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Evaluating Educational Marketing Strategies Using the CIPP Model: A Case Study of Student Enrollment Decline in an Islamic Primary School

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Abstract: Student enrollment sustainability has become a critical challenge for many Islamic primary schools amid increasing competition among educational institutions. This study aims to evaluate the management of educational marketing strategies in attracting new students at MI Ma'arif Ngampeldento Salaman, Central Java, Indonesia. A qualitative case study approach was employed using the CIPP (Context, Input, Process, Product) evaluation model. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with the school principal, teachers, committee members, and parents, supported by observations and document analysis. The findings indicate that, contextually, the madrasah has strong socio-religious potential within the Nahdliyin community, yet this advantage has not been translated into effective public visibility. From the input perspective, limited infrastructure, financial constraints, and the absence of a dedicated marketing team hinder strategic implementation. Process evaluation reveals that promotional activities remain conventional, sporadic, and lack systematic digital engagement. Product evaluation shows that while the madrasah offers strong Islamic character-based flagship programs and affordable tuition, these strengths have not been strategically branded or communicated to the wider community. The study concludes that improving institutional competitiveness requires an integrated educational marketing management approach that emphasizes digital-based promotion, strengthening of physical facilities, and strategic branding of flagship programs. These findings contribute to a contextual understanding of educational marketing management in Islamic primary schools facing enrollment decline.

Keywords: Educational Marketing Management; Student Enrollment; CIPP Evaluation Model; Islamic Primary School.

Abstrak: *Keberlanjutan pendaftaran siswa telah menjadi tantangan kritis bagi banyak sekolah dasar Islam di tengah persaingan yang semakin ketat di antara lembaga pendidikan. Studi ini bertujuan untuk mengevaluasi pengelolaan strategi pemasaran pendidikan dalam menarik siswa baru di MI Ma'arif Ngampeldento Salaman, Jawa Tengah, Indonesia. Pendekatan studi kasus kualitatif digunakan dengan model evaluasi CIPP (Kontekstual, Masukan, Proses, Hasil). Data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara mendalam dengan kepala sekolah, guru, anggota komite, dan*

orang tua, didukung oleh observasi dan analisis dokumen. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa secara kontekstual, madrasah memiliki potensi sosial-religius yang kuat di komunitas Nahdliyin, namun keunggulan ini belum diwujudkan dalam visibilitas publik yang efektif. Dari perspektif input, infrastruktur yang terbatas, kendala keuangan, dan ketidakhadiran tim pemasaran khusus menghambat implementasi strategis. Evaluasi proses menunjukkan bahwa aktivitas promosi masih konvensional, sporadis, dan kurang melibatkan digital secara sistematis. Evaluasi produk menunjukkan bahwa meskipun madrasah menawarkan program unggulan berbasis karakter Islam yang kuat dan biaya pendidikan yang terjangkau, keunggulan ini belum dibranding atau dikomunikasikan secara strategis kepada masyarakat luas. Studi ini menyimpulkan bahwa meningkatkan daya saing institusional memerlukan pendekatan manajemen pemasaran pendidikan terintegrasi yang menekankan promosi berbasis digital, penguatan fasilitas fisik, dan branding strategis program unggulan. Temuan ini berkontribusi pada pemahaman kontekstual tentang manajemen pemasaran pendidikan di sekolah dasar Islam yang menghadapi penurunan jumlah siswa.

Keywords: *Manajemen Pemasaran Pendidikan; Pendaftaran Siswa; Model Evaluasi CIPP; Sekolah Dasar Islam.*

Introduction

The sustainability of educational institutions is increasingly shaped by their ability to attract and retain students in an environment characterized by intense competition and expanding parental choice. Declining student enrollment has become a critical issue, particularly for private and faith-based primary schools that often operate with limited financial and infrastructural resources (Sahlan & Khoir, 2025). Enrollment trends not only determine institutional viability but also reflect broader public perceptions regarding educational quality, institutional credibility, and long-term trust (Hemsley-Brown & Oplatka, 2006; Maringe, 2006).

In this context, educational marketing has evolved into a strategic managerial function rather than a supplementary promotional activity. Contemporary educational marketing encompasses institutional positioning, branding, stakeholder engagement, and service quality management. Previous studies have demonstrated that effective educational marketing strategies significantly influence parental decision-making and institutional competitiveness, particularly through factors such as program differentiation, affordability, physical facilities, and the strategic use of communication media (Ivy, 2008; Kotler & Fox, 1995). Institutions that fail to manage these aspects systematically often struggle to maintain stable enrollment levels despite possessing strong educational or ideological foundations.

Within Islamic primary education, marketing challenges tend to be more complex. Madrasahs are required to maintain their religious identity while simultaneously responding to modern educational expectations and competing with public schools that typically offer greater visibility and more advanced facilities. Although Islamic values and character education represent distinctive institutional strengths, these advantages are frequently underutilized due to weak branding strategies and limited public communication. As a result, socio-religious capital does not always translate into tangible enrollment outcomes (Hefner, 2009; Azra, 2015).

MI Ma'arif Ngampeldento Salaman, located in Magelang Regency, Central Java, exemplifies this challenge. Despite being situated within a predominantly Nahdliyin community and offering strong religious and character-based educational programs, the madrasah has experienced stagnant and declining new student enrollment over

the past decade. Internal enrollment records indicate consistently low admission numbers when compared to nearby public primary schools. Preliminary observations suggest that this condition is not solely the result of external competition but is also closely related to internal limitations in marketing strategy management, including minimal promotional outreach, inadequate physical infrastructure, and the absence of structured digital engagement.

Existing studies on educational marketing in Islamic schools have predominantly focused on descriptive accounts of promotional activities or general management practices. However, there remains a lack of evaluative research that systematically examines how contextual conditions, resource availability, implementation processes, and marketing outcomes interact within a unified analytical framework (Sahlan & Khoir, 2025). In particular, limited attention has been given to structured evaluation models that can guide evidence-based decision-making and strategic improvement in educational marketing management Fitzpatrick et al. (2011).

To address this gap, the present study aims to evaluate the management of educational marketing strategies at MI Ma'arif Ngampeldento Salaman using the Context, Input, Process, and Product (CIPP) evaluation model. The CIPP framework is employed to provide a comprehensive assessment of environmental conditions, institutional resources, implementation practices, and marketing outcomes, thereby identifying strategic strengths and weaknesses that influence student enrollment sustainability (Aristya, 2023; Hisyam & Hasan, 2025). By adopting a qualitative case study approach, this research contributes empirical insights into educational marketing management within Islamic primary schools and offers practical recommendations for improving institutional competitiveness in similar educational contexts.

Method

1. Research Design

This study employed a qualitative case study design to evaluate educational marketing management in attracting new students at MI Ma'arif Ngampeldento Salaman, Magelang Regency, Central Java, Indonesia. A qualitative approach was selected to enable an in-depth understanding of institutional practices, managerial processes, and contextual factors influencing student enrollment within a real-life educational setting. The case study design was particularly appropriate because the research focused on a single institution experiencing persistent enrollment decline and sought to generate context-sensitive insights rather than statistical generalization.

2. Evaluation Framework

The evaluation was guided by the Context, Input, Process, and Product (CIPP) model. This framework was selected due to its comprehensive capacity to assess educational programs holistically, encompassing environmental conditions (context), institutional resources (input), implementation strategies (process), and outcomes or perceived results (product). The CIPP model enabled a systematic examination of how internal and external factors interact in shaping educational marketing management and student recruitment performance.

To strengthen analytical depth, the evaluation was complemented by the educational marketing mix perspective (7P), consisting of product, price, place, promotion, people,

process, and physical evidence. This integration facilitated a more nuanced interpretation of marketing practices and institutional positioning.

Table 1. CIPP Evaluation Indicators for Educational Marketing Management

CIPP Component	Evaluation Dimension	Key Indicators	Data Sources	Data Collection Methods
Context	Institutional environment and market potential	Community socio-religious characteristics; level of public awareness; competition with nearby schools; alignment between institutional vision and community needs	Principal, madrasah committee, parents	In-depth interviews; document analysis
	Strategic positioning	Clarity of institutional identity; visibility of flagship programs; differentiation from competing schools	Principal, promotional documents	Interviews; observation
Input	Human resources	Availability and qualifications of teaching staff; existence of marketing or admission team; staff involvement in promotional activities	Principal, PSB committee, teachers	Interviews; documentation
	Infrastructure and facilities	Classroom condition; sanitation facilities; learning environment; physical evidence supporting school image	Observation records; school documents	Non-participant observation; documentation
	Financial resources	Availability of marketing budget; funding sources; affordability of tuition and fees	Principal, financial records	Interviews; document analysis
Process	Marketing strategy implementation	Types of promotional activities; frequency and consistency of promotion; use of digital media (social media, online platforms)	PSB committee, teachers	Interviews; observation
	Communication and outreach	Engagement with community; school visits; partnerships with feeder institutions (RA/Kindergarten)	Teachers, committee members	Interviews; documentation
	Monitoring and evaluation	Existence of evaluation mechanisms; use of feedback for strategy improvement	Principal, PSB committee	Interviews
Product	Marketing outcomes	Trends in new student enrollment; perceived institutional image; community trust	Enrollment records; parents	Document analysis; interviews
	Perceived service value	Satisfaction with educational services; perceived strengths of flagship programs; affordability and accessibility	Parents, teachers	Interviews
	Institutional competitiveness	Alignment between marketed programs and stakeholder expectations; potential for sustainability	Principal, committee	Interviews; document analysis

3. Research Site and Participants

The research was conducted at MI Ma'arif Ngampeldento Salaman, a private Islamic primary school located in a rural area of Magelang Regency. Participants were selected purposively based on their direct involvement in student recruitment and institutional management. The participants consisted of the school principal, members of the new student admission (PSB) committee, teaching staff, the madrasah committee, and parents of enrolled students. This selection ensured that data were obtained from multiple stakeholder perspectives relevant to educational marketing decision-making.

4. Data Collection Techniques

Data were collected through three primary techniques: in-depth interviews, non-participant observation, and document analysis. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to explore participants' experiences, perceptions, and strategic considerations related to educational marketing and student recruitment. Observations were carried out to examine institutional facilities, promotional media, and daily school activities relevant to public image and service delivery. Documentation included enrollment records, promotional materials, social media content, policy documents, and archival data related to new student admissions.

5. Data Analysis

Data analysis followed the interactive model proposed by Miles and Huberman, which involves data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing with ongoing verification. Interview transcripts, observational notes, and documents were coded thematically in alignment with the CIPP evaluation components and the 7P marketing framework. This process enabled systematic comparison across data sources and facilitated the identification of patterns, strengths, and weaknesses in educational marketing management.

6. Trustworthiness of the Study

To ensure trustworthiness, this study applied credibility, dependability, and confirmability strategies. Credibility was enhanced through triangulation of data sources and methods. Dependability was supported by maintaining a clear audit trail of research procedures and analytical decisions. Confirmability was ensured by grounding interpretations in empirical evidence and minimizing researcher bias through reflective analysis.

7. Ethical Considerations

Ethical principles were observed throughout the research process. Informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to data collection. Participant anonymity and confidentiality were maintained, and data were used exclusively for academic research purposes.

Result and Discussion

1. Result

This study evaluated educational marketing management at MI Ma'arif Ngampeldento Salaman using the Context, Input, Process, and Product (CIPP) evaluation framework. Empirical findings were derived from in-depth interviews, observations, and document analysis. To strengthen analytical transparency, selected interview excerpts are incorporated to illustrate key findings.

a. Context Evaluation: Institutional Environment and Market Conditions

The contextual findings reveal a clear gap between the socio-religious potential of the surrounding community and the madrasah's actual enrollment outcomes. Although MI Ma'arif Ngampeldento Salaman is located within a predominantly Nahdliyin community, this potential has not translated into strong public interest or increased student enrollment.

Interviews with members of the madrasah committee indicate that limited public awareness remains a major challenge. One committee member stated:

> *"This madrasah actually has good programs, but many people do not really know them. The lack of trust mainly comes from limited information reaching the community." (Madrasah Committee Member)*

Field observations further show that promotional activities through digital platforms such as Instagram and YouTube are irregular and lack strategic planning. A teacher involved in new student admissions explained:

> *"We already use Instagram and YouTube, but there is no fixed schedule or specific target audience. Uploads are usually done only when there is an event."(PSB Committee Teacher)*

These findings indicate that the madrasah's institutional identity and flagship programs are not consistently communicated, weakening its visibility amid competition from nearby public primary schools.

b. Input Evaluation: Resources and Institutional Capacity

Input evaluation demonstrates that while the madrasah possesses committed human resources, its physical infrastructure and financial capacity remain limited. The recruitment of teaching staff is conducted through a selective process emphasizing academic qualifications and institutional commitment. According to the madrasah principal:

> *"We prioritize teachers who have at least a bachelor's degree and are willing to commit to the values of this madrasah. Teaching ability and teamwork are very important for us." (Madrasah Principal)*

However, inadequate facilities significantly constrain the institution's attractiveness. Observational data reveal a limited number of classrooms, the absence of a library and laboratory, and insufficient sanitation facilities. These conditions were acknowledged by school leadership:

> *"Many of our buildings are damaged, and facilities are very limited. Sometimes students even have to use toilets at nearby residents' houses." (Madrasah Principal)*

Financial limitations further restrict marketing efforts. The madrasah relies heavily on donors and proposal-based funding, with no specific budget allocated for educational marketing. Additionally, there is no dedicated marketing team, resulting in fragmented promotional activities managed on an ad hoc basis.

c. Process Evaluation: Implementation of Marketing Strategies

The process evaluation indicates that educational marketing strategies are implemented predominantly through conventional methods. Promotional efforts include brochure distribution, banner installation, visits to nearby kindergartens or religious institutions, and door-to-door outreach within the local community. A PSB committee member described the process as follows:

> *"Our promotion is still mostly around this village. We visit nearby RA or kindergartens and distribute brochures, but we have not reached wider areas yet." (PSB Committee Member)*

Digital marketing practices remain underdeveloped and unmonitored. There is no systematic planning, performance evaluation, or audience segmentation in the use of social media. Consequently, promotional activities lack continuity and fail to generate sustained engagement. The absence of regular evaluation mechanisms further limits the institution's ability to refine and improve its marketing strategies.

4. Product Evaluation: Outcomes and Perceived Institutional Value

Product evaluation highlights that MI Ma'arif Ngampeldento Salaman offers strong educational value, particularly in Islamic character education and affordability. Flagship programs such as Qur'an memorization, congregational worship practices, and character habituation activities are consistently implemented and positively perceived by parents. One parent expressed satisfaction with the madrasah's educational approach:

> *"This madrasah really emphasizes character and religious values. Children are guided to practice good manners and religious habits every day." (Parent of Student)*

In terms of affordability, the madrasah applies a low-cost and flexible fee structure, which is intended to ensure access for families from lower socio-economic backgrounds. The principal emphasized:

> *"We want all children to be able to go to school here. Fees are kept as low as possible, and parents can pay in installments." (Madrasah Principal)*

Despite these strengths, enrollment records over the past decade show stagnant and declining trends. This indicates that positive educational value and affordability have not been effectively transformed into a strong institutional brand. The absence of outcome-based marketing evaluation prevents these advantages from contributing meaningfully to improved enrollment and long-term sustainability.

2. Discussion

This study provides empirical evidence that educational marketing management at MI Ma'arif Ngampeldento Salaman has been implemented, yet remains insufficiently structured to address persistent enrollment decline. By applying the CIPP evaluation framework, the findings reveal that weaknesses in strategic communication, resource allocation, and institutional branding collectively undermine the madrasah's competitiveness. These results align with international research emphasizing that enrollment sustainability is strongly influenced not only by educational quality but also by how institutional value is communicated to prospective stakeholders (Hemsley-Brown & Oplatka, 2006; Kotler & Fox, 1995).

a. Context: Translating Socio-Religious Capital into Public Visibility

The findings indicate a clear gap between the madrasah's socio-religious potential and its public recognition. Despite being located within a predominantly Nahdliyin community, limited awareness and trust were repeatedly highlighted in interview excerpts. This condition supports Hefner (2009) argument that religious identity alone is insufficient to ensure institutional sustainability without effective public engagement strategies. Similarly, Azra (2015) emphasizes that Islamic educational

institutions must actively translate religious values into visible institutional advantages to remain competitive in plural educational markets.

The inconsistent use of digital platforms further weakens institutional positioning. International studies have demonstrated that regular and strategically managed communication plays a crucial role in shaping public perception and institutional image (Maringe, 2006). In this study, the absence of a coherent digital communication strategy explains why strong socio-religious capital has not resulted in increased enrollment.

b. Input: Resource Constraints and Institutional Image

Resource limitations, particularly in infrastructure and financial capacity, emerged as significant barriers to effective educational marketing. Interview data revealed that inadequate facilities negatively influence parental perceptions of comfort and safety. This finding is consistent with Ivy, (2008) and Elistatia et al., (2025) assertion that physical evidence is a critical component of the educational marketing mix, shaping stakeholders' initial judgments about service quality. International research also confirms that tangible facilities often function as symbolic indicators of institutional credibility, particularly in primary education settings (Hemsley-Brown & Oplatka, 2006).

Furthermore, the absence of a dedicated marketing team reflects a broader managerial issue. Fitzpatrick et al. (2011) and (Sahlan & Khoir, 2025) argue that sustainable program improvement requires structured responsibility and continuous evaluation. In the present study, marketing activities are managed informally, resulting in fragmented implementation and limited strategic coherence.

c. Process: Conventional Promotion and Underutilization of Digital Media

The predominance of conventional promotional methods, such as brochures and local outreach, indicates that marketing practices have not adapted to contemporary communication trends. While these approaches remain culturally relevant, their limited reach restricts institutional visibility. International literature consistently highlights the growing importance of digital engagement in educational marketing, particularly in reaching younger parents and wider geographic audiences (Hemsley-Brown & Oplatka, 2006; Sahlan & Khoir, 2025).

Innovative branding tools like podcasts can effectively convey authentic narratives, fostering engagement and a sense of community among stakeholders. This approach aligns with the preferences of younger audiences and enhances the institution's reputation (Leandro et al., 2025). This cohesive visual identity is essential for building a strong institutional reputation (Dwitasari et al., 2025).

The lack of systematic monitoring and evaluation of promotional activities further undermines effectiveness. According to (Adji et al., 2025; Aristya, 2023), evaluation models such as CIPP should function not only as diagnostic tools but also as mechanisms for continuous improvement. The absence of routine evaluation in this study suggests that marketing strategies are reactive rather than evidence-based.

d. Product: Untapped Value of Flagship Programs and Affordability

The findings demonstrate that MI Ma'arif Ngampeldento Salaman offers strong educational value through Islamic character-based programs and affordable tuition. Parental interview excerpts confirm positive perceptions of these services. However,

these strengths have not been effectively branded or communicated. Kotler & Fox, (1995) emphasize that educational products must be strategically positioned to differentiate institutions in competitive markets. Without clear branding narratives, internal program quality alone is unlikely to influence enrollment decisions. Institution reputation, brand association, brand awareness, educational environment, and perceived quality are critical dimensions that influence students' perceptions and decisions (Chen, 2019). A strong brand image, developed through strategic marketing and communication, positively affects students' preferences and enrollment intentions (Li et al., 2025; Perera et al., 2023).

Affordability, although a significant competitive advantage, remains underutilized as a marketing message. International studies on parental choice suggest that transparent communication of cost structures significantly affects enrollment decisions, particularly among lower- and middle-income families (Maringe, 2006; Hisyam & Hasan, 2025). The absence of such messaging in this case explains why affordability has not translated into increased student numbers.

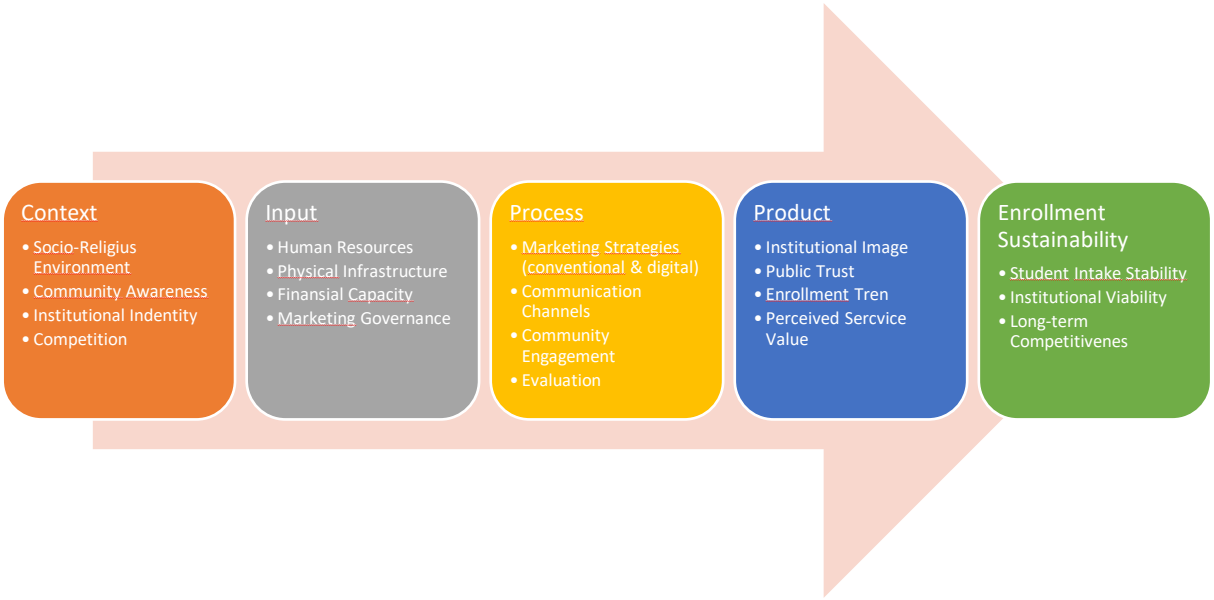


Figure 1. Conceptual framework of educational marketing management based on the CIPP model.

The framework illustrates the sequential relationship between contextual conditions, institutional resources, marketing processes, and outcomes that collectively influence student enrollment sustainability.

e. Implications for Educational Marketing Management

Overall, this study reinforces the view that effective educational marketing requires an integrated approach that aligns institutional identity, resources, communication strategies, and continuous evaluation. The findings suggest that Islamic primary schools must move beyond informal promotion toward structured, digital-based marketing management supported by institutional leadership. By systematically leveraging socio-religious values, improving physical facilities, and strengthening branding strategies, madrasahs can enhance public trust and long-term enrollment sustainability.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that declining student enrollment at MI Ma'arif Ngampeldento Salaman is primarily linked to weaknesses in educational marketing management rather than deficiencies in educational quality or socio-religious relevance. The application of the CIPP evaluation framework reveals that strong Islamic character-based programs and inclusive tuition policies have not been translated into institutional competitiveness due to limited digital engagement, inadequate physical infrastructure, and the absence of structured marketing governance. These findings reaffirm that educational value alone is insufficient to sustain enrollment without systematic branding, strategic communication, and continuous evaluative practices.

Theoretically, this study contributes to educational marketing scholarship by illustrating the usefulness of the CIPP model in evaluating marketing management within Islamic primary schools. Practically, it highlights the need for madrasahs to reposition educational marketing as a core managerial function by strengthening digital-based promotion, enhancing institutional branding, and aligning promotional strategies with regular evaluation mechanisms. Although this research is limited to a single case, its insights offer transferable implications for similar faith-based institutions facing enrollment challenges and provide a foundation for future multi-site or mixed-method studies on educational marketing effectiveness.

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