and offline marketing. The PPDB team works together according to the tasks that have been determined in the PPDB Decree to carry out marketing which is carried out not only during PPDB but throughout the year through various school activities such as kindergarten competitions, school milads, media publications, *existing* superior programs such as robotic classes, tahfidz, mipa and other extracurriculars that are various attractions at this school. Then the target is children at least 6 years old, the distribution of brochures, visits to kindergartens, guardians, online media such as *tik – tok*, *whatshap*, *Instagram*, *Facebook*, fees that must be paid can also be paid in installments in the first class so that all people who enter do not object.

Third, the results of the marketing strategy include an increase in the number of students, namely the number of students from 2021-2022 which is 109 students, in 2022-2023 it has increased slightly to 116 students, in 2023-2024 it has increased quite high there are 142 students, in 2024-2025 it has decreased slightly but still not far from the target of 127 students. Then improving the good name of the school in the community which can be seen by increasing the number of students where this school is included in the superior school in Ponorogo, the creation of a level of cooperation with kindergarten institutions, with this the school expands the network that supports and expands the school's promotion, the marketing strategy carried out also increases the participation of all teachers in this school with content and information dissemination on social media respectively. This shows that the strategy implemented shows results in increasing public interest in sending their children to SD Muhammadiyah Ponorogo.



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