

INTEGRATING INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY IN EDUCATION MARKETING FOR ISLAMIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOL IN BANDAR LAMPUNG**Sufisti Aragusta*, Sulthan Syahril, Safari and Ahmad Fauzan**

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to investigate the education marketing strategy implemented by Madrasah Ibtidaiyah in Bandar Lampung by integrating information technology within the framework of the 7P Market Mix and Sharia Market Mix. The study involves Public Islamic Elementary School 6 Bandar Lampung, Muhammadiyah Islamic Elementary School Bandar Lampung, and Al-Hikmah Islamic Elementary School Bandar Lampung as research subjects. Data were collected through qualitative methods, including in-depth interviews with key stakeholders such as madrasah leaders, teachers, students, and parents, and document analysis. The research findings indicate that the Islamic Elementary School in Bandar Lampung has successfully integrated information technology into its education marketing strategy through an informative official website, active social media presence, and engaging videos and content development. This technology integration has helped the madrasah effectively reach its target audience, increase parental involvement in the education process, and enhance the overall image of the madrasah in the community, in line with the principles of traditional marketing and Islamic values.

Index Terms: Education, Information Technology, Marketing Strategy, Islamic School.

INTRODUCTION

Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI) is commonly perceived as a primary-level Islamic educational institution akin to conventional elementary schools, yet it possesses distinct characteristics and uniqueness. As an Islamic-based primary educational institution, MI plays a crucial role in shaping the character and morals of children from a young age. The MI educational program spans six years, from Grade 1 to Grade 6. MI graduates can continue their education at Madrasah Tsanawiyah or Junior High School. MI holds a central role in the Indonesian education system, serving not only as a formal learning institution but also as a pillar for character formation, diversity, and Islamism.

The MI curriculum mirrors that of conventional schools, albeit with a greater emphasis on Islamic education. MI contributes to the preservation and development of Islamic culture in Indonesia. Through its curriculum, MI provides a deep understanding of Islamic teachings and local wisdom, encompassing values of diversity and tolerance. MI plays a role in preserving the Islamic identity of Indonesian children, enabling them to grow into individuals who appreciate differences and can coexist with diverse communities. In MI, students receive not only formal education in general subjects but also delve into the values of Islamic religion, ethics, and noble morals.

As an educational institution, Madrasah fulfills institutional elements not present in other educational institutions. The responsibilities undertaken by madrasahs at least reflect those of other Islamic educational institutions. According to An-Nahlawi, the role of madrasahs as Islamic educational institutions is integral in shaping students' character with a holistic approach encompassing religious, academic, and moral aspects [1]. By emphasizing the principles of thought, creed, and Sharia, madrasahs aim to instill in students worship and monotheism, obedience to God's commandments, and compliance with Islamic law. Through integrating knowledge and religious values, madrasahs can produce students who contribute to the development of science and technology.

Madrasah Ibtidaiyah, as a modern Islamic primary educational institution, integrates traditional pesantren education with contemporary Madrasah education, blending religious and general knowledge. Madrasah bridges traditional and modern educational systems by preserving valuable traditional values while embracing new

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science, technology, and economics knowledge that benefits the Islamic community. The curriculum of Madrasah generally mirrors that of pesantren education with additional emphasis on general subjects.

The education provided by Madrasah Ibtidaiyah has numerous positive impacts on human life, making education indispensable for all. While there's an assumption that many individuals succeed without higher education, it's worth noting that education enhances one's ability to comprehend situations. Those equipped with knowledge find it easier to pursue their dreams by applying their acquired knowledge effectively.

Despite their nonprofit principles, educational institutions have adapted marketing strategies due to social changes. Understanding social, community, and consumer needs through research is crucial for educational institutions. Institutions must navigate challenges such as demand fluctuations, consumer expectation gaps, and competition [2].

In educational institutions, marketing strategies play a pivotal role in winning competition. Strategies must align with the educational institution's goals and target markets [3]. With the advent of digital technology, marketing strategies have evolved, providing opportunities for institutions to showcase their competitive advantages. Digital marketing enhances an institution's visibility and profitability by leveraging online platforms [4]–[7].

The hybrid strategy combines low-cost and differentiation elements to address the limitations of single strategies recommended by Porter [8]. Kim et al. introduce the concept of hybrid, mixed, integrated, or combination strategies, combining low-cost and differentiation elements [9]. Acquah et al. view hybrid strategy as a response to the failure of cost and differentiation strategies [10]. Kim states hybrid systems demonstrate advantages and achieve higher performance in competitive excellence than single strategies [9].

A hybrid strategy continuously achieves differentiation and low cost compared to competitors, relying on the ability to enhance consumer benefits. Thompson et al. suggest that a hybrid strategy uniquely blends elements of differentiation and low-cost strategies [11]. Burke adds that most consumers seek low prices with distinctive product features, prompting companies to consider hybrid strategies [12]. This approach enables companies to adapt to technological and environmental changes, learn new capabilities, and achieve competitive advantages by offering low prices and product features [13].

Acquah justifies that a hybrid strategy is both easy and remarkably effective, generating numerous resources and competitive advantages compared to single strategies [14]. Japanese companies like Toyota, Canon, and Honda exemplify successful hybrid strategies. Toyota emphasizes quality while keeping prices low, whereas Honda showcases quality with added value.

The hybrid strategy integrates low-cost and differentiation elements to gain a competitive advantage, creating added customer value while maintaining cost efficiency. It focuses on achieving differentiation, low cost, and sustainable efforts to outperform competitors. Success depends on the company's ability to continuously enhance consumer benefits, utilizing uniqueness and cost efficiency to improve product or service attractiveness while controlling production costs.

Educational institutions implementing hybrid strategies must effectively balance cost and product value. Continuous efforts to pursue differentiation and cost efficiency reflect institutional flexibility in adapting to market dynamics. Hybrid strategy prioritizes consumer benefits and establishes a strong foundation for long-term competitive advantage. Implementation involves combining different elements, continuous change, and adaptation to evolving market needs.

Several Madrasahs in Lampung have been studied regarding their educational marketing activities. Madrasah Ar-Raudah in Bandar Lampung city prioritizes competitions to attract students [15]. This private Madrasah focuses on student achievements through cognitive and motor skills competitions to attract and maintain community satisfaction with the Ar-Raudah educational institution.

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At MI Muhammadiyah 1 Bandar Lampung, additional soft skills are provided to students through character development [16]. Soft skills are abilities that students can use in society. These skills are typically applicable to all age groups and educational levels. Choosing soft skills as the selling point of the Madrasah aims to equip students to face real-life situations wherever they are.

Educational marketing management does not always run smoothly and can encounter obstacles, as observed in MA Hidayatul Mubtadiin in South Lampung Regency. Nangimah et al. identified communication barriers among Madrasah residents, leading to a lack of community response to the Madrasah. Research data suggests a lack of community attention towards private educational institutions, possibly due to competition from government educational institutions [17]. This information highlights the importance of private educational management to enhance performance in various aspects to garner attention from the public and compete in the education sector.

Educational marketing activities at MTs Al-Ikhlash in West Tulang Bawang Regency are implemented by forming a promotional team focused on marketing educational services in various forms and targets [18]. Marketing is a systematic action, and marketing professionals play a crucial role in directly engaging with the community. Negative perceptions of the marketed products can be challenging, hence the need for a solid marketing team in educational institutions.

The above studies underscore the importance of establishing a solid marketing system, especially when soft skills are the Madrasah's primary selling point. Soft skills are considered essential for students to navigate real-life situations. The promotional team must have a good understanding of soft skills as the Madrasah's main offering. They can develop creative and effective marketing strategies to enhance the institution's image, attract community attention, and compete positively in the education sector.

This study explores marketing systems involving the marketing mix: Product, Price, Place, Promotion, Person, Physical Evidence, and Process. These 7 Ps will form individual findings based on research data. A more detailed focus is expected to generate a new marketing system at the Madrasah Ibtidaiyah level in Bandar Lampung.

The presented facts illustrate the need for innovation and creativity in educational institutions' marketing activities. Educational institutions must adapt to technological advancements in educational programs and marketing strategies [19]. The lack of marketing tools in the form of information technology can result in poor marketing. Therefore, a reorganization of educational marketing with a Revolution 4.0 approach is needed [20]. The ability to use artificial intelligence is crucial in marketing. Marketing requires employees who are competent in their respective fields [21].

Utilizing social media for marketing is important, as it is cost-effective and reaches a wide audience [22]. Optimizing social media marketing can make institutions more effective in promoting their products [23]. Social media marketing is an effective platform for introducing new products [24].

In this study, the researcher used Kotler's concept, which combines online and offline interactions between companies and customers, blending style with substance in building a brand and ultimately complementing machine-to-machine connectivity with human-to-human touch to strengthen customer engagement. Kotler's concept (7P) encompasses in-depth market analysis, an understanding of consumer behavior, and comprehensive marketing mix management. Implementing this concept helps educational institutions better understand the education market, identify customer segments, and design effective promotion strategies. Additionally, Kotler's concept views marketing as a long-term process involving value creation and sustainable customer relationships.

Digital channels in marketing have become crucial for many companies' strategies. Even for small business owners, there are inexpensive and efficient ways to market their products or services [6]. Digital marketing is limitless, utilizing devices such as smartphones, tablets, laptops, televisions, game consoles, digital billboards, and platforms like social media, SEO, video, content, and email, among others, to promote the company and its products and services.

Marketing strategies in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah can include a) content marketing, providing various information; b) Mobile marketing, focusing on mobile device users like smartphones; c) Continuous marketing, ongoing marketing focusing on social media promotions like Instagram and Facebook; d) Integrated marketing, maximizing all digital resource components; e) Visual marketing, creating visual objects offered to consumers; f) Personalized marketing, strategies focused on treating consumers personally [25]. Madrasah Ibtidaiyah managers can use these strategies to combine traditional marketing with digital marketing.

The researcher conducted an exploratory survey to obtain a general overview of marketing strategies used by Madrasah Ibtidaiyah in Bandar Lampung, including MIN 6 Bandar Lampung, MI Muhammadiyah Bandar Lampung, and MI Al-Hikmah Bandar Lampung. Based on the survey results, Madrasah Ibtidaiyah managers still predominantly use conventional marketing patterns, such as relying on banners, direct community outreach, pamphlet announcements for new student admissions, and word-of-mouth promotions. Managers, especially of MIN 6 and MI Muhammadiyah, maximize website usage for marketing, while MI Al-Hikmah does not yet have a functional website accessible to parents of students. Consequently, prospective consumers, namely students and parents, do not receive detailed information about the Madrasah.

These explanations demonstrate the significant role of educational marketing in the sustainability of educational institutions. When educational institutions want to carry out marketing activities, such as before the new academic year or during holiday promotions before grade promotions, the Madrasah management needs to conceptualize marketing strategies beforehand. This research plays an important role in the field of educational marketing. It aims to collect data from various Madrasah Ibtidaiyah in the city of Bandar Lampung and use it as a basis for finding effective marketing management models. The results of this study are expected to generate theories that can be used to expand research on marketing strategies. Practically, this research is also expected to serve as a model or guide for other Madrasah Ibtidaiyah in improving the quality and quantity of their students.

Based on theoretical reviews and recent studies on educational marketing management, it can be seen that the role of information technology and digitization is crucial for the success of educational marketing. However, the marketing of Madrasah education is still not optimal, especially in utilizing information technology and digitization. This research aims to uncover marketing strategies for Madrasah Ibtidaiyah in Bandar Lampung. Thus, conventional marketing patterns and strategies can replace digital marketing models.

LITERATURE REVIEW

I. Education Management

Educational management encompasses a multifaceted process to effectively lead, organize, and control educational institutions to achieve their goals. In exploring the concept further, it's essential to understand the broader context within which educational management operates [26].

Firstly, institutions are societal organs designed to contribute to specific functions and fulfill social roles. Management within these institutions can be defined as the organized body of knowledge and practices aimed at effectively carrying out these functions and roles. The emergence of management over the past century represents a significant transformation in society, signifying the shift towards pluralistic institutional structures that are effective in their operations.

From the Quranic perspective, management is depicted as arranging and organizing matters from the heavens to the earth, akin to a manager overseeing the universe. This underscores the orderliness of the universe as evidence of divine greatness. However, humans are also tasked with stewardship on Earth, implying a responsibility to manage earthly matters effectively.

Within Islamic educational management, Mujamil Qomar emphasizes the importance of deriving management principles directly from Islamic teachings rather than adopting Western management practices. Ideal Islamic educational management is thus rooted in Islamic principles outlined in the Quran and Hadith [27].

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Defining educational management involves understanding its multidisciplinary nature, incorporating elements from economics, political science, and sociology. It entails systematic planning, organizing resources, implementing strategies, and monitoring performance to achieve educational objectives effectively [26], [28]–[33].

Educational management functions can be categorized into Planning, Organizing, Actuating, and Controlling (POAC). Planning involves flexible decision-making to accommodate variables and uncertainties while Organizing systematically combines human efforts and material resources. Actuating focuses on implementing plans, and Controlling ensures that organizational activities align with established standards [34].

Educational management's components include planning, organizing, controlling, administration, and supervision. Educational planning involves systematically selecting alternatives and exploring routes to achieve desired outcomes [35]. Organizing encompasses various dimensions, such as organizational culture, personnel systems, and communication channels [36]. Controlling prevents obstacles to goal achievement [37], while administration involves managing organizational processes and procedures [38]. Supervision emphasizes teacher development through various learning strategies and experiences [39].

In essence, educational management is a dynamic and multifaceted process that integrates leadership, administration, planning, and resource management to achieve educational objectives effectively within educational institutions.

II. Marketing Strategy

The Board of Directors of the American Marketing Association, at the Winter Meeting of 1985, adopted a marketing definition reported in the March 1st edition of Marketing News, which was immediately recognized as the official definition. In marketing, strategy refers to systematically planned steps to promote and sell products or services [40]. They defined marketing 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 [41]." Marketing strategy involves decisions about marketing costs, marketing mix, marketing allocation concerning expected environmental conditions, and competitive situations [42].

Designing competitive marketing strategies begins with competitor analysis. Companies constantly compare the value and satisfaction provided to customers by their products, pricing, channels, and promotions with their close competitors. This way, companies can identify areas of potential profit and loss. Companies formally or informally monitor the competitive environment to address these and other important questions.

To succeed in today's competitive market, companies focus on customers. They capture customers from competitors and then engage and grow them by providing greater value. However, companies must first understand their needs and wants before satisfying customers. Therefore, effective marketing requires careful customer analysis. Companies know that they cannot serve all consumers profitably in a particular market, at least not all consumers in the same way [43]. There are many types of consumers with too many different needs. Most companies are in a position to serve some segments better than others. Therefore, each company divides the total market, selects the best segments, and designs strategies to serve those selected segments profitably. This process involves market segmentation, targeting, differentiation, positioning, and the marketing mix [44].

Market segmentation is dividing consumers into distinct groups based on various factors such as geography, demographics, psychographics, and behavior. This allows marketers to tailor their strategies to meet each segment's unique needs and preferences [44]–[46]. Geographic segmentation involves dividing markets by location, enabling companies to adjust their products and marketing efforts according to regional differences [47]. Demographic segmentation categorizes consumers by age, gender, income, occupation, and other demographic variables, which are easy to measure and strongly influence consumer behavior [48]. Psychographic segmentation considers lifestyle and personality traits, recognizing that people within the same demographic group can have different psychographic characteristics [49]. Lastly, behavioral segmentation divides consumers based on their

knowledge, attitudes, usage patterns, or responses to products, providing valuable insights for marketers to craft targeted strategies [50].

Market targeting involves evaluating each market segment's attractiveness and selecting one or more segments to enter. After identifying market segments, companies assess the potential value of each segment and choose those that can profitably generate the greatest customer value over time. Evaluating various market segments involves considering three factors: segment size and growth, segment structural attractiveness, and company objectives and resources. Firstly, companies aim to select segments with appropriate size and growth characteristics. However, the "right size and growth" is relative, as the largest and fastest-growing segments may not always be the most attractive for every company. Smaller companies may lack the skills and resources to serve larger segments or find them too competitive. They may target smaller and less attractive segments that have the potential to be more profitable for them.

Positioning involves arranging a product to occupy a distinct, unique, and desirable place relative to competitors in the minds of target consumers. Marketers plan a position that sets their product apart from competing brands and gives them the greatest advantage in their target market [51]. After evaluating various segments, companies decide which segments and how many to target. The target market consists of buyers with similar needs or characteristics identified for service by the company. Targeting can occur at different levels. Undifferentiated or mass marketing involves targeting the entire market with one offer, ignoring market segment differences [52]. This strategy focuses on common consumer needs rather than differences. However, most modern marketers doubt this strategy due to difficulties satisfying all consumers and competing with more focused companies. Differentiated marketing, on the other hand, targets multiple market segments with separate offerings for each [53]. By offering product variations and marketing to different segments, companies hope for higher sales and a stronger position in each market segment. While this approach increases total sales compared to undifferentiated marketing, it also raises business costs due to the need for extra market research, forecasting, sales analysis, promotional planning, and channel management for each segment targeted. Additionally, reaching different market segments with different advertising campaigns increases promotional costs, and overlapping brands may confuse customers and lead to cannibalization among brands.

In positioning their brand, companies first identify potential customer value differences that provide a competitive advantage to build that position. They may offer greater customer value by charging lower prices than competitors or offering more benefits to justify higher prices [54]. Effective positioning starts with true differentiation of the company's market offering to create superior customer value. Once a desired position is chosen, companies take strong steps to convey and communicate that position to target consumers. The entire company's marketing program supports the chosen positioning strategy.

After deciding which market segment to enter, companies determine the 'position' they want to occupy. Product positioning is the place a product occupies in consumers' minds. If a product is perceived as identical, consumers have no reason to buy it. Market positioning gives a product a clear, distinct, and desirable place in the minds of target consumers compared to competitor products. Marketers plan a position that sets their product apart from competing brands and gives them the greatest strategic advantage in their target market [55].

In positioning their product, companies first identify competitive advantages that allow them to build that position. To gain a competitive advantage, companies offer greater value to selected target segments by charging lower prices than competitors or offering more benefits to justify higher prices. However, effective positioning starts with differentiating the company's marketing offering to provide more value to consumers than competitors [56]. Companies may position their product on only one important differentiating factor or several factors. However, positioning a product on too many factors can lead to consumer confusion or disbelief. Once a desired position is chosen, companies take steps to convey and communicate that position to target consumers.

The marketing mix encompasses various elements crucial for achieving marketing objectives in the target market. Product, price, promotion, place, physical evidence, and process play significant roles among these elements. As

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articulated by Philip Kotler, the product concept emphasizes the importance of offering products that provide superior quality, performance, or innovative features to meet consumer needs and preferences [57]. Kotler's framework of "The Augmented Product Model" delineates five levels of a product, highlighting core aspects such as its expected attributes, actual features, augmented benefits, and potential for future development [58]. Understanding these dimensions aids in effective product design, positioning, and marketing strategies tailored to dynamic market conditions [59]. Additionally, Kotler emphasizes indicators like product quality, composition, variations, and standardization, which collectively enhance consumer satisfaction, build brand loyalty, and gain a competitive edge in the marketplace.

Price encompasses the value perceived by customers in exchange for the benefits of a product or service [44]. While historically significant, price is just one marketing element affecting market share and profitability. It's also the most flexible element, easily adjusted. However, pricing remains a top challenge for many marketers, often overlooked in favor of other mix components.

Determining price involves finding the balance between demand generation and profit maximization [60]. Effective pricing considers the value customers place on product benefits rather than just production costs. Cost-based pricing, though common, often ignores demand and competition. Instead, successful pricing strategies focus on communicating value to consumers through strategic messages about competitive advantages, product class level, or brand positioning.

Adapting to changing market dynamics requires understanding consumer trends to design responsive pricing strategies. These strategies should set the right price and include discount policies, package offers, or loyalty programs that align with overall marketing goals. Clear and transparent pricing communication builds consumer trust and enhances brand relationships, ultimately contributing to long-term business success.

Place refers to distribution channels or how a company presents its products to consumers. It involves strategic decisions about distribution channels, product placement, supply chain management, and storage policies [61]. The focus is on making products available in relevant locations to reach the target market effectively. Marketing location decisions involve selecting the most effective placement of products or services to reach the intended target market. This includes whether products will be available through physical stores, online platforms, or a combination [62]. Strategic location decisions can impact how easily potential consumers can access products or services. Location selection involves analyzing demographic characteristics, consumer behavior, and market preferences. It encompasses decisions about placing physical stores, expanding through online platforms, or collaborating with distribution partners [63]. Marketing location choices should align with the target market's characteristics, enhance brand visibility, expand market reach, and improve product availability in relevant locations.

Marketing services in the context of education involve essential marketing mix elements, including product, price, distribution, promotion, people, physical evidence, and process. Regarding the product, education should be considered a service educational institutions offer their customers. When setting prices, institutions should consider the value of the education offered and reasonable pricing for customers. Distribution involves physical accessibility and the presence of institutions, as well as ease of access to educational programs. Promotion in education marketing involves strategies to promote institutions and their programs, using tools such as advertising, sales promotion, and public relations. People representing educational institutions, including teaching and administrative staff, play a crucial role in providing quality services to customers. Physical evidence in education marketing includes the institution's physical facilities, learning environment, and all visual elements that can influence customer perceptions. The process in education marketing includes steps to understand customer needs, design value-based marketing strategies, build customer relationships, and use customer satisfaction for competitive advantage. By considering all elements in the marketing mix, educational institutions can enhance their attractiveness, improve customer satisfaction, and gain a competitive edge.

III. Islamic Marketing Strategies

Discussing Islamic marketing strategies is inseparable from the role of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) as the last Prophet sent by Allah. His teachings form the basis of these strategies, as reflected in the Quran, including Surah Al Ahzab verse 21, where Allah describes him as an excellent example for humanity. Prophet Muhammad's (PBUH) honesty and trustworthiness, evident even before receiving revelation, earned him respect and the title "Al-Amin" in Mecca. His ability to resolve disputes, such as the placement of the Black Stone, showcases his strategic insight [64].

In applying marketing strategies, Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) demonstrated segmentation by understanding customer needs, targeting by identifying the right market, and positioning by emphasizing honesty [65], [66]. These strategies align with conventional marketing mix elements, integrated with Islamic principles as the 7Ps: Pragmatism & Product, Palliation & Price, Patience & Place, Pertinence & Promotion, Peer Support & Person, Pedagogy & Physical Evidence, and Persistent & Process [67].

Islamic marketing emphasizes halal and tayyib (good) products, fair pricing reflecting supply-demand balance, strategic business locations that benefit society, truthful promotions avoiding exaggeration, personalized customer relationships driven by empathy, quality assurance for customer satisfaction, and commitment perseverance.

These principles, rooted in Prophet Muhammad's (PBUH) teachings, serve as a timeless guide for ethical and effective marketing practices in line with Islamic values.

IV. Education Management and Educational Marketing

Education management involves several key functions to achieve specific goals within educational marketing [68], [69].

Firstly, planning is essential, serving as the initial step undertaken by managers. This function encompasses defining organizational objectives, devising comprehensive strategies to attain these goals, and coordinating activities to ensure efficient and effective goal realization. In educational marketing, planning aims to mitigate uncertainties and future changes, concentrate on targets, facilitate efficient goal attainment, and streamline control processes.

Secondly, organizing plays a crucial role, with managers responsible for designing the organizational structure and arranging job divisions. This includes determining tasks, assigning responsibilities, and establishing reporting structures. Clear organization is vital to prevent ambiguity regarding responsibilities in case of deviations from work standards. Organizing involves task division, assignment to capable individuals, resource allocation, and coordination to enhance organizational effectiveness.

Thirdly, implementation is fundamental, involving executing actions and tasks to achieve organizational goals. It entails translating planned strategies into actionable steps, leveraging the preparations made during the organizing phase. In educational marketing, effective strategy planning is just the beginning; successful implementation is crucial. Marketing implementation transforms strategies and plans into actions to achieve strategic marketing objectives.

Lastly, control is paramount for monitoring organizational performance and ensuring smooth operations. Early control measures are necessary to prevent prolonged errors. Islamic teachings advocate two main aspects of supervision: self-control based on faith in Allah and external control mechanisms enforced by the system. Effective supervision involves aligning task completion with planning, creating a sense of accountability, and building a culture of responsibility. Ultimately, the best supervision integrates internal and external control mechanisms to uphold organizational standards and ensure goal achievement.

V. Information Technology in Education Marketing

Integrating information technology (IT) in school education marketing is crucial in today's digital age. With the increasing reliance on technology for communication, learning, and decision-making, leveraging IT tools and platforms can significantly enhance the effectiveness of marketing strategies in reaching target audiences [70]–[72].

IT integration in education marketing allows personalized communication with prospective students and parents, enabling schools to tailor their messaging and offerings based on individual preferences and interests. Additionally, digital platforms facilitate the disseminating of information about school programs, faculty profiles, facilities, and extracurricular activities, providing comprehensive insights to stakeholders.

Moreover, IT solutions such as websites, social media platforms, email marketing, and mobile applications offer convenient channels for engaging with the community, sharing updates, and addressing inquiries in real-time. These platforms streamline communication and enhance the visibility and accessibility of Islamic elementary schools, attracting prospective students and fostering stronger connections with parents and guardians.

Furthermore, IT integration enables schools to analyze data related to marketing campaigns, website traffic, social media engagement, and student demographics, allowing for informed decision-making and continuous improvement of marketing strategies.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research methodology employed in this study aimed to investigate the implementation of educational marketing strategies by Islamic Elementary Schools in Bandar Lampung, particularly focusing on the integration of information technology within the framework of the 7P Market Mix and Sharia Market Mix as implemented by Public Islamic Elementary School 6 Bandar Lampung, Muhammadiyah Islamic Elementary School Bandar Lampung, and Al-Hikmah Islamic Elementary School Bandar Lampung.

The background of this research is rooted in the educational marketing initiatives undertaken by Islamic Elementary Schools in Bandar Lampung, which represent both public and private madrasahs in Bandar Lampung. The researcher sought to delve into the intricacies of marketing strategies adopted by these elementary madrasahs, aiming to shed light on their practices within educational marketing.

Methodologically, this research adopted a qualitative approach, allowing for an in-depth interpretation of phenomena observed within the madrasahs. This qualitative research approach focused on interpreting the activities carried out by various stakeholders within the madrasahs, including teachers, administrators, students, and external parties involved in educational marketing. The case study method served as the overarching framework for data collection and analysis, leveraging unique cases or phenomena characteristic of the research sites [73], [74].

Data collection techniques included interviews, observations, and documentation, enabling the researcher to gather comprehensive information regarding educational marketing strategies. Data analysis followed the methodologies outlined by Miles and Huberman [75], encompassing data collection, correspondence, narrative presentation, and conclusion to discern the novelty of the research.

To ensure the validity of the data, the researcher employed credibility, dependability, and confirmability checks. These checks entailed a detailed presentation of the research, collaboration with supervisors to mitigate errors, and validation of data objectivity and impartiality through techniques such as source triangulation. Through these rigorous methodological processes, this research aimed to provide valuable insights into the educational marketing strategies of elementary madrasahs in Bandar Lampung.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

I. Overview of Islamic Elementary School

The research locations encompass three primary educational institutions in Bandar Lampung: Public Islamic Elementary School 6 Bandar Lampung, Muhammadiyah Islamic Elementary School Bandar Lampung, and Al-Hikmah Islamic Elementary School Bandar Lampung. Public Islamic Elementary School 6 Bandar Lampung, established in 1968, originated from the community's demand for primary education in the Way Halim area. Initially a private madrasah, it transitioned to become a state madrasah in 1992 and underwent subsequent name changes, eventually becoming Public Islamic Elementary School 6 Bandar Lampung in 2014. Over the years, Public Islamic Elementary School 6 Bandar Lampung has seen changes in leadership, with a current focus on improving educational quality and attracting community interest. Muhammadiyah Islamic Elementary School Bandar Lampung, operating under the Ministry of Religious Affairs, provides primary education following the national curriculum alongside Islamic teachings. Boasting competent teaching staff and various facilities, MI Muhammadiyah aims to cultivate well-rounded Muslim individuals with a global outlook. Al-Hikmah Islamic Elementary School Bandar Lampung, a private madrasah established in 2017, is committed to delivering quality education based on pesantren products. Accredited grade B, it emphasizes the integration of Islamic principles with Indonesian cultural values, fostering community collaboration, and promoting a healthy lifestyle. These educational institutions serve as crucial research sites for examining the nuances of educational marketing strategies in Bandar Lampung's primary madrasahs.

II. 7P Education Marketing Strategy of Islamic Elementary School

MIN 6 Bandar Lampung epitomizes a commitment to high educational standards bolstered by governmental support and a primary focus on understanding both the national curriculum and Islamic teachings. Its main strengths, such as fee exemption, make it a popular choice among parents. The madrasah adopts a holistic approach, emphasizing the spiritual, moral, and character development of students through a deep curriculum, religious values, and diverse extracurricular activities. Consequently, MIN 6 Bandar Lampung not only provides academic education but also plays a role in shaping individuals of quality and ethics. Its emphasis on religious values in the curriculum demonstrates a primary focus on a profound understanding of Islamic teachings. The approach adopted by MIN 6 Bandar Lampung not only covers academic aspects but also the character and moral development of students through extracurricular activities. These efforts reflect the belief that a good understanding of religious foundations can shape responsible and morally upright individuals. MIN 6 Bandar Lampung builds an educational environment open to various thoughts and views within Islam, yielding comprehensive and ethical educational products.

MI Muhammadiyah Bandar Lampung showcases a strong commitment to educational quality, reflected in the integration of Islamic education into the general curriculum, the formation of student characters, and the attention to teacher qualifications. MI Muhammadiyah Bandar Lampung is the preferred choice for parents seeking balanced and quality education through the development of student morals and the inclusive Muhammadiyah approach. Various educational products combining the national curriculum and Islamic teachings, along with extracurricular activities, create an environment conducive to the development of student interests and talents in line with Islamic values. Interfaith dialogue and values of tolerance highlight an inclusive and moderate environment. These educational products reflect efforts to integrate academic, religious, character, and student interest development into the educational process. With an emphasis on the Islamic curriculum, Quranic teaching, and a commitment to education, MI Muhammadiyah Bandar Lampung has successfully created educational products focused on developing graduates who are comprehensive academically, morally, ethically, and in line with Muhammadiyah values.

MI Al-Hikmah Bandar Lampung's educational products can be identified as manifestations of a moderate and inclusive Islamic approach. Emphasizing an understanding of Islam, Quranic learning integration and student character development create comprehensive religious education. Various educational products reflect a holistic approach with a profound understanding of religion, Quranic teaching, and Arabic language learning. Respect for

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local traditions, inclusive policies, and local cultural integration efforts demonstrate an attempt to present education that combines religious, character, and cultural aspects. Prioritizing Quranic teaching highlights a deep understanding that supports openness to various thoughts within Islam, and specific standards create a conducive learning environment for overall student growth. Local cultural integration adds a dimension of local values, creating educational products that not only develop academic skills but also cultivate a deep understanding of religion, language, critical thinking, and cultural values. MI Al-Hikmah Bandar Lampung has successfully created educational products focused on holistic student development through an inclusive Islamic approach, local culture, and specific standards that make it a quality learning environment.

In the context of education costs at MIN 6 Bandar Lampung, the primary factor influencing fee determination is operational expenses, covering teacher salaries, administrative staff, facilities, and teaching materials. Fee setting consistently considers quality standards, reflecting the school's commitment to providing high-quality education. Preparedness to allocate additional resources indicates efforts to ensure adequate educational quality, including teacher training, facility maintenance, and investments in educational equipment. Interconnectedness with government regulations and the impact of government funds on fee determination reaffirm the school's dependence on government financial policies.

Emphasizing the importance of free education at MIN 6 Bandar Lampung demonstrates the madrasah's commitment to improving educational access, especially for economically diverse communities. This policy is not only a strategy to enhance access but also a concrete solution to address economic challenges, alleviate financial burdens on parents, and enable families to allocate resources for other needs. This approach reflects MIN 6 Bandar Lampung's strategic efforts to create fair educational access and family welfare through measured education costs and inclusive free education policies.

MI Muhammadiyah Bandar Lampung is strongly committed to inclusive education access. To address education costs and support accessibility efforts, the madrasah actively seeks additional funding through donations, contributions, and special projects. These additional funding sources are considered crucial to cover education costs, maintain the sustainability of quality education, and respond to community needs. In terms of information, MI Muhammadiyah Bandar Lampung not only provides transparent education cost details but also commits to providing financial support and ensuring parents/guardians' understanding of education fund usage.

MI Al-Hikmah Bandar Lampung takes a diverse approach to determining education costs, reflecting religious principles and dedication to educational quality. The complex fee determination process, emphasized by the madrasah head, prioritizes adequacy for operational costs and maintains quality consistency in line with religious values to provide quality and affordable education. Fee delivery highlights religious values such as social justice, educational access, and community service, aligning with the religious principles of MI Al-Hikmah. Compliance with government regulations is emphasized as a foundation, demonstrating transparency and legal compliance. MI Al-Hikmah Bandar Lampung strives to provide meaningful and quality education for students with a focus on commitment to high educational quality and explanations of fee usage for education development and improvement.

MIN 6 Bandar Lampung utilizes its website as the primary channel to provide necessary information, facilitating parents and prospective students. Collaboration with educational centers and social institutions in Bandar Lampung serves as an effective additional marketing strategy, expanding outreach to those unfamiliar with MIN 6 Bandar Lampung. Selection criteria for marketing locations prioritize strategic locations and accessibility for prospective students and parents, considering reaching all parties through various transportation modes. Another emphasized aspect is the need for good internet access at marketing locations, ensuring smooth access to up-to-date information through efficient social media management and website functionality. MIN 6 Bandar Lampung's marketing efforts are based on an approach that combines the website, social media, strategic partnerships, and location choices that meet crucial criteria.

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MI Muhammadiyah Bandar Lampung's marketing strategy focuses on identifying target audiences. A deep understanding of the target audience serves as the basis for adjusting marketing approaches for maximum effectiveness. The subsequent process involves finding locations that align with the characteristics of the target audience and assessing potential visits and suitability. To meet the demands for information and community interaction, MI Muhammadiyah adopts strategies through various communication channels, such as banners, direct approaches to preschools and early childhood education centers, and the use of WhatsApp and teacher social networks, all aimed at ensuring easy access for parents and prospective students.

MI Al-Hikmah Bandar Lampung's marketing strategy successfully leverages social media, particularly Facebook and Instagram, to engage audiences involving prospective students, parents, and the local community. The success of this strategy not only relies on presence on relevant platforms but also emphasizes the use of short videos and live streaming. Videos provide direct insights into life at MI Al-Hikmah, effectively showcasing facilities, virtual tours, and interviews with teachers and students. This innovative approach reflects a marketing policy oriented towards active audience interaction, depicting the madrasah's culture and learning environment attractively.

MIN 6 Bandar Lampung actively utilizes social media to promote the madrasah, aiming to provide a comprehensive overview of life at the madrasah and create a strong promotional appeal involving students and parents in providing positive recommendations. Promotion focuses on transparency in new student admissions, commitment as an open and responsive institution, and clear information announcements through social media and websites to enhance promotional appeal. Through market analysis, they understand the demographics of prospective students and parental preferences and monitor competitors to identify needs and preferences to emphasize in promotional messages. The focus of promotional messaging is on clarity and completeness, with efforts to convey the madrasah's strengths, values, educational programs, facilities, and other important aspects.

MI Muhammadiyah Bandar Lampung clearly demonstrates their commitment and focus on the quality of education. With a comprehensive curriculum, innovative learning approaches, and qualified teachers, they are determined to provide a deep and meaningful learning experience for students, showing concern for educational quality. Besides academics, the madrasah also emphasizes the development of religious and moral values and applies Muhammadiyah values, creating an educational environment that supports students' spiritual and social development. This approach is reflected in unique promotional messages specifically designed to illustrate the madrasah's mission, vision, and values. With engaging promotional materials, active support from alumni, and dedication to building a positive image, MI Muhammadiyah Bandar Lampung strives to attract the attention of prospective students and parents, affirming their commitment to quality education.

MI Al-Hikmah Bandar Lampung emphasizes character formation and prioritizes values such as honesty, tolerance, and social concern as integral parts of their education strategy. The madrasah provides ample space for the development of student's interests and talents through extracurricular activities, believing that this process does not only occur in the classroom. Active in community activities, MI Al-Hikmah Bandar Lampung partners with local institutions, highlighting their participation and contribution to social, humanitarian, or environmental projects as a tangible expression of their concern for social issues and positive contribution to community improvement.

In the context of policy setting, MI Al-Hikmah Bandar Lampung adopts a holistic approach. This process involves the madrasah's vision, mission, and objectives, as well as considering the interests of students, staff, and the environment as crucial elements. The madrasah's vision and mission serve as the main guidelines in formulating policies ensuring consistency with established goals. This stage includes problem identification, active participation of stakeholders in policy-making, and emphasis on structured monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to ensure the sustainability and effectiveness of policy implementation at MI Al-Hikmah Bandar Lampung. This approach reflects the madrasah's awareness of the complexity and interconnectedness of various aspects of character formation and educational policy formulation.

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In promoting MIN 6 Bandar Lampung, credibility is a key aspect for promotional staff, with a focus on a deep understanding of the madrasah's education and values. Madrasah staff and promotional team members are expected to have comprehensive knowledge of various aspects of MIN 6 Bandar Lampung, including curriculum, facilities, extracurricular programs, and madrasah culture, to ensure effective promotional appeal. Active listening is also considered a crucial element, with emphasis on relevant responses to inquiries and concerns of prospective students and parents. Enthusiasm and passion play a significant role in transmitting positive energy towards madrasah education and culture, while the ability to understand and empathize with the feelings of prospective students and parents is seen as a key factor in attracting interest, with empathy being crucial in responding to individual needs effectively. Overall, a focus on good communication, mastery of technology, and neat and professional appearance reflects a holistic strategy to enhance the promotional appeal of MIN 6 Bandar Lampung with the hope of creating a positive impression on prospective students and parents.

In the context of promoting education at MI Muhammadiyah Bandar Lampung, the role of teachers is crucial. Teachers are expected to be not only educators but also active education professionals involved in various madrasah activities, setting positive examples that can be used in promotional efforts. A deep understanding of educational structure, curriculum, and educational programs is acknowledged as a key element in providing accurate information to prospective students and parents. A background in bachelor's level education in relevant fields, along with the ability to manage social media and online platforms, is considered an added value and an important factor in implementing appropriate and effective marketing strategies. The involvement of teachers with multicultural skills is also seen as a positive contribution to promoting cultural diversity in the madrasah.

MI Al-Hikmah Bandar Lampung's appeal in educational promotion lies in the combination of successfully fostering close relationships with the community as an external factor and a deep understanding of the curriculum and educational approaches as internal factors. Success in external community relationships, along with deep internal understanding, creates a strong appeal to prospective students and parents. Good communication skills, proficient use of social media, and networking within the community and local environment are effective strategies for expanding the reach of promotions and gaining support from religious figures and the local community. The combination of internal and external elements provides a holistic view of MI Al-Hikmah Bandar Lampung's appeal, creating a strong foundation for their educational promotional efforts.

MIN 6 Bandar Lampung adopts a comprehensive approach in marketing its education, emphasizing its commitment to providing an optimal learning environment and excellent physical facilities. Clear information dissemination efforts are evident through the creation of brochures and promotional materials covering important elements such as the curriculum, teaching staff, student achievements, and madrasah facilities. The madrasah also focuses on building its image through physical evidence design, such as the clear display of the madrasah's logo and visual identity in the surrounding area. Physical evidence design is considered a strategic key in promoting the school by highlighting educational quality, and consistency in design with the madrasah's visual identity is seen as a critical step in enhancing marketing appeal. Understanding the importance of integrating physical facility quality, clear information, and consistent physical evidence design, MIN 6 Bandar Lampung creates a positive and appealing image for prospective students and parents.

The packaging of physical evidence involving the use of brochures, promotional materials, documentation of extracurricular activities, and designs incorporating the logo and visual identity of the madrasah is an essential part of MI Muhammadiyah Bandar Lampung's marketing strategy. This packaging plays a central role in representing the madrasah's identity and values, while crucial design involves key elements such as the logo, vision, mission, and values, which are carefully designed to create a positive image. Responsive and interactive approaches through social media are vital elements in directly communicating with prospective students and parents, providing real-time insights into madrasah life. The packaging of physical evidence and design are key instruments in achieving marketing goals, attracting the interest of prospective students and parents while building a positive image and providing comprehensive information about MI Muhammadiyah Bandar Lampung.

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MI Al-Hikmah Bandar Lampung has successfully utilized various marketing tools, especially brochures and social media, to convey information to prospective students and parents effectively. Brochures are recognized as the primary tool providing detailed information about the madrasah, while social media is considered an effective channel with advantages in reach, interactivity, and responsiveness. Creativity and visual appeal in social media content are emphasized, along with a focus on branding consistency and a positive image aligned with the madrasah's values. In marketing strategy, physical evidence design, including visual elements reinforcing the message, is a central element in creating a professional appearance and delivering a positive impression. Clear and cohesive message continuity, along with responsiveness in managing digital marketing materials, are acknowledged as key to success in effectively communicating with the audience.

MIN 6 Bandar Lampung employs a meticulous marketing process in its efforts to enhance the quality of education. Recognizing the crucial role of market understanding and customer needs, they integrate market insights into curriculum planning and actively engage in monitoring student progress, demonstrating their commitment to improving educational quality and creating an adaptive learning environment. Moreover, MIN 6 Bandar Lampung demonstrates a similar commitment to designing marketing strategies. They not only focus on quantitative aspects but also carefully explore qualitative dimensions, acknowledging that a deep understanding of customer needs involves aspects such as preferences, values, and user experiences. Furthermore, they align their madrasah's strengths with customer demands and needs through in-depth analysis of parents', students', and teachers' expectations, as well as understanding the dynamics of changes in the education landscape.

This marketing process encompasses not only academic aspects but also involves forming strong and supportive bonds between the madrasah and stakeholders. By creating a dynamic learning environment, MIN 6 Bandar Lampung makes a real contribution to the positive development of learners. They understand that customer satisfaction not only yields direct benefits but also represents a long-term investment. By focusing on customer satisfaction, they hope to gain broader community support, increased enrollment, and financial backing for madrasah development in the long run.

At MI Muhammadiyah Bandar Lampung, the educational marketing process is not just a promotional strategy but a holistic journey that begins with in-depth steps. Firstly, the madrasah integrates deep market understanding with comprehensive stakeholder engagement, such as the Head of the Madrasah, Vice Curriculum, and Public Relations, to design education programs that are not only relevant but also high quality in line with the demands of the times.

Next, MI Al-Hikmah Bandar Lampung has designed a holistic and adaptive approach to conduct its educational marketing process. First, they carefully execute market understanding and customer needs approach, marked by thorough adaptation to contemporary developments, periodic evaluations, and effective communication. This creates a strong foundation for assessing and understanding the dynamics of the education market and the needs of the surrounding community.

Second, MI Al-Hikmah's marketing strategy focuses not only on promotion but also involves a deep understanding of customer needs and expectations. Identifying program strengths and implementing effective communication are key elements in their approach. This creates a solid basis for developing adaptive and responsive marketing strategies to the dynamics of the education market, demonstrating the madrasah's commitment to providing services that meet customer expectations.

Third, MI Al-Hikmah's determination of the madrasah's strengths not only focuses on academic aspects but also involves character, skill development, and overall student well-being. Understanding that madrasah excellence encompasses various dimensions reflects their holistic vision of education.

Fourth, awareness that customer satisfaction involves student welfare and engagement becomes a primary focus. Prioritizing student comfort, active engagement, and adequate support reflect the madrasah's focus on creating a positive learning environment that supports holistic student growth.

Finally, a strategic approach to leveraging customer satisfaction data is a key element in the marketing process. This data is not only used as an internal evaluation tool but also as a foundation for madrasah development, promotion, and marketing. By prioritizing responsiveness to customer feedback, this madrasah proves its commitment to providing quality and responsive educational services to meet the needs of students and parents as key stakeholders.

III. Discussion of the 7P Education Marketing Strategy of Islamic Elementary School

The marketing strategies of Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI) in Bandar Lampung reflect a deep commitment to quality education and character development, with each institution showcasing unique approaches tailored to its mission and values.

MIN 6 Bandar Lampung stands out for its emphasis on religious values in its curriculum, attracting parents through the provision of free education. This aligns with research indicating the appeal of tuition-free schooling and the importance of religious education. By prioritizing Islamic values, MIN 6 employs a strategic marketing approach that resonates with Islamic teachings and contributes positively to society [76].

Similarly, MI Muhammadiyah Bandar Lampung prioritizes education quality through an integrated Islamic curriculum, appealing to parents seeking a well-rounded educational experience. Their marketing strategy emphasizes this commitment and the unique value proposition of Islamic education [77], consistent with research highlighting various facets of education.

Meanwhile, MI Al-Hikmah Bandar Lampung adopts a moderate and inclusive Islamic approach, focusing on fostering Islamic understanding, Quranic learning, and character development. This approach aligns with research on inclusive Islamic education principles [78], emphasizing excellence within an inclusive Islamic framework to support students' growth across various dimensions.

In terms of pricing strategies, MIN 6 Bandar Lampung's approach is influenced by government regulations and funding impact, reflecting a commitment to education quality while emphasizing the importance of free education for enhancing accessibility. MI Muhammadiyah Bandar Lampung seeks additional funding to support accessibility efforts, demonstrating financial transparency in line with Islamic teachings. MI Al-Hikmah Bandar Lampung prioritizes operational sufficiency and quality, aligning with religious principles and emphasizing values like social justice and community service [79], [80].

The marketing discussions of these Madrasahs highlight strategic placement within the community, utilizing various channels such as websites, social media, and strategic partnerships to reach prospective students and parents [81], [82]. Target audience identification and tailored marketing approaches ensure optimal effectiveness, reflecting a deep understanding of market dynamics and stakeholder needs.

Effective communication skills, technological proficiency, and community engagement are essential in expanding promotional reach and garnering support. Physical evidence, including branding and promotional materials, reinforces the institutions' identities and values, enhancing consumer comfort and trust.

Overall, the marketing strategies of Madrasah Ibtidaiyah in Bandar Lampung underscore a commitment to quality education, character development, and community engagement, aligning with Islamic principles and promoting holistic student growth.

CONCLUSION

The marketing strategies employed by Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI) in Bandar Lampung showcase a holistic commitment to providing quality education, fostering character development, and engaging with the community. Through a deep understanding of market dynamics and stakeholder needs, each institution - MIN 6 Bandar Lampung, MI Muhammadiyah Bandar Lampung, and MI Al-Hikmah Bandar Lampung - tailors its approach to reflect its mission, values, and unique offerings.

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MIN 6 Bandar Lampung stands out for its emphasis on religious values and free education, aligning with research on the appeal of tuition-free schooling and the importance of Islamic education. MI Muhammadiyah Bandar Lampung prioritizes education quality through an integrated Islamic curriculum, while MI Al-Hikmah Bandar Lampung adopts a moderate and inclusive Islamic approach, emphasizing character development and social responsibility.

In terms of pricing strategies, these institutions demonstrate transparency and a commitment to accessibility, reflecting Islamic teachings on financial transparency and social justice. Their marketing efforts focus on strategic placement within the community, utilizing various channels to reach prospective students and parents while ensuring tailored approaches for optimal effectiveness.

Effective communication, technological proficiency, and community engagement are key factors in expanding promotional reach and garnering support. Physical evidence, including branding and promotional materials, reinforces the institutions' identities and values, enhancing consumer comfort and trust.

Overall, the marketing strategies of Madrasah Ibtidaiyah in Bandar Lampung underscore dedication to providing quality education that aligns with Islamic principles, promotes character development and contributes positively to society. Through continuous evaluation, adaptation, and engagement with stakeholders, these institutions strive to uphold their mission of nurturing holistic student growth and making meaningful contributions to the education sector and the wider community.

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