

DIGITAL MARKETING STRATEGIES OF MODERN ISLAMIC BOARDING SCHOOLS

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to identify the digital marketing strategies implemented by Al Azhar Balikpapan and Al Mazaya Paser and to assess their effectiveness in strengthening institutional visibility and trust. The research employed a qualitative descriptive method using a multisite design, supported by observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. Data were collected through observations, interviews, and documentation. Involving Kiai, public relations managers, and social media administrators as primary data sources, while secondary data were obtained from institutional documents, digital content of the boarding schools, and scholarly literature relevant to digital marketing in Islamic education. Data validation was conducted through source and technique triangulation. This study employs the Miles and Huberman qualitative data analysis model, which consists of data collection, data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing or verification. Findings reveal the formulation of a Parent-Based Digital Trust Marketing (PDTM) model grounded in the principle of *khidmah*, emphasizing parental trust, satisfaction, and engagement as the primary social proof. The model operates through Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, official websites, and WhatsApp, utilizing educational content, activity visuals, and authentic testimonials. The strategy enhances digital visibility, builds a modern-Islamic institutional image, and effectively reaches prospective students beyond Kalimantan. Practical applications of this study include digital marketing for Islamic education, branding in faith-based institutions, and trust-based communication strategies. The novelty of this research lies in the integration of parental trust as the core driver of digital marketing effectiveness in pesantren, producing a culturally grounded model aligned with Islamic educational values. The study concludes that optimizing parental trust significantly strengthens digital marketing performance in modern Islamic boarding schools during the ongoing digital transformation in education.

Keywords

Digital Marketing; Educational Branding; Modern Islamic Boarding Schools; Parental Trust.



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INTRODUCTION

The development of digital technology has brought fundamental changes to patterns of information seeking and decision-making within society, particularly among parents when choosing educational institutions for their children. In East Kalimantan, the growth of modern Islamic boarding schools (pondok pesantren modern) has shown an increasing trend in line with public demand for educational institutions capable of integrating strong Islamic religious education with general education that is relevant to contemporary challenges. Modern pesantren are no longer understood merely as traditional educational institutions; rather, they have transformed into educational entities that adopt integrated curricula, adequate facilities, and the utilization of digital technology in both learning processes and institutional management. Nevertheless, despite this considerable potential, an academic problem remains evident in the suboptimal implementation of digital marketing strategies by many modern pesantren, resulting in limited visibility and competitiveness within the digital space.

Based on the results of field observations and in-depth interviews, it was shown that Pesantren Modern Al Azhar in Balikpapan and Pesantren Mazaya in Paser represent relatively new modern Islamic boarding schools that have successfully gained a relatively high level of public trust. Both institutions integrate religious and general education supported by adequate facilities, more comprehensive curricula, and technology-based innovations. Based on the researcher's preliminary findings, the success of these two pesantren in building public trust is not determined solely by the quality of education they offer, but also by their ability to utilize digital media and technology to introduce their institutions to a wider audience. In this context, pesantren marketing management becomes a strategic aspect, particularly in responding to increasingly intense competition with other educational institutions, including fellow pesantren as well as public and international schools that have more aggressively optimized digital marketing strategies.

Although Pesantren Modern Al Azhar and Pesantren Mazaya have succeeded in establishing positive reputations within society (Mardani & Siswanto, 2024), both institutions continue to face various challenges in marketing management, particularly in the rapidly evolving digital era. These challenges include limitations in the optimal utilization of digital technology, despite the initial use of social media, websites, and other digital platforms. Many modern pesantren do not yet possess marketing teams with specialized competencies in digital marketing, resulting in the partial and unstrategic use of digital platforms. Furthermore, managing institutional image and reputation in

the digital sphere remains a critical issue. A strong digital image plays a significant role in building public trust; however, not all pesantren have clear and sustainable strategies for developing institutional identity and branding in digital spaces (Azizah et al., 2024).

On the other hand, modern Islamic boarding schools are also confronted with increasingly competitive pressures from other educational institutions that have adopted digital technology earlier in their marketing strategies. Public and international schools offer various technology-based advantages and aggressive digital promotions, compelling modern pesantren to develop more adaptive and innovative digital marketing strategies. These challenges are further compounded by limited institutional resources, both financial and human (Tamam, 2020). Such constraints often hinder the development of effective digital marketing, as digital strategies require investment, technical expertise, and sustained management.

Based on these conditions, this study is essential to examine in depth how Pesantren Modern Al Azhar and Pesantren Mazaya manage marketing activities in the digital era, to assess the effectiveness of the digital marketing strategies they employ in building institutional image and public trust, and to identify the supporting and inhibiting factors influencing the implementation of these strategies. Accordingly, this research is expected to contribute academically to the development of Islamic educational marketing studies, while also offering practical recommendations for modern pesantren in optimizing digital marketing strategies in East Kalimantan.

Previous studies on digital marketing strategies in modern pesantren include research conducted by Rahma Nanda Nur Azizah from Universitas KH. Mukhtar Syafaat Blokagung, entitled *Digital Marketing as a Catalyst for Change: Innovation in Building Pesantren Resilience* (Azizah et al., 2024). The findings indicate that effective digital marketing enhances pesantren visibility, community engagement, and student participation in online education programs. Content marketing strategies play a crucial role in conveying Islamic educational values and strengthening pesantren identities, while social media facilitates closer interaction between pesantren and their communities. However, this study does not specifically explore in depth the digital marketing strategies of modern pesantren.

Another study by Ade Apriyanto, entitled *Digital-Era Promotion Strategies of Darul Ma'arif Islamic Boarding School, Indramayu: An Explorative Case Study* (Apriani et al., 2023), demonstrates that digital marketing strategies through social media significantly influence the improvement of

Darul Ma'arif's institutional image. Nevertheless, this research does not examine managerial aspects in the implementation of digital marketing, leaving a gap in institutional analysis.

Additionally, Atika Aini Nasution from Universitas Battuta conducted research entitled *Socialization of Strategic Marketing Management in the Development of Pesantren Modern Saifullah An Nahdliyah* (Nasution et al., 2024). The findings reveal that the implementation of marketing strategies at Pesantren Modern An Nahdliyah successfully achieved its objectives, resulting in increased student enrollment and heightened public awareness. Digital media, including official websites, social media, and online advertising campaigns, proved effective in reaching target audiences. The success factors included strong collaboration between the marketing team and pesantren management, as well as active involvement of institutional leaders. However, this study does not specifically analyze digital marketing strategies in modern pesantren.

Furthermore, Fahmi Ihsan Firdaus conducted a study entitled *A Review of Islamic Marketing Values in the Implementation of Marketing Communication during Student Admissions* (Firdaus & Nuzula, 2023). The findings indicate that marketing communication from an Islamic marketing perspective involves the planning and implementation of advertising, direct response, sales promotion, public relations, and personal selling in accordance with Islamic teachings. At Pesantren Al Quran Al Ittifaq, Bandung Regency, marketing communication was implemented through an integrated approach aligned with Islamic values. Nonetheless, this study does not comprehensively examine the effectiveness of digital marketing strategies in modern pesantren, particularly in the Kalimantan region.

Another relevant study by Lili Apriani entitled *Educational Service Marketing Strategies in Improving Institutional Image at Madinatul Ulum Islamic Boarding School, Merangin* (Apriani et al., 2023) found that Madinatul Ulum Merangin had implemented educational service marketing strategies fairly well in enhancing its institutional image. These strategies included product offerings aligned with community needs, strategic location, and promotional activities through student guardians, print media, social media, and alumni networks. However, limitations in facilities and infrastructure were identified as constraints. This study does not link these limitations to adaptive strategies developed by modern pesantren.

Based on these five previous studies, it is evident that research on digital marketing strategies in Islamic educational institutions remains largely focused on formal Islamic schools and quantitative approaches, with limited attention given to modern pesantren as distinctive

educational entities with unique cultural and managerial characteristics. Moreover, prior studies tend to discuss digital media effectiveness in a fragmented manner without an integrative analysis of managerial, human resource, and institutional cultural factors. Therefore, the novelty of this research lies in its in-depth qualitative examination of digital marketing strategies in modern Islamic boarding schools in East Kalimantan, along with a comprehensive analysis of the supporting and inhibiting factors influencing digital marketing implementation within pesantren institutions.

This study aims to examine the digital marketing strategies implemented by Pesantren Modern Al Azhar Balikpapan and Pesantren Mazaya Paser in enhancing institutional visibility, image, and attractiveness to prospective students in the digital era. Theoretically, this research is expected to contribute to the development of digital marketing studies within Islamic education by enriching perspectives on digital marketing strategies in modern pesantren with distinctive cultural and Islamic value orientations. It also seeks to fill empirical gaps related to the effectiveness of pesantren digital marketing in East Kalimantan. Pragmatically, the findings are expected to serve as a reference for pesantren administrators in designing and implementing more strategic, effective, and sustainable digital marketing initiatives, as well as providing insights for Islamic education policymakers in strengthening the competitiveness of modern pesantren amid digital transformation.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative interpretive approach to explore digital marketing management in modern Islamic boarding schools. A multisite design was used to examine naturally occurring phenomena across two research locations, namely Pesantren Modern Al Azhar Balikpapan and Pesantren Mazaya Paser. The qualitative paradigm was selected because it enables the researcher to investigate meaning, context, and processes within natural settings, using flexible and sensitive instruments for capturing participants' perspectives. In line with Creswell's view of qualitative inquiry, this study adopts an interpretivist orientation that allows the researcher to understand social realities constructed through interaction and lived experiences.

The research sites consisted of two modern Islamic boarding schools in East Kalimantan. The subjects of the study included key institutional stakeholders such as kiai, administrators, teachers (ustadz), and students (santri), all of whom were selected purposively based on their relevance to the research focus. The researcher was directly present in the field and served as the primary

research instrument, as is typical in qualitative research, adapting to the environment to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the phenomena being examined.

Data collection was conducted in natural settings through observations, in-depth semi-structured interviews, and document analysis. Observations were non-participatory, allowing the researcher to record behaviors, activities, and patterns related to digital marketing practices without intervening in institutional processes. Semi-structured interviews were carried out with kiai, teachers, administrators, and students to gain detailed insights into their experiences and strategies related to digital marketing implementation. Interviews were recorded and transcribed to ensure accuracy. Document analysis included institutional records, meeting notes, strategic plans, promotional materials, photographs, and other documents relevant to the management of digital marketing in both pesantren.

The research procedures covered preparatory activities, field observations from July 8, 2025, to October 19, 2025, interviews, documentation, and continuous reflection. Data generated from these processes were organized and reduced to identify emerging patterns. The multisite design allowed the researcher to compare findings across research locations, ensuring a more comprehensive understanding of the studied phenomena. The study adhered to the principle of examining real-life contexts in which boundaries between phenomena and context are often blurred, consistent with Bogdan and Biklen's perspective on multi-case inquiry.

Data analysis followed the Miles and Huberman interactive model, consisting of data collection, data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing (Miles, 2014). Analysis began prior to fieldwork, continued throughout data collection, and was refined after leaving the field. Data credibility was ensured through source and technique triangulation, enabling validation of findings derived from interviews, observations, and documents. The final outcome of the analysis aimed not only to identify substantive findings at the site level but also to generate broader conceptual insights that contribute to the development of theoretical understanding related to digital marketing strategies in modern Islamic boarding schools.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

Digital transformation has become a structural reality that is inseparable from the dynamics of managing educational institutions, including modern Islamic boarding schools. The development

of information technology has fundamentally reshaped how educational institutions build relationships with society, communicate values, and shape public perceptions. In this context, modern pesantren can no longer rely solely on historical reputation and conventional social networks; instead, they are required to present an institutional identity that is accessible, comprehensible, and openly evaluated within the digital space. Digitalization not only affects the technical aspects of marketing but also reaches the cultural and ideological dimensions of pesantren as Islamic educational institutions grounded in values, tradition, and devotion.

Along with the intensifying competition among educational institutions, digital marketing strategies have become a crucial instrument for building visibility, institutional image, and public trust. For modern pesantren, digital marketing possesses distinctive characteristics, as it is not merely oriented toward promotion but also toward value communication, trust formation, and the cultivation of long-term relationships with parents as key stakeholders. Parents function not only as consumers of educational services but also as social actors who determine the legitimacy and sustainability of pesantren. Therefore, the effectiveness of pesantren digital marketing is highly dependent on the institution's ability to manage communication that is transparent, humane, and aligned with Islamic values.

This study conceptualizes pesantren digital marketing as part of a holistic process of institutional adaptation. Such adaptation involves the integration of digital technology with management systems, organizational culture, and the spiritual identity of the pesantren. In practice, digital marketing does not operate in isolation but is intertwined with service strategies, human resource management, and the implementation of the educational marketing mix. Accordingly, the analysis of digital marketing strategies in modern pesantren must be conducted comprehensively, not only to assess the effectiveness of the media employed but also to understand the social, symbolic, and institutional meanings constructed through these digital practices.

Based on this conceptual framework, the present study presents empirical findings that illustrate how Pondok Pesantren Modern Al Azhar Balikpapan and Pesantren Mazaya Paser manage digital marketing within the context of institutional transformation. The research findings are classified into three main dimensions: digital transformation and the construction of pesantren identity, the digital marketing strategies implemented, and the integration of the 7P marketing mix along with its strategic implications. The presentation of these findings is expected to provide a systematic overview of the patterns, mechanisms, and models of digital marketing in modern

pesantren, while also serving as a foundation for theoretical analysis and further discussion regarding the contribution of this study to the development of Islamic educational marketing scholarship.

Table 1. Research Findings Digital Marketing Strategies of Modern Islamic Boarding Schools

Digital Transformation and Identity Development	Digital Marketing	Integration of the 7P Marketing Mix and Its Strategic Implications
<p>Digital transformation is understood as a process of institutional modernization that integrates technology with the values of khidmah to construct an image of the pesantren as professional, transparent, and adaptive. Digital content functions as a representation of pesantren identity through visual portrayals of students' activities, religious culture, and boarding school life.</p>	<p>The pesantren utilizes Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, official websites, and WhatsApp Business as an integrated marketing ecosystem. These digital media are employed to ensure transparency, facilitate two-way communication, support storytelling, and provide responsive services, which in turn enhance parental trust and expand the reach of prospective student recruitment.</p>	<p>The 7P marketing mix is digitally implemented through the presentation of educational programs (product), transparency of tuition and fees (price), virtual access to information and services (place), organic digital promotion (promotion), the role of human resources as digital ambassadors (people), online-based service delivery (process), and systematic documentation of facilities (physical evidence). This integrated approach strengthens the pesantren's competitiveness and enhances the efficiency of its marketing efforts.</p>
<p>The identity of the pesantren is constructed through consistent digital narratives that highlight Islamic values, professionalism, and public accountability.</p>	<p>A khidmah-based Parent-Based Digital Trust Marketing (PDTM) model was identified, which positions parental trust as the core of the marketing strategy through transparency, two-way communication, and testimonials from parents/guardians of students.</p>	<p>The integration of the 7P marketing mix supports the effectiveness of the PDTM model by enhancing institutional reputation, improving promotional cost efficiency, and expanding geographic reach. However, the main challenges lie in the limited digital competencies of human resources and the management of online reputation.</p>

Source: Observations, Interviews, and Documentation at Al Azhar Modern Islamic Boarding School in Balikpapan and Al Mazaya Islamic Boarding School in Paser

Based on the results of research through observation, interviews, and documentations of informants as sources, the first research findings at Al Azhar Modern Islamic Boarding School in Balikpapan and Al Mazaya Islamic Boarding School in Paser indicate that both institutions are entering a significant phase of institutional modernization driven by digital transformation. This transformation extends beyond the technical adoption of digital tools to encompass a deeper philosophical adjustment in how pesantren position themselves in the contemporary educational

landscape. Both institutions seek to balance the preservation of core Islamic values, such as *khidmah*, moral development, and simplicity, with the need to project a professional, transparent, and adaptive institutional image in the digital era.

Digital marketing is strategically positioned as an integral component of institutional development rather than a mere promotional instrument. The *pesantren* utilizes digital platforms to communicate educational values, learning systems, and organizational culture in a sustainable manner. In this context, parents are not treated solely as consumers of educational services, but as key stakeholders whose trust determines institutional legitimacy and continuity. Consequently, digital marketing practices are oriented toward long-term relationship building through transparency, responsiveness, and value-based communication.

Empirically, both *pesantren* employ an integrated digital media ecosystem. Social media platforms such as Instagram and Facebook function as primary channels for visual storytelling of daily activities, while YouTube is used for in-depth audiovisual documentation of institutional programs and major events. Official websites serve as centralized information hubs, and instant messaging applications support administrative services and direct communication. This multi-platform integration enables *pesantren* to present a comprehensive and accessible institutional profile to a broader audience.

Digital content plays a central role in constructing *pesantren* identity in the public sphere. Learning activities, religious practices, dormitory life, student achievements, and character development are consistently represented through visual and narrative content. These representations function as digital showcases that allow the public particularly prospective parents to gain a concrete understanding of *pesantren* culture and educational seriousness. As a result, digital content becomes a key reference in parental decision-making prior to direct institutional visits.

A distinctive marketing pattern identified in this study is the Parent-Based Digital Trust Marketing (PDTM) model grounded in *khidmah*. Trust is cultivated through transparent program information, responsive communication, regular activity updates, and testimonials from parents. This trust-oriented approach is reinforced by the integration of the 7P marketing mix, where educational programs are clearly articulated, cost structures are openly communicated, access is expanded digitally, promotion is conducted organically, human resources act as service ambassadors, administrative processes are streamlined online, and facilities are consistently

documented.

Despite its positive impact, the implementation of digital marketing faces structural challenges, particularly limited digital competencies among human resources and the absence of specialized digital marketing teams. Media management often relies on multitasking educators, constraining content innovation and long-term strategic planning. Nevertheless, both pesantren demonstrate strong adaptive capacity by gradually aligning digital transformation with institutional culture. Overall, digital marketing has strengthened institutional reputation, expanded geographical reach, improved promotional efficiency, and reinforced public trust without eroding the Islamic identity that forms the pesantren's foundational core.

Discussion

The digital transformation identified in this study indicates that Al Azhar Modern Islamic Boarding School in Balikpapan and Al Mazaya Islamic Boarding School in Paser perceive digitalization not merely as technological adoption, but as a value-oriented process of institutional modernization. The integration of technology with the value of *khidmah* serves as the primary foundation for building a professional, transparent, and adaptive institutional image. These findings demonstrate that digital marketing in modern Islamic boarding school functions as a strategic instrument to maintain institutional relevance amid social change and increasing public expectations regarding accountability in educational institutions.

From the perspective of organizational transformation theory, digitalization in educational institutions is understood as a simultaneous structural and cultural change. Hatch and Schultz (Poole & Ven, 2021) emphasize that organizational identity is formed through interaction between internal culture and external image. The findings of this study reinforce this theory by showing that Islamic boarding schools construct their institutional identity through digital content that portrays students' activities, religious culture, and dormitory life. Such visual content becomes a medium for continuously articulating internal institutional values to the wider public.

The function of digital content as a representation of pesantren identity is also aligned with symbolic interactionism theory within organizational communication. Visual representations of students' activities, religious practices, and dormitory discipline form social symbols that are interpreted by parents and the community as indicators of educational quality and environmental safety. Consequently, digital marketing does not merely convey informational messages, but also constructs collective meanings of modern pesantren as credible and trustworthy institutions.

The utilization of Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, websites, and WhatsApp Business as an integrated marketing ecosystem indicates that pesantren have adopted an integrated digital marketing communication approach. Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick (Pattiasina et al., 2025) explain that the effectiveness of digital marketing depends on cross-platform integration that consistently delivers messages and builds user experience. This study reveals that pesantren do not operate digital platforms in isolation, but rather as interconnected communication networks that support long-term relationships with parents.

From a relationship marketing perspective, the use of digital media for transparency, two-way communication, and responsive services reflects a shift from one-way promotional orientation toward trust-based relational marketing. Morgan and Hunt identify trust as a key variable in long-term relationships between service providers and users (Kleinaltenkamp & Ehret, 2006). The findings confirm that parental trust increases when pesantren consistently provide open access to information and respond to communication needs promptly and ethically.

When compared with previous studies, these findings extend (Titi & Badrut, 2024) research, which emphasized the role of social media in enhancing pesantren visibility. This study demonstrates that visibility alone, without transparency and interaction, is insufficient to build trust. Rohman's study on digital transformation in madrasahs also did not position parent relationships as the core of marketing strategy (Tamam & Kadi, 2024). Therefore, this research contributes by identifying parental trust as the primary outcome of pesantren digital marketing strategies.

The digital implementation of the 7P marketing mix in this study shows that pesantren adapts the service marketing framework contextually. Kotler and Fox argue that educational marketing requires clarity in programs, pricing, access, and evidence of quality (P. K. Setiawan Hermawan Kartajaya, Iwan, 2019). The findings indicate that all elements of the 7P are translated into the digital space, ranging from program presentation and cost transparency to virtual accessibility and facility documentation as tangible evidence of service quality.

This integration of the 7P not only strengthens pesantren competitiveness, but also enhances marketing cost efficiency. Strauss and Frost argue that digital marketing reduces promotional costs while expanding market reach (Oplatka & Hemsley-Brown, 2012). The findings support this view, as pesantren are able to attract applicants across regions without relying on high-cost and geographically limited conventional promotion methods.

Nevertheless, the author argues that the success of digital transformation in pesantren should not be reduced to technical and managerial aspects alone. Challenges related to limited digital competencies among human resources and online reputation management indicate that pesantren digitalization remains in a transitional phase. Without strengthening digital literacy and communication ethics, digital media may pose reputational risks that are counterproductive.

Reflectively, this discussion emphasizes that digital marketing strategies in modern Islamic boarding schools must be understood as value-based practices rather than purely business-oriented activities. The integration of technology with *khidmah* becomes a distinguishing feature of pesantren compared to other educational institutions. Therefore, digital transformation should aim not only to enhance competitiveness and efficiency but also to reinforce the mission of Islamic education as a process of character formation, trust-building, and institutional sustainability in the digital era.

Furthermore, the identity of modern Islamic boarding schools in this study is proven to be constructed through consistent digital narratives that simultaneously reflect Islamic values, professionalism, and public accountability. These findings indicate that pesantren identity is no longer formed solely through local word-of-mouth reputation, but also through digital representations accessible across time and space. From the perspective of organizational identity theory, Hatch and Schultz assert that institutional identity emerges from continuous interaction between internal culture and external image. Digital narratives serve as a bridge connecting internal pesantren values with broader public perceptions (Steers et al., 2013).

The consistency of digital content depicting student activities, religious culture, and institutional governance reflects pesantren efforts to build public accountability. This aligns with Hemsley-Brown and Oplatka's view that modern educational institutions are increasingly required to be transparent and communicative in building public trust. The findings show that pesantren that consistently present authentic digital narratives tend to gain stronger social legitimacy than those that remain passive in digital spaces.

One of the main contributions of this study is the identification of the Parent-Based Digital Trust Marketing (PDTM) model grounded in *khidmah*. This model positions parental trust as the core of pesantren digital marketing strategies. In relationship marketing theory, Morgan and Hunt emphasize trust as the foundation of long-term organizational-consumer relationships (Khasanah et al., 2022). This study extends the theory by demonstrating that, in the pesantren context, trust is built

not only through service rationality but also through emotional and spiritual dimensions embodied in the value of *khidmah*.

Information transparency, two-way communication, and the presentation of parent testimonials constitute the main mechanisms of the PDTM model. These findings reinforce Hennig-Thurau et al.'s research on electronic word of mouth, which highlights that user recommendations exert a stronger influence than institutional promotional messages (Fahham, 2020). In the pesantren context, parent testimonials function as social proof that enhances institutional credibility because they are based on lived experiences rather than unilateral claims.

Compared with previous studies such as (Sopwandin, 2019) which focused on digital marketing's role in enhancing pesantren visibility, this research goes further by positioning parents as strategic actors within the marketing ecosystem. Nasution et al. (2024) also discussed the success of pesantren promotion, but did not explicitly link it to trust construction based on *khidmah* values. Thus, the PDTM model represents a conceptual differentiation that enriches the discourse on Islamic educational marketing.

The digital integration of the 7P marketing mix is proven to support the effectiveness of the PDTM model. Each element of the 7P—from product to physical evidence—is translated into digital formats to strengthen parental experience and perception (Sudarsono et al., 2024). This aligns with Kotler and Fox's assertion that educational service marketing must make service quality visible, even though the product itself is intangible. In this study, the visualization of facilities, programs, and service processes serves as concrete evidence of pesantren professionalism (P. K. Setiawan Hermawan Kartajaya, Iwan, 2019).

In terms of impact, the integration of the 7P and PDTM is shown to enhance pesantren reputation, expand the geographical reach of applicants, and reduce promotional costs compared to conventional methods. These findings support Strauss and Frost's argument that digital marketing improves cost efficiency while expanding market coverage. However, the author emphasizes that such efficiency can only be achieved through content consistency and a clearly articulated digital identity.

Despite these strengths, the study also reveals key challenges in implementation, particularly limitations in digital human resource competencies and online reputation management. This condition indicates a gap between the vision of digital transformation and the pesantren's operational capacity. The author argues that without serious investment in digital literacy

enhancement and reputation management systems, pesantren digital marketing strategies may lack sustainability (Tamam & Kadi, 2024).

Reflectively, this discussion underscores that digital marketing in modern Islamic boarding schools cannot be equated with marketing practices in commercial educational institutions. Its success is highly dependent on the ability of pesantren to maintain a balance between modern professionalism and the value of khidmah. The PDTM model, grounded in khidmah, supported by the 7P framework, demonstrates that pesantren digital transformation can proceed without losing institutional identity while simultaneously opening new pathways for strengthening the competitiveness of modern pesantren in the digital era.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the digital marketing strategies implemented by Al Azhar Modern Islamic Boarding School in Balikpapan and Mazaya Islamic Boarding School in Paser play a significant role in enhancing institutional visibility, organizational image, and the attractiveness of prospective students in the digital era. Digital marketing is understood as an integral part of institutional transformation that integrates technological innovation with the value of khidmah, thereby shaping an identity that is professional, transparent, and adaptive. The integrated use of digital media ecosystems effectively builds parental trust through information transparency, two-way communication, and consistent visual narratives. The findings further demonstrate that the effectiveness of digital marketing strategies is strengthened by the integration of the 7P marketing mix and the emergence of the Parent-Based Digital Trust Marketing (PDTM) model grounded in khidmah, despite ongoing challenges related to limited digital competencies among human resources and the management of online reputation.

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