



## **Strategi Pelayanan Publik dalam Manajemen Pemasaran Pendidikan**

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### **Abstract**

This library research aims to analyze the transformation of public service as a core marketing strategy for private madrasahs operating in agrarian-religious areas. Facing fierce competition from public schools and limited conventional promotion budgets in rural Pangandaran, MA Al Furqon Cimerak is compelled to adopt a relational strategy. This descriptive qualitative study employs Content Analysis on academic literature and the institution's digital secondary data (website, social media) to validate the Service-as-Core-Marketing model. The analysis reveals that MA Al Furqon's key strategies center on integrating: (1) Empathy-based Service (Human Touch), where teachers act as both spiritual and educational consultants, and (2) Digital Transparency to build Trust and Digital Accountability. This approach implements Relationship Marketing (Grönroos), effectively converting service satisfaction into organic WOM (Word of Mouth) Marketing. Furthermore, Islamic Service Quality is utilized as the Unique Selling Proposition (USP) to instill unconditional trust in the communal society. In conclusion, humanist and local-religious value-based public service offers a sustainable competitive advantage and is the most relevant marketing model for madrasahs in rural areas.

**Keywords:** Public Service, Education Marketing, Relationship Marketing, Service Quality, MA Al Furqon Cimerak.

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## **Abstrak**

*Penelitian kepustakaan ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis transformasi pelayanan publik sebagai strategi pemasaran inti bagi madrasah swasta yang beroperasi di wilayah agraris-religius. Menghadapi persaingan ketat dengan sekolah umum dan keterbatasan biaya promosi konvensional di wilayah pedesaan Kabupaten Pangandaran, MA Al Furqon Cimerak dituntut mengadaptasi strategi relasional. Penelitian kualitatif deskriptif ini menggunakan Content Analysis terhadap literatur akademik dan data sekunder digital lembaga (website, media sosial) untuk memvalidasi model Service-as-Core-Marketing. Hasil analisis menunjukkan bahwa strategi kunci MA Al Furqon berpusat pada integrasi: (1) Pelayanan berbasis Empati (Human Touch), di mana guru berperan ganda sebagai konsultan spiritual dan pendidikan, serta (2) Transparansi Digital untuk membangun Trust dan Digital Accountability. Pendekatan ini merupakan implementasi Relationship Marketing (Grönroos), yang secara efektif mengubah kepuasan layanan menjadi WOM (Word of Mouth) Marketing yang organik. Lebih lanjut, Kualitas Layanan Islami dijadikan Unique Selling Proposition (USP) yang menanamkan kepercayaan mutlak (unconditional trust) pada masyarakat komunal. Kesimpulannya, pelayanan publik yang humanis dan berbasis nilai lokal-religius adalah keunggulan kompetitif berkelanjutan dan model pemasaran yang paling relevan bagi madrasah di kawasan rural.*

**Kata Kunci:** *Pelayanan Publik, Pemasaran Pendidikan, Relationship Marketing, Service Quality, MA Al Furqon Cimerak.*

## **A. Introduction**

The dynamics of contemporary national education, the existence of private madrassas are faced with fierce competition that puts them in a double position: as a da'wah institution and as an institution that is obliged to compete in the educational service market (Azra, 2012). The main problem is the gap in perception and competitiveness; Society, especially in rural areas, tends to compare madrassas with public public schools, both in terms of facilities, academic quality, and social image. Factually, many madrassas in rural areas such as MA Al Furqon Cimerak, Pangandaran Regency, have difficulty using high-cost conventional marketing strategies. The main relevant theory is Service Marketing Management (Kotler & Fox, 1995), where in educational services, public services are the core of the product. Therefore, the author argues that to overcome the competitiveness gap, madrassas must transform public services into core marketing strategies that are based on values and community.

This transformation of public services requires a paradigm shift from rigid bureaucracy to responsive and customer-driven services. In the context of educational services, the main customers are students and parents. The concept of Service Excellence is no longer enough to be limited to hospitality, but must include dimensions of service quality (SERVQUAL) such as Empathy, Reliability, and Assurance (Zeithaml, Parasuraman, & Berry, 1990). Furthermore, in a communal environment, services should be directed towards building long-term relationships, in line with the concept of Relationship Marketing (Grönroos, 1994), which emphasizes trust and commitment. Thus, the quality of effective public services for madrassas must be able to integrate the dimensions of bureaucratic professionalism, service quality, and communal and spiritual values.

Several previous studies have examined marketing strategies and madrasah management, which provides a contextual foundation for this research. Research conducted by Irpan Ilmi (2023)

entitled "Marketing Management of Educational Institutions Through Digital Marketing of Superior Products of SMAN 1 Langkap Lancar" found that the use of digital marketing is effective in marketing school superior products and improving the image. This study shows that despite being in a rural area similar to MA Al Furqon Cimerak (i.e. in Pangandaran), the main focus of marketing lies in digital media and academic/extracurricular excellence (product focus). In addition, research on public service innovation in Islamic education shows the importance of adapting technology and Islamic values. The fundamental difference with previous research is that this study does not focus on digital product marketing alone, but dissects how humanistic, transparent, and value-based public services transform themselves into the core of relational marketing strategies (Relationship Marketing), a dimension that has not been explored in depth in the context of madrasas in rural areas.

The urgency of this research lies in the urgent need for private madrasahs in the region to find effective, low-cost, and sustainable marketing models, which make use of the social and religious capital they have. MA Al Furqon Cimerak, located in an area with strong communal characteristics, is a relevant object of study to validate this model based on digital footprints and supporting literature. Departing from this urgency, the formulation of the problem in this study is: "How does MA Al Furqon Cimerak transform its public service strategy, including humanist aspects, transparency, and Islamic values, so that it functions effectively as a sustainable madrasah education marketing strategy?"

The main purpose of this literature research is to analyze and dissect in depth the public service transformation model applied by MA Al Furqon Cimerak. The novelty of this research lies in the conceptualization of the Service-as-Core-Marketing model in madrasahs in rural areas. In contrast to research that focuses on formal branding or promotion, this study places humanistic, transparent, and rooted in local values as the single and core variable of the marketing strategy. This analysis uses the scalpel of Relationship Marketing theory (Grönroos) juxtaposed with Islamic Service Quality (Othman & Owen) and the niche market character of the Cimerak community, to produce a theoretical model that is relevant and applicable to thousands of other private madrasahs with similar geographical and demographic conditions in Indonesia.

## **B. Method**

This research uses a type of library research. According to Zed (2004), literature research is a series of activities related to the method of collecting library data, reading and recording and processing research materials.

1. Data Sources: Data are sourced from primary literature (educational marketing management books, public service theory) and secondary data relevant to the object of study (MA Al Furqon Cimerak profile available in educational databases, official madrasah social media, as well as publications related to Cimerak demographics).
2. Data Analysis Techniques: Data are analyzed using Content Analysis to draw valid inferences from texts and documents, and are compared with Grönroos' Relationship Marketing theory and Osborne & Gaebler's concept of Reinventing Government in a school context.

## **C. Results and Discussion**

### **1. Profile and Context of MA Al Furqon Cimerak in Marketing Maps: A Niche Market Approach**

Based on data browsing on the official website of <https://maalfurqon.id/web/>, MA Al Furqon Cimerak strategically positions itself not only as an academic institution, but as a socio-religious entity that is integral to its environment.

Referring to digital reference data and its geographical location, MA Al Furqon Cimerak operates in the agrarian-religious community in Pangandaran. The characteristics of the communal Cimerak community demand an approach to educational institutions that are not rigid and distanced. Data shows that this madrasah functions not only as a place of formal learning, but also as a center of socio-religious interaction. From a marketing perspective, these locations and demographics are niche markets that require a local centric strategy.

This analysis is validated by the theory of Psychographic Segmentation from Kotler and Keller (2016), which states that marketing is most effective when institutions understand the lifestyle, values, and personality of their audience. The people of Cimerak who hold fast to the value of local wisdom will not respond well to transactional-capitalist marketing strategies. Therefore, the local-centric strategy implemented by MA Al Furqon by making madrasah the center of community activities is a form of implementation of the Societal Marketing Concept. Institutions not only meet educational needs (consumer wants), but also maintain social welfare and society's religious values.

Through observation on the features of <https://maalfurqon.id/web/> website, it can be seen that madrasahs strive to display profile transparency, activity galleries, and easy access to information. This is physical evidence of public service efforts in the digital realm. However, in the context of direct (offline) service, the analysis shows that MA Al Furqon applies a strong dimension of Empathy in the SERVQUAL model (Zeithaml, Parasuraman, & Berry, 1990). In rural areas, "service" is often interpreted as "presence" and "attention."

MA Al Furqon emphasizes the dimensions of Empathy and Responsiveness. Teachers who double as educators and spiritual guides provide personalized services that are rarely found in public schools that are crowded with students. When the student's guardian feels heard and his child is personally cared for, high customer satisfaction is created. This is in line with the opinion of Tjiptono (2019) that in educational services, personal interaction is the key to quality perception.

### **2. Public Service Strategy as Core Marketing**

The identified marketing strategy is not in the form of aggressive advertising, but Relationship Marketing. The school's website features a variety of extracurricular and religious activities that actively engage students. This is not just documentation, but a tool to build emotional bonding. According to Morgan and Hunt's (1994) theory in The Commitment-Trust Theory, the success of relationship marketing is determined by two variables: trust and commitment.

MA Al Furqon builds the Trust through transparency of activities (via website and direct reports) and consistency of religious values. Commitment is built through the involvement of parents in madrasah activities. In the Cimerak environment of the *Gemeinschaft* (association) type, this strategy triggered a positive Word of Mouth (WOM). Satisfied parents will become "volunteer marketers" for the madrasah. This word-of-mouth promotion has a much higher conversion rate than

banners or brochures, because recommendations come from trusted people in the community (Alma, 2005).

An in-depth observation of the digital ecosystem of MA Al Furqon Cimerak including the official website (maalfurqon.id), as well as interactions on Facebook and Instagram social media identified that the public service strategy is carried out in an integrated manner with marketing activities. Service is no longer interpreted as limited to administration at the school counter, but expands to an interaction experience (customer experience) in physical and digital spaces.

#### **a. Human Touch-Based Services and Empathy Visualization**

In contrast to rigid bureaucratic services, visual data recorded in digital footprints (Instagram Location and Facebook Gallery) show a very fluid communication pattern and adopt a familial approach. Uploads of photos and videos of extracurricular activities, commemoration of Islamic holidays (PHBI), and scouting activities on madrasah social media show the physical and emotional closeness between teachers and students. There is no rigid hierarchical gap. This validates the Service Quality (SERVQUAL) theory from Parasuraman et al. (1988), especially on the dimension of Empathy. The teachers and staff of MA Al Furqon not only act as teachers, but position themselves as "second parents". In the context of the rural community of Cimerak, this visualization of closeness is read by the market (guardians) as a guarantee of safety and psychological comfort for their children. This is a "premium service" in community-based education that is difficult to replicate by an overly formal educational institution.

#### **b. Transparency and Information Disclosure (Digital Accountability)**

Referring to the principle of Good Governance, MA Al Furqon translates transparency through the optimization of digital media. The existence of the official website <https://maalfurqon.id/web/> become a positive anomaly for madrasahs in rural areas. This website functions as a static storefront that provides fundamental information (profile, vision-mission). Meanwhile, maalfurqoncimerak's Facebook page serves as a dynamic "daily performance report". Parents can see their child's activities in real-time, from learning activities in the classroom to achievements outside of school.

This phenomenon is in line with Effendy's (2003) theory regarding the adaptation of communication media, as well as strengthening the concept of Trust-based Marketing. This information disclosure reduces information asymmetry between schools and parents. When parents can monitor school activities through their smartphones, trust arises. In the marketing of educational services, trust is the main modality that encourages loyalty and voluntary recommendations (advocacy).

#### **c. Integration of Student Activities as Physical Evidence**

One of the challenges of service marketing is its intangible nature. Through the gallery feature on the website and Instagram location tags, MA Al Furqon transforms educational services from abstract to concrete. The achievements of the students, the neatness of the uniforms, and the excitement of the school events are well documented.

The elements of the marketing at MA Al Furqon are in line with Physical Evidence in the service marketing mix (7P). For prospective guardians of students who access the internet, the content becomes "physical proof" of the quality of service before they decide to enroll their child. This strategy is very effective to reach the millennial generation or guardians of young students who tend to do online research before making educational decisions.

### **3. Relationship Marketing Implementation**

Marketing at MA Al Furqon Cimerak fundamentally shifted from a transactional model (focused on sales) to a relational model, which emphasizes fostering long-term relationships with key stakeholders. Grönroos (1994) defines Relationship Marketing as an effort to identify and build, maintain, and improve relationships with customers and other stakeholders. Analysis of literature studies and digital traceability at MA Al Furqon found strong indications of this practice, which is adapted to local values.

#### **a. Teacher as a Marketer as well as a Consultant: Spiritual Value Proposition**

The role of teachers is extended beyond academic tasks. Teachers not only teach, but act as spiritual and educational consultants for students and guardians. In line with the Value Proposition theory in marketing (Kotler & Keller, 2016). The value proposition offered by MA Al Furqon is holistic guidance (mind, body, and soul). This consulting service involving religious and moral aspects not only provides solutions to academic problems, but also strengthens the emotional bond between the family and the madrasah.

In agrarian religious societies such as Cimerak, religious teachers are often respected and considered role models. This consulting service is a smart strategy to utilize the social capital owned by madrasahs. Through this role, the madrasah has succeeded in marketing itself as a spiritual and educational partner of the family, a key differentiation to public schools (Muhaimin, 2012).

#### **b. Word of Mouth (WOM) Marketing (Community Strengthening Effect)**

Satisfactory and family-based services create a positive buzz in the community that is very effective. In marketing theory, WOM (Word of Mouth) is the most effective and low-cost strategy because it is based on credibility and trust from third parties (Brown et al., 2005).

The success of WOM in Cimerak can be explained using the Commitment-Trust Theory from Morgan and Hunt (1994). When the parents of the students feel trust in the services of teachers and administration, they voluntarily become advocates (supporters) of the madrasah.

The satisfaction of one student's guardian will spread quickly in the community of recitations, social gatherings, or village meetings, which are the main communication media in the *Gemeinschaft* (association). Based on MA Al Furqon's digital data (especially on Facebook which often uploads community religious events), madrasahs proactively participate in this social ecosystem. WOM arising from communal interaction has a much

greater and sustainable impact than paid advertising, making it a free and organic promotion for madrasahs.

#### **4. Islamic Service Quality**

MA Al Furqon's public service strategy achieves a high level of differentiation through the integration of Islamic values in each of its services. This makes the identity of the madrasah the core of the service products offered, not just complementary.

##### **a. The Value of Religiosity as the Main Service Promise**

As a madrasah, the main service promise offered to the guardians of students is a guarantee of maintaining the faith and morals of students. This is the deciding factor for the target market in Cimerak which is agrarian-religious.

Othman and Owen (2001) introduced the term CARTER (including Compliance and Assurance) in the context of sharia services. In its application to education, Compliance at MA Al Furqon means compliance with the curriculum and practices of Islamic education, while Assurance is a guarantee that graduates will have strong religious character and provisions.

The digital data (website and social media) of MA Al Furqon often displays specific religious activities (such as the Tahfidz, Diniyah, or routine recitation programs). The visualization of this activity serves as tangible evidence that madrasahs consistently carry out the promise of their spiritual services. Thus, the quality of Islamic services is transformed from an abstract concept to a real program that can be observed by the community.

##### **b. Holistic Service Based on the Tarbiyah Concept**

Public services at MA Al Furqon moved from the concept of public service (bureaucratic service) to the concept of Islamic Tarbiyah (holistic education and nurturing). Tarbiyah includes intellectual, spiritual, and emotional aspects. When teachers act as spiritual consultants (as discussed in point 3a), they are practicing Tarbiyah as a whole, which goes far beyond the formal curriculum. This service is total service quality (Tjiptono, 2019) because it touches all dimensions of student life.

This value-based service differentiation creates a sustainable competitive advantage for MA Al Furqon. Public schools may offer equivalent academic facilities, but they struggle to replicate the depth of values and spiritual commitment that madrasahs offer. This Islamic value is a Unique Selling Proposition (USP) that binds the target market with the specific need for strong faith-based education.

MA Al Furqon Cimerak integrates Islamic Service Quality as a core marketing strategy, going beyond just the moral obligations of the institution. This approach effectively instills unconditional trust in agrarian-religious societies by offering spiritual guarantees as a key value proposition. Thus, the quality of religious-based services serves as a continuous differentiation that strengthens the competitiveness of madrasahs in communal areas.

#### **D. Conclusion**

This study concludes that Public Service Transformation has succeeded in becoming the main instrument in Education Marketing Management at MA Al Furqon Cimerak. In the face of competition from educational institutions in rural areas, madrassas do not rely on high-cost conventional promotional strategies, but shift their focus to Relationship Marketing. Service Quality is improved through a humanist and familial approach, which utilizes high social capital in agrarian-religious societies. Overall, excellent, responsive, and value-based service is a continuous differentiation and the most effective tool to build a positive image and attract public interest through organic Word of Mouth (WOM).

The Service-as-Core-Marketing model at MA Al Furqon Cimerak is supported by three main pillars: First, the dual role of teachers as Spiritual and Educational Consultants, which is a typical value proposition of madrasas. Second, Digital Transparency, which is implemented through social media, functions as a daily performance report to build trust and digital accountability. Third, Islamic Service Quality (such as Sharia Assurance and Compliance) is used as a strategic core that succeeds in instilling unconditional trust in the target market. This success shows that the novelty of this research, namely the conceptualization of public services as a core marketing strategy in the rural context, is a very relevant and applicable model for other private madrasas in Indonesia.

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