

A Quality-Based Educational Marketing Strategy to Increase Student Interest

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Abstract: The competition among educational institutions demands improvement in service quality as a key marketing strategy. Good service quality not only builds a positive image for the institution, but also encourages student satisfaction and interest. The purpose of this study is to identify a quality-based educational marketing strategy to increase student interest. This study used a qualitative approach, with a case study method. Data collection techniques were conducted through interviews, observation, and documentation analysis. The results of the study found that: 1) An effective Islamic education marketing strategy is rooted in the integration of Islamic values and service quality as the basis for forming a positive image of the institution. 2) MTs Al Hidayah excels with a humanistic approach based on empathy and service flexibility, while MTs Daarul Uluum PUI excels through a structured and institutional quality management system. 3) Visionary leadership, teacher competence, and spiritual value-based communication are key factors in building public trust and loyalty. 4) The main obstacles include a lack of quality systematization, documentation, and digital promotion innovation, which have an impact on the limited reach and professionalism of marketing. Strategic solutions include strengthening data-based quality management, increasing human resource capacity, community partnerships, and optimizing digital communication to create sustainable Islamic education marketing that has da'wah value.

Keywords: Marketing Strategy, MTs Al Hidayah, MTs Daarul Uluum PUI, Service Quality, Student Interest.

1. Introduction

The Islamic educational institutions (madrasahs), according to common sense, are still considered to be marginal educational institutions. We can see this, among other things, from the fact that madrasahs generally still lag behind in terms of student enrollment. In fact, the advantage of Madrasahs is their ability to combine general knowledge and religion. Thus, it is hoped that they will produce students who are skilled in both Imtaq (religious knowledge) and IPTEK (science and technology). Madrasah Tsanawiyah (MTs), as an Islamic educational institution at the junior high school level, has a strategic role in shaping a generation with noble character and broad knowledge. However, in an era of increasingly fierce competition in education, MTs faces challenges in attracting

Received: September 15, 2025

Revised: September 30, 2025

Accepted: October 28, 2025

Published: October 31, 2025

Curr. Ver.: October 31, 2025



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new students. Many parents and prospective students prefer public schools, which are considered to have better facilities and service quality.

To establish Islamic educational institutions in this era of disruption, madrasahs must pay attention to the following: first, madrasahs must improve their competitiveness in a serious and planned manner, so that the output of madrasahs is able to compete in the global arena. Second, madrasahs must offer a variety of majors, given the breadth of employment opportunities in the era of the free market. Third, madrasahs must maintain their identity and not abandon their core values. Fourth, madrasahs must conduct continuous and ongoing evaluations to ensure quality assurance (Sulaiman, 2017).

Service quality in the context of education covers various aspects, such as teaching quality, supporting facilities, administrative services, and interactions between educators and students. Research by Sarpendi (2022) at MTs Hidayatul Mubtadiin shows that aspects such as physical evidence, empathy, and service reliability greatly influence students' perceptions of the quality of educational services (Sarpendi, 2022). In addition, research by Slamet Pujiono et al (2023) emphasizes the importance of educational service quality management in increasing student satisfaction. They state that improving service quality can improve the quality of work produced as well as the productivity and efficiency of educational institutions (Yusuf Rohmadi Slamet Pujiono, Supriyanto, 2023). The process of changing the paradigm of education, which is increasingly moving and developing in line with needs, requires society to keep up with developments in science and technology in accordance with the changes and developments of the times. This condition inevitably creates a high level of competition in all aspects of life in society. These changes and developments have also made competition between educational institutions even fiercer, and of course this is a positive signal for educational institutions to make creative efforts, continue to innovate, explore the uniqueness and excellence of Madrasah by offering excellent facilities, learning programs that are in line with the needs of the workplace, relatively more affordable education costs, and various other unique features that are developed with the sole purpose of attracting prospective students.

Currently, not many Madrasah Tsanawiyah (junior high schools) are implementing effective educational service marketing management, even though they believe that the key to winning the increasingly fierce competition in the world of education is to implement effective educational service marketing management. Junior high schools that are not good at service-based educational marketing management can be seen from several indicators, including: (1) low professionalism in learning management, (2) educational learning models that still emphasize conventional approaches, resulting in an educational system that is still sterile, backward, and stifles children's critical thinking skills, (3) the weak commitment of bureaucrats and madrasah administrators to achieving excellence and their lack of competence in managing madrasahs, (4) many teachers do not have a background in education, and (5) the madrasah has lost its function of providing knowledge, skills, expertise, and moral and spiritual values to students (Haidar Putra Daulay, 2007).

Education services in Indonesia are divided into two types, namely the emotional market and the rational market. In the emotional market, religious considerations are very important, regardless of price, service, and other factors. As a result, a small portion of the population still considers madrasahs to be a second choice when their children are not accepted into their preferred schools. In contrast, the rational market focuses on the quality of educational services that align with the demands and developments of the times. The marketing of madrasah educational services, in the sense of educational institutions providing services or delivering educational services to consumers in a satisfactory manner, involves the development, adoption, benchmarking, and innovation of previous educational system models and trends in line with the demands and developments of the times. Therefore, it is important for madrasah educational institutions to rethink their marketing models in the current era (Machali, 2015).

Tjiptono et al. (2003) formulated several important indicators for achieving excellent service quality, including (1) Physical facilities and infrastructure of the school, whether they meet standard quality so that the need for information and comfortable teaching and learning can be carried out properly. (2) The delivery process, friendliness, and service that is fast, accurate, responsive, and satisfying for students. (3) The responsiveness of the principal, teachers, and staff, which is marked by an improved administrative process that is easy to access, enabling them to respond to the needs of students. (4) The ability and competence of the Principal and teaching staff in their respective fields are a guarantee of the quality of the output or graduates produced. (5) Finally, sincere attention and a positive role from all elements of education to understand the needs of students.

The context of quality in education is inseparable from four dominant elements that influence it, namely: (1) Input, where new input can only be considered high quality if it is ready and able to be processed properly. (2) Process, where the process element is considered high quality when it is able to create active, innovative, creative, and enjoyable learning, commonly referred to as PAIKEM. (3) Output, whereby an output can be considered high quality if the academic and non-academic learning outcomes of students meet and even exceed the standards set by the university, and (4) Outcome, whereby an outcome is considered high quality if graduates are quickly absorbed into the workforce (Husaini Usman, 2014).

2. Preliminaries or Related Work or Literature Review

The quality of madrasah education is a continuous improvement effort carried out by all components of madrasah management. Of course, the quality of madrasah needs to be evaluated. The quality of madrasah can be measured through accreditation and periodic performance assessments. According to A. Suryadi (2012), madrasah quality is a measure of the quality of education provided at the institution. Meanwhile, according to Syafaruddin (2002), madrasah quality covers various aspects, such as input quality, including students, educators, facilities, and infrastructure; process (including curriculum, learning methods, and evaluation);

and output, including student learning outcomes. Furthermore, Sallis (2012) emphasizes that a quality madrasah is one that is able to provide educational services in accordance with established standards, both national and international. Syaiful Sagala (2010) states that the concept of madrasah quality also includes the aspect of human resource development, especially qualified teaching and educational personnel. Efforts to improve madrasah quality can be made through the implementation of Total Quality Management, which involves all components of the madrasah (J. S. Arcaro, 2005). Meanwhile, a quality madrasah must also be able to create a conducive learning environment, provide adequate facilities, and establish partnerships with education stakeholders (E. Mulyasa, 2012).

According to Husein Umar (2010), "strategy is an incremental (continuously increasing) and continuous action, carried out based on the perspective of what customers expect in the future. Thus, strategy always starts from what could happen and not from what has happened. The emergence of new market innovation speeds and changes in consumer patterns require core competencies. Companies need to find core competencies within their business.

A marketing strategy is essentially a comprehensive, integrated, and unified plan in the field of marketing that provides guidance on the activities to be carried out in order to achieve the marketing objectives of a company or educational institution. In other words, a marketing strategy is a series of goals and objectives, policies and rules that provide direction for the marketing efforts of a company/educational institution from time to time, at each level and reference point, as well as their allocation, especially in response to the ever-changing environment and competitive conditions faced by the company/educational institution. Therefore, the determination of a marketing strategy must be based on an analysis of the environment and internal affairs of the company or, in this case, the educational institution through an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the institution, as well as an analysis of the opportunities and threats faced by the institution from its environment. In addition, the marketing strategy that has been determined and implemented must be reassessed to determine whether it is still appropriate for the current circumstances or conditions. This assessment or evaluation is used as a basis for determining whether the strategy being implemented needs to be changed, as well as a foundation for formulating or determining the strategy to be implemented in the future (Sofjan Assauri, 2010).

3. Materials and Method

This study used a qualitative approach, with a case study method. Data collection techniques were conducted through interviews, observation, and documentation analysis. Lexy J Moleong (2013) states that qualitative research is a scientific approach that reveals certain social situations by accurately describing reality, formed by words based on relevant data collection techniques obtained from natural situations. Considering that this study aims to understand and interpret various phenomena that exist or occur in reality as a characteristic of qualitative research, in this case, how the marketing strategies for educational

services at MTs Al-Hidayah and MTs Daarul Uluum PUI Majalengka increase student interest, the researcher uses a descriptive qualitative research method. According to Sonia Ospina (2004), qualitative research is a research method that attempts to place the researcher directly as part of the field context, as stated by Shank in the book *Qualitative Research*. Meanwhile, Sugiyono (2016) interprets qualitative research as an approach to discover and understand central phenomena, how people interpret their experiences, and understand phenomena based on the participants' perspective (emic perspective) or internal perspective rather than the researcher's own perspective or external perspective (etic perspective).

Primary data was obtained from interviews and observations, both written and oral, with the foundation chairperson, madrasah principal, teachers' council, students, parents, and the community as research subjects. Meanwhile, secondary data was obtained from sources that could support the research, including documentation and literature such as Madrasah Profiles, Madrasah Strategic Plans, data on new student admissions for the last 5 years, data on madrasah activities, and others.

Data collection techniques were carried out using purposive sampling. According to Sugiyono (2013), this technique is used to determine data sources or key informants who truly understand the issues in the research in question. The selection of data sources in this study was obtained from the Principals of MTs Al Hidayah and MTs Darul Uluum PUI Majalengka as key informants, followed by other informants including the Vice Principals, teachers, the Head of Administration (TU), and data sources obtained from several students and parents as well as the community who could provide justification related to the information needed. Data collection techniques were carried out qualitatively through observation, interviews, documentation, and a combination/triangulation (observation, interviews, and documentation). This research was conducted at MTs Darul Uluum PUI Majalengka and MTs Al Hidayah Jatiserang Majalengka. The research period was from November 2024 to July 2025.

4. Results and Discussion

One of the marketing strategies used by MTs Al Hidayah to attract and increase student interest is the physical appearance or visual identity of the madrasah. This includes banners, brochures, pamphlets, and the school's official website, which play a strategic and significant role in building the institution's image and influencing public perception of the quality of education services provided. In the context of educational service marketing, physical appearance is part of the marketing mix that functions as a visual communication medium between the institution and the community. At MTs Al Hidayah, promotional media are designed with colors, layouts, logos, and narratives that highlight religious values, professionalism, and academic quality, thereby creating a strong first impression for prospective students and parents.

Respondents assessed that banners and brochures are not merely administrative information tools (e.g., registration schedules or flagship programs), but rather tools for representing the image of the institution. When the public sees neat designs, clear messages, and attractive visuals, they will psychologically associate these with good, orderly, and credible educational management. In addition, the madrasah website serves as the digital face of the institution, expanding its promotional reach. In today's digital era, the existence of an official website and social media accounts for the madrasah shows that MTs Al Hidayah is adaptive to developments in information technology, while also affirming the madrasah's commitment to transparency and public accountability. Through these online channels, the public can easily and openly access the latest information about academic activities, student achievements, and educational facilities.

Furthermore, respondents also emphasized that these visual aspects support the establishment of trust in the eyes of the public. Consistent visualization between promotional media and the reality of educational services in madrasahs makes the public feel confident that what is displayed is not just promotion, but a true reflection of the quality of educational services. Thus, the visual promotion strategy at MTs Al Hidayah not only highlights the aesthetic side, but also becomes an integral part of efforts to build public reputation and loyalty. In the context of MTs Al Hidayah, the use of attractive and consistent promotional media has succeeded in strengthening the madrasah's brand image as a superior, modern, and trusted Islamic educational institution.

This is in line with the results of interviews with the head of the madrasah, which revealed that MTs Al Hidayah has a strategic policy that is systematically designed and long-term oriented in the field of educational service marketing. This policy is not solely aimed at increasing the number of new registrants, but also at strengthening the madrasah's position as a credible, high-quality Islamic educational institution that is relevant to the needs of modern society. The head of the madrasah explained that the marketing strategy at MTs Al Hidayah is based on three main pillars, namely:

First, strengthening the identity of madrasah institutions seeks to build a strong institutional identity through various promotional media designed with distinctive visual characteristics and prominent Islamic values. Logos, slogans, and promotional narratives emphasize the character of madrasahs as educational institutions that integrate knowledge, faith, and morals. This effort reflects the awareness that in the world of education, image and identity are strategic assets that determine public perception of the quality of services provided.

Second, improving the quality of academic and non-academic services, the head of the madrasah emphasized that an effective marketing strategy must be accompanied by improvements in the quality of the educational product itself. Therefore, MTs Al Hidayah focuses on improving the curriculum, strengthening teacher competence, and providing various extracurricular activities that are relevant to the needs of students. The madrasah also develops comfortable and representative facilities and infrastructure to support the learning process. Thus, service quality becomes the main basis for attracting and maintaining public trust.

Third, the involvement of all elements of the madrasah and the community is one of the strategic strengths of MTs Al Hidayah, namely the collective participation of all madrasah residents, teachers, educational staff, students, and parents in promotional activities. Teachers act as academic communicators who introduce the institution's excellence through social interaction, while students become promotional ambassadors who spread a positive image of the madrasah in their surrounding environment. In addition, harmonious relationships with the community, religious leaders, and alumni help expand the promotion network based on social trust.

This policy shows that madrasahs view the marketing of educational services as an ongoing social process, not merely a publicity activity. The madrasah principal understands that the success of promotion greatly depends on the alignment between the message conveyed and the reality of service quality. Therefore, the marketing strategy is aimed at building public trust and loyalty through consistent quality and a positive reputation that is continuously maintained. Thus, the strategy implemented is not only reactive to competition between institutions but also proactive in establishing the madrasah's positioning as a leading Islamic educational institution. Overall, the principal's strategic policy reflects a comprehensive managerial vision: combining communicative aspects, service quality, and Islamic values in an integrated marketing framework, which ultimately strengthens the image and appeal of MTs Al Hidayah in the eyes of the community.

Supported by interviews with the surrounding community, it was found that the promotional materials distributed by MTs Al Hidayah in the form of brochures, posters, and social media were widely known and created a positive perception of the madrasah. The community considered that the promotional materials were not only informative, but also reflected the actual quality of the educational facilities and services provided. In the community's view, the design and content of the brochures, which contain information about flagship programs, learning facilities, student achievements, and religious activities, successfully describe the madrasah's characteristics of discipline, religiosity, and quality orientation. The posters distributed in public spaces and on the madrasah's social media are considered to have visual and narrative messages that are consistent with the actual conditions on the ground. This has led to a high level of trust in the institution, as the community sees the consistency between the promotional messages and the real experiences of parents or students who already attend the school.

These findings show that MTs Al Hidayah has successfully implemented an authentic and transparency-based marketing communication strategy. This success is evident in the way the madrasah builds harmony between its promoted image and the quality of services provided. In practice, the community not only receives information from promotional media, but also strengthens their perceptions through testimonials, social interactions, and direct observation of educational activities at the madrasah. Furthermore, the community views the madrasah's social media, such as Facebook and Instagram, as having a strategic function as

interactive and dynamic publication media. Through these platforms, madrasahs regularly share documentation of student activities, competitions, academic achievements, and religious activities. This reinforces the image of the institution as one that is open, progressive, and communicative with the public. The community considers this digital approach to be evidence of the madrasah's readiness to face the challenges of the modern era and the need for fast information.

Research findings at MTs Al Hidayah show that external communication through brochures and digital media serves as social proof that affirms the quality of the institution, while also strengthening the madrasah's positive image in the eyes of the community. Thus, it can be concluded that the success of MTs Al Hidayah's promotion lies not only in its aesthetics, but also in the credibility of the message it conveys. The community feels that every form of madrasah publication reflects Islamic values, discipline, and academic excellence that are truly embodied in daily educational activities. Therefore, this authentic and trust-based communication strategy is the main foundation in attracting the community's interest in enrolling their children at MTs Al Hidayah Jatiserang.

Based on the results of interviews with students, it can be concluded that the promotional materials presented by MTs Al Hidayah Jatiserang through brochures, websites, and digital advertising media are perceived very positively and are considered to reflect the best quality of the madrasah. Students consider that the messages conveyed in each form of promotion truly describe the real conditions of the madrasah, in terms of facilities, learning processes, and the religious atmosphere that characterizes the institution. According to the students, the visual appearance and promotional content presented by the madrasah are not only aesthetically appealing, but also inspire a sense of pride as part of MTs Al Hidayah. Brochures and advertisements featuring learning activities, student achievements, and religious programs are considered to accurately and proudly represent their school life. For them, this kind of promotion is not only a tool to introduce the madrasah to the outside community, but also a source of internal motivation that strengthens their identity and loyalty as students. In addition, students believe that the madrasah's website and social media provide a space to showcase their various positive activities to the public. The regular uploading of documentation of academic activities, competitions, and religious lectures makes them feel valued and recognized, as their achievements and activities become part of the institution's public narrative. This has implications for the growth of a sense of belonging to the madrasah.

This phenomenon shows that the promotional strategy implemented by MTs Al Hidayah not only has an external function to attract new students, but also has an internal function in strengthening institutional identity among school members. Students who see their institution presenting itself professionally and positively in the public sphere will internalize these values as part of their collective pride. In other words, madrasah promotion becomes an effective tool for shaping organizational culture. Authentic promotion that is consistent with the experiences

of students strengthens the positive image of the institution and builds emotional bonds between students and the madrasah.

Conceptually, it can be said that MTs Al Hidayah has implemented a participatory marketing strategy, in which students are not only the objects of promotional activities, but also subjects who help build the institution's image through their involvement in every activity that is displayed. This strategy strengthens the emotional branding dimension in educational service marketing, namely how the institution is able to create a deep emotional connection between students and the values and identity of the madrasah. Thus, it can be concluded that MTs Al Hidayah's promotional material plays a dual role: as an external means to attract public interest and as an internal instrument to foster student loyalty and pride. This approach demonstrates the maturity of madrasah management in managing value-based marketing strategies, which emphasize honesty, identity, and participation as the main foundations of successful educational communication.

Based on the findings of the study, the marketing strategies used by MTs Al Hidayah to attract and increase student interest include the following:

1. The marketing strategies used by MTs Al Hidayah are targeted, systematic, and sustainable. The madrasah implements strategic measures that focus not only on external promotion but also on internal institutional strengthening to ensure the quality of educational services is maintained.
2. Visual communication is a key element in shaping the image of the institution. Through attractive and informative banners, brochures, and websites, the madrasah has succeeded in presenting a professional, religious, and credible identity to the public.
3. The head of the madrasah has a comprehensive strategic policy in educational marketing. This policy includes strengthening the institution's identity, improving academic and non-academic quality, and involving teachers, students, and the community in promotional activities to build public trust.
4. The community's perception of the madrasah's promotion shows a high level of trust. The promotional materials are considered to reflect the reality of the quality of education at the madrasah, in terms of facilities, learning activities, and student achievements, thereby enhancing the madrasah's reputation in the surrounding community.
5. The students' views show that promotional strategies also have an internal impact. Authentic and positive promotional materials inspire pride and loyalty among students toward the madrasah, making them part of the promotional agents that help strengthen the institution's image.
6. The promotional strategies implemented by MTs Al Hidayah are integrative and value-based. Promotion not only highlights visual and informative aspects, but also describes Islamic values, discipline, and academic quality as the madrasah's main strengths.
7. The image of the MTs Al Hidayah institution is strong and authentic. Through consistency between promotional messages and the reality of

educational quality, the madrasah has succeeded in building a brand image as an institution that is superior, religious, and trusted by the community.

8. The implementation of marketing strategies has a direct impact on increasing public interest. Every year there is an increase in the number of new registrants, which shows the effectiveness of a marketing approach based on trust, values, and service quality.

Conceptually, MTs Al Hidayah implements a relationship-oriented approach to marketing educational services. The main focus is not only on attracting new students, but also on building long-term relationships based on satisfaction, loyalty, and community trust in the madrasah. MTs Al Hidayah's overall marketing strategy reflects the integration of managerial, communication, and Islamic values. This approach makes the madrasah not only institutionally competitive, but also representative as a modern Islamic educational institution of high quality and character.

Marketing educational services is understood as a systematic process of identifying, understanding, and meeting the community's needs for educational services by highlighting the value, quality, and credibility of the institution (K. F. A Kotler, P., & Fox., 1995). In the context of madrasahs, marketing not only functions as a promotional activity, but also as an instrument of da'wah, strengthening Islamic identity, and shaping a sustainable institutional image. Furthermore, according to D. D. Zeithaml, V. A., Bitner, M. J., & Gremler (2018), marketing educational services essentially integrates managerial, psychological, and social aspects to achieve value-based competitive advantage. According to Kotler & Armstrong (2018), educational institutions must identify potential market segments (segmentation), select primary targets (targeting), and build an institutional image (positioning) that distinguishes them from other institutions.

In the context of Islamic institutions, educational communication not only serves as promotion, but also as value communication, where religious and moral messages become part of the branding strategy. Gobe (2001) emphasizes the importance of emotional branding, which is an effort to build emotional bonds between institutions and the community through values, experiences, and authentic evidence of service quality (M. Gobe, 2001). Ethical and sustainable education service marketing does not only pursue quantitative aspects (number of students), but also emphasizes the dimensions of quality, fairness, and social sustainability. Belz & Peattie (2012) refer to this approach as sustainability marketing, where marketing strategies are directed at creating sustainable value for humans and the social environment. Thus, in the context of madrasahs, the principle of sustainability is realized through strengthening long-term relationships with the community, fostering Islamic character, and developing educational quality that is relevant to the needs of the times. Thus, ethical education marketing strategies become instruments of da'wah, social empowerment, and human quality improvement.

The findings show that MTs Al Hidayah implements an educational service marketing strategy oriented towards strengthening institutional identity and Islamic values as the basis for developing the institution's public image and appeal. This

strategy is not merely promotion in the conventional sense, but a systemic effort to build a value image that integrates aspects of religiosity, professionalism, and academic credibility into every form of institutional communication. Theoretically, the approach used by MTs Al Hidayah is based on the value-based marketing paradigm, which is a marketing strategy that focuses on creating meaningful value for society through honesty, social relevance, and the moral sustainability of the institution (K. Belz, F.-M., & Peattie, 2012).

In this model, the effectiveness of promotion is not measured solely by an increase in the number of new students, but by the institution's success in building brand meaning—the emotional and ethical significance that the public perceives in relation to the institution. In the context of madrasahs, value-based marketing is realized through the integration of Islamic spiritual values with academic quality. Promotional media designed with Islamic symbols (such as calligraphy, soft colors, and religious slogans) not only serve an aesthetic function but also become a means of conveying the moral message of the institution's vision: combining faith, knowledge, and morals. Thus, madrasah promotion acts as an instrument of *da'wah* that radiates an inclusive and progressive Islamic identity.

This strategy demonstrates institutional awareness that image is not merely an outward appearance, but a reflection of internal values that live within the madrasah culture. As stated by Balmer & Greyser (2003), authentic corporate identity is formed from the alignment between the internal values of the institution (what it is) and public perception (what it is seen to be). This harmony makes the image of the madrasah not a result of artificial construction, but a reflection of the integrity and consistency of the values that are actually implemented.

The results of the study also show that promotional media such as banners, brochures, and websites are designed with professional and religious visual aesthetics, emphasizing simplicity, cleanliness, and clarity of message. Through a uniform and elegant visual design, MTs Al Hidayah presents itself as a modern, orderly, and credible Islamic educational institution. The combination of soft colors, Islamic symbols, and communicative visual narratives serves to build perceived professionalism in the eyes of the community. This is important because, as stated by Zeithaml, Bitner, & Gremler (2018), initial perceptions of the quality of educational services are often shaped by visual impressions before the community experiences the services directly.

This phenomenon is in line with Grönroos' (2007) findings that in educational services, an institution's reputation is formed through the total perceived quality of technical quality (learning outcomes), functional quality (service interactions), and institutional image. When these three aspects are consistent, public perception becomes stable and loyalty increases naturally. Thus, MTs Al Hidayah's promotional strategy can be categorized as trust-based educational marketing, a marketing model that places social trust at the core of the relationship between the institution and the community. This model is not only effective in increasing student interest but also contributes to the long-term development of the institution's brand equity.

Meanwhile, the marketing strategy for educational services at MTs Daarul Uluum PUI Majalengka is oriented towards strengthening institutional identity, social legitimacy, and relationship marketing that combines the values of da'wah and service quality. As a madrasah with the status of a PUI Pilot Center, this institution has succeeded in integrating Islamic values, professional management, and social communication into the main foundations of public reputation building. The status of MTs Daarul Uluum as a PUI Pilot Center has a strategic meaning that goes beyond administrative functions. Conceptually, this status represents a form of strategic branding, namely the process of attaching the values, history, and legitimacy of the parent organization (PUI) to the image and identity of the educational institution. According to Balmer & Greyser (2003), organizational identity is formed through the alignment of internal values (what the organization is), institutional behavior (what it does), and external perceptions (how it is perceived), and MTs Daarul Uluum demonstrates this alignment. This phenomenon reinforces the concept of symbolic capital, namely social capital that arises from symbolic recognition (P. Bourdieu, 1991). Recognition as a PUI Pilot Center enhances the honor and social status of the madrasah, thereby expanding its network of influence at the local and regional levels.

The distinctive feature of MTs Daarul Uluum lies in its ability to combine rational and spiritual dimensions in its institutional branding strategy. Rational in the sense that the madrasah has an excellent management system and curriculum, while spiritual in the sense that the madrasah represents Islamic values that are alive and oriented towards good character. Within the framework of Islamic organizational branding, the marketing strategy of Islamic educational institutions not only sells services but also offers spiritual credibility and moral reputation that grow from a commitment to divine values and community service (M. Ahmad, Z., & Abbas, 2019). This approach reflects the application of relationship marketing theory, which is a marketing strategy that emphasizes the development of long-term relationships based on values, trust, and social interaction. This approach is also relevant to the concept of Islamic social marketing, which emphasizes the dissemination of values and positive social behavior change through religious activities (S. Hassan, 2015). Thus, the marketing strategy at MTs Daarul Uluum functions as da'wah that broadens public trust and strengthens spiritual loyalty. This approach is also in line with Grönroos' (2007) view that effective service marketing in the education sector must combine functional quality (how the service is delivered) and technical quality (the results obtained) to build a long-term reputation. Thus, the marketing strategy at MTs Daarul Uluum serves as a form of da'wah that broadens public trust and strengthens spiritual loyalty. This approach is also in line with Grönroos' (2007) view that effective service marketing in the education sector must combine functional quality (how services are provided) and technical quality (the results obtained) to build a long-term reputation. Thus, MTs Daarul Uluum does not merely engage in promotion, but builds an ecosystem of values and trust where every aspect of the institution, from management structure to social interaction, functions as a living marketing medium.

This phenomenon reinforces the concept of symbolic capital, namely social capital that arises from symbolic recognition. Recognition as a PUI Pilot Center enhances the honor and social status of madrasahs, thereby expanding their network of influence at the local and regional levels. Within the framework of Islamic organizational branding, the marketing strategy of Islamic educational institutions not only sells services but also offers spiritual credibility and moral reputation that grows from a commitment to divine values and community service (Ahmad, Z., & Abbas, 2019).

5. Comparison

A comparative analysis shows that MTs Al Hidayah and MTs Daarul Uluum PUI Majalengka both develop educational service marketing strategies rooted in Islamic values, but with different orientations and approaches. MTs Al Hidayah emphasizes the symbolic and emotional dimensions through visual communication, madrasah community involvement, and the strengthening of a modern religious identity that is adaptive to the times. In contrast, MTs Daarul Uluum PUI Majalengka is oriented towards strengthening institutional legitimacy and formal reputation through its status as a PUI Pilot Center, making spiritual values and professional governance the main instruments for building public trust.

6. Conclusion

Based on the analysis of the findings of the research on the educational service marketing strategies implemented by MTs Al Hidayah and MTs Daarul Uluum PUI Majalengka in attracting and increasing student interest, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. Different Marketing Strategy Orientations but Based on the Same Values. MTs Al Hidayah focuses on strengthening its image and Islamic values through visual communication and the participation of madrasah members, while MTs Daarul Uluum PUI Majalengka emphasizes its legitimacy and institutional reputation as a PUI Pilot Center. Both are based on Islamic values and educational quality as the core of their strategies.
2. Identity and Leadership as Key Drivers. Institutional identity is a major force in building public trust, with the head of the madrasah acting as a strategic leader who drives value-based, quality, and professionalism-based promotion.
3. Quality of Service as an Effective Promotional Tool. Consistent, responsive, and reliable educational service quality is a major factor in shaping institutional loyalty and reputation in the eyes of the community.
4. Utilization of Media and Social Activities as Marketing Tools. MTs Al Hidayah is stronger in digital and visual promotion, while MTs Daarul Uluum relies on socio-religious activities as a medium for public relations and Islamic values outreach.

5. Value-Based Marketing, Trust, and Spirituality. Both madrasahs prove that the success of marketing Islamic education services does not depend on commercial promotion, but rather on the authenticity of values, integrity of service, and trust that grows from the real experiences of the community.

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