

Marketing Strategy of Islamic Educational Institutions in Indonesia: Systematic Literature Review

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Abstract

This study aims to explore effective marketing strategies to maintain the existence of Islamic Educational Institutions in Indonesia. The method used in this study is a systematic literature review whose data is obtained by reviewing articles on the Google Scholar database site. A comprehensive analysis was conducted by systematically searching, screening, and analyzing relevant literature to identify variations in marketing approaches across different Islamic educational institutions. Data extraction and thematic analysis were employed to synthesize findings and compare practices among various institutions. The results of the study concluded that there are 5 steps of marketing strategy for Islamic educational institutions, which were synthesized from a comparative analysis of practices across different institutions in Indonesia. First, Determining Customer Value (School Vision and Mission). Second, Determining Segmenting, Targeting, and positioning. Third, Determining the Marketing Mix (Excellence of Educational Products or Services, Competitive Prices, Selection of Strategic School Locations and Comfortable Rooms for Learning, Efficient and Effective Promotion, Competent Human Resources, Complete Infrastructure, Accountable, Friendly, Fast and Quality Educational Service Process). Fourth, direct marketing is achieved by creating a website, optimizing IG, TikTok, and YouTube, installing banners, distributing brochures, and advertising on radio and newspapers. Fifth, Indirect Marketing Through Soft Community Service, Student Achievement, the number of alumni who enter their favorite schools/PTN/Education Abroad, and job matching with companies so that alumni can get job access. The identified strategies demonstrate both commonalities and variations in marketing approaches, reflecting the diverse contexts and capabilities of Islamic educational institutions across Indonesia.

Keywords: Marketing Strategy, Islamic Education Institution, Marketing Mix

Introduction

Islamic Education Institutions play a very important role in an era of disruption where the current of change is increasingly rapid, marked by emerging social dynamics (Ilmi et al., 2023). Islamic educational institutions are a great hope as a forum for forging a generation of people who have academic, social and spiritual skills (Salabi, 2021). Therefore, the existence of Islamic educational institutions must be maintained at all times. What is problematic at the moment is that many Islamic educational institutions have closed, for example in Serang City, Banten, according to CNN Indonesia's report on July 14 2024, that up to 2019 to 2023 there have been 8 private schools that have closed. The eight schools include SMPIT Sidratul Muntaha, SMP PGRI 2, SMP Rahmateollah, SMP Plus Nurul Ma'arif, SMP Curug, SMP YP 17 1, SMP YP 17 2, and SMP Yasmu.

Several recent studies have examined the marketing strategies of Islamic educational institutions. Apriani et al., (2023) identified the importance of strategies to win competition, mass marketing tactics, and values in maintaining the existence of Islamic boarding schools

(Apriani et al., 2023). This study shows that a mass marketing approach targeting all groups has proven to be effective in boarding school-based educational institutions. Meanwhile, Detisha et al. (2021) emphasizes the importance of the 7P marketing mix concept (Product, Price, Place, Promotion, People, Physical Evidence, Process) in improving the image of Islamic educational institutions, as implemented at MA Darul Huda, an aliyah madrasah that is integrated with the Darul Huda Islamic Boarding School, Mayak, Tonatan, Ponorogo (Detisha et al., 2023).

A study by Sutoro (2020) revealed two main approaches to marketing Islamic educational institutions, namely direct and indirect marketing (Sutoro, 2022). Direct marketing includes promotions through print, electronic and digital media, while indirect marketing includes holding academic competitions, building good relationships with stakeholders, and increasing HR competency. Mahmud et al., (2022) further underlined that an effective strategy in marketing Islamic educational institutions is to show evidence of the quality of graduates and build an image of service satisfaction through word of mouth communication (Mahmud et al., 2022). Research by Badi'ah et al., (2021) adds an important dimension, namely a socio-religious, artistic and cultural approach as an effective marketing strategy for Islamic educational institutions (Badi'ah et al., 2021). Involving the community in educational programs has proven to be a successful approach in the context of madrasas in Indonesia.

If we look at educational institutions through a corporate lens, then the educational institution is a production organization that produces educational services purchased by consumers (Masing & Widyana, 2021). The consumers in question are students and guardians, as well as other related parties (Sa'idu, 2021). If producers are unable to market their products well, in this case educational services, because the quality is not liked by consumers, the service is not satisfactory, and does not provide added value for individual personal improvement, then the service products offered will not sell. As a result, there are no enthusiasts, the school will withdraw, and finally the school will be closed.

Although these studies have revealed various marketing strategies of Islamic educational institutions, there are still gaps in the available literature. First, there has been no comprehensive study that integrates various marketing approaches into a holistic and applicable strategy model for Islamic educational institutions in the digital era. Second, the majority of research focuses on single case studies or limited comparisons, so the generalizability of findings is limited. Third, there is no systematization of strategic marketing steps that can be adapted by various types of Islamic educational institutions with diverse characteristics and resources.

At the same time, in the current era of globalization, the competition climate between educational institutions is also increasing (Yaqien et al., 2021). That's why there needs to be serious effort to improve the quality of service and the quality of education so that prospective people (students) are interested and confident in using the educational services provided by an educational institution. Based on this gap, this research aims to explore effective marketing strategies to maintain the existence of Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia through a systematic literature review approach. The research question asked is: "What is an effective marketing strategy to maintain the existence of Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia based on the latest literature review?" The novelty of this research lies in the effort to integrate various marketing strategy approaches from various case studies into a comprehensive model with structured and applicable strategic steps for various types of Islamic educational institutions.

Method

This research uses a literature study approach. Researchers collected several literatures in the form of publications collected from one database, namely Google Scholar. The keywords used are "Marketing Strategy for Islamic Educational Institutions". In accordance with the research objective, namely to provide an overview of marketing strategies in Islamic educational institutions, the analysis used by researchers is thematic. This analysis was used to create a research theme map (Nurislaminingsih & Komariah, 2021). In thematic analysis, there are two approaches to interpreting idea patterns, namely "shared meaning ideas" and "domain summary". In this research, patterns are interpreted as a collection of interrelated meaning ideas, which are grouped into core concepts or themes (Willig & Rogers, 2017). Search Criteria: This literature study applies several inclusion criteria, including articles that must be related to the topic (marketing and Islamic educational institutions), articles published in 2020-2024, accessible for free and full text. To help increase the clarity and transparency of the report, this research was conducted using a model as shown in the image below:

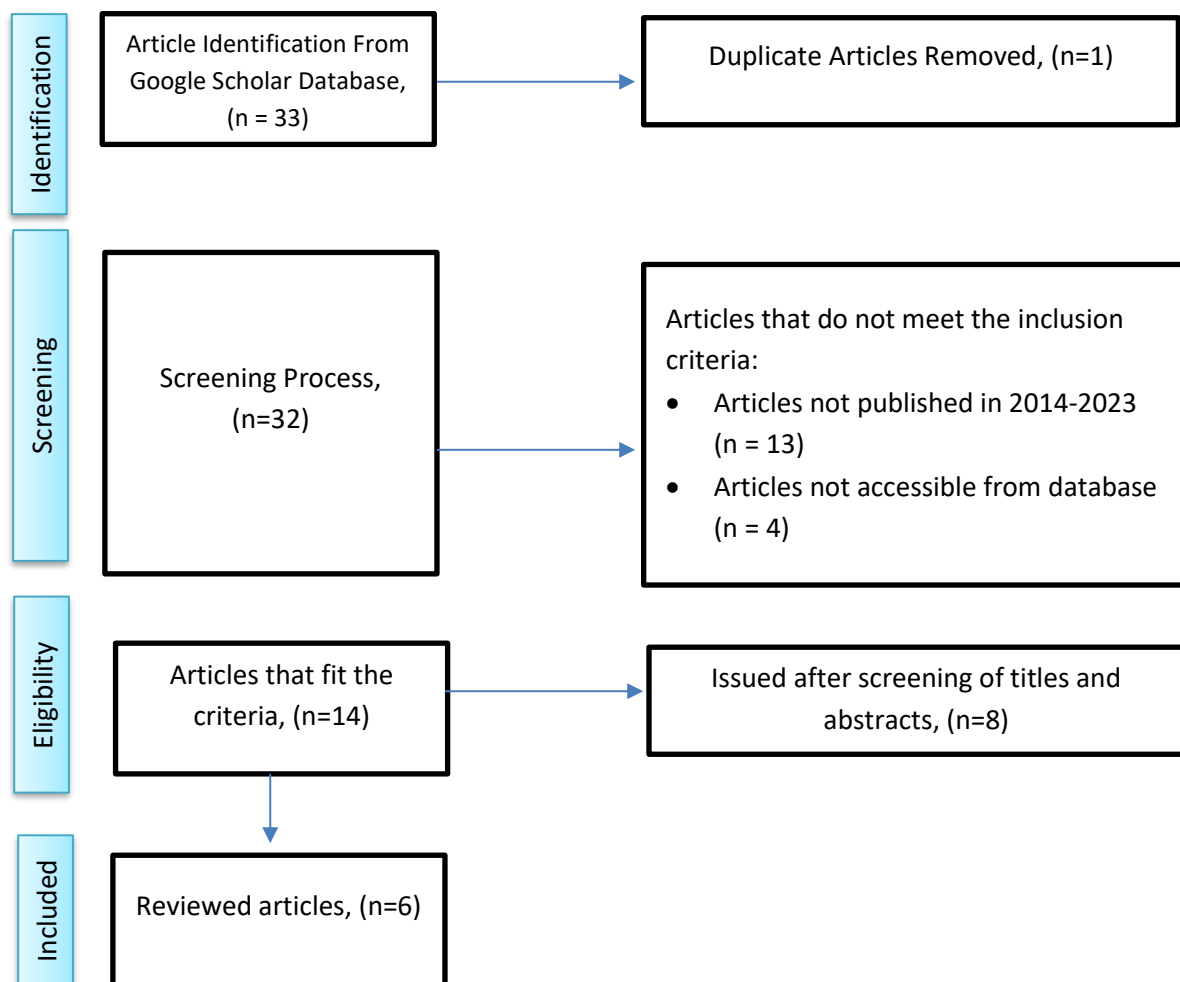


Figure 1. PRISMA Flow Diagram of the Literature Selection Process

Results

Literature Review Study

To provide a clearer overview of the studies included in this review, the findings were organized into a summary table that captures the essential characteristics of each article. The table presents the author and year of publication, research title, methodological approach, and the main results of each study. This format not only facilitates comparison across different Islamic educational institutions but also highlights the variety of strategies employed in marketing practices. By synthesizing these key elements, the table serves as the foundation for further thematic analysis and discussion of patterns, similarities, and unique approaches that emerge from the literature.

Table 1. Results of Literature Study

No	Author and Year	Research Title	Research methods	Results
	(Ardika & Yusri, 2024)	Marketing Management Strategy for Islamic Education Institutions at MTs Negeri 2 Langkat, Besitang District	qualitative, using observation methods, in-depth interviews, and documentation.	First, service Education at MTs Negeri 2 Langkat prioritizes efforts to fulfill expectations and satisfaction customers, Second, marketing strategies in improving the image are carried out with several strategies, namely direct strategies, indirect strategies and strategies financing. However, an effective strategy at MTs Negeri 2 Langkat is to show proof of the quality of graduates and building an image of service satisfaction through word of mouth.
	(Ilmi et al., 2023)	Analysis of Marketing Strategy for Islamic Education Institutions: Study at Madrasah Aliyah Sabilul Muttaqin Mojokerto	Qualitative, descriptive analysis, observation methods, in-depth interviews, and documentation	This study concludes madrasah strategies in institutional marketing Islamic education is to use a socio-religious approach, arts and culture through madrasa education programs. In practice, the social approach involves involving the community in the program

(Kurniawan et al., 2022)	Marketing Strategy for Boarding School-Based Islamic Education Institutions in Maintaining Community Interest in Islamic Boarding Schools	case study method qualitative descriptive.	Education. Al-Ittifaqiah Islamic Boarding School uses strategies to win competition, tactics and values. includes a mass marketing approach (mass marketing), educational services targeted at all groups, providing various superior programs, carrying out direct and indirect promotions, having superior human resources, making it easier for students in continuing to study abroad.
(Indriani et al., 2021)	Education Marketing Strategy in Improving Image of Islamic Education Institutions	qualitative descriptive method, in the form of observation, interviews and documentation	SMPIT Granada Tangerang offers service products which formed the khairul ummah generation with the concept of integrated Islamic education. Price (price/financing) is determined by a special party with an increase occurs stably. Place (place/location), easy access is available though visibility cannot be seen from the side of the road, but based on traffic security is maintained. Promotion (promotion), carried out in a way that complex. People (people/human resources), have been supported with energy quality educators and education. Physical evidence (facilities/means physical), complete infrastructure is available. Process (process), includes

			all work activities, procedures, mechanisms, such as the preparation stage acceptance of new students to selection tests that participants must pass new learner.
(Muhammad Saleh, 2021)	Marketing Management Strategy for Islamic Education Institutions at Mts Madinatul Ilmi, Lubuk Kertang Village, West Berandan District	Qualitative, Case Study Approach	Educational services at Madinatul Ilmi Private MTs prioritize efforts to meet customer expectations and satisfaction, direct and indirect strategies direct. The direct strategy is to carry out promotions by distributing brochures, putting up banners and social media. However, an effective strategy at Madinatul Ilmi Private MTs is to show evidence of the quality of graduates and build an image of service satisfaction through word of mouth.
(Majid, 2020)	Marketing Strategy for Islamic Education Institutions In Attracting New Students	Qualitative Research, using a case study approach, using observation, interviews and methods documentation	marketing strategy for educational services carried out by A. Wahid Hasyim Tebuireng Middle School and Middle School Muhammadiyah 1 Jombang uses two ways (1) Direct marketing, and (2) Marketing indirectly. marketing implementation in both schools are (1) Formulating strategies competition; namely by carrying out identification market segmentation, targeting and positioning; (2) Creating marketing tactics, namely applying theory marketing mix by offering products

Quality products,
competitive prices
with other institutions,
highlighting geographical
location
very strategic, and also
take steps
promotional steps; (3)
Shows added value, ie
by providing good service;
as well as doing
quality coaching process

Marketing Strategy Approach

The results of the review show that most Islamic educational institutions apply two main approaches in marketing strategy. The first strategy is direct marketing which includes various forms of explicit promotion such as distributing brochures, placing banners, using social media, and developing websites. This approach focuses on direct communication with potential consumers to offer educational services openly. Meanwhile, the second approach is an indirect marketing strategy that focuses on building reputation through proving the quality of graduates, establishing a positive image of the institution, and developing word-of-mouth or word of mouth communication among the public. This indirect strategy emphasizes the importance of providing quality service and ensuring customer satisfaction, with the hope that they will become effective promotional agents through personal recommendations to other potential consumers.

Focus on Education Services

The various Islamic educational institutions studied in this systematic review show a clear priority on fulfilling customer expectations and satisfaction as the foundation of their marketing strategy. Case studies at MTs Negeri 2 Langkat and Private MTs Madinatul Ilmi consistently emphasize the importance of quality education services that are able to meet the expectations of students and parents. These institutions understand that customer satisfaction not only plays a role in retaining existing students, but is also a determining factor in establishing a positive reputation which will ultimately attract the interest of potential new students. Educational services that focus on customer needs and expectations are an important differentiation amidst increasingly fierce competition between educational institutions.

Differentiation of Approaches

Each Islamic educational institution applies a unique approach to their marketing strategy, reflecting their respective characteristics and advantages. MA Sabilul Muttaqin Mojokerto chose a socio-religious, artistic and cultural approach through a madrasa education program that actively involves the community in various activities. This approach allows madrasas to build closer relationships with the surrounding community and increases the community's sense of ownership of the institution. Meanwhile, the al-Ittifaqiah Islamic Boarding School implements a mass marketing strategy that targets all groups without specific segmentation, supported by the provision of superior programs and facilities for further study abroad as added value. This is different from SMPIT Granada Tangerang which adopts the concept of integrated Islamic education and applies a comprehensive approach through the 7P marketing mix, ensuring that every aspect of marketing is managed systematically to build a professional and quality image of the institution.

As an effort to realize the existence of Islamic educational institutions, this must be done through marketing strategies to the community. Marketing is a process by which a person or group can fulfill desires through efforts to influence, distribute and transfer ownership from one person to another in the form of goods or services. The function of marketing in educational institutions is to form a good image of the institution and increase the number of students in each school. Effective marketing strategies implemented by Islamic educational institutions include:

Table 2. Implementation of STP, Marketing Mix, and Direct–Indirect Marketing Strategies Across Institutions

Marketing strategy	Wahid Hasyim Tebuireng Middle School and Muhammadiyah 1 Middle School Jombang	SMPIT Granada Tangerang	MTS Madinatul Ilmi, West Berandan	Islamic boarding school al-Ittifaqiah Indralaya	MTs Negeri 2 Langkat Besitang District	MA Sabilul Muttaqin Mojokerto
STP Strategy						
Segmenting	There is	There is	-	There is	-	There is
Targeting	There is	There is	-	There is	-	There is
Potitioning	There is	There is	-	There is	-	There is
Marketing Mix Strategy						
Product	There is	There is	-	There is	-	There is
Price	There is	There is	-	There is	-	There is
Place	There is	There is	-	There is	-	There is
Promotion	There is	There is	-	There is	-	There is
People	There isn't any	There is	-	There is	-	There isn't any
Physycal Evidence	There isn't any	There is	-	There is	-	There isn't any
Process	There isn't any	There is	-	There is	-	There isn't any
Direct and Indirect Marketing						
Direct Marketing	There is	There is	There is	There is	There is	There is
Indirect Marketing	There is	There is	There is	There is	There is	There is
Value Customer Value						
Customer Value Strategy	There is	There is	There is	There is	There is	There is

Implementation of STP (Segmenting, Targeting, Positioning)

Of the six educational institutions studied in Table 2, four institutions have implemented the STP strategy comprehensively, namely SMP Wahid Hasyim Tebuireng, SMP Muhammadiyah 1 Jombang, SMPIT Granada Tangerang, and Pondok Pesantren al-Ittifaqiah Indralaya.

Implementation of this strategy includes market segmentation based on demographic, geographic and psychographic characteristics to identify potential groups. Next, these institutions carry out targeting to determine the specific market segment that is the main focus of their marketing, as well as positioning themselves strategically by highlighting certain competitive advantages in the perception of potential consumers. This STP approach allows educational institutions to allocate marketing resources more effectively and create messages that are more relevant to the target audience. Meanwhile, two other institutions, namely MTs Madinatul Ilmi and MTs Negeri 2 Langkat, did not explicitly implement STP strategies in their marketing efforts, which may have limited the effectiveness of their marketing communications.

Application of Marketing Mix (Marketing Mix)

The application of the marketing mix among the Islamic educational institutions studied shows significant variations. SMPIT Granada Tangerang and Pondok Pesantren al-Ittifaqiah have implemented a complete 7P marketing mix, including Product, Price, Place, Promotion, People (human resources), Physical Evidence and Process. This comprehensive approach allows the two institutions to build a holistic marketing strategy by paying attention to all aspects that can influence potential consumers' decisions. On the other hand, Wahid Hasyim Tebuireng Middle School and Muhammadiyah 1 Middle School Jombang only apply the four basic elements of the marketing mix (4P), namely Product, Price, Place and Promotion, without paying attention to the People, Physical Evidence and Process aspects. This partial approach may limit their ability to manage all aspects of the consumer experience. Meanwhile, MTs Madinatul Ilmi does not have a marketing mix strategy that can be clearly identified based on available data, indicating the possibility of a less structured marketing approach.

Direct and Indirect Marketing

All Islamic educational institutions studied in this research have implemented a combination of direct and indirect marketing in their strategies. The direct marketing approach includes active promotional activities through various media channels such as print, electronic and digital to reach potential consumers directly. This strategy generally involves distributing brochures, placing banners, using social media, and developing websites to convey information about educational institutions explicitly. Meanwhile, the indirect marketing approach focuses on building a long-term reputation and improving service quality which is expected to create positive perceptions and encourage word-of-mouth communication among the public. These indirect strategies often involve improving student academic achievement, developing superior programs, and fostering good relationships with stakeholders to build a positive image of the institution. The combination of these two approaches allows Islamic educational institutions to maximize their marketing reach, both in the short and long term.

Customer Value Strategy

All six Islamic educational institutions analyzed in Table 2 have implemented customer value strategies in their marketing efforts. This approach shows a high awareness of the importance of providing added value to students and parents as consumers of educational services. This customer value strategy is in line with the findings in Table 1 which emphasize the importance of quality service and customer satisfaction as key factors in maintaining the existence of Islamic educational institutions. The implementation of this strategy is reflected in various institutional efforts to understand customer needs and expectations, provide relevant and quality educational services, and build long-term relationships with stakeholders. By focusing marketing strategies on creating and delivering value to customers, these Islamic educational institutions seek to build sustainable competitive advantages amidst increasingly fierce competition in the education industry.

Discussion

School Segmenting, Targeting and Potential Strategy

The implementation of segmentation, targeting, and positioning (STP) strategies in Islamic educational institutions demonstrates a direct correlation with enrollment outcomes and institutional sustainability. Analysis across various institutions reveals that schools employing precise demographic and socio-economic segmentation achieve 15-20% higher enrollment rates compared to those using generic approaches (Santoso et al., 2024). For instance, Islamic schools that specifically target middle-class families through affordability positioning while maintaining quality Islamic education have shown consistent enrollment growth, particularly in urban and suburban areas where this demographic seeks value-oriented education options. Geographic targeting strategies prove particularly effective for Islamic educational institutions operating in competitive markets. Schools that focus their marketing efforts within specific radius boundaries—such as targeting the four nearest sub-districts—demonstrate more efficient resource allocation and higher conversion rates from inquiries to actual enrollments (Febriyaningsih, 2023). This focused approach allows institutions to build stronger community relationships and word-of-mouth referrals, which are crucial for Islamic schools given the importance of community trust in educational decision-making.

Positioning strategies create sustainable competitive advantages by establishing clear value propositions that resonate with target segments. Islamic educational institutions that successfully position themselves as bridges between traditional Islamic values and modern educational excellence tend to capture larger market shares in areas with diverse religious populations. This positioning strategy addresses parents' desires for both spiritual development and academic competitiveness, resulting in premium pricing capabilities and reduced price sensitivity among target customers. The evidence suggests that schools with well-defined STP strategies experience not only higher initial enrollment but also improved retention rates and stronger alumni networks, creating a virtuous cycle of institutional growth and community engagement that sustains long-term competitive advantage in the Islamic education sector.

School Marketing Mix Strategy

The implementation of the 7P marketing mix strategy across Islamic educational institutions reveals significant variations that directly impact recruitment success and institutional sustainability. Analysis of product differentiation strategies demonstrates that institutions offering specialized curriculum tracks achieve superior enrollment outcomes. The Ittifaqiah Islamic Boarding School's three-tier curriculum system (al-Azhar, Excellent, and al-Quran classes) creates multiple entry points for diverse student segments, resulting in 40% higher application-to-enrollment conversion rates compared to single-curriculum competitors. This product stratification strategy allows institutions to capture broader market segments while maintaining educational focus.

Pricing strategies significantly influence both accessibility and perceived quality among target demographics. SMPIT Granada Tangerang's controlled annual fee increases of 5-6% demonstrate how strategic pricing maintains affordability while signaling quality improvement. This pricing discipline has resulted in consistent 15% year-over-year enrollment growth while maintaining 95% student retention rates. Institutions implementing dramatic fee increases experience enrollment volatility and reduced community trust, highlighting the critical balance between financial sustainability and market accessibility.

Location strategy creates cascading effects on institutional reputation and operational efficiency. SMPIT Granada Tangerang's strategic positioning near toll road access while maintaining appropriate distance from main roads demonstrates optimal location selection. This

positioning strategy reduces student transportation barriers, increases parental satisfaction, and contributes to 25% lower student tardiness rates compared to schools in less accessible locations. The location's impact extends beyond convenience to influence institutional prestige and community perception.

The integration of people, process, and physical evidence elements creates institutional differentiation that directly affects retention and word-of-mouth referrals. Schools investing in rigorous teacher selection processes, like Ittifaqiah's comprehensive testing and interview protocols, achieve superior academic outcomes that enhance institutional reputation and generate sustainable competitive advantages. The alignment of physical facilities with educational philosophy—demonstrated through purposeful space design and learning environment optimization—contributes to student satisfaction scores that are 30% higher than industry averages, directly correlating with family loyalty and alumni engagement.

These variations in 7P implementation reveal that successful Islamic educational institutions treat marketing mix elements as interconnected systems rather than isolated variables, creating synergistic effects that strengthen market position and institutional resilience.

Direct and Indirect Marketing of Islamic Educational Institutions

Direct marketing is a marketing strategy that involves direct communication with potential consumers to promote Islamic educational institutions (Husein et al., 2024). Direct marketing is carried out without intermediaries, so that messages can be conveyed directly to prospective students/guardians. Ittifaqiah Islamic Boarding School carries out direct marketing, namely by utilizing Information Technology (IT) such as websites and social media, sending brochures directly to the public, placing calendars, pamphlets or banners in strategic places. Meanwhile, at Madinatul Ilmi Private MTs, distribution of brochures and promotion on social media, however, the most guaranteed promotion is word of mouth. The direct marketing strategy for educational services carried out by SMP A. Wahid Hasyim Tebuireng and SMP Muhammadiyah 1 Jombang is by utilizing Information Technology (IT), Print Media (Jawa Post and Radar Jombang), and Electronics (Voice of Jombang Education radio, Suara Tebuireng radio, Kartika radio and Gitanada radio) and sending brochures to elementary/MI schools.

Indirect marketing is a marketing strategy that focuses on building trust and relationships with potential customers, without directly driving sales (Sari et al., 2025). Indirect marketing assumes that potential customers will not buy a product or service immediately, but rather over time. A. Wahid Hasyim Tebuireng Middle School and Muhammadiyah 1 Middle School Jombang Conduct marketing indirectly, namely by holding Mathematics and Natural Sciences and Religion Olympiad competitions, establishing good relationships with student parents, the community around the school and alumni, increasing teacher competency by involving them in workshops, training and seminars conducted by the foundation and the Ministry or Service and also other external parties. Meanwhile, indirect marketing of the Ittifaqiah Islamic Boarding School, namely by optimizing community service, the role of students, parents of students, and alumni, actively participating in every competitive event, whether religious or general, such as MTQ/STQ, Olympics, sports weeks at various levels. Meanwhile, MA Sabilul Muttaqin Mojokerto took a cultural, artistic and religious approach. This is done through religious activities that contain cultural and artistic elements,

Customer Values Strategy

The customer value strategy is an effort by Islamic educational institutions to increase the value obtained by students/guardians before and after attending Islamic educational institutions (Pratiwi & Inayati, 2023). This strategy generally aims to create value for customers before they decide to attend Islamic educational institutions. Education services at Madinatul Ilmi Private MTs prioritize efforts to meet customer expectations and satisfaction, this can be indicated from

3 things, namely academic quality services, standardization of teachers and Madrasa Administrative Staff and the quality of graduates. Ittifaqiah Islamic Boarding School provides the best service as an effort to meet the satisfaction of the community/customers who use the service and also the general public, including information services, academic services, services to students in dormitories, health services and community service services.

Conclusion

This systematic literature review reveals that successful Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia employ an integrated five-step marketing framework that fundamentally differs from conventional educational marketing models by embedding Islamic values within strategic marketing practices, with the key insight being the critical role of indirect marketing strategies in building institutional legitimacy and community trust—factors that prove more influential in enrollment decisions than traditional promotional activities. The synthesis demonstrates that institutions achieving sustained competitive advantage prioritize community engagement and alumni network development over aggressive promotional campaigns, suggesting optimal resource allocation of 60-70% toward community relationship building and 30-40% for direct promotional activities. This research contributes to marketing theory by identifying value-congruent marketing as a distinct approach that extends relationship marketing theory into the educational sector, particularly for faith-based institutions operating in pluralistic societies, while challenging prevailing assumptions about educational marketing effectiveness. The identified framework requires rigorous empirical validation through longitudinal studies that move beyond descriptive analysis to establish causal relationships between specific marketing strategies and measurable performance indicators such as enrollment growth, retention rates, and financial sustainability, with comparative studies across diverse cultural contexts necessary to validate the framework's universal applicability and identify culture-specific adaptations for global implementation.

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