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Digitization of Islamic Education Marketing: Madrasah Head's Strategy in Optimizing Digital Platforms

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ABSTRACT
This study examines the digitalization of Islamic education marketing through the principal's strategy in digital platform-based marketing management at MI Nurul Ulum Bilingual School Grabagan Sidoarjo. The research aims to analyze strategy the implementation of POAC management functions (Planning, Organizing, Actuating, Controlling), the application of the Product,, Price, Place, Promotion, People, Process, dan Physical evidence (7P) marketing mix theory, and the obstacles and solutions faced by the school principal. This study employs a qualitative approach using a case study method. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation, analyzed using Miles, Huberman, and Saldana's interactive model. The findings reveal: (1) Digital platform-based education marketing has been structured through collaborative POAC functions; (2) The principal's strategy encompasses an integrated 7P marketing mix, including bilingual and tahfidz flagship programs, transparent pricing, information distribution via website and social media, and strengthened human resources and physical evidence; (3) Key challenges including limited digital HR, community perceptions, and digital infrastructure were addressed through adaptive and gradual strategies. This research affirms the strategic role of the madrasah principal as an effective agent of Islamic education marketing digitalization. Based on the research findings, madrasas are advised to strengthen their digital human resource capacity, consistently optimize social media and website management, and conduct regular evaluations of the effectiveness of digital marketing strategies.

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INTRODUCTION

Digital transformation has become a crucial issue in the management of educational institutions, including madrasas, as changes in people's behavior in seeking educational information are increasingly shifting to the digital space. In Indonesia, the number of registered madrasas will reach more than 80,000 educational units in 2023, which indicates the amount of competition in attracting new prospective students (Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia, 2023). At the same time, internet penetration in Indonesia continues to increase and by 2024 it will reach 79.5% of the total population, which means that people are increasingly accustomed to accessing information through digital platforms (APJII, 2024). This condition encourages Islamic educational institutions, especially madrasas, to no longer rely on conventional promotions such as brochures and banners, but instead switch to digital platform-based marketing strategies.

Digital platforms are no longer just supporting media, but strategic spaces for educational institutions to build an image, reach prospective students, strengthen communication with parents, and display institutional excellence more quickly and widely (Dian et al., 2020). In the context of madrasas, digital transformation is becoming increasingly important (Yahya et al., 2025) because madrasas not only compete in academic aspects, but also must maintain Islamic identity (Salamah & Falah, 2024), public trust (Yusuf et al., 2024), and the competitiveness of educational services (Rahmawati et al., 2024). Educational institutions to build an image, reach prospective students, strengthen communication with parents, and display institutional excellence more quickly and widely. Through digital platforms, madrasas can convey information on educational programs, religious activities, student achievements, the quality of educators, and institutional values in a more open and easily accessible manner by the public.

Studies on digital *marketing* in education show that social media, *websites*, and other digital platforms can affect the attractiveness of educational institutions (Deiss & Henneberry, 2020), improve communication with the public, and strengthen prospective students' registration decisions. Arifin et al. (2023) examined digital marketing as a madrasah marketing strategy during a pandemic whose results are relevant but situational and do not explore specific leadership strategies (Arifin et al., 2023). The results explore the optimization of social media and school websites for branding madrasah promotions in Indonesia (Yahya et al., 2025), but the study has not touched specifically on the strategic role of madrasah heads as the main driving actor.

Other research also shows that social media is used as a means of promoting educational institutions (Arifin et al., 2023), publishing flagship programs, and forming the image of madrasas in society (Rofiki, 2025). However, most of these studies still tend to place digital *marketing* as a technical promotional activity, rather than as part of the leadership and marketing management strategy of Islamic education that is integrated with the institutional vision of madrasas. Thus, there is a gap in the existing literature: there has been no study that has integrally analyzed the strategy of madrasah heads as leaders in managing digital platform-based educational marketing management at the madrasah ibtidaiyah level using the POAC (Planning, Organizing, Actuating, Controlling) management function framework and the 7P marketing mix (Yandra et al., 2024).

The limitation of previous research lies in the lack of studies that specifically examine the role of madrasah heads as strategic actors in managing Islamic education marketing based on digital platforms, especially at the madrasah ibtidaiyah level (Susanti et al., 2023). Studies on the leadership of madrasah heads in the digital era are generally more directed at learning transformation, teacher professional development (Hartono et al., 2025), or the integration of technology in madrasah management (Arifin et al., 2023). Meanwhile, studies on madrasah marketing often focus more on the use of social media, promotional strategies, or increasing the number of students, but it is not enough to explain how madrasah heads design, organize, direct, and evaluate digital marketing while maintaining Islamic educational values. This gap is an important basis for this research.

Based on this background, this study aims to: (1) analyze the implementation of the digital platform-based Islamic education marketing management function at MI Nurul Ulum Bilingual School Sidoarjo; (2) identify the strategies of madrasah heads in the implementation of the 7P (*Product, Price, Place, Promotion, People, Process, and Physical evidence)* marketing mix and (3) analyze the obstacles and solutions faced by madrasah heads in the implementation of digital marketing. Practically, the findings of this study can make a theoretical contribution in the form of developing an analytical framework for Islamic education marketing management in the digital era that

integrates transformational leadership with POAC management functions and the 7P *(Product, Price, Place, Promotion, People, Process, and Physical evidence)* marketing mix. References for madrasah heads, Islamic education policy makers, and other stakeholders in designing digital marketing strategies that are effective, ethical, and in line with Islamic education values.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study type. The use of this method is motivated by the purpose of the research to gain a comprehensive understanding of the madrasah head's strategy in Islamic education marketing management based on digital platforms (Prof. Dr. Sugiyono, 2023). Qualitative descriptive research was chosen because it is able to produce an in-depth picture of the situation of objects and events according to the actual reality.

The research was carried out at MI Nurul Ulum Bilingual School which is located at Jalan Patmosari No.03, North Juwet, Grabagan, Tulangan District, Sidoarjo Regency, East Java. The research lasted for three months, from September to November 2025. Primary data sources were obtained from the main informants, namely: (1) the Head of the Madrasah, (2) the Deputy Head of the Madrasah for Public Relations, and (3) the IT Team. Secondary data sources include the institution's profile, vision and mission, work program documents, social media archives, and relevant literature on digital marketing management.

The development of the instrument is carried out by formulating several main indicators that are in accordance with the focus of the research. The focus of the research is the strategy for the use of digital platforms, the form of communication between the madrasah and the community, strengthening the image of the institution, the promotion of superior programs, parental involvement, and obstacles in the implementation of digital transformation. Each indicator is then developed into an open-ended question so that informants can provide answers in a broad, reflective way, and according to their experience.

Data collection techniques are carried out through: (1) Direct observation of digital marketing activities; (2) In-depth interviews, and (3) Documentation studies of documents related to the focus of the research. The research uses a coding system with the format of techniques/research focus/data sources/time to facilitate analysis. Data analysis uses the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014) which consists of four stages: (1) Data Collection; (2) Data Condensation; (3) Data Presentation; and (4) Conclusion Drawn. The validity of the data is ensured through source triangulation, triangulation techniques, and time triangulation (Miles et al., 2014).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

The implementation of digital platform-based education marketing management at MI Nurul Ulum Bilingual School (NBS) Grabagan has been carried out systematically and structured through intensive coordination between leaders and staff. This was obtained by the researcher from the results of an interview with Mr. Hudi Nurwiyanto, S.Sos.I, as the Head of Madrasah MI NBS Grabagan. He explained that the flow of digital marketing management in this institution starts from careful planning in monthly coordination meetings. Educational marketing planning at MI NBS begins with determining the direction of the institution as stated in the vision, mission, and motto of the madrasah. The head of the madrasah emphasized that marketing planning cannot

be separated from the identity and ideals of the institution. The program promoted must be in accordance with the real needs of parents and students, including the analysis of community needs (need assessment).

The organization of digital-based education marketing management is carried out through the management of human resources and the arrangement of clear workflows. The head of the madrasah forms an IT team and a PPDB committee that is specifically responsible for the management of digital-based education marketing and new student admission services. There is a specific division of tasks such as managing Instagram social media, managing the website, and focusing on photo and video editing. The madrasah also prepares an educational calendar and content plan that is integrated with madrasah activities, so that content uploads are sustainable and relevant. In determining the digital marketing strategy, the head of the madrasah together with the public relations team and the IT team choose the digital platform that is most relevant to the character of the target community, namely Instagram, WhatsApp, Facebook, YouTube and websites, because these platforms are most often used by parents of students. The target marketing is not only the surrounding community, but also parents who have concerns about the quality of education and the strengthening of foreign languages from various regions.

At the implementation stage, the head of the madrasah plays an active role in directing, moving, and ensuring that all marketing strategies are carried out consistently. The main policy implemented is the consistency of content uploads on social media at least once a week, even every day. Classroom teachers also play a role in the implementation of digital marketing by documenting learning activities as a source of content. In addition to digital promotion, offline promotions such as the installation of billboards and the distribution of brochures to partner RA/TK are still carried out as a support for digital marketing. These two strategies go hand in hand and complement each other to expand the reach of information to the public, both those who access information digitally and those who still rely on direct visual information.

Supervision is carried out actively by the head of the madrasah through consistent monitoring of the content upload schedule with the public relations officer and the IT team. Promotion evaluation is carried out by monitoring public response, interaction on social media (comments and incoming messages), and the registration of new students as indicators of success. The head of the madrasah also ensures that what is published on social media is in accordance with the reality of the learning process in the classroom, so that it does not cause false expectations. Registrant data shows an increase from year to year, namely, 739 students (Academic Year 2023-2024), 741 students (Academic Year 2024-2025), and 756 students (Academic Year 2025-2026). The steadfastness of registrants at MI NBS shows that the success of digital marketing strategies has been successfully implemented in village madrasas.

The marketing strategy implemented by the head of the madrasah is oriented towards strengthening the image of the institution through *planned* and sustainable digital innovation products (products). The main products displayed are the services of *the Bilingual Program, International Class Program* (ICP), Tahfidz, integration of the national curriculum and *Cambridge University*, habituation of Dhuha Prayer and the practice of Ahlussunnah Waljamaah, as well as the collaboration *of Immersion* activities to Singapore and Malaysia with MINU Pucang Sidoarjo. The pricing strategy is formulated as a balance between maintaining the competitiveness of the institution and ensuring affordability for the local community. Cost information is disseminated transparently through digital pamphlets, website posts, and announcements in WhatsApp groups so that prospective parents get a clear picture.

In addition to a physical location (*place*) that is conducive, safe, and easily accessible, the head of the madrasah also utilizes virtual space as a place strategy. The location of the madrasah has been integrated with *Google Maps* to make it easier for people from outside the area. *The* madrasah website functions as an information center for educational services. The combination of a quiet rural physical location with digital access support provides added value for madrasas. This strategy shows that the concept *of place* in education marketing is no longer limited to the geographical existence of the institution, but also includes easy access to information through digital space. Thus, madrasas can expand their communication reach to the public, increase the visibility of the institution, and build a positive perception as an Islamic educational institution that is adaptive to technological developments.

The promotion strategy is carried out through *a hybrid* approach, which is a combination *of offline* and *online* promotions in a structured manner. Offline promotion includes the distribution of brochures to partner RA and kindergarten institutions as well as the installation of billboards at strategic points. Meanwhile, digital media used for promotion include *websites, Instagram, YouTube, Facebook, and WhatsApp*. Madrasah has implemented digital-based Human Resources (*People*) management, including teacher recruitment through institutional *email*, data collection through school computer databases and the Ministry of Religion's *Education Management Information System* (EMIS GTK) application, as well as *a fingerprint* attendance system for objective attendance monitoring.

The digital marketing management process (*Process*) is carried out through a systematic workflow involving various elements of the head of the madrasah, the deputy head of public relations, the IT team, teachers, students, and parents. Each publication content through the teacher stages documents the learning activities, is submitted to the IT team for processing and editing, then through verification and final approval by the head of the madrasah before being published. The madrasah has supporting facilities (*Physical Evidence*), including 25 air-conditioned classrooms, 60 units of laboratory laptops, and various other digital facilities. The organization is reflected in the work coordination flow that is built in stages: teachers as the implementers of activities and data collectors convey content to the IT and public relations teams, which are then controlled by the head of the madrasah before being published. This workflow pattern ensures consistency and quality of content displayed on digital platforms.

In terms of pricing, madrasas need to increase cost transparency, explain the benefits of educational services, and provide flexibility and assistance for digital payments. The location of madrasas in village areas also needs to be positioned as an advantage through the promotion of a safe, comfortable, and conducive learning environment. In promotion, human resource limitations and content consistency can be overcome through regular and collaborative digital upload planning. Meanwhile, differences in students' abilities and teachers' digital competency limitations need to be answered through adaptive learning and continuous training. In terms of process and physical evidence, madrasas need to build a systematic digital marketing workflow, including content verification by madrasah heads, as well as maximize photos, videos, websites, and social media as indirect evidence.

Discussion

Digital-Based Education Marketing Management

Digital platform-based education marketing management is basically a process of managing institutional strategies (Nurmalasari & Masitoh, 2020) in introducing, communicating, and building

the value of educational services to the community (Sarohmad, 2023) through the use of digital technology (Setyaningsih et al., 2025). Islamic education marketing management based on digital platforms at MI Nurul Ulum Bilingual School has been run in a targeted and integrated manner through the POAC *(Planning, Organizing, Actuating, Controlling) function.* This is in line with Fayol's (2013) theory which states that a systematic management function is the main foundation for organizational success, including in the context of education marketing (Fayol, 2013). In this context, madrasah heads not only function as administrative managers, but also as strategic leaders who are able to formulate and direct digital-based education marketing collaboratively. Transformative leadership (Rosmini et al., 2024) like this plays an important role in supporting the sustainability and competitiveness of madrasas in the midst of technological developments and global competition.

In the planning stage, the head of the madrasah and his team conduct monthly coordination meetings to determine the direction of marketing, compile publication programs, and adjust communication strategies to the vision, mission, and motto of the madrasah. This shows that marketing is not carried out spontaneously, but is designed based on institutional identity and community needs. In the theory of educational marketing management, planning has an important position because it is the basis for determining market targets, the messages to be communicated, the media used, and the image of the institution to be built (Rofiki, 2025). The findings of the study show that MI Nurul Ulum Bilingual School has made efforts in preparing content plans and activity calendars that are integrated with madrasah activities. Thus, the digital content published does not stand alone, but is sourced from real activities that take place in the madrasah environment.

At the organizing stage, the madrasah forms an IT team and a PPDB committee that has a special task in managing digital-based education marketing and new student admission services. The division of labor is also carried out more specifically, for example *Instagram* managers, *website* admins, and photo and video editing teams. When viewed from the perspective of organizational theory, this division of tasks shows a differentiation of roles in the madrasah work structure. Digital marketing requires the involvement of various parties because good content requires not only information, but also documentation, editing, media management (Sugeng, 2022a), communication responses, and message supervision. Therefore, the existence of a special team is important so that digital marketing does not run informally or depend on one individual. This finding also shows that madrasas are beginning to understand the needs of human resources in the digital ecosystem. The IT and public relations teams then process the documentation into content that is worthy of publication. This pattern shows that there is an integration between academic activities, institutional documentation, and public communication strategies.

At the implementation stage, digital marketing is carried out through consistent content uploads. The head of the madrasah sets a policy that social media needs to be filled at least once a week, even tried every day. This consistency is in line with the principles of digital marketing which emphasizes the importance of sustainable communication with the audience (Valentin et al., 2025a). In the context of education, content consistency can build the perception that the institution is active, open, and has real activities (H. Sari, 2025). The public not only needs claims that madrasas have excellent programs, but also needs visual and narrative evidence of how the program is run (Bowo et al., 2023). Therefore, documentation of learning activities, tahfidz programs, *bilingual* activities, *Cambridge* programs, religious habits, and *international* activities are important materials in building public trust. In other words, digital content serves as a

representation of educational services that can be observed by the public before they make a decision to enroll their children.

At the supervision stage, the head of the madrasah monitors the upload schedule, content quality, community response, comments, incoming messages, and the development of the number of registrants. This supervision is important because digital marketing is not only related to the intensity of publications, but also the compatibility between the published message and the reality of educational services. In the theory of service marketing, trust is an important element (Hakim & Faradiba, 2024) because educational services are completely intangible and the results cannot be seen immediately in a short time (Wulandari et al., 2024). The head of the madrasah at MI NBS plays a role in ensuring that the content published does not raise false expectations. This shows that there is ethical awareness in education marketing. Marketing not only aims to attract prospective students, but also must maintain the accuracy of information and institutional integrity.

Education marketing management based on digital platforms at MI NBS can also be analyzed through the concept of marketing mix of educational services or 7P, namely *product, price, place, promotion, people, process, and physical evidence* (Goestjahjanti et al., n.d.) . In terms of products, madrassas offer educational services that have differentiation, such as *Bilingual Programs*, *International Class Programs*, Tahfidz, integration of the National Curriculum and *Cambridge University*, habituation of Dhuha prayers, Ahlussunnah Waljamaah practices, and *Immersion activities* to Singapore and Malaysia. These educational products show that madrassas are trying to build an identity as an Islamic educational institution that not only emphasizes religious aspects, but also foreign language skills, global insights, and academic quality. In education marketing theory, products are not only interpreted as formal programs (Arizka Rahmatin Nisa' & Asep Kurniawan, 2025), but include all the values received by students, ranging from the curriculum, learning culture, facilities, character development, to the reputation of the institution. Therefore, MI NBS's flagship program is the main basis in building the institution's position in the midst of educational competition.

In terms of price, madrasas convey cost information through digital pamphlets, *websites*, and *WhatsApp* groups. Cost transparency is important (Nurillah & Herawan, 2024) because parents' decisions in choosing educational institutions are influenced by the perception of the balance between costs and benefits (Kotler & Keller, 2006). In the context of rural communities, the cost of education can be a sensitive factor, especially if the flagship program is perceived as an expensive exclusive program. Therefore, the price strategy is not enough to only display the nominal cost, but needs to be followed by an explanation of facilities, services, quality of learning, and long-term benefits for students. The results of the study show that madrasas have used digital media to provide cost information openly. This shows that digital platforms also have administrative and informative functions, not just promotion.

In the aspect of place, madrasas combine physical locations and virtual spaces. Physically, madrasas are located in a quiet, safe, and conducive rural environment. Digitally, madrasas strengthen accessibility through *Google Maps* and *websites*. The concept *of place* in education marketing has expanded its meaning. In the past, *place was* more often understood as the geographical location of the institution (Sugeng, 2022). However, in the digital era, *place* also includes the convenience of the community in finding information (M. P. Sari & Sirozi, 2024), accessing institutional profiles, and communicating with schools or madrassas (Sari, 2025). In the context of MI NBS, rural locations that can initially be considered as an obstacle can actually be

positioned as an added value because they offer a calmer and conducive learning atmosphere. The support of digital platforms then helps overcome distance limitations by providing wider access to information for people from outside the region.

In the promotion aspect, madrasas implement hybrid promotion strategies through *offline* and *online media*. Offline promotion is carried out through brochures and billboards, while *online promotion* is carried out through *websites, Instagram, YouTube, Facebook, and WhatsApp*. This strategy is relevant to the diverse character of society. Not all parents have the same pattern of access to information. Some people actively use social media (Septiana et al., 2025), while others still find it easier to receive information through brochures, billboards, or direct communication (Valentin et al., 2025). Therefore, *hybrid* promotion shows that madrassas do not completely abandon conventional approaches, but combine them with digital approaches. In marketing communication theory, multichannel strategies can expand the reach of messages and increase the chances of people receiving information from various sources.

In the aspect of Human Resources (*people*), madrasas involve madrasah heads, deputy heads of public relations, IT teams, teachers, students, and parents in the digital marketing process. This shows that education marketing is not only the responsibility of the promotion part, but is the collective work of all madrasah residents (Dedi Abu Samsudin et al., 2024). Teachers are important actors because they produce learning activities that can be documented as content. Students are representatives of the results of educational services, while parents can be part of social communication that strengthens the institution's reputation. Madrasah heads play the role of directors and controllers so that marketing activities remain in accordance with the institutional vision. Thus, people in the context of education marketing not only means service personnel, but also all parties who shape the educational experience and public perception of madrasas.

In terms of process, madrassas have a systematic content workflow. Teachers document learning activities, then submit them to the IT team or public relations to be processed, edited, and prepared as publication content. After that, the content is verified by the head of the madrasah before being published. This process shows the existence of a quality control mechanism in madrasah digital communication (Simenec et al., 2023). In service marketing, the process is very important because the community assesses the quality of services not only from the final results, but also from the way the institution runs the service. A systematic workflow can prevent misinformation, maintain image consistency (Bowo et al., 2023), and ensure that the content published reflects the values of the madrasah. Meanwhile, in the aspect of *physical evidence*, madrasas display facilities such as air-conditioned classrooms, laptop laboratories, digital facilities, and documentation of daily activities as physical evidence of educational services. Physical evidence is important because educational services are abstract so that the community needs concrete indicators to assess the quality of the institution.

Madrasah Head's Strategy in Digital Platform-Based Education Marketing Management

The strategy of madrasah heads in digital platform-based education marketing management at MI Nurul Ulum Bilingual School Grabagan shows a leadership role that is not only administrative (Hartono et al., 2025), but also strategic (Taufan et al., 2021), communicative, and adaptive to technological developments (Bowo et al., 2023). Madrasah heads are the main actors in directing marketing vision, forming work teams, determining digital platforms, supervising content, and ensuring that every message published is in accordance with the institution's identity. In the theory of educational leadership, the principal or head of the madrasah has the responsibility to manage resources (Yusuf et al., 2024), build organizational culture, direct innovation, and

maintain the institution's relationship with the community (Asyafi'iyah & Nur, 2025). The results of the study show that this role is seen in the way madrasah heads place digital marketing as part of the madrasah development strategy, not just a technical publication activity.

The first strategy that appears is the affirmation of the institution's identity as the basis for marketing. The head of the madrasah places the vision, mission, and motto of the madrasah as a foothold in designing marketing programs. This is important because effective educational marketing must have clarity of identity (Romandoni & Efendi, 2024). It is not enough for educational institutions to display facilities or activities, but must be able to show values that distinguish them from other institutions. In the context of MI NBS, the identity built is an Islamic madrasah with bilingual strengthening, tahfidz, international programs, national curriculum, *Cambridge*, and habituation of *Ahlussunnah Waljamaah*. This strategy shows a *clear positioning. Madrasah wants to be known as an Islamic educational institution that maintains religious values, but is also open to global needs and technological developments.*

The second strategy is the selection of digital platforms based on the character of the target community. The head of the madrasah and the team choose *Instagram, WhatsApp, Facebook, YouTube, and websites* because these platforms are widely used by students' parents and the community. Choosing a platform that suits the character of the audience is important in digital marketing (Sugeng, 2022b). The media used must be in accordance with people's communication habits. *WhatsApp*, for example, is effective for direct communication and the dissemination of information to parents. *Instagram* is effective for building a visual image through photos, short videos, and documentation of activities. *YouTube* can be used to display longer videos of activities, while websites serve as official information centers. *Facebook* is still relevant for some people who are used to accessing community information through the platform. By using various platforms, madrasas expand information affordability opportunities and build more flexible communication.

The third strategy is to strengthen content based on real activities. The head of the madrasah not only encourages the publication of promotional content, but also ensures that the content is sourced from learning activities, superior programs, student activities, and madrasah culture. This strategy is important because educational marketing that is too oriented to promotional claims can create a distance between image and reality. By making real activities as content material, madrasas build trust through evidence. Documentation of bilingual learning, tahfidz, religious activities, the use of facilities, student achievements, and international activities become a stronger form of communication because the public can see the educational process concretely. In this context, digital platforms function as an institutional window that shows madrasah life to the public.

The fourth strategy is to build digitalization on the internal aspects of management, not just external promotion. The results of the study show that madrasas use institutional email in teacher recruitment, school computer databases, the Ministry of Religion's EMIS GTK, and the fingerprint attendance system. This shows that digital transformation does not stop at promotional media, but also enters human resource governance and madrasah administration (Rosmini et al., 2024). In modern management theory, internal digitalization can strengthen organizational efficiency, data accuracy, and accountability (Hasna, 2024). If digital marketing only displays an external image without the support of organized internal management, then the image is potentially unsustainable.

Overall, the strategy of madrasah heads in digital platform-based education marketing at MI NBS shows leadership that is oriented towards the integration of Islamic values, service quality, technology, and public communication. Madrasah heads not only carry out administrative

functions, but also become strategy directors (Rosmini et al., 2024), team drivers, quality supervisors, and guardians of madrasah identity. This shows that the success of digital marketing in educational institutions is greatly influenced by leadership capacity. Digital platforms are only tools, while their effectiveness depends on the ability of leaders to determine direction, build teams, manage content, read community needs, and maintain compatibility between digital image and the quality of real educational services.

Obstacles and Solutions for Madrasah Heads in Digital Platform-Based Education Marketing Management

Obstacles in digital platform-based education marketing management at MI Nurul Ulum Bilingual School Grabagan can be understood through the education marketing mix. These obstacles are not only related to technical aspects, but also concern public perception, human resource readiness, promotion consistency, digital systems, and the ability of madrasas to display evidence of educational services. In the theory of marketing educational services, educational services are complex, not fully tangible, and highly dependent on public trust (Yusuf et al., 2024). Therefore, the solutions needed are not only in the form of promotion, but also strengthening communication, transparency, human resource development, process improvement, and providing convincing physical and digital evidence.

In the product aspect, the main obstacle lies in the public's lack of understanding of the benefits of superior programs such as bilingual, Cambridge, and tahfidz. Some people still view these programs as heavy, exclusive, and synonymous with high costs. In marketing theory, a good product will not be optimally accepted if the benefits are not communicated in easy-to-understand language (Hidayat & Patras, 2024). Therefore, madrasas need to explain programs communicatively, for example bilingual as a provision for global communication, tahfidz as the formation of Islamic character, and Cambridge as the strengthening of academic standards.

In terms of price, the obstacle arises from the perception of some village people that the cost of education is relatively high and parents are not used to using digital payments. In education marketing, price is not only nominal, but also value perception. Costs will be easier to accept if the community understands the benefits of services, facilities, and programs obtained by students. Therefore, madrasas need to increase cost transparency, explain service components openly, provide payment flexibility, and assist parents so that the digitization of financial services does not become a new burden.

In terms of location, the position of the madrasah in the village area can cause doubts for prospective guardians of students from outside the area because it is considered far from the city center. However, the location can also be an advantage if communicated as a calm, safe, comfortable, and conducive learning environment (Kotler & Keller, 2015). A relevant strategy is to highlight the atmosphere of the madrasah through photo and video documentation of activities. The integration of location with Google Maps and the use of the website as an information center also strengthens the place strategy, because access to madrasas is not only physical, but also digital.

In terms of promotion and human resources, the main obstacles are limited human resources, inconsistent management of digital content, differences in students' initial abilities, and limited digital competencies of some teachers. Digital promotion requires continuous planning, creativity, technical skills, and collaboration (Nur Fitriyanti, 2023). Therefore, madrasas need to develop content plans, divide roles between teachers, IT teams, public relations, and madrasah heads, and set publication standards. On the other hand, learning must be carried out gradually

and adaptively, while teachers need to receive digital training to be able to support learning while strengthening the image of the madrasah.

In terms of process and physical evidence, obstacles can be seen in the lack of optimal digital support systems in marketing workflows and the limited documentation facilities for educational services. The marketing process needs to be strengthened through a systematic workflow, starting from content planning, documentation collection, editing, verification of madrasah heads, publications, to evaluation of audience responses. Meanwhile, physical evidence such as facilities, classrooms, laboratories, learning activities, student achievements, and religious activities need to be displayed through photos, videos, websites, and social media. Thus, MI Nurul Ulum Bilingual School's digital marketing does not only depend on the platform, but also on the strength of internal management, the leadership of the madrasah head, content quality, conformity with the reality of services, and the ability of the madrasah to maintain its Islamic identity.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the digitalization of Islamic education marketing at MI Nurul Ulum Bilingual School Grabagan, Sidoarjo, is implemented systematically through the integration of the POAC management functions (Planning, Organizing, Actuating, and Controlling). The head of the madrasah plays a strategic role in directing digital marketing activities, starting from planning based on the institutional vision, mission, and community needs, organizing human resources through the establishment of IT and new student admission teams, implementing consistent digital publications, and supervising content quality and marketing effectiveness. Furthermore, the marketing strategy integrates the 7P marketing mix, encompassing differentiated educational programs, transparent pricing, accessible physical and digital locations, hybrid promotional activities, human resource involvement, systematic service processes, and the presentation of adequate physical facilities as evidence of educational quality. These strategies demonstrate that digital platforms function not merely as promotional tools, but also as instruments for building institutional identity, strengthening public trust, and expanding access to information about Islamic educational services.

However, the implementation of digital marketing continues to face several challenges, including limited digital human resource competencies, inconsistent content management, public perceptions regarding the cost and exclusivity of flagship programs, geographical accessibility, and limitations in digital infrastructure and technological readiness. The madrasah addresses these challenges through collaborative management, continuous digital competency development, transparent communication regarding educational services and costs, adaptive learning strategies, and the optimization of both online and offline promotional channels. This study highlights that the effectiveness of digital marketing in Islamic educational institutions depends not only on the availability of digital platforms, but also on the strategic leadership of the madrasah head, the readiness of human resources, the quality of institutional communication, and the consistency between promotional messages and actual educational services. Therefore, madrasah heads are encouraged to continuously strengthen digital human resource capacity, optimize website and social media management, and conduct regular evaluations to ensure sustainable and effective educational marketing. Ultimately, the integration of POAC management functions and the 7P marketing mix provides an important framework for developing adaptive, competitive, and Islamic value-oriented educational marketing management in the digital era.

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