

Madrasah Image Building through Educational Marketing Strategy: A Marketing 4.0 Perspective

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Keywords:	Abstract
Image Building, Marketing Strategy, Marketing 4.0.	<i>Competition between educational institutions in the digital space demands that madrasahs systematically build their image through marketing strategies. This study aims to describe the educational marketing strategy of MTsN 1 Ponorogo based on the 5A and 4C concepts from a Marketing 4.0 perspective, and analyze how this strategy builds the madrasah's image. The study used a qualitative case study approach with an interactive model analysis of Miles, Huberman, and Saldana. The results show that at the awareness stage. The Madrasah combines print media, social media, and the Matsapo Competition. At this stage, appeal, the attraction rests on a variety of excellent programs and affordable costs. At this stage ask, information is available through brochures, banners, websites, social media, and family. At this stage, act, fans exceed capacity. At this level, advocate: recommendations circulate through families and guardians, thus forming a cycle that returns to the initial stage, aware. In the 4C analysis, co-creation appears as consultative participation in program design. In contrast, currency, communal activation, and conversation partially align with the concept: cost differentiation, access relying on existing communities, and the strongest conversations taking place face-to-face. This strategy builds image by making programs and achievements publicized and recommended, thereby shifting the Madrasah's position from second choice to first choice.</i>
Kata Kunci: Pembangunan Citra, Strategi Pemasaran, Pemasaran 4.0.	Persaingan antarlembaga pendidikan di ruang digital menuntut madrasah untuk secara sistematis membangun citra mereka melalui strategi pemasaran. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan strategi pemasaran pendidikan MTsN 1 Ponorogo berdasarkan konsep 5A dan 4C dari perspektif Pemasaran 4.0, serta menganalisis bagaimana strategi tersebut membangun citra madrasah. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan studi kasus kualitatif dengan model analisis interaktif dari Miles, Huberman, dan Saldana. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa pada tahap “aware”, madrasah tersebut memadukan media cetak, media sosial, dan Kompetisi Matsapo. Pada tahap “appeal”, daya tariknya terletak pada beragam program unggulan dan biaya yang terjangkau. Pada tahap “ask”, informasi tersedia melalui brosur, spanduk, situs web, media sosial, dan keluarga. Pada tahap “act”, jumlah penggemar melebihi kapasitas. Pada tahap “advocate”, rekomendasi beredar melalui

keluarga dan wali, sehingga membentuk siklus yang kembali ke tahap awal "aware". Dalam analisis 4C, *co-creation* muncul sebagai partisipasi konsultatif dalam perancangan program, sedangkan *currency*, *communal activation*, dan *conversation* sebagian selaras dengan konsep: diferensiasi biaya, akses yang bergantung pada komunitas yang ada, dan percakapan terkuat yang terjadi secara tatap muka. Strategi ini membangun citra dengan mempublikasikan dan merekomendasikan program serta pencapaian, sehingga mengubah posisi madrasah dari pilihan kedua menjadi pilihan pertama.

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1. Introduction

The development of digital technology has changed the way people choose educational institutions. Information about institutions can now be obtained through the internet, social media, and interpersonal recommendations, which are also considered before prospective students and parents make their choice (Wahyunto et al., 2024). Information regarding the facilities and daily activities of a *madrasah* can be accessed flexibly, so educational institutions do not rely solely on conventional promotions (Dewi & Suardana, 2021). This situation demands educational marketing that combines conventional and digital approaches, as conceived in the Marketing 4.0 concept (Kotler et al., 2020). Face-to-face interactions, such as socialization and open houses, remain important for building trust. At the same time, digital media plays a role in expanding reach, opening two-way communication, and facilitating the spread of testimonials (Septian, 2022).

The openness of information in the digital space has created intense competition among educational institutions, including madrasahs (Karsono et al., 2021). Madrasahs compete not only with their surrounding institutions but also with other institutions that are more actively establishing a presence in the digital space (Herawati, T. & Supriyoko, 2023). Parents now face a variety of choices when choosing an educational institution. Thus, the selection of an educational institution not only takes into account the quality of learning, but is also influenced by the perception and image of the institution that develops in society. Image building becomes an important aspect in educational institutions (Ad'ha et al., 2026).

Education is an intangible service, and its benefits can only be felt after the educational process. This situation causes prospective students and parents to tend to consider image, reputation, and level of trust when choosing an educational institution (Alamsyahbani et al., 2026). A positive image can increase public recognition and trust in madrasahs, while also differentiating them from other educational institutions (Ilyasa, 2025). This image also has the potential to encourage recommendations from word of mouth in the digital era; information can be disseminated more widely and quickly through social media (Dewi & Suardana, 2021). Therefore, building an institutional image needs to be managed through a systematically designed marketing strategy (Azizah & Mahmudin, 2024).

The importance of systematic image building is reflected in the management strategy of MTsN (*Madrasah Tsanawiyah Negeri*) 1 Ponorogo. According to research by (Mu'awanah, 2026), the formulation of this strategy at the *Madrasah* is based on a shared awareness of the public perception that still places *Madrasah* as a second choice. This perception encourages stakeholders to reposition the *Madrasah's* image so that it can position itself as one of the main educational choices in Ponorogo. This effort is realized through the development of superior programs in academics, tahfidz (memorization of the Koran), language, research, multimedia, semester credit systems (SKS), and sports, with the motto UNIK (Excellent, Innovative, and Competitive). The *Madrasah* has achieved several achievements at the provincial and national levels, and these achievements are published through the *Madrasah's* Instagram account (Mu'awanah, 2026). Thus, MTsN 1 Ponorogo has advantages in aspects of educational products and achievements, which are supported by digital communication practices as part of its educational marketing strategy.

Previous research shows that educational marketing in madrasahs is generally studied in relation to increasing the number of students (Khoirumansyah et al., 2025); studies in Ponorogo Regency emphasize the strategy of madrasa principals in realizing superior and competitive madrasahs (Yanuarti et al., 2026), as well as the implementation of blue ocean strategy through differentiation of flagship programs (Mu'awanah, 2026). In these studies, the image of the *Madrasah* appears as part of or an implication of the strategy, not yet a primary focus. Furthermore, no research has been found that analyzes the educational marketing strategy at MTsN 1 Ponorogo in building the image of the *Madrasah* from a Marketing 4.0 perspective that includes the 5A and 4C stages. Based on this description, this study aims to examine image building through educational marketing strategies at MTsN 1 Ponorogo from a Marketing 4.0 perspective. Specifically, this study aims to describe the educational marketing strategies of MTsN 1 Ponorogo based on 4C and 5A, and analyze how these strategies build the image of the *Madrasah*.

2. Methods

This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study type. The qualitative case study approach was chosen because the research aims to understand in depth the marketing strategy of education and the process of building the image of the *Madrasah* and is focused on one institution. The research was conducted at MTsN (*Madrasah Tsanawiyah Negeri*) 1 Ponorogo because the *Madrasah* develops various superior programs and has communication practices in the digital space that are relevant to the study of marketing and image building. Primary data were obtained through informants directly involved in the management of the *Madrasah's* programs and marketing, namely the *madrasah* principal, deputy head of curriculum, promotion team, and students. Informants were determined using the technique of purposive sampling. They were selected based on their understanding and involvement in the research object (Wahyuni et al., 2022). Secondary data consisted of *madrasah* profile documents, achievement data, brochures, and social media accounts.

Data collection was conducted through semi-structured interviews to explore marketing strategies, implementation of flagship programs and perceptions of the *Madrasah's* image. Observations of promotional activities, information services and *madrasah* activities in physical and digital spaces. Documentation in the form of archives, social media publications and other supporting documents. Data analysis

techniques use the interactive model of Miles et al. (2014), which includes data condensation, data presentation and drawing conclusions and verification. Data validity is tested through source triangulation, namely comparing different information and informants, and technical triangulation, namely comparing the results of interviews, observations and documentation (Basrowi & Suwandi, 2008).

3. Result and Discussion

3.1. *The Concept of Image Building in Educational Marketing*

An institution's image plays a crucial role in influencing parents in choosing a school for their children (Azizah & Mahmudin, 2024). Image itself is the primary goal of reputational and performance-building efforts in the field of public relations (Salamah & Falah, 2024). The image of an educational institution refers to the perception held by the general public or related parties of the institution. Various factors can influence this image, such as the teaching standards applied, the institution's reputation, the physical facilities available, student academic achievement, recommendations from related parties, and the scope of activities carried out by the institution (Lieyani et al., 2025).

Image building is a deliberate and planned effort to shape and strengthen that image. An educational institution really needs an image that can influence public perception (Ad'ha et al., 2026). Image building is closely related to the institution's appearance, impression, popularity, and reputation. A positive image can be formed by conveying information that is clear, easy to understand, rational, and credible to the public, thus building trust and a good reputation (Anggraeni & Putri, 2022). A school's existence in the public eye is highly dependent on public perception or opinion of the school. This perception can influence the school's presence in the market, particularly based on the quality of services and outcomes offered to the public (Azizah & Mahmudin, 2024). From the Marketing 4.0 perspective used in this study, image is not formed from a single activity. Image is formed from a series of experiences of prospective students and parents, starting from knowing (aware), interested (appeal), asking (ask), acting (act), to recommending (advocate) (Gau, 2019). Based on this framework, the following discussion describes how MTsN 1 Ponorogo's marketing strategy builds the image of the *Madrasah* at each stage.

3.2. *Educational Marketing Strategy from a Marketing 4.0 Perspective*

Marketing 4.0 is a marketing approach that combines interactions online and offline between institutions and customers in the digital economy (Kotler et al., 2020). This approach continues the stages of Marketing 1.0 (product-oriented), 2.0 (customer-oriented), and 3.0 (people-oriented) by extending the human-centered approach to the entire customer journey. Traditional marketing remains instrumental in building initial awareness, while digital marketing deepens engagement and advocacy (Kotler et al., 2020).

The two core concepts used in this research are the 5A customer journey and the 4C marketing mix. The customer journey consists of awareness, appeal, ask, act, and advocate. The 4C marketing mix is an adaptation of the 4Ps, which consists of co-creation, currency, communal activation, and conversation (Ilyasa, 2025). In this study, 5A is used to examine how prospective students and parents know, are interested in, seek information, register, and recommend madrasahs. In contrast, 4C is used to analyze the strategies implemented by madrasahs.

3.2.1 Aware Level

At the aware level, the *Madrasah* combines print and digital media. Print media includes brochures, banners, and billboards, with the banners displayed on the roadside in front of the *madrasah* entrance for easy public visibility. Digitally, the *Madrasah* maintains Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, YouTube, and an official website to update activities and upload student, teacher, and institutional achievements. As of March 2026, the *Madrasah*'s Instagram account had 6,000 followers and 1,850 posts, while its YouTube channel had 4.12 thousand subscribers and 550 videos featuring the *Madrasah*'s profile. Podcasts and tutorials. Provincial and national achievements, such as two wins at the 2021 NASA Fair National Scientific Writing Competition and third place in the National Social Studies Olympiad, are also continuously updated on the *Madrasah*'s Instagram.

The *madrasah* agenda is used as a means of introduction. The competition is held annually in conjunction with the *Madrasah*'s anniversary. In 2024, approximately 800 elementary school students from across Ponorogo Regency participated in competitions such as the MIPA and PAI Olympiad, Al-Qur'an tartil, calligraphy, memorization, futsal, and volleyball. Participants who attended would get to know the *madrasah* environment so that it could be a consideration for them in continuing their education. This was emphasized by Mr. Jauhari, as the deputy head of public relations.

"The event is called a competition. The event coincided with the school's anniversary. There were various competitions, including olympiads, volleyball, Quranic recitation, singing, calligraphy, pildacil, and futsal, with 800 students participating this year."

Promotions also took place through parents. However, visits to elementary schools were only conducted in a few locations because the number of applicants had exceeded the target, as explained by the Deputy Public Relations Officer:

"For promotional activities, we utilize all social media platforms, banners, and billboards. We also hold various competitions for elementary and Islamic elementary schools throughout Ponorogo Regency. We also visit schools, but only a few, not many, considering the number of applicants has already exceeded our target."

From a Marketing 4.0 perspective, the findings show that the stage is awareness. This is implemented by combining conventional and digital channels (Dewi & Suardana, 2021). Print media, strategically located, directly reaches the surrounding community; social media expands reach and serves as a showcase for achievements; and events provide firsthand experiences for prospective students. The decrease in school visits can be interpreted as a sign that *madrasah* awareness is supported by reputation and digital channels. Posting achievements means that awareness extends beyond simply recognizing the *Madrasah*'s existence but also fosters an initial impression of it as a high-achieving institution, the initial stage of image formation. This awareness serves as a gateway to the next stage, namely appeal, when the flagship program becomes the main attraction.

3.2.2 Appeal Stage (Interested)

The appeal of MTsN 1 Ponorogo stems from the realization that *madrasah*s have long been viewed as a secondary option if students are not accepted into

competing schools. Therefore, the leadership, quality assurance team, teachers, and parents worked together to formulate a way to transform this into a primary goal. The vice-chancellor of curriculum emphasized this.

So, all this time, our *Madrasah* was seen as a second choice. If we weren't accepted at a competing school, we'd come here. From there, we began to think about how to elevate this *Madrasah*. It became first-class, or the first choice, not an alternative, but the primary goal. So, we conducted a planning session involving the leadership, namely the principal, vice principals, the head of administration, and the quality assurance team. This team was tasked with formulating the *Madrasah's* potential and development strategies.

The flagship program was designed based on community aspirations and the potential of prospective students, including academics, language, memorization (*tahfidz*), research, sports, and multimedia. The design process utilized *Madrasah* Self-Evaluation and a SWOT analysis, resulting in the introduction of the Credit Unit (SKS) service in 2023, enabling highly capable students to graduate in two years. The *Madrasah* also described this program as an innovation not widely available in other madrasas, including integrated memorization (*tahfidz*) classes with academics, credit units, research, language, sports, multimedia, and even a *madrasah* (*ma'had*).

In practice, madrasas offer four types of services: advanced classes, extracurricular activities, Islamic schools, and credits (SKS). Advanced classes have unique activities, for example, an Arabic camp in language classes, Olympiad orientation in science classes, a target of memorizing 4 *juz* in three years in *tahfidz* classes, intensive training in sports classes, scientific writing in research classes, and graphic design and cinematography in multimedia classes. The quality of the program is supported by collaboration with UNIDA and Kampung Inggris Pare for language classes, and research institutions for research classes. The SKS service is selective. Students are selected through recommendations from homeroom teachers based on first-semester results, then interviewed with parents, who must both agree. Classes are small, around 10–20 students, with the most complete facilities. The attraction is also proven through achievements, such as 2nd Runner-Up in the national *Musabaqah Fahmil Qur'an* competition and 1st place at the provincial level in boxing and karate in 2026, as well as 1st place in the Scout Troop at the East Java Provincial level.

The interest of prospective students is evident in several aspects. The principal stated that the sports class is the most popular, even though only 320 students were accepted. The vice-principal of curriculum assessed that language and science classes are the most popular because they are benchmarks for selecting majors in high school. In contrast, the vice-principal of public relations emphasized that the sports class excels only in terms of the number of applicants. The number of new students increased from 296 in 2020 to 306 in 2021 and 328 in 2022. A teacher also stated that the number of applicants increases every year. In terms of price, this state *madrasah* does not charge registration fees or building fees, only monthly donations, and part of the costs are supported by the School Operational Assistance (SOA) funds. The principal, Mr. Agus Darmanto, conveyed this.

"Parents or guardians do not bear the full cost of a student's education; they also receive assistance from the School Operational Assistance (BOS) fund, which eases their financial burden. If a student has an Indonesia Pintar Card (KIP), is enrolled in the Family Hope Program (PKH), holds a Family Welfare Card (KKS), or has a

Certificate of Financial Need (SKTM), their educational costs will be significantly lower than those of students who do not have these cards."

From the perspective of parents, a parent and committee member chose the *Madrasah* because he initially intended to send his child to a boarding school but was concerned about leaving behind his general education. The program's combination of religious and general education convinced him. From the student perspective, Putri Aisah was drawn to the flagship program after seeing many options on the *Madrasah's* Instagram and only learned about the research class there. Moh Ridho was drawn to the sports extracurricular after seeing an Instagram post.

Level appeal Marketing 4.0 occurs when prospective students and parents who are already familiar with *madrasas* begin to evaluate the value they offer. The findings above indicate that the appeal of *madrasas* does not rest on a single advantage, but rather on a selection of programs suited to diverse interests and a combination of religious and general education that addresses parents' concerns. As a result, demand exceeds capacity. This also marks a shift in the image of *madrasas* from second choice to first choice, and this was the initial goal of the repositioning. Appeal: This is the entrance to the next level; ask, when prospective students and parents seek information about programs, requirements, and registration processes.

3.2.3 Ask level

At the ask stage, prospective students and interested parents begin seeking additional information, and the *Madrasah* provides channels to answer these questions. Brochures and banners include the school's vision, service programs, registration requirements, registration timelines and process, registration pathways, extracurricular activities, facilities, and more contact persons at the *Madrasah*. In the digital space, the official website contains information ranging from profiles to student admissions activities, and a TikTok account displays PPDB content, as well as competitions and extracurricular activities. This channel is managed by a dedicated team consisting of IT and public relations, although all internal parties are involved. Regarding direct services, researchers found a One-Stop Integrated Service next to the gate that welcomes guests in a friendly and efficient manner.

Prospective students' information searches appear to be conducted through two complementary channels: family and social media. Ridho, a student, confirmed this.

"My older sister used to be here, so my mother also recommended me here, then I looked at the Madrasah's IG and Facebook to see what the school was like, and then I was interested because the sports extracurricular was good. I first found out about it from posts on Instagram."

Putri Aisah also left her family and observed activity posts on Instagram before becoming interested in the flagship program. The deputy public relations officer and the *madrasah* principal mentioned promoting through parents as one of the promotional activities. Bone Competition gives elementary school/Islamic elementary school students the opportunity to see the *madrasah* environment

directly, which, according to the curriculum deputy, can be a consideration for them to continue their education.

Parents explained that program information is also conveyed through meetings. The school socializes the program to parents and the community through meetings and social media, and the program is said to be derived from community aspirations. Socialization to parents regarding science and research class activities and regular parent-teacher meetings take place during report card submissions. For the Credit System service, interaction is two-way: students recommended by the homeroom teacher are interviewed with their parents, and if both agree, the program can continue.

The Marketing 4.0 perspective explains that these findings indicate the stage ask. This is done by ensuring that prospective students' and parents' questions can be answered at their destination. Registration information is available in print media and on the website, evidence of activities is available on social media, and answers from those closest to them come from family and alums. The similarity of content between brochures and banners indicates consistent information across channels. Because some students already know the *Madrasah* through family before accessing social media, social media serves as a place to verify existing impressions, rather than as an initial introduction. This stage serves as the gateway to the act stage, namely the decision to register and participate in the admissions process.

3.2.4 Level Act (Registering and Using the Service)

At the act stage, interest turns into a decision to enroll, then is tested by service experience (Ilyasa, 2025). Evidence of this decision is seen in the number of applicants exceeding the target and the highest interest in the sports class, while the *Madrasah* only accepted 320 students. According to students, the decision to choose the *Madrasah* was driven by several factors. Monica, a language program student, was interested in the English Camp and Arabic Camp, and she had participated in competitions at the *Madrasah* when she was still in elementary school, which attracted her to the environment and activities. Moh Ridho mentioned the good sports extracurricular activities. Parents who initially wanted to send their children to boarding schools chose the *Madrasah* because of the balance of religious and general knowledge. In terms of costs, there are no registration fees or building fees, only a monthly donation of Rp100,000, which two students mentioned. The presentation of the curriculum vice principal, Mr. Masyhudi, emphasized this.

Because we're a public madrasah, there's no building fee; we only receive a monthly donation, which varies in amount and isn't too significant. However, there are sometimes other costs to support student needs, such as supporting each class's program activities. These other costs aren't significant and don't force students to reinvest in their own needs.

After enrolling, the service experience is shaped by the learning process and facilities. Learning activities run from morning to afternoon, followed by extracurricular activities until the evening, and the advanced classes offer additional supporting subjects, such as research subjects and computer research in research classes. The school complements this experience with external collaborations, such as an Arabic camp with UNIDA and a program with

Kampung Inggris Pare. Students rate the experience positively. Alyssia, a multimedia student, feels she's growing and is always trying new things. She said her class won third place in a district-level graphic design competition thanks to a well-planned learning schedule. The location is also considered convenient, allowing students to avoid traffic noise and allowing buses to stop in front of the school. The SKS service demonstrates careful consideration of the student experience, as students are selected through homeroom teacher recommendations and parent interviews, and placed in small classes of around 10–20 students with the most complete facilities.

The service experience was not without limitations acknowledged by the *Madrasah*. Learning facilities were described as adequate, including projectors in each classroom and both digital and physical libraries, but the principal and two students cited a shortage of classrooms. The vice principal of public relations acknowledged that the public often judges an institution based on its physical appearance. Marketing evaluations are conducted quarterly by the principal, along with the public relations and IT teams, and annually after the PPDB (School Enrollment) with all educators and staff. The principal also sets quality standards for each program, such as a minimum memorization of 3 juz (seven-seven chapters) for tahfidz and the ability to write a research proposal for research. The vice principal of curriculum emphasized this.

"In the future, I plan to establish quality standards for each program. For example: the tahfidz program: a minimum standard of memorizing 3 juz; the sports program: a target of winning at the district level; the language program: students are confident in communicating in Arabic/English, supported by activities such as English Camp and Arabic Camp; the research program: students are at least able to write a research proposal, and are expected to participate in competitions such as OPSI (Indonesian Student Research Olympiad). Evaluation is based on the achievement of these minimum standards. If they exceed them, they are considered to have improved."

From a Marketing 4.0 perspective, the act stage marks when interest and information seeking culminate in the purchase and use of a service. The findings above indicate that the decision to register does not occur in isolation, but rather results from a series of previous events. Based on the student's explanation, he learned about the *Madrasah* through a competition during MI (aware), became interested in the camp program (appeal), then registered (act). Because demand exceeds capacity, madrasas are in a position of choice, not a target. Service experience then informs the next stage, namely advocate, when satisfied students and parents recommend the *Madrasah* to others.

3.2.5 Advocate Stage (Recommendation)

The advocate phase shows that satisfied students, parents, and alums are the ones who recommend the *Madrasah* to others. The most obvious form in this data is recommendations within families. Moh Ridho attended the *Madrasah* because his older brother attended there and his mother recommended it. Putri Aisah also learned about the *Madrasah* through family, because her older brother attended. The *madrasah* principal cited promotion through parents as one of the promotional activities, alongside social media, banners, and competitions. On the parent side, a parent who is also a committee member feels safe sending his child to the school

because the *Madrasah* can simultaneously fulfill both his expectations of character education and general knowledge. Regular parent-teacher meetings, including during report card submissions, make parents feel that the school has good communication and therefore trusts its policies.

Madrasas also maintain these recommendation materials through achievements. Student accomplishments are displayed in the madrasa environment and on Instagram, and the madrasa recognizes them through social media posts, teacher and staff story posts, and the Appreciation for Achievement Warriors program. The achievements of teachers and education personnel also increase public trust. Researchers note that madrasas, once a second choice after students were not accepted to schools near their homes, are now the primary destination for students in southern and eastern Ponorogo. Madrasas have social resonance in the form of public trust in their quality and an increasing number of applicants each year, accompanied by changing perceptions. Thus, madrasas have successfully built a strong image as the primary choice for those seeking a balanced education.

From a Marketing 4.0 perspective, the advocate stage is when satisfied customers become active supporters (Ni'mah et al., 2026), and the findings above demonstrate its earliest form: recommendations circulated through family and guardians. Recommendations within families demonstrate a cycle in which older siblings at the *Madrasah* become sources of information that lead younger siblings to the awareness and ask stage, thus enabling advocates in one generation to open the first stage for the next. The *Madrasah's* strategy amplifies this cycle by making achievement a continuously circulating content, making student and teacher satisfaction visible to prospective students. In this way, the advocate stage reinforces the awareness stage, and the customer journey takes a circular, not a straight line.

The customer journey cycle from the aware stage until advocate, which then returns to the aware stage, does not occur spontaneously. In each cycle, the *Madrasah* conditions a series of marketing tools that facilitate prospective students and parents to learn about, become interested in, seek information, make decisions, and ultimately be willing to recommend the institution to others. Within the Marketing 4.0 framework, these tools are formulated as the 4Cs, namely co-creation, currency, communal activation, and conversation, which is an extension of the traditional 4P marketing mix (product, price, place, and promotion). While the 5A framework represents the customer experience, the 4C framework represents how institutions present and interact throughout that experience (Kotler et al., 2020). Given that some empirical evidence, such as parent recommendations and social media posts, is relevant to both frameworks, the analysis in the following section examines it from the perspective of *madrasah* management, namely product, cost, community, and conversation management. In contrast, the perspective of prospective student experiences has been described in the previous section.

3.2.6 Co-creation

Co-creation is a 4C element that replaces product in the traditional marketing mix, and emphasizes the involvement of partners and consumers in the product or service development process (Kotler et al., 2020). At MTsN 1 Ponorogo, this element is evident in the way flagship programs are designed. According to the

curriculum vice chairman, flagship programs are derived from community aspirations and the potential of prospective students. Their formulation involves leaders, teachers, parents, and educational consultants through *Madrasah* Self-Evaluation and SWOT analysis, which, among other things, resulted in the SKS service in 2023. The opening of *tahfidz* (memorization) and sports classes also stems from student conditions, namely the presence of students who have memorized and many students who are talented in sports. At the implementation level, program quality is strengthened through partnerships with UNIDA, Kampung Inggris Pare, and research institutions. These findings indicate that co-creation, in this madrasa, takes the form of consultative participation between the institution, parents, and partners, not digital platform-based collaboration as is common in Marketing 4.0 literature.

3.2.7 Currency

Currency is a 4C element that replaces price and illustrates a shift from fixed prices to flexible prices adjusted to market demand (Dewi & Suardana, 2021). At MTsN 1 Ponorogo, this element is evident in the heterogeneous educational fee structure. As a state *madrasah*, this institution does not charge registration fees or building fees, and only implements a monthly *infaq* (charity) that varies among students, with concessions for KIP, PKH, KKS, or SKTM holders, as well as SOA funding support. Two students stated that their infaq was Rp100,000 per month. The amount of the fee was determined through a committee meeting with parents. This finding indicates that the flexibility of fees at this *Madrasah* takes the form of differentiation based on family economic capacity and deliberation, rather than dynamic adjustments based on market demand data as intended in the concept currency. Thus, the suitability of the findings with this concept is partial, and affordability is more appropriately read as supporting the attractiveness of the program at the stage appeal and the decision to register at the level act.

3.2.8 Communal Activation

Communal activation is a 4C element that replaces place, and illustrates the shift in access to products or services from mere physical locations to communities or platforms that connect customers. At MTsN 1 Ponorogo, this element is evident in the *Madrasah*'s dependence on its surrounding network. The *madrasah* principal mentioned promotion through parents as one of the promotional activities, and two students knew the *Madrasah* from their families, including an older sibling who had attended the school, as described in the previous stage advocate. *Madrasah* also reaches out to the elementary school community through Bone Competition and involving parents in memorization class activities through rotating Quranic recitation sessions at parents' homes.

Furthermore, physical accessibility remains a factor, including a location on a busy roadside that is free from noise and accessible by bus, as well as a web-based digital library that expands service access. These findings indicate communal activation. This *Madrasah* works through existing communities, namely families, parents, and elementary schools, rather than through a digital platform that connects customers directly. Therefore, its conformity to this concept is partial, and the traditional dimension of place still plays a role.

3.2.9 Conversation

Conversation is a 4C element that replaces promotion and illustrates the shift in promotion from one-way messages to conversations because social media makes customers more vocal in responding to brand messages (Wahyunto et al., 2024). At MTsN 1 Ponorogo, this element is evident in two channels. First, the digital channel: the Madrasah maintains a TikTok account with 1,595 followers that features content on PPDB (School Student Admissions), competitions, and extracurricular activities, and this content has received 56,800 likes. It also maintains a YouTube channel with content on the Madrasah's profile, podcast, and tutorials. Second, the face-to-face channel: the Madrasah holds regular meetings with parents, which are used to communicate program planning, and according to the Deputy Head of Curriculum, input from the community as service users is taken into account in designing the program. Community responses are also evaluated, as the promotion team reports on strategies, media, and community responses in evaluation meetings held online. These findings indicate that conversations at this Madrasah take place primarily through direct communication with parents and the absorption of public responses. At the same time, digital channels function more as dissemination of content that is responded to through likes, rather than as a documented dialogue. Thus, its conformity to this concept is partial, and the strongest two-way dimension lies in the digital channel offline.

4. Conclusion

The educational marketing strategy of MTsN 1 Ponorogo is implemented comprehensively following the decision-making process of prospective students and their parents (customer journey). At the awareness level, it utilizes the integration of print media, digital platforms, and institutional agendas, which are then strengthened at the next stage by appealing through differentiation of flagship programs, integrated curriculum, and competitive financing. Information needs at this stage are facilitated through offline promotional instruments, online channels, and personal networks to encourage conversion at the stage of action, with a surge in enrollment that exceeds class capacity. Level advocacy then manifested through chain recommendations from stakeholders that form a sustainable marketing cycle. Through the 4C mix analysis, the dimensions of co-creation were seen in public consultative involvement. At the same time, the aspects of currency, communal activation, and conversation were partially fulfilled due to differentiation-based costing, market penetration relying on existing communities, and the dominance of offline dialogue.

Demonstrated superior programs, information dissemination through various channels, and recommendations from families reinforce each other, so that the image of the Madrasah appears to have successfully shifted from an alternative to a primary choice. However, these findings have limitations. The image shift is inferred from statements from madrasah administrators and the number of applicants, not from direct measurements of parents' perceptions. Furthermore, data on recommendations come from only a small number of informants. Future research is recommended to examine the perceptions of parents and prospective students through structured surveys and to examine interactions on social media in greater depth. *Madrasah* administrators are advised to strengthen two-way communication through digital channels and address limitations in physical

facilities, such as classrooms, so that the perceived quality of service aligns with the established image.

5. References

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