

Marketing Strategies for Educational Services in Improving Educational Quality at SD Darul Aidam, Kedungdung District, Sampang Regency, in the 2025–2026 Academic Year

Siti Aminah

Sekolah Tinggi Agama Islam Ma'arif Sampang; Indonesia

* Correspondence e-mail; amikdafa@gmail.com

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Abstract

This study aims to describe educational service marketing strategies for improving educational quality at SD Darul Aidam, Kedungdung District, Sampang Regency, during the 2025–2026 academic year. The research is motivated by increasingly intense competition among educational institutions, which requires schools to implement effective marketing strategies to attract public interest and improve educational quality. The study focuses on two aspects: (1) educational service marketing strategies implemented at SD Darul Aidam and (2) supporting and inhibiting factors affecting their implementation in improving educational quality. This study employs a qualitative approach using a case study design. Data are collected through observation, interviews, and documentation, involving the principal, teachers, and educational staff as research informants. Data analysis follows the Miles and Huberman model, comprising data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. Data validity is ensured through prolonged engagement, persistent observation, and triangulation. The findings are expected to provide insights into effective educational service marketing strategies and identify factors influencing their implementation. This study is also expected to serve as a reference for educational institutions in developing appropriate marketing strategies to strengthen school competitiveness, improve educational service quality, and enhance public trust.

Keywords

Marketing Strategies, Educational Services, Educational Quality, Elementary School



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INTRODUCTION

The rapid development of science and technology in the modern era has significantly influenced various aspects of human life, including education. Educational institutions are increasingly required to adapt to social changes, technological advancements, and global competition. Education plays a fundamental role in improving human welfare by developing knowledge, skills, character, and the ability to participate effectively in society. Therefore, educational institutions must

continuously improve their quality to meet the expectations of students, parents, and the wider community.

From an Islamic perspective, educational quality is closely associated with the principle of excellence in human actions. The Qur'an, Surah Al-Kahf (18:7), explains that earthly life serves as a test to determine who performs the best deeds. In education, this principle encourages schools to provide educational services with commitment, integrity, and continuous improvement. Furthermore, Surah As-Saff (61:2–3) emphasizes the importance of consistency between words and actions. These teachings imply that educational marketing should communicate institutional strengths honestly and ensure that promotional claims correspond to the actual quality of educational services. Consequently, marketing should not merely attract prospective students but also strengthen accountability and public trust.

Educational service marketing has become increasingly important as schools compete to attract students and maintain their institutional sustainability. Kotler and Fox (1995) explain that marketing in educational institutions involves understanding the needs of their target communities and developing appropriate programs to achieve institutional objectives. Unlike tangible products, educational services involve complex interactions among teachers, students, school management, learning processes, and supporting facilities. Therefore, effective marketing requires schools to communicate their educational value while ensuring that the services offered meet community expectations.

One relevant framework is the educational marketing mix, which consists of seven elements: product, price, place, promotion, people, process, and physical evidence. These elements help schools develop comprehensive strategies for presenting their educational programs, managing costs, ensuring accessibility, communicating institutional advantages, improving staff competence, organizing learning services, and maintaining adequate facilities. Research by Mukaromah and Fadly (2022) on educational service marketing at MI Al Kautsar Durisawo, Ponorogo, highlights the relevance of the marketing mix in strengthening an educational institution's brand image and attracting public interest. This suggests that educational marketing should be integrated with institutional development rather than limited to promotional activities.

Nevertheless, effective marketing must be supported by genuine improvements in educational quality. Susanto et al. (2024), in their study of SD Pangudi Luhur Bernardus Semarang, examined the relationship between educational quality and marketing strategies. Their findings emphasize the importance of human resources,

adequate financing, educational facilities, and parental satisfaction in supporting institutional competitiveness. Similarly, recent research on educational marketing indicates that the seven-element marketing mix can help schools communicate their strengths and improve the quality of services they provide (Sundari et al., 2026). These studies demonstrate that marketing and quality improvement should operate together to establish a sustainable institutional reputation.

In this context, SD Darul Aidam, located in Kedungdung District, Sampang Regency, represents an important setting for examining how educational service marketing strategies are implemented at the elementary school level. Schools need to understand the expectations of parents and the surrounding community while identifying their distinctive educational advantages. Marketing activities may involve developing relevant educational programs, maintaining positive relationships with parents, communicating school achievements, utilizing appropriate promotional media, and strengthening the quality of teaching and learning. However, the effectiveness of these strategies may depend on supporting factors, including leadership commitment, teacher competence, community participation, and available resources. Conversely, limited facilities, financial constraints, and insufficient promotional capacity may create challenges for implementation. These possibilities require systematic investigation rather than assumptions about the school's actual conditions.

Although previous studies have discussed educational marketing strategies and institutional competitiveness, further contextual investigation is necessary to understand how marketing practices operate within individual schools and how supporting and inhibiting factors influence their implementation. Examining these issues at SD Darul Aidam can provide a more detailed understanding of the relationship between educational marketing, service quality, and community trust in a local educational context.

Accordingly, this study aims to describe the educational service marketing strategies implemented at SD Darul Aidam, Kedungdung District, Sampang Regency, during the 2025–2026 academic year and identify the supporting and inhibiting factors affecting their implementation in improving educational quality. The study is expected to contribute to the development of educational management knowledge and provide practical insights for school leaders in designing marketing strategies that are ethical, responsive to community needs, and oriented toward continuous quality improvement.

METHODS

This study employs a qualitative approach with a descriptive case study design to examine educational service marketing strategies for improving educational quality at SD Darul Aidam, Kedungdung District, Sampang Regency, during the 2025–2026 academic year. A qualitative approach is appropriate because the study seeks to understand marketing practices, institutional experiences, and factors influencing strategy implementation within their natural context. Bogdan and Taylor, as cited by Moleong (2017), describe qualitative methodology as a research procedure that produces descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words and observable behavior. Meanwhile, Creswell and Poth (2018) explain that qualitative research enables researchers to explore complex phenomena through detailed information gathered from participants. The case study design allows an in-depth examination of educational marketing practices and their supporting and inhibiting factors within a specific institutional setting.

The researcher serves as the primary research instrument, responsible for planning the study, collecting data, conducting analysis, interpreting findings, and reporting the results. Direct involvement enables the researcher to understand the school's context and obtain comprehensive information from relevant participants. The research location is SD Darul Aidam, Kedungdung District, Sampang Regency, East Java, Indonesia. The school was selected because it provides a relevant setting for investigating educational service marketing strategies and their relationship with educational quality.

The data sources consist of primary and secondary data. Primary data are obtained directly from research participants through interviews and observations. The participants include the principal, teachers, and educational staff who possess relevant knowledge of school marketing activities, educational services, and quality improvement initiatives. Secondary data are collected from relevant documents, including school profiles, promotional materials, educational programs, institutional reports, academic journals, books, and previous research. These sources provide additional context and support the interpretation of primary data.

Data collection involves three techniques: interviews, observation, and documentation. Interviews are conducted with selected participants using a semi-structured format to explore marketing strategies, promotional activities, community engagement, educational service quality, and the factors supporting or hindering implementation. Observation is conducted using a non-participant approach, in which the researcher observes relevant school activities without becoming directly

involved in them. This technique helps identify actual practices related to educational services and marketing. Documentation is used to collect relevant written and visual evidence, including school documents, promotional publications, activity records, and other materials related to the research objectives. Combining these techniques enables the researcher to compare information obtained from different sources.

Data analysis follows the interactive model developed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014), comprising data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. Data condensation involves selecting, organizing, and coding information relevant to the research questions. Data display involves presenting the organized findings in descriptive narratives and thematic categories to identify patterns and relationships. Conclusion drawing and verification involve interpreting the findings and checking their consistency against the collected evidence. The analysis focuses on identifying the marketing strategies implemented by the school and examining the supporting and inhibiting factors affecting their contribution to educational quality.

To ensure data credibility, the study applies prolonged engagement, persistent observation, and triangulation, following the principles discussed by Moleong (2017). Method triangulation compares information obtained through interviews, observations, and documentation, while source triangulation compares perspectives from the principal, teachers, and educational staff. When necessary, repeated observations and follow-up interviews are conducted to clarify inconsistencies and strengthen the credibility of the findings. The research proceeds through preparation, fieldwork, data analysis, and report preparation. Ethical considerations include obtaining permission from the school, explaining the research purpose to participants, respecting voluntary participation, and maintaining the confidentiality of information. Through these procedures, the study aims to produce a comprehensive and credible account of educational service marketing strategies at SD Darul Aidam.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Bagian Results and Discussion berikut disusun dalam bahasa Inggris dalam bentuk narasi tanpa subjudul, dengan mengintegrasikan temuan wawancara, observasi, dan dokumentasi yang Anda berikan dengan teori pemasaran jasa pendidikan. Pembahasan menggunakan kerangka segmentation, targeting, positioning (STP) dan bauran pemasaran 7P, sekaligus menganalisis hubungan

strategi pemasaran dengan peningkatan mutu pendidikan di SD Darul Aidam pada Tahun Pelajaran 2025–2026.

The findings indicate that educational service marketing at SD Darul Aidam, Kedungdung District, Sampang Regency, is implemented through market segmentation, target market selection, positioning, and a marketing mix comprising seven elements: product, price, place, promotion, people, physical evidence, and process. These strategies demonstrate that educational marketing is not merely an activity to attract prospective students but also a means of communicating institutional strengths, developing community relationships, and supporting improvements in educational services. This finding is consistent with Kotler and Fox (1995), who explain that marketing in educational institutions involves identifying the needs of target communities and developing programs that correspond to those needs. Accordingly, SD Darul Aidam's marketing activities can be understood as an effort to align its educational services with parental expectations while maintaining its institutional identity within a competitive educational environment.

Market segmentation is an important initial strategy implemented by SD Darul Aidam. Based on the interview with the principal, Sunarti, S.Pd., on August 16, 2025, the school recognizes differences in parental expectations concerning academic achievement, character development, and the provision of a safe and comfortable learning environment. Teachers also contribute to identifying these expectations through interactions during student registration, parent meetings, classroom communication, and informal consultations. The school consequently distinguishes parental needs according to their educational priorities rather than treating the community as a homogeneous group. This approach reflects the segmentation concept proposed by Kotler and Fox (1995), which emphasizes identifying groups of potential customers with different needs and preferences. In the context of educational services, such segmentation enables schools to develop relevant programs and communicate their institutional advantages more effectively. However, the findings also suggest that segmentation at SD Darul Aidam relies substantially on direct observation and informal communication. More systematic documentation of parental expectations could help the school evaluate these needs and improve the relevance of its educational programs.

The second strategy concerns target market selection. Although the school serves children from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds, its principal geographical target consists of families living in villages surrounding the school. The principal explained that geographical proximity is an important consideration because parents

often prefer an accessible school that provides appropriate educational services at an affordable cost. Interviews with teachers also indicate that community trust and relatively stable or increasing enrollment are perceived as signs of the school's continued appeal. Nevertheless, these perceptions should be distinguished from verified enrollment statistics. The findings suggest that SD Darul Aidam adopts a geographically focused marketing approach while maintaining inclusive access to education. Kotler and Fox (1995) argue that educational institutions need to select target markets according to their institutional objectives and capacity. For SD Darul Aidam, concentrating on nearby communities allows the school to establish closer relationships with families, communicate its educational programs directly, and respond to local expectations. Its effectiveness, however, depends on whether the school consistently delivers the quality of education it promises.

Positioning constitutes the third component of the school's marketing strategy. SD Darul Aidam seeks to distinguish itself through the integration of the national curriculum, character education, religious habituation, and extracurricular activities. According to the principal, students participate in morning prayers, recitation of Asmaul Husna and selected short Qur'anic surahs, and collective istighosah every Friday. The school also offers scouting activities and receives the Ummi method program to support Qur'anic learning. These programs provide the school with a distinctive identity that combines academic learning with moral and religious development. Kotler and Fox (1995) explain that positioning involves establishing a distinctive place for an institution in the minds of its target audience. From this perspective, SD Darul Aidam's positioning emphasizes character formation and religious values alongside the national curriculum. Such differentiation can strengthen parental confidence when the programs are implemented consistently and their educational benefits are communicated transparently. The findings also indicate that positioning should be supported by evidence of student development rather than relying exclusively on promotional statements.

The school's marketing mix further illustrates how these strategies are translated into educational services. In terms of product, SD Darul Aidam offers the national curriculum, character-building activities, religious programs, Qur'anic learning through the Ummi method, and scouting. The principal emphasizes that quality graduates should demonstrate both academic competence and good moral character. This perspective indicates that the educational product encompasses not only curriculum content but also the learning experiences and competencies developed through schooling. Grönroos (1984) argues that service quality involves

both the outcome received by customers and their evaluation of how the service is delivered. Accordingly, the quality of SD Darul Aidam's educational product depends on the extent to which its programs contribute to students' academic, social, and moral development.

Regarding price, interview findings suggest that parents perceive the school's educational costs as affordable relative to their economic circumstances and the facilities provided. A parent, Atikoh, described the costs as manageable, while a teacher explained that the school's pricing considerations reflect the economic conditions of local families, many of whom work as farmers. Affordability can therefore be understood as an important factor in the school's accessibility and attractiveness. Nevertheless, affordability should not be interpreted as the sole determinant of school choice. Parents also consider educational quality, safety, teacher competence, and the relevance of school programs. As Kotler and Fox (1995) suggest, educational institutions must consider the relationship between the value offered and the needs of their target communities. For a public school, any discussion of educational costs should also distinguish voluntary contributions and incidental expenses from fees that are legally prohibited.

In terms of place, the school benefits from its location near the residential areas of its prospective students. Interviews with teachers and students indicate that geographical proximity makes attendance more convenient for families. This accessibility represents a practical advantage because it can reduce travel burdens and facilitate communication between parents and the school. Promotion, meanwhile, is conducted through banners displayed near the school before the new academic year and word-of-mouth recommendations from parents and community members. These findings demonstrate the importance of interpersonal communication in local educational marketing. Parents who experience satisfactory services may share positive impressions with other families, helping to strengthen the school's reputation. However, promotional effectiveness depends on the accuracy of the information communicated and the actual quality of educational services. As Kotler and Fox (1995) emphasize, institutional marketing should establish relationships with target audiences rather than merely publicize an institution.

The people component highlights the involvement of the principal, teachers, administrative staff, students, and other school stakeholders in delivering and communicating educational services. The principal's explanation indicates that marketing is considered a shared responsibility across the school community. Teachers are particularly important because their instructional competence,

communication, and relationships with students and parents directly influence perceptions of school quality. This finding corresponds with the service marketing framework developed by Booms and Bitner (1981), which recognizes the importance of people in service delivery. Physical evidence, meanwhile, includes the school's facilities, learning environment, and administrative services. A parent interviewed for this study considered the facilities adequate and the administrative staff friendly. These conditions may support positive perceptions of institutional quality, although continued assessment is necessary to determine whether facilities adequately meet students' learning needs.

The process component concerns the procedures through which educational services are delivered, including student registration, communication with parents, and classroom learning. Teachers emphasized the importance of clear registration procedures, responsive communication, and engaging learning activities. These findings indicate that the quality of interactions between the school and its stakeholders is an integral part of educational marketing. Booms and Bitner (1981) explain that service processes influence how customers experience and evaluate a service. At SD Darul Aidam, accessible administrative procedures and supportive classroom practices may therefore reinforce public confidence while contributing to a positive learning environment.

Overall, the findings suggest that SD Darul Aidam employs a combination of STP strategies and the seven-element marketing mix to communicate its educational strengths and maintain relationships with the surrounding community. The integration of academic learning, character education, religious activities, accessible location, affordable services, interpersonal promotion, and stakeholder involvement provides a foundation for strengthening the school's competitiveness. However, the relationship between marketing strategies and improved educational quality should be interpreted carefully because the available findings primarily describe practices and stakeholder perceptions rather than measured changes in learning outcomes. Sustainable improvement requires the school to evaluate student achievement, parental satisfaction, teacher performance, and the effectiveness of its educational programs regularly. In this regard, marketing becomes most meaningful when it is supported by demonstrable service quality, transparent communication, and continuous institutional improvement.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that educational service marketing strategies at SD Darul Aidam, Kedungdung District, Sampang Regency, during the 2025–2026 academic

year are implemented through market segmentation, target market selection, positioning, and the seven-element marketing mix. Market segmentation identifies diverse parental expectations regarding academic achievement, character development, and a safe learning environment. Targeting focuses on children living in surrounding communities, while positioning emphasizes the integration of the national curriculum, religious activities, character education, and extracurricular programs.

The implementation of the marketing mix involves educational programs, affordable services, an accessible school location, promotional banners, word-of-mouth communication, stakeholder participation, adequate facilities, and supportive administrative and learning processes. These strategies demonstrate that educational marketing extends beyond promotion to include the quality and accessibility of services delivered to students and parents. The involvement of the principal, teachers, administrative staff, and community members also contributes to building public trust and strengthening the school's institutional image.

However, the sustainability of these strategies depends on continuous quality improvement, effective communication, and systematic evaluation of educational outcomes. Therefore, SD Darul Aidam should strengthen its marketing planning, document parental needs, and regularly assess student achievement and satisfaction. This study provides practical insights into integrating educational marketing with quality improvement, although further research is needed to measure its direct impact on enrollment and learning outcomes.

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