Education marketing management from the total quality management (TQM) perspective: A case study of a Muhammadiyah Islamic primary school

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Abstract
Educational marketing management is crucial for the sustainability of an educational institution. To attract more clients for educational services, institutions require effective marketing strategies. The role of the Principal as a manager in implementing these strategies is vital. This research analyzes the Principal's role in educational marketing management at SD Muhammadiyah Limpung from a Total Quality Management (TQM) perspective. The research addresses three key questions: (1) What is the strategic role of the Principal in marketing SD Muhammadiyah Limpung from a TQM perspective? (2) What strategies are employed in the educational marketing management at SD Muhammadiyah Limpung? (3) What are the impacts of implementing educational marketing? Using a qualitative research method and a case study design, data were collected through interviews, observations, and document analysis, including journals and other sources. The findings reveal that the Principal plays a crucial role in school management. The educational marketing strategy at SD Muhammadiyah Limpung, viewed through the TQM lens, is implemented using the 7Ps framework: product, price, place, promotion, people, physical evidence, and process. The impacts of implementing these educational marketing strategies include: 1) improved educational quality, 2) increased parental involvement, 3) enhanced school reputation and image, 4) increased student satisfaction, and 5) continuous innovation and improvement.

Keywords: Educational marketing management, total quality management (TQM), school management


Introduction
Educational marketing management is a crucial and vital part of the development of educational institutions. The rapid transformation of the educational world, coupled with changes in societal paradigms towards education, necessitates a holistic and integrated approach. In this context, Total Quality Management (TQM) emerges as a potential framework for application in educational marketing management (Jasuri, 2014). TQM serves as a philosophy of continuous improvement that can provide educational institutions with practical tools to meet and exceed the needs, desires, and expectations of current and future customers (Sallis, 2006, p. 34).

The implementation of TQM is a highly significant aspect of efforts to enhance the quality assurance of educational institutions. Through this approach, educational institutions can align all operational aspects to achieve the highest quality standards. TQM is not merely a
management framework but a philosophy that emphasizes the involvement of all members of the institution in a continuous effort to improve the quality of education. Implementing TQM becomes a strategic policy in promoting sustainable educational quality and providing positive impacts for all stakeholders of the educational institution (Darifah, 2016; Mursalim, 2010).

Few schools have effectively implemented educational marketing management, especially at the elementary school level. SD Muhammadiyah Limpung, as part of the Muhammadiyah educational network, has attracted the attention of researchers. This institution has a strong mission to provide quality education with Islamic values. In the first six years since its establishment, SD Muhammadiyah Limpung has experienced a significant increase in the number of students. By the third year, SD Muhammadiyah Limpung had achieved two classroom groups, and now it gradually accepts three classroom groups each year (Observasi SDM Limpung, 2023).

Marketing management for educational institutions is essential to ensure they do not fall behind or fail to attract students due to competition among schools (Bernardi, 2023; Indriani, 2023). The educational marketing management at SD Muhammadiyah Limpung is carried out to provide satisfaction to both internal and external customers. This aligns with Philip Kotler's definition of educational marketing management as the process of planning and executing the conception, pricing, promotion, and distribution of ideas, goods, and services to create exchanges that satisfy individual and organizational goals (Kotler, n.d., p. 13).

Educational institutions are part of the service industry (Wahyudi, 2017, p. 69). Therefore, the educational marketing management at SD Muhammadiyah Limpung incorporates service aspects as outlined in economic marketing theories. The implementation of TQM as an educational marketing management framework at SD Muhammadiyah Limpung is expected to enhance the institution's marketing efforts. This article will elaborate on the principal's role in marketing management, the strategies used, and the impact of implementing TQM-based marketing management at SD Muhammadiyah Limpung. This research is expected to provide insights into developing effective educational marketing strategies for primary education institutions in Indonesia.

Method

This research is a field study focusing on educational marketing management from a TQM perspective. The study was conducted at SD Muhammadiyah Limpung, located in Batang Regency. This school was chosen because it is a relatively new elementary school that has managed to compete successfully and attract a large number of students. Additionally, the high level of community trust is evidenced by the significant number of students coming from outside the Limpung sub-district.

Data collection techniques included interviews, observations, and documentation. These three data collection methods were employed to provide a holistic perspective. Interviews were conducted with the school principal to gather information related to educational marketing management from a TQM perspective at SD Muhammadiyah Limpung. Field observations involved the researcher directly participating to observe the educational marketing processes at the school. The documentation technique involved collecting evidence through documents, photos, videos, and other digital traces accessible both online and offline. This documentation aimed to strengthen the data obtained from interviews and observations.

The data analysis technique employed was the interactive model analysis by Miles, Huberman, & Saldana (2014), which includes data condensation, data display, and drawing conclusions. The operationalization of data analysis, as per the Miles, Huberman, & Saldana model, involves summarizing interview and observation information without discarding any
data. Then, the data is displayed sequentially to facilitate understanding. Finally, conclusions are drawn based on the analysis by identifying specific patterns.

Result and Discussion

Educational marketing management in a school is inextricably linked to the role of the principal as a manager. This is also true for SD Muhammadiyah Limpung, where the principal plays a crucial role in organizing the various units under his leadership. The discussion of educational marketing management at SD Muhammadiyah Limpung is divided into three parts according to the research problem: 1) the role of the principal as a manager in the school; 2) the TQM perspective on educational marketing strategies at SD Muhammadiyah Limpung; and 3) the impact of implementing educational marketing from a TQM perspective at SD Muhammadiyah Limpung.

SD Muhammadiyah Limpung is an elementary school owned by the Limpung Branch of Muhammadiyah. It was established in 2014 as a realization of the Limpung Muhammadiyah Branch's responsibility to the community after successfully founding the Integrated PAUD Aisyiyah Limpung (www.sdmutulimpung.sch.id). Currently, SD Muhammadiyah Limpung is a well-reputed private Islamic school in the surrounding community, having the highest number of students among elementary schools in the Limpung sub-district (Data Korwil Bidik Limpung, 2024; Observations at SDM Limpung, on 8/12/2023).

In an interview with the principal, Mr. Abdullah Azzam Izzuddin, regarding the role of the principal in educational marketing management at SD Muhammadiyah Limpung, he stated: 

"Firstly, as the principal, my focus is on school management. Secondly, concerning educational marketing here, a team has been formed to handle the marketing of SDM. Of course, as the principal, I am directly involved, as are all the teachers in the team. I ensure that all school facilities are functioning well for the school's promotion. Thirdly, as the principal, I bridge the communication between the school marketing team and the central PCM. As the principal, I also strive to maintain the school's good reputation, which is already well-regarded in the broader community. The larger the school, the greater the challenges" (Interview with the Principal, 8/12/2023).

The researcher then asked about the role of the principal and teachers in implementing the school's programs:

"At SD Muhammadiyah, we run numerous school programs, from the flagship tahfidz program to compulsory and elective extracurricular activities, parenting sessions, and other Islamic activities. We are even working on adding English and Arabic language programs. I firmly believe in collaboration. We involve the parents' forum to provide input on the programs we run for the following year. Each teacher is assigned responsibility for the various programs, and we involve staff and teachers through working groups, training, and workshops" (Interview with the Principal, 8/12/2023).

Next, the researcher inquired about the strategic steps taken by the school to ensure the quality of education and customer satisfaction (students, teachers, and parents):

"To ensure the quality of education, I continuously promote professional development for teachers and staff and evaluate the curriculum and teaching methods. For customer satisfaction, I collect scheduled feedback from teachers and staff and hold discussion forums with parents. Our new student enrollment and orientation programs are also designed to meet their expectations. Our flagship program at SD Muhammadiyah Limpung is the tahfidz Al-Quran, with a minimum of two juz, and we continuously strive..."
to improve students' memorization with murojaah sessions before dhuha, zuhr, and asr prayers. In addition to the tahfidz program, we are currently working on adding Arabic and English language programs” (Interview with the Principal, 8/12/2023).

Finally, the researcher asked about the impact of the continuous promotion implemented at SD Muhammadiyah Limpung:

“I am grateful that student enrollment has increased, and the school's reputation has improved in the community. We have seen increased parental involvement in school activities, and innovative programs have created a more dynamic learning environment. Alhamdulillah, student achievements have also improved, and parents are satisfied. The key is to build communication with parents and continuously enhance quality together”” (Interview with the Principal, 8/12/2023).

Analysis of Educational Marketing Management from a Total Quality Management (TQM) Perspective

The Role of the Principal

The role of the principal encompasses managerial responsibilities such as planning, organizing, actuating, and evaluating (controlling) (Hartono et al., 2023). At SD Muhammadiyah Limpung, the principal plays a central role in managing the school towards continuous improvement. In the context of TQM, continuous improvement is a fundamental principle that the principal must adhere to. TQM consists of four main principles aimed at promoting overall quality enhancement: 1) customer satisfaction, 2) respect for every individual, 3) management based on facts, and 4) continuous improvement (Mursalim, 2010, p. 137).

The role of the principal at SD Muhammadiyah Limpung, aligned with TQM principles, is as follows:

Planner

The principal has a crucial role in translating the school’s vision and mission into concrete plans and programs. These plans not only outline short-term goals but also include medium-term and long-term objectives. As a planner, the principal is responsible for ensuring that every step taken by the school aligns with the established vision and mission. In this way, the principal is not just an administrative leader but also a strategic architect guiding the school towards achieving its short-term, medium-term, and long-term goals.

Organizer

In the role of an organizer, the principal designs the organizational structure, assigns responsibilities, and allocates resources to achieve the set goals. This task includes selecting, developing, and managing staff as an integral part of ensuring that the school operates efficiently and effectively. By clearly defining roles and responsibilities, the principal provides a solid foundation for teamwork and the continuity of quality education. As a human resource manager, the principal also ensures that staff receive the support and development opportunities needed to contribute maximally to the school's vision and mission.

Actuator

The principal functions as a supervisor and motivator, providing support and direction to staff and students. By adopting a positive leadership approach, the principal can create an optimal working culture within the school environment. As a supervisor, the principal is responsible for ensuring that the implementation of plans and programs meets the established expectations and standards. As a motivator, the principal plays a crucial role in inspiring, building enthusiasm, and guiding the entire school community to reach their maximum
potential. Thus, the principal’s role not only shapes a productive educational environment but also motivates and guides the entire school community towards higher achievements.

**Evaluator**

Finally, as an evaluator, the principal has the responsibility of measuring the school's achievements and effectiveness. This task includes staff performance assessments, analysis of exam results, and evaluation of educational programs to ensure the quality and appropriateness of the implemented strategies. By integrating these four management functions, the principal can ensure holistic and sustainable management in improving the quality of education at the school.

**Educational Marketing Strategy at SD Muhammadiyah Limpung from a Total Quality Management Perspective**

The educational marketing strategy at SD Muhammadiyah Limpung combines elements of the marketing mix, known as the 7Ps. In the context of education, the marketing mix consists of crucial components that can be meticulously arranged to create an effective and competitive marketing strategy. This mix includes various elements within the marketing program that must be considered to ensure the smooth implementation of marketing strategies and positioning. According to Hasan et al. (2023), there are seven elements in the marketing mix: product, price, place, promotion, people, physical evidence, and process. These seven elements are referred to as the 7Ps, consisting of the traditional 4Ps and three additional Ps that extend the marketing mix. The 4Ps include product, price, place, and promotion, while the 3Ps include people (human resources), physical evidence, and process (service management). Further explanations on the implementation of the educational marketing strategy at SD Muhammadiyah Limpung are as follows:

**Product**

A product encompasses everything that is offered, considered, demanded, managed, and consumed. In the context of education, the product offered includes educational services through facilities, services, reputation, and future prospects for further education (Song et al., 1996). The product at SD Muhammadiyah Limpung is evident in various programs emphasizing quality and character development of students, including:

**Full Day School (FDS) Program**

SD Muhammadiyah Limpung offers an educational approach that includes both learning and extracurricular activities throughout the day, from morning until the afternoon after communal Asr prayer. Focusing on developing students' potential beyond regular class hours, this program aims to provide a holistic and comprehensive learning experience that fosters an Islamic culture. The goal of the full day school program is to create a safe and positive school environment. Parents feel reassured knowing their children are in a good environment where Islamic values are emphasized and maintained. Keeping students in this environment helps shield them from negative external influences and creates a conducive learning atmosphere.

**Extensive Mandatory and Optional Extracurricular Activities**

Strengthening Islamic values is an integral part of this approach. Through mandatory extracurricular programs like Tapak Suci and Scouting, and 15 optional interest-based extracurricular activities held on Saturdays.

**Tahfidz Al-Quran Program**

The Al-Quran memorization program is a flagship initiative at SD Muhammadiyah Limpung, with a minimum memorization target of two Juz. This program not only supports students’ intellectual development but also stimulates their spiritual and moral growth, creating a meaningful and value-rich learning environment at SD Muhammadiyah Limpung.
Price

Saladin-Oesman explains that price is the amount of money exchanged to acquire a product or service (Saladin, 2002, p. 95). In the context of the educational marketing mix, it means that parents, as consumers of education, pay a certain amount to obtain educational services at SD Muhammadiyah Limpung. The school sets its monthly tuition fees based on the offered flagship programs. Tuition fees at SD Muhammadiyah Limpung vary, ranging from IDR 350,000 to IDR 450,000 per month, depending on parents' choices during enrollment.

SD Muhammadiyah Limpung offers a convenient payment system for tuition and other financial matters. Parents do not need to visit the centralized service office manually for payments; they can also make payments via banking services, transferring to the school’s account anytime and anywhere. The school's financial centralization department has partnered with Bank Muamalat in Batang Regency to facilitate financial transactions for parents, teachers, and employees of the Muhammadiyah Enterprises (AUM) in Limpung District.

SD Muhammadiyah Limpung sets higher tuition fees than other schools, targeting a different market segment. There is an unwritten understanding in the community that price correlates with quality, leading parents to willingly pay higher fees for their children’s education. This is evidenced by the benefits parents receive through the educational services provided by SD Muhammadiyah Limpung. Additionally, the school offers scholarship programs for students genuinely in need, collaborating with Lazismu (Muhammadiyah's Zakat and Charity Institution) for the Mentari Scholarship Program, with mechanisms managed by the financial centralization department of the Limpung Muhammadiyah Branch Leadership as the school owner.

Place

The location of the school plays a crucial role. SD Muhammadiyah Limpung is strategically located with easy road access. It is situated near the center of Limpung sub-district, about one minute away from the sub-district square. The location is important as it forms part of the value and benefits considered when making a choice.

Figure 1
Location of SD Muhammadiyah Limpung

Promotion

Promotion involves marketing communication activities. At SD Muhammadiyah Limpung, a designated team, including public relations personnel and teachers, handles
promotional activities. These promotions are conducted both offline and online. Offline promotions include establishing communication with nearby kindergartens and RA (Raudhatul Athfal) across villages and sub-districts. They also distribute brochures during Sunday morning gatherings across sub-districts, showcasing students' Quran memorization. Additionally, offline promotions rely on word-of-mouth from parents, who communicate within their WhatsApp groups and communities. Online promotions are conducted via the school’s website and social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube.

**Figure 2**
*Website and Facebook Page of SD Muhammadiyah Limpung*

*People*

People refer to the human resources providing educational services to students. The educators at SD Muhammadiyah Limpung are young teachers with high integrity and competence. These competencies include pedagogical, personal, professional, and social skills. Besides the educators and staff, SD Muhammadiyah Limpung receives support from the Primary and Secondary Education Council (Dikdasmen) of the Muhammadiyah Branch Leadership in Limpung. This council includes former school supervisors and principals who have retired from public schools and are now dedicated to advancing education at SD Muhammadiyah Limpung.

*Physical Evidence*

Physical evidence encompasses the facilities and infrastructure supporting the delivery of educational services, helping the institution achieve its vision and mission. SD Muhammadiyah Limpung has various representative facilities for teaching and learning activities, such as a three-story building, a spacious mosque accommodating about 350 students, a library, a computer lab, a cafeteria, a kitchen, and other facilities.
Figure 3
Three-story Building of SD Muhammadiyah Limpung

Process
Zaithaml and Bitner (Fließ & Kleinaltenkamp, 2004) describe the process as the procedures, mechanisms, and flow of activities involved in service delivery, including the service delivery and operational systems. In the context of educational services, the process includes the mechanisms and series of activities supporting the implementation of teaching and learning processes to produce graduates aligned with the institution's vision and mission. The educational service delivery process at SD Muhammadiyah Limpung meets the National Education Standards (SNP) for primary schools. This is evidenced by the school’s A accreditation from the National Accreditation Board (BAN) for Formal Education. Thus, the teaching and learning activities meet national standards in content, process, management, and educational assessment.

Impact of Educational Marketing at SD Muhammadiyah Limpung from the Perspective of TQM

In the realm of educational marketing, the implementation of Total Quality Management (TQM) has a significant impact on the quality of educational services at SD Muhammadiyah Limpung. Through this approach, there is a strong emphasis on continuous improvement efforts and strengthening the framework to enhance overall quality. TQM aims not only to improve operational efficiency but also to pay more attention to the needs of students and stakeholders. By focusing on performance measurement, staff development, and process management, the implementation of TQM at SD Muhammadiyah Limpung promotes the creation of a more inclusive, innovative, and results-oriented learning environment. Its impact is felt not only in improving the school’s reputation and customer satisfaction but also in strengthening relationships with the community as a whole. Below are some of the impacts of educational marketing at SD Muhammadiyah Limpung from the perspective of TQM:

Improvement in Educational Quality
TQM emphasizes the importance of focusing on quality in every aspect of educational services. By applying TQM principles, SD Muhammadiyah Limpung ensures that teaching processes, school facilities, curriculum, and educators meet high standards, thus improving the quality of education offered.
Increase in Parental Involvement

One of the principles of TQM is recognizing the importance of parental involvement in their children's education. SD Muhammadiyah Limpung has applied these TQM principles and translated them into the educational processes within the school environment. This is evidenced by strengthening parental involvement through open communication. Parental involvement in the educational process is transformed into communication forums for parents. These forums act as school partners in school activities such as the study tour committee held at class V and activities philanthropy minor and final.

Philanthropic activities are activities of giving or donating time, funds or other resources for the benefit of society or broader social goals. The practice that has become a good culture at SD Muhammadiyah Limpung is the little philanthropy activity practiced by students who donate their spare change and donate it to Lazismu Limpung service office for people in need. In addition, there is also a waqf activity for schools from student guardians to the school. This philanthropy activity has been running since the first batch until now.

Increase in School Reputation and Image

By focusing on quality and excellent service, SD Muhammadiyah Limpung has gained a good reputation and trust in the community. Many parents enroll their children in SD Muhammadiyah Limpung because of its quality education. Despite the relatively high cost compared to public schools, the school's good reputation gives it strong bargaining power in the community.

Increase in Student Satisfaction

The principles of TQM help SD Muhammadiyah Limpung better understand the needs and expectations of students. By paying attention to feedback from students and proactively addressing emerging issues, the school can create a more positive learning environment and effectively meet students' needs. To meet students' psychological needs, SD Muhammadiyah Limpung has appointed a Guidance and Counseling (BK) teacher as a place for consultation and counseling for students. This is quite effective in addressing issues related to students at the school.

Innovation and Continuous Improvement

TQM promotes a culture of innovation and continuous improvement. SD Muhammadiyah Limpung continues to enhance its teaching practices through ongoing evaluations and decision-making based on data. In its learning activities, the school adopts the best practices in education. These continuous innovation and improvement activities are based on the understanding that private schools must have different attractions and selling points. Therefore, as a follow-up to the principles of continuous innovation and improvement, the school conducts benchmarking visits to more advanced schools every year to imitate and create new innovations to improve the school. Benchmarking visits conducted by SD Muhammadiyah Limpung include visits to SD Muhammadiyah Sapen Yogyakarta (a national model elementary school), SD Mutual Magelang, SD Al Adzkiya Wonosobo, and SD Muhammadiyah 4 Pucang Surabaya (national model elementary schools), among others.

One of the recent breakthroughs resulting from these benchmarking visits is the development of foreign language classes and special tahfidz classes, which are still in progress. The follow-up from these programs includes practices such as "learning abroad, such as in Singapore" in English classes and "halaqoh murojaah Al Quran at Masjid Nabawi in Medina Al Munawwaroh". By applying TQM principles in educational marketing, SD Muhammadiyah Limpung can achieve competitive and sustainable excellence and provide positive impacts for students, parents, and the community.
Conclusion

Educational marketing management is a crucial and fundamental part of developing elementary school educational institutions. SD Muhammadiyah Limpung faces the demand to continuously enhance its attractiveness and educational quality. Therefore, the implementation of TQM as a framework for educational marketing management is used as a solution to address these issues. Educational marketing cannot be separated from management concepts executed by the school principal as a manager. Hence, the role of the school principal as a manager is similar to the basic management concepts: planning, organizing, actuating, and evaluating (controlling).

The strategies implemented by the school principal in educational marketing management are inseparable from marketing applied in the educational aspects: product, price, place, promotion, people, physical evidence, and process. The application of the product at SD Muhammadiyah Limpung can be seen in various programs that prioritize quality and focus on student character development, including the Full Day School (FDS) program, mandatory and optional extracurricular activities, and the Quran Memorization (Tahfidz) program. The application of price involves paying a certain amount of money to obtain quality educational services, the application of place includes strategic location access, and the application of promotion involves both offline and online promotion and establishing cooperation with various parties. The application of people involves providing qualified teachers and education personnel, the application of physical evidence includes evidence of facilities such as the three-story classroom building, mosque, computer lab, library, and other facilities that support quality education. Meanwhile, the application of process is evidenced by the good accreditation results with an A grade.

The results of the educational marketing conducted have impacts on several aspects, namely: 1) improvement in the quality of education; 2) increased involvement of parents; 3) improvement in the reputation and image of the school; 4) increased student satisfaction; 5) continuous innovation and improvement.

Conflict of interests

The author declares that he has no conflict of interest.

References


