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Management of Educational Service Marketing in Enhancing the Competitiveness of MI Ma'arif Sidomulyo

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the implementation of educational service marketing management in enhancing the competitiveness of MI Ma'arif Sidomulyo through the application of the 7P marketing mix. The study was conducted in response to the increasing competition among primary educational institutions, which requires madrasahs not only to provide quality educational services but also to develop effective marketing strategies to strengthen public trust and institutional sustainability. A qualitative descriptive approach was employed in this research, which was conducted at MI Ma'arif Sidomulyo, Magelang Regency, from January to February 2026. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, observations, and documentation involving seven informants consisting of the principal, teachers, parents, and community representatives selected through purposive sampling. The data were analyzed using the Miles and Huberman interactive analysis model, including data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing, while data validity was ensured through source triangulation, method triangulation, and member checking. The findings indicate that the implementation of the 7P marketing mix has been carried out effectively. The product aspect is reflected in flagship religious programs such as tahfidz, tilawah, and character habituation activities. Affordable tuition fees and free registration policies improve educational accessibility for the community. In addition, strategic location, relationship-based promotion, utilization of digital and offline media, competent educators, adequate facilities, and systematic service processes significantly contribute to strengthening the madrasah's image and competitiveness. The study concludes that comprehensive educational service marketing management plays an important role in enhancing institutional competitiveness and increasing public trust in Islamic educational institutions. Future efforts are recommended to strengthen digital promotion, expand institutional partnerships, and develop innovative educational programs to sustain institutional competitiveness.

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Introduction

Competition among primary educational institutions in the modern era increasingly requires schools not only to provide high-quality learning services, but also to implement effective marketing strategies in order to remain attractive to the public. In the context of Islamic educational institutions, educational service marketing plays a strategic role in building institutional image, strengthening public trust, and enhancing the relevance of educational services amid growing competition. Educational service marketing can be understood as a series of planning, management, and communication efforts aimed at delivering the value of educational services to society through a systematic approach that emphasizes customer satisfaction (Yılmaz & Temizkan, 2022). Through effective marketing practices, educational institutions are able to position themselves competitively while demonstrating the distinctive advantages of their educational programs.

One of the most widely applied marketing frameworks in the educational sector is the service marketing mix, commonly referred to as the 7P marketing mix, which consists of product, price, place, promotion, people, physical evidence, and process. This framework is considered relevant for evaluating how educational institutions design their services, determine financial policies, formulate promotional strategies, manage human resources, provide facilities, and maintain consistent service processes (Fahrizal et al, 2022). Within Islamic educational settings, the implementation of marketing strategies is not solely oriented toward academic achievement, but also toward religious values, character development, and meaningful learning experiences.

Several previous studies on MI Ma'arif Sidomulyo have examined various aspects, including principal leadership (Febriyanti et al., 2024), and learning strategies for students with special needs (Putri et al., 2024). However, these studies have not specifically explored how the madrasah manages educational service marketing strategies to enhance its institutional competitiveness amid competition with public elementary schools. This condition indicates the existence of a research gap that deserves further investigation, considering that educational service marketing significantly contributes to institutional sustainability and student enrollment growth.

Based on this gap, the present study aims to analyze how educational service marketing management is implemented at MI Ma'arif Sidomulyo in improving institutional competitiveness. This study is expected to provide empirical contributions to the development of Islamic educational marketing management studies and serve as a reference for other educational institutions in designing adaptive and effective marketing strategies. Specifically, this research highlights the implementation of the 7P marketing mix as an evaluative framework for strengthening the competitiveness of madrasahs.

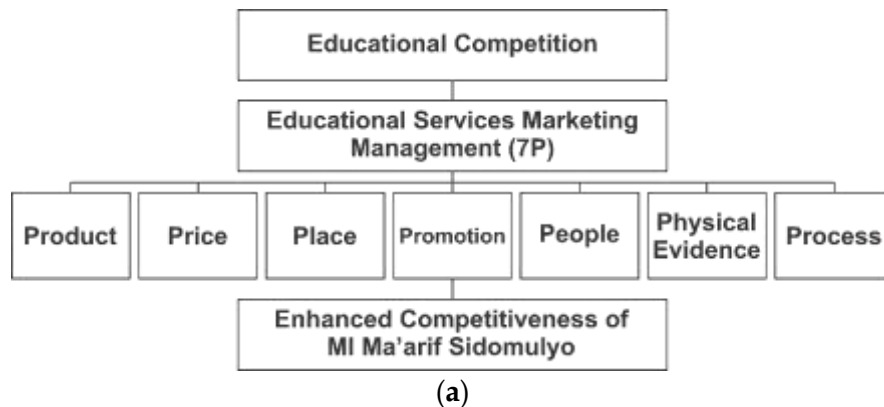


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

Figure 1 illustrates the conceptual framework of this study, which is based on the 7P educational service marketing mix consisting of Product, Price, Place, Promotion, People, Physical Evidence, and Process. These seven dimensions serve as the analytical framework for examining how the implementation of educational service marketing contributes to strengthening the competitiveness of MI Ma'arif Sidomulyo. The framework illustrates that the integration of the seven elements of the marketing mix provides a comprehensive basis for analyzing educational service marketing practices and their contribution to improving service quality, strengthening the institution's image and public trust, and ultimately enhancing the competitiveness of the madrasah in an increasingly competitive educational environment.

Methods

This study employed a qualitative research design with a descriptive approach aimed at gaining an in-depth understanding of educational service marketing management strategies within the social context of MI Ma'arif Sidomulyo. The selection of this method was based on the consideration that educational service marketing strategies cannot be adequately understood solely through numerical or quantitative data, but instead require exploration of experiences, considerations, and actual practices in the field. Through direct interaction with informants, the researcher was able to examine the motives, policy considerations, and communication dynamics that shape the madrasah's marketing strategies. This approach enabled a deeper and more contextual understanding of how educational marketing practices are implemented at MI Ma'arif Sidomulyo.

The research subjects were determined using purposive sampling, namely the selection of informants based on their ability to provide data relevant to the focus of the study (Ilker Etikan et al., 2016). The informants consisted of seven individuals, including the principal, three teachers, two parents, and one community leader. These informants were selected because they possessed direct knowledge regarding educational marketing processes, service dynamics, and public perceptions of the competitiveness of MI Ma'arif Sidomulyo. The study was conducted at MI Ma'arif Sidomulyo, located in Salaman District, Magelang Regency, from January to February 2026.

Data collection techniques included in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to obtain information regarding flagship programs, promotional strategies, tuition policies, and educational services. Observations focused on learning activities, physical facilities, student admission processes, and interactions among members of the madrasah community. Documentation data were obtained from institutional archives, activity photographs, student admission reports, and the madrasah profile. Research instruments were developed through the preparation of interview guidelines, observation sheets, and document recording formats aligned with the objectives of the study. These instruments were designed based on indicators of the educational marketing mix (7P).

The data were analyzed using the interactive analysis model developed by Miles and Huberman, which consists of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. Data reduction was carried out by selecting and focusing on information relevant to the research objectives, while data presentation was organized in narrative form to facilitate the identification of patterns and relationships among findings. Conclusion drawing was conducted continuously throughout the research process and verified through cross-informant comparison and feedback from informants (Asipi et al., 2022).

To ensure data trustworthiness, source triangulation and method triangulation techniques were employed. Source triangulation was conducted by comparing information obtained from the principal, teachers, parents, and community leaders, while method triangulation involved comparing the results of interviews, observations, and documentation. In addition, the researcher conducted member checking by reconfirming preliminary findings with the informants to ensure consistency between the researcher's interpretations and the informants' experiences. This validation process was essential to maintain the accuracy, credibility, and consistency of the research findings (Schlunegger et al., 2024).

Result

Product

Based on the research findings, the educational products offered by MI Ma'arif Sidomulyo extend beyond the core curriculum to include various flagship programs designed to meet students' academic, spiritual, and personal development needs. The madrasah has established several key flagship programs, namely Qur'anic memorization (tahfidz Al-Qur'an), Qur'anic recitation (tilawah), and rebana performance. The tahfidz and tilawah programs are specifically intended to enhance students' abilities to read and memorize short chapters of the Qur'an accurately and fluently.

In addition to these flagship programs, the madrasah also implements various habituation activities aimed at strengthening students' religious character development. Activities such as reciting Asmaul Husna before the learning process begins, performing dhuha prayer, and conducting congregational dhuhur prayer have become part of the daily routines within the madrasah environment. These flagship programs are further

supported by extracurricular activities, including scouting and pencak silat, which contribute to the development of students' discipline, cooperation, and self-confidence.

Price

MI Ma'arif Sidomulyo implements a relatively affordable monthly tuition policy, ranging from IDR 25,000 to IDR 35,000 per month. The determination of these fees is adjusted to the socio-economic conditions of the surrounding community, enabling the madrasah to accommodate students from various social backgrounds. This policy reflects the institution's commitment to providing inclusive educational services without compromising educational quality. In addition, MI Ma'arif Sidomulyo also applies a no-registration-fee policy for new students, making access to education more accessible for the local community.

Place

is located in Drojogan Hamlet, Sidomulyo Village, Salaman District, Magelang Regency, Central Java, within a strategically situated residential area. The madrasah is positioned alongside the village's main road and adjacent to the Sidomulyo Village Hall, making it easily recognizable and accessible to the surrounding community. Access to the institution is considered favorable, as transportation routes leading to the madrasah can be reached by both motorcycles and cars. In addition, the road conditions are relatively good, thereby facilitating the mobility of students and parents in accessing the educational services provided by the institution.

Promotion

Based on the research findings, MI Ma'arif Sidomulyo implements various promotional strategies, both direct and indirect. The madrasah collaborates with RA Muslimat NU Sidomulyo as a channel for recruiting new students, as the kindergarten is located directly behind the madrasah. According to interviews with the principal, the majority of new students originate from RA Muslimat NU Sidomulyo due to the close institutional relationship between the two educational institutions. This strategy demonstrates how the madrasah utilizes institutional networks as part of a relationship-based educational marketing strategy. The harmonious relationship between the kindergarten and the madrasah enables promotional activities to be conducted more easily, efficiently, and effectively.

Indirect promotion is also carried out through a word-of-mouth approach, in which parents share positive experiences regarding the educational services and their children's learning outcomes with members of the surrounding community. In addition, MI Ma'arif Sidomulyo utilizes social media as an effective promotional tool in the digital era. Digital platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok are used to share documentation of school activities, student achievements, and daily school programs. The use of digital media also facilitates administrative services for parents and students, particularly in the process of new student admissions.

Beyond digital promotion, MI Ma'arif Sidomulyo also conducts offline promotional activities through printed media, including banners and billboards placed along roadsides and at strategic points within the village to ensure that information about the school is easily visible to the public. Furthermore, the school distributes brochures to the community as part of its promotional efforts. These initiatives are intended to help the public obtain more detailed information regarding admission schedules, flagship programs, and student achievements.

People

Employs a total of 15 teachers, consisting of a combination of senior and younger educators. The majority of the teaching staff possess at least a bachelor's degree (Strata 1/S1), indicating that the institution maintains an adequate standard of academic competence among its educators. In addition to classroom teachers, the madrasah also employs specialized religious educators, including Islamic studies teachers and two tahfidz teachers responsible for guiding students in Qur'anic memorization programs.

Physical Evidence

Based on the research findings, MI Ma'arif Sidomulyo possesses relatively complete and representative facilities for an Islamic primary school. The availability of eleven classrooms in proper condition supports the implementation of a comfortable, well-structured, and conducive learning environment. In addition to the classrooms, the presence of a large mushola serves as an important facility that supports students' religious practices and spiritual activities. The mushola functions not only as a place for congregational prayers, but also as a center for Islamic character development activities, including tahfidz, rebana, and other educational programs.

The madrasah also provides other supporting facilities, such as a spacious multifunctional area that can be utilized for sports activities, including volleyball, badminton, and other physical activities. Furthermore, MI Ma'arif Sidomulyo has access to the village field, which can be used to support broader sports development programs such as running and football. Beyond its physical facilities, one of the institution's major advantages lies in its highly strategic location. Situated alongside the village's main road and adjacent to the village hall, the madrasah benefits from high visibility and easy accessibility for the surrounding community.

Process

At MI Ma'arif Sidomulyo, the educational service process encompasses a series of structured activities, beginning with planning, implementation, and continuing through the evaluation of learning activities. The madrasah strives to ensure that each stage is conducted systematically and in accordance with established operational standards. This effort is intended to maintain an effective, orderly, and student-oriented teaching and learning process. During the new student admission process, MI Ma'arif Sidomulyo implements a registration mechanism that is simple and easily understood by the community. The admission procedures are conducted through both offline and online

systems, which can be completed within a relatively short period without complicated administrative requirements. The free registration policy further supports the efficiency of the admission process, as prospective parents are not burdened with additional initial payment documents. This accessible admission process enhances community convenience and contributes to the increasing interest in enrolling children at the madrasah.

The learning process at MI Ma'arif Sidomulyo is designed to create a conducive and interactive classroom environment that supports both students' academic achievement and character development. The instructional process utilizes the Merdeka Curriculum module, which encourages students to participate actively in learning activities. Teachers also conduct regular assessments through daily evaluations, assignments, and examinations to ensure that students' progress can be monitored appropriately. In addition, teachers' involvement in providing supplementary guidance further strengthens the quality of the learning process implemented within the madrasah.

Discussion

Educational products constitute the core element of educational service marketing, as they represent the primary value offered by educational institutions to students and the wider community. Within the service marketing mix framework, the product extends beyond the core educational service of the teaching and learning process to include flagship programs, supporting activities, and learning experiences that provide added value and distinguish an institution from its competitors (Greaves et al., 2023). Furthermore, high-quality educational products are expected to address students' academic needs while simultaneously fostering character development and essential life skills, thereby enhancing public satisfaction and trust in educational institutions.

The findings of this study indicate that the educational products offered by MI Ma'arif Sidomulyo are manifested through a variety of flagship programs supported by extracurricular activities and religious habituation practices. From the perspective of character education, extracurricular activities play a significant role in fostering students' holistic development, encompassing practical skills, social competencies, and character formation (Rosianti & Widowati, 2025). Meanwhile, religious habituation activities reinforce students' religious values by integrating them into their daily lives. The integration of these three components reflects the madrasah's commitment to providing comprehensive educational services that align with the needs and expectations of the community.

Overall, the product dimension, as reflected in the implementation of flagship programs, extracurricular activities, and religious habituation practices, serves as a distinguishing factor that strengthens the identity of MI Ma'arif Sidomulyo compared with other primary educational institutions. Service marketing scholars argue that products characterized by uniqueness and added value create competitive advantages and enhance an organization's attractiveness in the eyes of consumers. The findings of this study demonstrate that the madrasah's educational products not only cultivate a religious and disciplined school

culture but also increase parents' interest in enrolling their children at MI Ma'arif Sidomulyo. Therefore, the product strategy implemented by the madrasah has strengthened its competitive position while enhancing public trust in the quality of the educational services it provides.

In educational service marketing, price is not merely understood as the amount of tuition or fees paid by students but also reflects the affordability of educational services, which significantly influences parents' decisions when selecting an educational institution (Taruna et al., 2025). The findings of this study reveal that the affordable tuition policy and the absence of an enrollment fee at MI Ma'arif Sidomulyo constitute an effective strategy for attracting students from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds while strengthening the madrasah's image as an institution that is responsive to the needs of the surrounding community (Amarullah et al., 2025). These findings suggest that an affordable pricing strategy enhances the madrasah's competitive advantage while reinforcing public trust in the quality of the educational services it provides.

A strategic location and adequate accessibility are important components of educational service marketing because they influence parents' school selection decisions and enhance institutional competitiveness (Rusdiah et al., 2025). The findings of this study indicate that MI Ma'arif Sidomulyo is located in an easily accessible area, providing convenience for students and parents while fostering positive perceptions of safety, comfort, and service quality. These findings are consistent with Juhaidi et al. (2025), who argued that school accessibility enhances institutional attractiveness and strengthens public trust. Furthermore, an accessible location serves as a strategic asset in educational service marketing by increasing institutional visibility, strengthening community engagement, and supporting sustainable student enrollment growth.

Promotion is a fundamental element of educational service marketing because it serves as a communication channel between educational institutions and the community to introduce educational programs, build institutional reputation, and foster public trust (Stribbell & Duangekanong, 2022). The effectiveness of promotional activities depends not only on the communication media employed but also on the institution's ability to deliver relevant information and establish sustainable relationships with prospective users of educational services. The findings of this study indicate that MI Ma'arif Sidomulyo implements an integrated promotional strategy that combines direct promotion, word-of-mouth marketing, online media, and offline media. This approach enables the madrasah to reach a broader audience while fostering more effective communication with diverse target groups.

In addition to utilizing digital media, the madrasah optimizes its promotional efforts through RA Muslimat NU Sidomulyo, an educational institution located within the same educational environment, thereby creating more personalized interactions with prospective students and their parents. These findings suggest that the integration of online and offline promotional strategies strengthens the institution's branding, enhances its visibility, and promotes a positive public image within the community. Furthermore,

word-of-mouth promotion through community networks and parents reinforces public trust, as the information is derived from the direct experiences of educational service users (Riyadi et al., 2023). Therefore, an integrated promotion strategy has become a key factor in enhancing the competitiveness of MI Ma'arif Sidomulyo while supporting a sustainable increase in new student enrollment.

Within the service marketing mix, people represent a critical element in determining service quality, as the successful delivery of services largely depends on the competence, professionalism, and interactions of human resources with service users (Akiri & Judy, 2022). The findings of this study indicate that MI Ma'arif Sidomulyo is supported by an adequate number of qualified teachers, the majority of whom possess extensive teaching experience, complemented by the presence of teachers specializing in Islamic religious education. The combination of senior teachers' experience and the creativity of younger teachers fosters an adaptive, innovative, and effective learning environment (Fadila & Latifah, 2024). This condition enhances the quality of educational services, strengthens public trust, and serves as an important factor in improving the madrasah's competitive advantage.

Within the service marketing mix, physical evidence refers to the tangible facilities and physical environment that reflect an organization's quality and professionalism in the eyes of service users (Baars et al., 2023). The findings of this study indicate that MI Ma'arif Sidomulyo provides adequate classrooms, a prayer room (mushola), and a well-maintained school environment, all of which contribute to a comfortable and effective learning environment. The availability of these facilities not only supports students' academic needs but also facilitates the development of religious character through various religious activities (Fitriani et al., 2022). These findings suggest that effective management of physical evidence enhances the quality of educational services, strengthens public trust, and improves the madrasah's competitive advantage.

Within the service marketing mix, process refers to the procedures and mechanisms through which educational services are delivered, as these determine service quality and user satisfaction (Dangaiso et al., 2022). The findings of this study indicate that MI Ma'arif Sidomulyo implements an educational service delivery process that is simple, systematic, and responsive to the needs of both students and parents. This is reflected in its straightforward administrative procedures, well-structured teaching and learning activities, and continuous evaluation practices, all of which support the effective implementation of academic activities (Sudiantini et al., 2023). These findings demonstrate that an effective service delivery process enhances the quality of educational services, strengthens public trust, and serves as an important factor in improving the madrasah's competitive advantage.

Conclusion

The management of educational service marketing at MI Ma'arif Sidomulyo has been implemented effectively through the application of the 7P marketing mix. Religious

flagship programs, habituation activities, and diverse extracurricular programs have strengthened the identity of the madrasah's educational products. Affordable tuition policies, a strategic location, partnership-based promotion, the utilization of online and offline media, competent educators, adequate physical facilities, and systematic service processes have all contributed significantly to increasing public trust and enhancing the competitiveness of the madrasah. The findings of this study confirm that comprehensive educational marketing management is capable of improving the sustainability and institutional position of Islamic educational institutions amid competition among primary schools. Based on these findings, it is recommended that MI Ma'arif Sidomulyo continue strengthening its digital publications, enhance innovation in flagship programs, and expand institutional partnerships to broaden the scope of its promotional activities. Future research may broaden the scope of investigation to other madrasahs or conduct comparative analyses in order to obtain a deeper understanding of educational marketing strategies across different institutional contexts.

Declarations

Author contribution statement

All authors contributed substantially to this study. Zumrolis Sholikhin designed the research, collected the field data, conducted interviews and observations, and drafted the initial manuscript. Dahlia contributed to data analysis, theoretical review, and refinement of the methodological framework. Ali Rohmat supervised the research process, validated the data interpretation, and provided critical revisions to improve the intellectual content of the manuscript. All authors have read and approved the final version of the article.

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Data availability statement

The datasets generated and analyzed during this study are not publicly available due to ethical considerations and the protection of informants' identities, but they are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

Declaration of interests statement

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have influenced the work reported in this article.

Additional information

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