



Marketing Strategies for Education Services to Improving the Students Competitiveness of MAN I Aceh Barat

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ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received, May 2025
Received in revised from May, 2025
Accepted June 2025
Available online, June 28, 2025

Keywords: Marketing Strategy,
Educational Services,
Competitiveness

ABSTRACT

Abstract

This study aims to determine the marketing strategy of educational services in increasing the competitiveness of MAN I Aceh Barat with a descriptive qualitative approach through observation, interviews, and documentation. The research subjects included the head of the madrasah, the head of student affairs, teachers, students and the community. The results showed that the marketing strategy was carried out through four stages: planning (preparation of superior programs and needs-based services), organizing (formation of a promotion team, social media management, external cooperation), implementing (digital promotion, innovative activities, and participatory services), and supervising (periodic evaluation and monitoring of community response). The madrasah competitiveness model is measured through indicators such as increased student numbers, market share, institutional image, student satisfaction and loyalty, and value to stakeholders, reflecting the effectiveness of the marketing strategy and the madrasah's contribution to the community

1. Introduction

Education is a process of learning designed to develop individual potential through knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes, enabling individuals to contribute meaningfully to society (Nurul Fatimah, 2022). Through education, individuals acquire not only knowledge but also skills and noble values that facilitate positive interactions within their social environment (Azfa Nabil Shafi, 2024).

As an institution providing educational services, madrasahs are expected to continuously innovate and adapt to contemporary developments (Jamrizal, 2022). Effective marketing strategies are critical to enhancing both the quality and quantity of student enrollment. However, field observations reveal that not all madrasahs successfully navigate these changes (Fera Indriani, 2021).

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Preliminary observations indicate that MAN I Aceh Barat, a prominent public madrasah in West Aceh Regency located in Meulaboh City, enjoys significant community support despite the emergence of new, innovative madrasahs and schools. The madrasah has experienced consistent growth in student enrollment over the past three years, with total students rising from 957 in 2022–2023 to 1,048 in 2023–2024, and further to 1,112 in 2024–2025. This consistent upward trend across all levels underscores MAN I Aceh Barat's appeal.

Compared to other institutions in the region, such as MAN 2 Aceh Barat (300 students), SMA 1 Aceh Barat, and SMA 2 Aceh Barat (approximately 500 students each), MAN I Aceh Barat maintains a significantly larger student body, positioning it as a preferred choice for students and the community. Data from the Ministry of Religious Affairs and the Ministry of Education and Culture indicate that West Aceh hosts numerous madrasahs and public schools, each with distinct competitive advantages.

MAN I Aceh Barat's appeal stems from its reputation, educational quality, facilities, and diverse extracurricular programs designed to foster both academic and non-academic student potential, alongside active community engagement in educational activities. Consequently, marketing educational services involves creative and innovative efforts to highlight an institution's unique strengths, ensuring its appeal to prospective students and the community. Effective marketing extends beyond merely promoting educational services; it requires aligning strategies with consumer needs and satisfaction.

To remain competitive and sustainable, educational institutions must implement continuous marketing efforts. The importance of marketing strategies in madrasahs is evident as a key factor in thriving amidst global competition.

2. Methodology

This study adopts a descriptive qualitative approach, with data collected through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation (Sandu Siyoto & M. Ali Sodik, 2015). The research subjects comprised the madrasah principal, head of student affairs, teachers, students, and community members. Data analysis followed three stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing.

3. Results

3.1 Marketing Strategies for Educational Services to Enhance the Competitiveness of MAN I Aceh Barat.

a. Planning

The planning phase focuses on strengthening branding through social media, developing flagship programs, and setting realistic targets for new student admissions. Social media leverages technological advancements to expand reach and reinforce the madrasah's positive image. Programs such as tahfidz classes, olympiad training, and extracurricular activities reflect a commitment to academic excellence and character development. Additionally, setting admission targets aligned with capacity and market segmentation ensures educational quality while avoiding overcapacity risks. These strategies aim to enhance competitiveness and service quality at MAN I Aceh Barat.

b. Organizing

The organizational structure supporting promotional activities at MAN I Aceh Barat demonstrates a systematic and collaborative approach to enhancing marketing effectiveness. A dedicated promotion team, comprising teachers, students, the school committee, alumni, and parents, fosters a participatory approach. The media and publicity team manages social media to build a positive image and reach a broader audience, while the admissions team professionally communicates technical information to prospective students and parents. Collaborations with external stakeholders, such as

the school committee, alumni, and parents, strengthen promotional efforts by leveraging emotional connections, enhancing public trust in the institution.

c. Implementing

Implementation is tailored to the local community's characteristics, involving both internal and external activities to enhance competitiveness and foster closer community ties. Digital platforms, including social media, the official website, and digital brochures, enable rapid and widespread information dissemination, reflecting an awareness of digital branding's importance. Regular publication of student achievements strengthens the madrasah's positive image, builds public trust, and motivates students. Direct engagement through school visits and community interactions establishes emotional connections and long-term trust. This synergy of technological innovation and humanistic approaches reinforces the madrasah's position in a competitive educational landscape.

d. Controlling

Comprehensive oversight ensures that implemented strategies positively impact MAN I Aceh Barat's competitiveness. Periodic evaluations, including admission review meetings, analysis of applicant data, and surveys of student and parent satisfaction, inform future strategies and innovative program development. Promotional activities involving alumni and teacher testimonials proved more effective than passive print media. However, challenges include limited outreach to remote areas and inadequate coordination with external parties, necessitating more structured strategies involving community leaders. Data analysis shows a consistent increase in applicants, indicating successful promotion and educational quality. Surveys confirm high satisfaction with teacher discipline, flagship programs, and religious guidance, though improvements in learning technology and extracurricular variety are needed. Overall, MAN I Aceh Barat has built a positive image but requires continuous improvement to remain competitive.

3.2 . Competitiveness Model of MAN I Aceh Barat

The competitiveness of MAN I Aceh Barat is measured through several indicators, reflecting the success of its marketing strategies:

a. Sales

Madrasahs aim to generate income through the sale of educational services that support their operational sustainability. This income is obtained through two main approaches: pull selling and push selling. According to Winardi, sales are an integrated effort to develop strategic plans aimed at satisfying the needs and desires of buyers in order to generate profitable sales.

The pull approach focuses on creating appeal for prospective students through various promotions, educational campaigns, and brand management that can motivate them to choose education at the madrasah. Meanwhile, the push approach involves providing adequate sales infrastructure and efficient distribution channels to facilitate access and the registration process for new students.

Sales are direct efforts to attract the interest of prospective students to enroll in madrasahs. These activities include: (a) Direct promotion to schools/madrasahs by actively approaching prospective students and their parents face-to-face. (b) Internal roles as promotional agents, such as teachers, madrasah principals, and alumni, are utilized as ambassadors to disseminate information about the madrasah's strengths to the community. Alumni, in particular, serve as tangible examples

of the madrasah's success, thereby exerting a positive influence on prospective students and their parents (Zamahsari Abdul Azis, 2024). (c) Offering outstanding programs Madrasahs offer specific programs that add value, such as tahfidz classes, science classes, foreign language classes, extracurricular activities, and other achievement-based programs. These programs are designed to attract students with special interests and talents, as well as to highlight the madrasah's differentiation from other educational institutions. (d) The creation of promotional materials such as brochures and videos is used to convey information in an engaging visual format. This is crucial for expanding promotional reach, especially in the digital age and on social media (Qonitah Hafidzah, 2025).

Thus, MAN 1 Aceh Barat has implemented various effective promotional strategies to enhance competitiveness and attract the interest of prospective new students. Direct promotional strategies targeting schools and madrasahs are conducted through face-to-face approaches, fostering more personal communication between the madrasah and prospective students as well as their parents. Additionally, internal roles such as teachers, madrasah principals, and alumni are maximized as promotional agents. Alumni, in particular, serve as a tangible representation of the educational success at MAN 1 Aceh Barat. However, it is not only that; the madrasah also has a sufficiently positive image among the community, which can exert a positive influence and strengthen the madrasah's reputation within society.

Furthermore, the madrasah highlights its flagship programs such as tahfidz classes, science classes, foreign language classes, and various extracurricular activities based on achievements. The diverse program offerings provide added value and unique appeal for students with special interests and talents, while also demonstrating the differentiation of MAN 1 Aceh Barat from other educational institutions. Equally important, the use of promotional media such as brochures and promotional videos supports the dissemination of information in a visual and engaging manner, especially in today's digital age. This strategy expands the reach of promotions through social media and other digital platforms, further solidifying MAN 1 Aceh Barat's position as an outstanding and adaptive madrasah that meets the needs and developments of the times.

The research findings on sales in enhancing the competitiveness of MAN I Aceh Barat have strong relevance to previous research conducted by Rika Ayu Sapitri and her colleagues on the Implementation of Educational Service Marketing in Enhancing the Attractiveness and Competitiveness of Schools in a Competitive Era. Both researchers emphasize the importance of marketing strategies in promoting or marketing the madrasah's outstanding programs.

Haeruddin and his team's research on Madrasah Marketing Strategies in Attracting Student Interest at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Al-Ijtihad Danger. In this context, the research results emphasize an emotional approach and the foundational values of education for young children, with a focus on marketing to parents. This indicates that the research can provide insights for attracting student interest and community involvement in enrolling their children in madrasahs. Thus, both studies collectively contribute significantly to promoting and marketing madrasah programs, ensuring that madrasahs remain a preferred choice.

b. Market Share

Market share in the world of education can be defined as the ratio between the revenue generated from educational services and the total size of the education market as a whole. This market share reflects the extent to which a school or madrasah can dominate the market compared to other educational institutions. According to Kotler and Keller, market share refers to the proportion of students who choose a particular educational institution compared to the total potential student population in a specific geographic area or market segment. Increasing market

share requires a deep understanding of competitive strategies, differentiation advantages, and effective market penetration strategies. The larger the market share held by an educational institution, the greater its influence within the education sector.

- a. The percentage of students compared to other schools and measuring the proportion of students enrolled in madrasahs compared to other schools in the surrounding area, providing an overview of the market share.
- b. The number of applicants each year and analyzing the number of prospective students who enroll each year, which shows the madrasah's appeal to prospective students in the area.
- c. The madrasah's position compared to competitors: superior, equal, or inferior compared to other competitors.

Thus, MAN 1 Aceh Barat has achieved impressive results in various strategies implemented, as evidenced by the percentage of students compared to other schools in the surrounding area. This madrasah has successfully maintained and even increased its market share, reflecting the public's trust in the quality of education it offers. The continuously increasing number of applicants each year serves as evidence that MAN 1 Aceh Barat is increasingly sought after by prospective students and parents, indicating a strong appeal, both in terms of academic excellence, extracurricular activities, and Islamic values that are the hallmark of the madrasah.

In comparison with other educational institutions, MAN 1 Aceh Barat has positioned itself as a leading institution, marked by various student achievements, the quality of its teachers, and adequate facilities. This success is attributed to targeted educational marketing strategies and responsive services that address the needs of students and the community. Therefore, MAN 1 Aceh Barat deserves to be regarded as a madrasah that is not only competitive but also inspiring in creating quality education in the Aceh Barat region.

c. Customer awareness

If the public is not familiar with a school or madrasah, then demand for the educational services offered will likely be low. According to Keller, customer awareness is the level of public recognition of the existence and excellence of an educational institution. Communication and promotion strategies are very influential here.

Therefore, many educational institutions strive to introduce themselves and their brands through various forms of promotion, with the aim of increasing public awareness of the services they offer. There are several objectives as follows:

- a. The level of public awareness of a madrasah's name is an initial indicator of the success of the educational institution's marketing strategy. The higher the level of awareness, the greater the opportunity for the madrasah to attract prospective students. This awareness is typically built through the madrasah's reputation, which is established through various social activities, student achievements, and the madrasah's involvement in the surrounding community.
- b. Public knowledge about the outstanding programs offered, as understanding of these strengths will influence their perception of the quality of education provided by the madrasah.
- c. The information channels used to convey information; madrasahs can utilize various communication channels. Social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, and WhatsApp are effective tools for targeting young people and digitally literate parents (Helina Apriyani, 2022).

MAN 1 Aceh Barat has demonstrated a deep understanding of the importance of communication in building the image and enhancing the appeal of educational institutions in the eyes

of the community. Through social media platforms like Instagram and Facebook, the madrasah publishes the achievements of its students, such as participation in academic and non-academic competitions, as well as other accomplishments that highlight the quality of education at the madrasah. With engaging and visually-oriented content, the madrasah has successfully attracted the attention of many people, making it easier for the public to learn more about the educational services offered.

Moreover, the presence of MAN 1 Aceh Barat in the social environment also highlights its contribution to advancing education in Aceh Barat. Active participation in various social and cultural activities helps promote more inclusive educational values rooted in community needs. Thus, this madrasah does not only focus on academic achievements but also on character development and social awareness among students, which in turn strengthens its image and popularity in the public eye.

Overall, MAN 1 Aceh Barat has successfully demonstrated that the use of effective communication channels, especially social media, is one of the key strategies in building closeness with the community and increasing the appeal of educational institutions. This shows that good communication and the use of technology can be important factors in introducing the quality of education and the madrasah's flagship programs to the wider community.

d. Customer Image

Self-image refers to perceptions formed based on knowledge, understanding, and information received by individuals about something. According to Kotler and Keller, customer image is the perception of service quality, teaching staff, facilities, and graduate outcomes. A positive image will influence the decisions of parents and students to choose that institution. In the context of educational institutions, it is very important for the institution to consistently convey information to the public or prospective education customers in order to create a positive image and support the institution's reputation (Juhji et al., 2020).

The public's perception of the quality of madrasahs is often influenced by students' academic results, competitive graduates, and a conducive and religious learning environment. Many parents choose madrasahs because they are considered capable of providing a balanced education in both religious and general subjects. In some areas, madrasahs are seen as superior in shaping students' character and morality, although there are still challenges in terms of learning facilities and technological proficiency compared to public schools (Fera Indriani, 2021).

The reputation of madrasahs in academic and non-academic fields at both the local and national levels. If madrasahs actively participate in competitions such as the Olympics, MTQ, or Islamic arts and culture, their reputation tends to improve. Madrasahs that successfully integrate the national curriculum and religious curriculum also gain wider recognition. A strong reputation will encourage public trust and increase enrollment interest.

e. Customer Satisfaction

Customer satisfaction in the context of education is something that customers themselves need to be aware of. The process of achieving this satisfaction begins with the planning stage of educational services, followed by interactions between service providers and customers, the services provided during the process, and the services received after the process is complete. According to Kotler and Keller, customer satisfaction is the feeling of joy or disappointment that a person experiences as a result of comparing the perceived performance or product with the expected performance or product. Each of these stages plays a crucial role in shaping the overall experience and satisfaction of education service customers (Kholifah Putrikurnia, 2024).

Student satisfaction with the teaching and learning process encompasses their experiences during educational activities. Factors influencing this include teaching methods, interaction with teachers, the quality of the material taught, the use of technology in learning, and a supportive classroom environment. Students feel satisfied if they feel comfortable and challenged to learn, and acquire knowledge and skills relevant to their needs. Satisfaction with facilities and infrastructure plays a significant role in creating a comfortable learning environment that supports the learning process. Adequate facilities such as comfortable classrooms, laboratories, libraries, internet access, and sports facilities and extracurricular activities will support students' development to the fullest.

At MAN 1 Aceh Barat, attention to these factors is a top priority in improving the quality of education. This madrasah continues to strive to develop innovative teaching methods, improve the quality of interaction between teachers and students, update learning materials, and maximize the use of educational technology. In addition, MAN 1 Aceh Barat is also committed to providing complete and comfortable learning facilities, thereby creating a learning environment that encourages students to develop both academically and non-academically. These efforts aim to increase student satisfaction and make MAN 1 Aceh Barat a competitive and sought-after educational institution.

f. Customer Loyalty

Currently, the cost of attracting new customers in the education sector is increasing. According to Oliver, customer loyalty is a deep commitment to consistently subscribe to or reuse educational services in the future. In education, this could mean students continuing to higher levels at the same institution or alumni actively supporting their alma mater. Therefore, retaining existing customers is a key focus in educational marketing strategies. Loyal customers are less sensitive to price changes and often act as agents promoting educational services more broadly.

Recommendations from parents and alumni play an important role in the enrollment process for new students at madrasahs. Parents typically assess the quality of education provided by madrasahs based on the experiences of their children or previous students. Therefore, recommendations from parents or alumni can provide a clear picture of the quality of teaching, facilities, and learning environment at the madrasah.

For prospective students who are continuing from the MTs to MA levels in the same madrasah, these recommendations can be even stronger because they already understand and have experienced the learning process. Alumni who have been successful after continuing their education at the madrasah can also be a strong source of recommendation, as they can provide testimonials about the quality of teaching that supports their academic and non-academic development.

g. Stakeholder Value

The success of a school or madrasah in educational competition can be measured by the extent to which the institution benefits its stakeholders. According to Freeman Stakeholder, the success of an educational institution is not only measured by student satisfaction, but also by the value created for all stakeholders, including parents, lecturers, staff, the government, and the community. This includes the quality of education, career opportunities for graduates, contributions to social development, and responsible resource management.

These benefits can be calculated as the difference between the value obtained by stakeholders from the educational services provided and the total costs they incur. Thus, success can be seen from how much value is felt by the parties involved compared to the costs they bear.

MAN 1 Aceh Barat, in facing competition in the world of education, can be measured by the extent to which the institution is able to provide tangible benefits to its stakeholders. These benefits

are reflected in the difference between the value or satisfaction felt by students, parents, and the community regarding the educational services provided, and the total costs they incur. The greater the value of the benefits received compared to the costs incurred, the higher the level of success of the madrasah in meeting the expectations and needs of its stakeholders.

MAN 1 Aceh Barat needs to ensure that all of its educational services, whether in academic aspects, character development, or extracurricular activities, are able to provide meaningful experiences and enhance the competitiveness of its students. The quality of learning, the responsiveness of services to student needs, and innovation in educational programs are key factors in creating this added value. Additionally, responsive service, adequate facilities, a comfortable learning environment, and harmonious relationships between teachers, students, and parents are elements that support stakeholder satisfaction.

Furthermore, the success of MAN 1 Aceh Barat also depends on its ability to manage educational costs to remain affordable without compromising service quality. Efficiency in resource utilization, transparency in fund management, and the provision of scholarships to high-achieving or underprivileged students can serve as strategies to enhance the positive perception of the community toward this madrasah. As a result, the community will feel that their investments—whether in the form of costs, time, or trust placed in MAN 1 Aceh Barat—have yielded results that are commensurate with, or even exceed, their expectations.

Therefore, to continue strengthening its position in the education competition, MAN 1 Aceh Barat must focus not only on improving internal quality but also on understanding the needs, aspirations, and satisfaction levels of stakeholders on an ongoing basis. Regular evaluation of educational service performance, openness to feedback, and the ability to adapt to changes in the external environment are key to maintaining and improving the success of this madrasah in the future.

h. Growth

Madrasahs must continue to develop in order to improve important aspects such as sales, market share, and customer awareness. According to Ansoff's Matrix, it offers a framework for growth strategies, including market penetration (increasing market share in existing markets), market development (entering new geographic markets or segments), product development (offering new study programs), and diversification (starting new unrelated businesses).

Additionally, there needs to be continuous improvement in performance to compete in the education sector. All success indicators in this educational competition must be consistently improved over time to ensure sustained progress.

There are several areas of growth in madrasahs, as follows:

- a. An increase in the number of students each year, indicating that the educational institution is able to attract more parents and students. This can occur due to the institution's improving reputation, adequate facilities, relevant curriculum, or effective teaching methods. Institutions that continue to grow in terms of student numbers will have more resources to enhance educational quality and expand program variety.
- b. Improvements in facilities and infrastructure (educational facilities) are an important aspect of creating a conducive learning environment. Facilities such as comfortable classrooms, sports facilities, laboratories, libraries, and learning technology can support students in learning more effectively. Infrastructure such as access roads, parking, and security systems are also important to ensure students feel safe and comfortable in the school environment.
- c. Developing a curriculum that is in line with the times is very important to ensure that students acquire skills that are relevant to the needs of the world of work or further education.

Additional programs such as extracurricular activities, skills courses, or programming classes can improve students' abilities outside of core subjects and give them more options to develop according to their interests and talents.

Thus, MAN 1 Aceh Barat continues to show a positive trend in its institutional development, as evidenced by the increase in the number of new students each year. This phenomenon indicates that the madrasah has successfully built a positive image in the eyes of the community, through improvements in the quality of educational services, teaching standards, and a more responsive approach to the needs of students and parents. The success in attracting more students is also due to systematic efforts to improve various internal aspects, from enhancing the competence of educators, providing flagship programs, to strengthening relationships with the surrounding community. The increasing number of students is an important asset for MAN 1 Aceh Barat to expand the scope of educational services while increasing the availability of resources that will support the madrasah's future development.

Based on the indicators used by researchers and the findings of the MAN I Aceh Barat study, the success of the educational service marketing strategy in enhancing the competitiveness of MAN I Aceh Barat is measured by key aspects such as sales, market share, customer awareness, customer perception, customer satisfaction, customer loyalty, value for stakeholders, and growth. These are fundamental elements in assessing the success of an institution, including in the field of education. At MAN 1 Aceh Barat, these aspects show positive development, with the increasing number of applicants each year reflecting stable growth in educational service sales.

MAN 1 Aceh Barat's market share has also increased, marked by greater public trust in choosing this madrasah over other institutions in the area. Public awareness of the existence and excellence of MAN 1 Aceh Barat has grown stronger through various promotional programs, academic achievements, and social activities involving students and teachers. The positive image of MAN 1 Aceh Barat is built on its reputation as an institution that excels in educational quality, discipline, and attention to student needs.

Customer satisfaction, in this case students and parents, is reflected in the high student retention rate and positive recommendations from alumni. Their loyalty is an important asset for the madrasah in building a sustainable educational community. Additionally, MAN 1 Aceh Barat actively provides added value to stakeholders, not only through academic achievements but also through character development programs, collaborations with external institutions, and improvements in educational facilities and infrastructure. All these efforts contribute to the growing strength of MAN 1 Aceh Barat, making it one of the most respected and proud madrasahs in the Aceh Barat region. By maintaining its commitment to quality education services, MAN 1 Aceh Barat is ready to take further steps toward becoming a leading educational center that adapts to the evolving times.

The results of the study on sales in improving the competitiveness of MAN I Aceh Barat are strongly relevant to previous research conducted by Rika Ayu Sapitri and her colleagues on the Implementation of Educational Services Marketing in Enhancing the Attractiveness and Competitiveness of Schools in a Competitive Era. This study shows that marketing at SMP Negeri 4 Tanjung Lubuk has been effectively implemented through coordination in market identification, product differentiation, communication, and service.

Motivation, clear communication, and guidance also support marketing success. The main supporting factors are the school's strategic location and reputation, while the primary constraint is the limited network for expanding marketing reach. Both researchers emphasize the importance of marketing strategies in promoting the school's outstanding programs.

The main difference between the two studies lies in their focus and scope. The study “Marketing Strategies for Educational Services in Enhancing the Competitiveness of MAN 1 Aceh Barat” focuses specifically on the strategies used by one madrasah, MAN 1 Aceh Barat, to enhance its competitiveness. Meanwhile, the study titled “Implementation of Educational Service Marketing in Enhancing the Attractiveness and Competitiveness of Schools in a Competitive Era” has a broader scope and emphasizes the actual implementation of marketing activities in various schools to attract student interest and compete in the increasingly intense educational competition.

Haeruddin and his team's research on “Madrasah Marketing Strategies in Attracting Student Interest at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Al-Ijtihad Danger” highlights the importance of emotional approaches and foundational educational values for young children, with a focus on marketing to parents. This indicates that the research can provide insights for attracting student and community interest in enrolling their children in madrasahs.

The differences and similarities between the educational service marketing strategies at MAN 1 Aceh Barat and Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Al-Ijtihad Danger lie in their shared primary objective: to enhance competitiveness and attract student interest. Both focus on effective marketing tailored to the needs of the community or students. However, there are significant differences in terms of target market and marketing approach. MAN 1 Aceh Barat targets secondary school students with an emphasis on academic aspects, achievements, and modern facilities, and uses social media and digital platforms for promotion.

On the other hand, Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Al-Ijtihad Danger focuses more on basic education with an emphasis on character development and religious values, and relies more on personal and local approaches in marketing, with the primary target being the parents of students. Despite differences in differentiation and market segmentation strategies, both institutions agree that effective marketing is crucial for enhancing the image and competitiveness of their educational institutions, as well as attracting students who align with their respective market needs. Thus, these two studies collectively contribute significantly to promoting the marketing of madrasah programs.

From this research on marketing strategies at MAN 1 Aceh Barat, there are a number of important innovations, especially with a very specific focus on secondary madrasahs in the Aceh region, which face intense competition among educational institutions. These innovations lie in the integration of digital media and modern communication strategies as highly effective tools for marketing the madrasah's flagship programs, such as extracurricular activities, academic achievements, and other educational services. By leveraging digital media such as social media, the madrasah's official website, and other online communication platforms, the madrasah can reach a broader and more diverse audience more quickly and effectively than with conventional marketing methods.

The use of digital media not only enhances the madrasah's visibility but also strengthens its positive image as a progressive educational institution aligned with contemporary needs. Additionally, this study makes a significant contribution in terms of mapping marketing strategies based on the local context of West Aceh society. This underscores that marketing strategies should not be uniform and generic but must be tailored to the social-cultural characteristics and values inherent in the local community. The integration of modern marketing approaches, such as digital marketing and interactive communication, with traditional approaches that value local culture, religious values, and social norms, is the key strength of this strategy.

This hybrid approach ensures that the marketing messages conveyed are well-received and build emotional closeness between the madrasah and the community. In this context, the madrasah does not only function as a formal educational institution but also as an integral part of the community that understands and respects local traditions and customs. Another innovation is how

this research positions technological adaptation as a key factor in addressing the increasingly competitive dynamics of the education market.

Madrasahs, as educational institutions that may have been less than optimal in utilizing digital technology, are now encouraged to adopt various relevant marketing innovations, such as educational video content, live streaming of madrasah activities, and data-driven digital campaigns. This strategy enables madrasahs to not only attract the attention of prospective students but also increase the involvement of parents and the wider community in supporting the educational programs being implemented. Furthermore, this study proposes marketing strategies that are not only short-term in nature to attract new students but also oriented toward building the madrasah's long-term reputation.

With a systematic and measurable approach, madrasahs can create sustainable competitive advantages and maintain student and community loyalty. This is important given the increasingly intense competition among educational institutions, necessitating madrasahs to continuously innovate and adapt to changing trends and market preferences. Overall, this study offers a new perspective on developing adaptive educational service marketing strategies that align with technological advancements while remaining responsive to local market needs and characteristics.

This comprehensive approach serves as a model for other educational institutions seeking to strengthen their position in an increasingly complex competitive environment. Thus, this research not only enriches the academic literature on educational marketing but also provides practical guidance for madrasah administrators and stakeholders in designing and implementing effective and sustainable marketing strategies.

4. Conclusions

The marketing strategy for educational services to enhance the competitiveness of MAN I Aceh Barat so that it can compete with other educational institutions involves several stages. The first stage is planning, which is carried out through annual meetings to design promotional programs. Second, the organizing stage involves forming a marketing team. Third, the implementation stage involves active promotional strategies across innovative digital platforms. Fourth, the controlling stage involves the madrasah conducting regular evaluations through satisfaction surveys and analyzing the number of applicants.

The competitive strength of MAN I Aceh Bara in facing other educational institutions in the surrounding area is measured by indicators or tools of competitiveness, including sales, market share, customer awareness, customer image, customer satisfaction, customer loyalty, value for stakeholders, and growth. These aspects show positive development, resulting in an increase in the number of applicants each year.

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