


**Branding Innovation in *Pesantren*:
The Role of Students Improving Image and Public Trust**

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Abstract

The research was carried out at the Darul Fikri Islamic Boarding School educational institution to find out how the educational institutions at the Islamic boarding school are. This type of research is qualitative and uses ethnography. Techniques for collecting data at Darul Fikri Islamic Boarding School educational institutions using interview methods and direct field observations. The results of this research are to find out the efforts made by students in branding a school education institution and what impact it has after students carry out Branding of educational institutions in schools. The efforts made by students are to study seriously and develop all the potentials possessed by students. Students must synergize in the policies that have been established by educational institutions at the Darul Fikri Islamic Boarding School. The activities of students in comparing educational institutions are as follows: social service as a means of introducing institutions, students participating in competitions held outside of school, involving majlis table outside and inside the school as a place for class XII final exams and so forth.

Kata Kunci:

*Manajemen,
Branding,
Pesantren*

Penelitian dilakukan di lembaga pendidikan Pondok Pesantren Darul Fikri dengan tujuan untuk mengetahui bagaimana lembaga pendidikan di pondok Pesantren tersebut. Jenis penelitian ini adalah kualitatif dengan menggunakan etnografi. Teknik pengumpulan data pada lembaga pendidikan Pondok Pesantren Darul Fikri menggunakan metode wawancara dan observasi langsung ke lapangan. Hasil dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mengetahui upaya yang dilakukan siswa dalam melakukan branding lembaga pendidikan sekolah, dan dampak apa yang ditimbulkan setelah siswa melakukan branding lembaga pendidikan di sekolah. upaya yang dilakukan siswa adalah belajar dengan sungguh-sungguh, mengembangkan semua potensi yang dimiliki oleh siswa dan siswa harus bersinergi dalam kebijakan-kebijakan yang sudah ditetapkan oleh lembaga pendidikan di Pondok Pesantren Darul Fikri. Adapun kegiatan siswa dalam membandingkan lembaga pendidikan adalah sebagai berikut: bakti sosial sebagai sarana pengenalan lembaga, siswa mengikuti lomba-lomba yang diadakan di luar sekolah, melibatkan majlis

ta'lim di luar dan di dalam sekolah sebagai tempat ujian akhir kelas XII dan lain sebagainya.

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1. Introduction

Education management is generally an activity in which an organization aims to achieve an effective and efficient working method. Management is the art of organizing by using or involving qualified human resources and other resources in achieving a goal (Fauzi & Fajrin, 2022). According to (Mubarok, 2021), In carrying out management, a plan is needed so that it can run, a group of people is needed, or an organization is created according to their fields, coordinating ongoing activities, evaluating activities that have been carried out or have not been carried out. An educational institution can be successful or advanced if its management is carried out and its goals are achieved. An organization is an educational institution in which there is a group of more than three people, and it is also commonly referred to as the activities of an institution.

Management is the process of planning, organizing, directing and directing the efforts of organizational members by using all organizational resources to achieve predetermined goals. According to (Porath, 2023), Management is an effort to achieve predetermined goals by utilizing the actions of others. As for opinion, according to (Kholiq, 2020), management is a process of utilizing human resources with a group of people to achieve a goal. Management must have these four criteria to achieve its goals: planning, organization, mobilizing educational institutions and controlling the running of educational institutions. Meanwhile, according to (Jahari et al., 2020), a learner who studies from kindergarten to high school is a student or carries out the learning process from the lowest to the highest. Managing students is a place to develop a student's *skills* or potential so that they can develop.

Education management is a field of study and practice related to the organization of education. Education management implements educational tasks by effectively utilising various resources to achieve practical goals (Sarun et al., 2025). According to (Rodhiyana, 2023), Learners are part of Islamic education. Students are "linear material" in what is called educational transformation. This differs from other parts of the education system because we accept that this "material" is half-finished. In contrast, other components can be designed and organized according to the conditions and needs of existing facilities.

According to (Zhang, 2020), managing students is an activity that records students starting from the admission process, processing them, and when students leave or graduate from the educational institution. Meanwhile, according to (Zakirullah et al., 2025), managing students is a service for students in which it only focuses its attention on managing, supervising, and serving students or individuals in order to foster the potential of students according to physical, intelligence, social, and emotional.

The biggest challenge for education in competing to provide education is establishing itself and fulfilling its role in making schools, parents, and students aware of their lag in mastering modern science and technology about human progress and welfare, materially and spiritually (Jamaluddin et al., 2025). Hence

the need for quality education. Quality education is important not only for educated individuals and communities but it is also the most important tool in global competition, which is competition between nations that is very fierce and affects all aspects of life. An educational institution is said to be of quality if it meets the national education standards. The educational institution of Darul Fikri Islamic Boarding School is running well. Darul Fikri Islamic Boarding School is a school or educational institution that integrates modern education and religious education. Graduates of Darul Fikri Islamic Boarding School get 2 (two) certificates, namely an official certificate from the government and a certificate issued by the *Pesantren*.

2. Methods

This research method is qualitative with descriptive analysis ethnographic design. According to (Sugiyono, 2016), the qualitative method is a research method that uses an in-depth interview and observation process. Therefore, using this method in research can produce more comprehensive research. With a qualitative approach, research can be conducted by observing community activities. The information can be obtained through observation and interviews. Research can be conducted in educational institutions and schools. From this, researchers can conclude that the formation of children's character through an Islamic religious education institution is important. Data collection techniques include observation, interview, and documentation. Data validity in this study is still measured using triangulation and source methods. Then, for data techniques after data collection, data analysis involves three steps, including data reduction, data visualization, and data validation.

3. Result and Discussion

Branding in other perspectives is respectively interpreted as follows: marketing, communication, sales psychology, sociology and so on. According to (Chea, 2024), the word Branding comes from the word brand, which means brand. This activity is often carried out by ranchers in America, marking their livestock to help identify the property before it is sold on the market. Branding is also an indicator of value offered to consumers. Branding is an effort to introduce the quality of an institution to convince consumers or the public. According to KBBI, Branding is a promotion, a doctorate, or the conferment of a doctorate through a special ceremony or presentation (related to promoting a business or business, etc.). Meanwhile, according to Wikipedia, the word branding refers to an effort to announce or offer a product or service to customers to persuade someone to take part in an educational institution.

Thus, branding a school institution can be interpreted as an effort to present the school to prospective students or parents of prospective students to attract attention so that they can become students at the educational institution. From this explanation, it can be concluded that the purpose of sponsorship or school branding is to attract the attention of prospective students and parents of prospective students. With the amount of attention that educational institutions get. Hopefully, some of them will become students or recommend the school to others they know. Therefore, this measure of school support is significant because the spearhead of the school itself and school leaders should not underestimate this branding effort.

Branding is a social process in which individuals and groups get what they need and want by creating, offering, and freely sharing products and services of value with others (Ozuem & Ranfagni, 2021). Educational institutions are service-oriented businesses, so educational institutions, in general, must follow the concept or philosophy of marketing, a philosophy or assumption used as the basis by companies in each of their activities to satisfy consumer needs.

Several understandings of brand properties are described (Safitri, 2024). First, brands or brand properties are intangible assets that create added value for the company. Brands are also reported as one of the types of intangible assets (a category that also includes patents, databases, etc.). The following definition is that brands are conditional property. This is an important point that has been overlooked so far. The following definition of an asset is an item that can provide long-term benefits, and a brand is a name that influences buyers. This definition captures the essence of the brand from the name, which has the power to influence the buyer and vice versa, explaining that a trademark is a distinguishing element (such as a logo, seal, or packaging) that identifies the goods or services of a particular seller and distinguishes them from the goods or services are some name or symbol – created by competitors. Ultimately, brands mark the product's origin and protect consumers and manufacturers from competitors trying to offer the same superior product.

From the various definitions given by the author, Branding is a social and administrative process planned and implemented to achieve what is needed and desired by creating, offering and freely exchanging high-quality products and services with others. Therefore, managing the Branding of educational institutions is a series of management activities that aim to introduce *Madrasah* and Islamic boarding school products to the public so that people know about them and are then interested in buying the products offered, namely *Madrasah* and Islamic Education interior arrangement products.

According to (Pamungkas et al., 2023), branding education or school itself is part of marketing techniques that aim to produce better results than marketing techniques that do not achieve the desired target number of students or users of educational services. The organization or educational institution's goals are as follows: a) Production Concept: This concept states that they like products that match their abilities. Therefore, learners should focus on improving production and institutional distribution efficiency (within educational institutions). b) Service Concept: According to this concept, users of educational services prefer and pay more attention or attention to services provided with the best quality and performance standards and straightforward features. So, educational institutions must continue to invest in improving educational services. c) The concept of Branding towards the community: According to the concept of social Branding, the task of learners in Branding is to determine the needs, wants and interests of the target market and provide the desired satisfaction more effectively and efficiently than competitors so that public trust is maintained and increased.

According to (O'Sullivan et al., 2024), Strategy in Branding is a fundamental tool to achieve business objectives by developing a sustainable competitive advantage through market entry and marketing programs that serve the target market. Therefore, a branding strategy can be interpreted as a systematically created plan for marketing activities that guides implementation. Based on the study results, the Branding of educational institutions built at Darul Fikri Islamic Boarding School is

Islamic, has skills and is independent. From the results of the research, there is a problem formula, among others, namely (1) The efforts of students in branding educational institutions at Darul Fikri Islamic Boarding School and (2) The impact of students in branding educational institutions at Darul Fikri Islamic Boarding School.

3.1. *Learners' Efforts in Branding Educational Institutions*

Based on observations and interviews with school teachers at the Darul Fikri Islamic Boarding School educational institution, students play a huge role in branding educational institutions because, according to the vision of the institution, students are the object of education, as a determinant of success in branding educational institutions. With this vision, all staff of school educational institutions (principals, teachers and employees) must be excellently skilled. Therefore, vision is a form of behavior of the educational institution community and vision is the key to the success of an educational institution in a professionally managed school.

According to (Syadzili, 2022), learning activities that can be applied in educational institutions will be good if they are organized according to the guidance of scientific values, principles or criteria. So, the information and the range of its dissemination can change more widely without limiting one's view of the relationship back to the loving god, Allah SWT. The last attack may also come from the behaviour of the Muslim community itself; there is no longer a big and big embrace and practice of Islamic teachings in everyday life.

As students, the efforts made by students are to study seriously and develop all their potential. Students must synergize with the policies set by the educational institutions of Darul Fikri Islamic Boarding School. Educational institutions will feel proud of the existence of students who practice efforts to uphold educational institutions. According to (Hidayah, 2024), improving school programs also branding formal educational institutions to continue improving school performance and student academic and non-academic achievement. In addition, it also requires formal educational institutions to improve adequate facilities and infrastructure in its implementation. The school brand is an educational institution that formally needs to form a special group to manage the brand program on school management. Then, school management and marketing must continue to synergize and integrate into the implementation of the branding strategy, which can be the same as what was previously planned.

The coach's job is to develop and promote the potential that exists. This student property does not create or build potential for the student. Therefore, the teacher must understand the psychological possibilities of what belongs to the student and what needs further development. Based on this idea. So, the breeder's role here is only as an intermediary, namely, guiding students in developing their potential. Quality Education is based on a relative notion of the qualities expected of students. Lifelong learners and good communicators in national languages have broad specialized skills for work and daily life or complex work. The goal is for students to become human adults who are responsible for their lives (Kholili & Fajaruddin, 2020).

Students do not object to the existence of activities or the task of branding an educational institution, but instead, students feel happy with the activity. Even with this activity, students can release their potential in educational institutions to the community. Results of interviews conducted at Pondok *Pesantren* Darul fikri,

bringing the activities of students in branding educational institutions, are as follows:

(a) Social service as a way to introduce the institution. In social service, students go directly to the community to help with matters relating to religion and other issues. For example, students are sent to the community to fill the Friday sermon and Imam prayers and even become material fillers during Ramadan. (b) Students participate in competitions organized outside of school. With competitions outside the school, students can show their potential and bring the school's good name if they get an award in the competition. (c) Involving majlis ta'lim outside and inside the school as a place for the final exam for class XII. Students are required to go to the community to practice the knowledge obtained at Pondok Pesanten Darul Fikri as a requirement for graduation. (d) Students help launch a routine study activity at the beginning of the month. This is very helpful in educational institutions, and students can practice good attitudes or behaviour when preparing for their studies. The community can believe that students can carry out the mandate well, and the community believes that the educational institution is receiving a good education or can be trusted. (e) Students continue to apply the manners and ways of dressing familiarized with the educational institutions of Darul Fikri Islamic Boarding School as an educational institution branding effort. In this case, the community also views that students know when good deeds and wrong deeds.



Figure 1. Branding Strategy

3.2. *The impact of students in branding educational institutions*

The impact of students in branding educational institutions can have a very positive influence that can benefit schools and users of academic services, namely parents. The effect of Branding is that the institution is increasingly trusted by the broader community as a place to send their children to school, and they believe that by sending their children to this school, they can become valuable people in the future. According to (Erlinda & Safitri, 2020), Branding dramatically affects the interest of job seekers or education in the realization of recruitment when an educational institution socializes jobs to candidates about the work environment so that prospective employees and students have an opinion about it. Educational institutions offer facilities such as room atmosphere, work equipment, learning systems, learning activities, and movement opportunities for prospective students. So, with the Branding of academic institutions, more and more people are interested in sending their children to school.

According to (Harisatunisa, 2021), educational institutions' branding activities aim to create a good image to increase student interest. To build brand awareness, institutional leaders must communicate with the public. To create brand awareness, institutional leaders must communicate with the public. One of the fundamental communication tasks in Branding is to increase public awareness and information about the institution. Therefore, the objectives of branding communication are: (1) Increase students' understanding of the university's existence. (2) Increase connections and make prospective students want to know more. (3) Try or persuade prospective students to compare their expectations.

In the efforts of students in branding an educational institution, there are benefits, among others, namely: 1) The students' behaviour shows a positive direction, as indicated by the interview with the school principal, who stated that there were no adverse reactions from the surrounding community and the industrial world. 2) The school is motivated to succeed and grow, and the results and observations about the school's performance are excellent. The benefits of the branding strategy in schools and students explained that the advantages of the branding strategy are, for example, 3) The school is better known by the community, as evidenced by the increased development of students 4) The community believes that Darul Fikri Islamic Boarding School can produce graduates who are positive or have good behaviour. 5) Changes in student behaviour in a positive direction, school programs such as Dhuha prayers, reading the Quran and interview results for students who experience positive changes during their education at Darul Firi Islamic Boarding School. 6) Parents' trust increased, as shown in the interview with the principal, who stated there were no negative reactions from the seniors. 7) More innovations and achievements can be seen as growth in professional programs and non-academic areas.

The research was conducted on school identity; the researcher's material provides direction for the preparation of research, including quality related to the quality of services offered by organizations that consumers can trust by having advantages about the products or services offered. Branding in educational institutions carried out by students is beneficial and very profitable; with the increasing public trust, academic institutions are not preoccupied with too deep a promotion to attract public interest in sending their sons and daughters to school. Without excessive promotion, students who enter Darul Fikri Islamic Boarding School are deep enough or have enough to fulfil the city of students.

According to (Pınar & Kelimeler, 2020), several supporting and inhibiting factors exist in branding educational institutions. The supporting factors for the implementation of educational marketing strategies in academic institutions are as follows: (1) *Madrasahs* are schools under the auspices of foundations that are more independent, (2) Have clear segments, (3) The trust of the community and alums is still relatively high, (4) The *Madrasah* is located close to the community.

Factors inhibiting the implementation of marketing strategies for education services in educational institutions are as follows: (1) There is no specialized support group, (2) *Madrasahs* do not yet have a systematic marketing concept of educational offerings, (3) There is no evaluation data to improve the strategy for the following year, (4) Marketing strategy is often considered to be less critical. Based on interviews and observations at Darul Fikri Islamic Boarding School, several inhibiting factors exist in implementing branding educational institutions, including: 1) Lack of students in branding educational institutions in urban areas.

2) Students do not play a significant role in branding urban education institutions. However, teachers and foundations are instrumental in branding educational institutions in urban areas. The foundation and teachers brand educational institutions by using an activity (studies and so on) and helping the community build a mosque and a place of ablution. Therefore, Pondok Darul Fikri can be recognized by the community through assistance and over time, the community can find out what the educational institutions in the cottage are.

4. Conclusion

Learners play a huge role in branding educational institutions because, according to the institution's vision, students are objects of education as determinants of success in branding educational institutions. As students, the efforts made by students are to study seriously and develop all their potential. Students must synergize in the policies set by the educational institution Pondok *pesantren* Darul Fikri. The impact of branding educational institutions carried out by students can have a very positive influence that can benefit schools and users of academic services, namely parents. The advantages of the branding strategy, for example, are that the community better knows the school, it is proven that students have increased development, and the community believes that Darul Fikri Islamic Boarding School can produce graduates who are positive or have good behaviour.

Branding in educational institutions carried out by students is beneficial and very profitable; with the increasing public trust, academic institutions are not preoccupied with too deep a promotion to attract public interest in sending their sons and daughters to school. Without excessive promotion, students who enter Darul Fikri Islamic Boarding School are deep enough or have enough to fulfil the city of students.

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