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Digitalizing the 7Ps Marketing Mix Components in Educational Service Marketing: A Case Study at MI Khadijah Malang

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Abstract

The advancement of digital technology has reshaped how educational institutions communicate with the public, pressing private madrasah to strengthen public trust, competitiveness, and sustainability through effective educational service marketing. This study aims to describe the digitalization of the product, price, place, and promotion components; the people, process, and physical evidence components; the integration of 7Ps digitalization; and user and community responses toward this digitalization at MI Khadijah Malang. A qualitative case study approach was employed, with the school principal, public relations coordinator, IT staff, teachers, students, parents, and the surrounding community as data sources. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation, and analyzed using the Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña interactive model, with source and technique triangulation to ensure trustworthiness. The findings show that digitalization has transformed each 7P component into an interconnected digital service ecosystem—covering academic innovation, transparent financial administration, expanded information access, authentic promotion, human-resource competence, integrated service processes, and a digital service environment—that strengthens public trust, institutional image, and word-of-mouth recommendation.

Keywords: Digitalization; 7Ps Marketing Mix; Educational Service Marketing

1. Introduction

Education plays a strategic role in shaping the nation's human resources, and the effectiveness of educational institutions in delivering their mission increasingly depends on how well they build public trust and remain competitive (Widodo, 2021). Formal educational institutions, whether managed by the government or the private sector, no longer merely deliver instruction; they must also actively market their services to the communities they serve, since students and parents act as consumers of school services (Rismawati et al., 2024). This is particularly true for private madrasah, which must continuously demonstrate quality, transparency, and accessibility to sustain public confidence, enrolment, and institutional sustainability.

Marketing in education draws heavily on the extended marketing mix originally developed for services, comprising seven interrelated components: product, price, place, promotion, people, process, and physical evidence (Booms & Bitner, 1984). Recent studies confirm that each of these components significantly influences prospective students' and parents' decisions in choosing a school (Abdillah & Herawati, 2018; Astuti, 2020; Zulfiah et al.,

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2023). At the same time, the rapid advance of digital technology has reshaped how institutions design and deliver each of these components—from digital learning platforms and online payment systems to social-media-based promotion and digitally mediated communication with stakeholders (Amanulloh et al., 2026; Muskania & MS, 2021). Digital transformation is no longer an optional add-on but a strategic necessity for institutions competing for public trust (Verhoef et al., 2021), a pressure that is especially salient for private madrasah operating amid tightening demographic and economic competition (Mustari & Darmayanti, 2024).

Despite the growing body of research on the educational marketing mix and on digital transformation in schools, most existing studies examine either the marketing-mix components (e.g., Faizin, 2017; Khasanah, 2015; Nurjanah et al., 2024) or digitalization initiatives (e.g., Rahman & Prabowo, 2025; Ariesta et al., 2025) in isolation, with limited attention to how digitalization simultaneously reconfigures all seven components as an integrated system, and how such integration is perceived by users and the surrounding community. This gap is particularly evident in the context of small private Islamic primary schools (madrasah ibtidaiyah), which often operate with limited resources yet face intense competition from both public and private counterparts.

MI Khadijah Malang, a private Islamic primary school established in 1986, provides a relevant case for examining this gap. The school has progressively digitalized multiple aspects of its academic, administrative, and promotional activities while maintaining its distinct identity as an Islamic educational institution. Investigating how this madrasah integrates digital technology across the 7Ps of its service marketing mix—and how its stakeholders respond to that integration—can offer both theoretical insight into the digitalization of the educational marketing mix and practical guidance for similar institutions.

Accordingly, this study aims to (1) describe the digitalization of the product, price, place, and promotion components of educational service marketing at MI Khadijah Malang; (2) describe the digitalization of the people, process, and physical evidence components; (3) analyze the integration of 7Ps digitalization in supporting educational service marketing; and (4) describe user and community responses to the digitalization of the 7Ps components.

2. Method

This study employed a qualitative approach with a case study design, aimed at obtaining an in-depth understanding of how digital marketing strategies for the 7Ps components are designed, implemented, and developed in a real institutional context (Fitrah et al., 2018). A case study design was chosen because it allows an intensive, contextual examination of a single site with distinctive characteristics in adopting digital technology for educational service marketing (Achjar et al., 2023).

The study was conducted at MI Khadijah Malang, a private Islamic primary school located on Jl. Arjuno No. 19A, Kauman, Klojen, Malang, East Java. The school was purposively selected because it has implemented digital technology across various marketing and service activities, making it a relevant and representative site for examining the digitalization of the 7Ps components.

The researcher acted as the primary instrument, engaging directly with key informants through nine fieldwork sessions between February and July 2026. Data sources comprised human sources—the school principal, the public relations coordinator, IT staff, teachers, students, parents, and members of the surrounding community—and non-human sources, including the school's official website, social media accounts, promotional materials, and administrative documents.

Data were collected through three complementary techniques: (1) semi-structured and unstructured in-depth interviews guided by an interview protocol; (2) participant observation of digital marketing and service activities, including academic platforms, online payment systems, and promotional-content management; and (3) documentation, comprising photographs, institutional archives, and digital promotional materials.

Data were analyzed using the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014), consisting of data collection, data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. Data were condensed and categorized according to the focus of the study—digital promotion, technology-based educational services, digital-media management, human-resource roles, and supporting/inhibiting factors—before being displayed narratively to identify patterns and relationships among findings.

The trustworthiness of the data was established through source and technique triangulation. Source triangulation involved comparing information obtained from different informants (e.g., the principal, the public relations coordinator, IT staff, and parents), while technique triangulation involved comparing data obtained through interviews, observation, and documentation to ensure the consistency and credibility of the findings.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Result

Digitalization of Product, Price, Place, and Promotion. Digitalization at MI Khadijah Malang has transformed conventional academic services into an integrated digital learning system covering evaluation, interactive learning media, and technology-based flagship programs. For grades 4–6, daily, mid-semester, and final-semester assessments are now conducted through a digital platform that automatically generates item analysis, as explained by the school principal:

> *"When it comes to developing digital-based educational services, we do not implement everything at once. We first look at the school's needs and the students' readiness. Currently, for grades 4 to 6, the Daily Assessment, Mid-Semester Assessment, and Final-Semester Assessment are already conducted through a digital platform – questions are answered online and results are generated immediately. Teachers are also helped because the system automatically provides item analysis, so the evaluation process becomes faster and more accurate." (Interview/Focus 1/Principal, 13 February 2026)*

This adaptive, needs-based implementation shows that digitalization is positioned as a means to enhance service quality rather than an end in itself. Beyond assessment, flagship programs in information technology, multimedia, podcasting, photography, and videography give students early opportunities to build digital competencies, which are then documented and published as authentic promotional content that reinforces the school's brand as an innovative Islamic institution.

Digitalization of the *price* component is manifested in an integrated electronic payment system covering transaction processing, confirmation, operator verification, and digital record-keeping. The system increases transparency, as parents can independently monitor payment status through a mobile application, which strengthens trust between the school and parents. Digital payment records also reduce administrative errors and speed up reporting, although the school continues to provide socialization and assistance for parents who are still adapting to the new system.

The meaning of *place* has shifted from a purely physical location to digital accessibility. The official website functions as the main information hub—covering the school profile, flagship programs, achievements, facilities, and new-student admission information—while Instagram extends the reach of promotional content and WhatsApp enables direct, two-way communication with parents and prospective students. The integration of these three platforms, each with a distinct but complementary function, allows information and services to be accessed regardless of time or location.

Promotion has evolved from a seasonal activity limited to the new-student admission period into a continuous, authenticity-based digital promotion strategy. Content published on Instagram, the website, and WhatsApp is drawn from real school activities rather than persuasive marketing copy, which can be characterized as evidence-based promotion. Systematic content planning and consistent documentation support the generation of organic electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM), reflected not merely in follower counts but in growing public awareness and inquiries leading to enrolment.

Digitalization of People, Process, and Physical Evidence. Digital competency development among teachers and staff follows a job-based approach rather than uniform training: personnel directly responsible for a given digital system receive targeted training from vendors or external resources, then act as mentors for their colleagues, creating a peer-mentoring culture that sustains knowledge transfer in daily practice. This human-resource development also extends to communication with parents, who now receive information primarily through WhatsApp, the website, and Instagram rather than through face-to-face meetings alone.

Service *process*es—financial administration, teacher and student attendance, academic evaluation, and communication with parents—have been digitalized to increase speed, accuracy, transparency, and responsiveness. Automation of data recording, grade recapitulation, payment management, and document retrieval has improved staff productivity, although challenges remain in digital literacy and internet infrastructure, which the school addresses through continuous improvement, including regular evaluation, network upgrades, and user training.

Physical evidence now spans both conventional facilities—computer laboratories, LCD projectors, smartboards, and internet networks—and a digital service environment comprising the official website, digital payment and attendance systems, a digital library, and

a digital canteen currently under development. Each facility has a designated person in charge, ensuring coordinated maintenance and reporting. The website and Instagram, in particular, function as a "digital showcase" that shapes public perceptions of the school's professionalism and credibility.

Integration of 7Ps Digitalization. The digitalization of the seven components does not occur in isolation but forms an interconnected system. A prospective student's enrolment journey typically begins with information obtained via social media, followed by communication through WhatsApp, registration, digital payment through the school's mobile application, and finally access to digital academic and administrative services—illustrating the interdependence of product, promotion, process, and price. This integration is sustained by institutional policy, cross-unit coordination (public relations, curriculum, IT, and academic staff), human-resource development, and continuous evaluation, forming what this study terms a Digital Integrated Educational Marketing Ecosystem. The school continues to expand this ecosystem, including plans for a digital library, a digital canteen, and renewable-energy infrastructure to support digital operations.

User and Community Responses. Overall, users and the surrounding community responded positively to the school's digitalization efforts. Digital media—Instagram, the website, and WhatsApp—serve as the primary source of information and, at the same time, as a means of verifying the school's profile, programs, and achievements before enrolment. Although some users required an adjustment period, guided socialization accelerated adaptation, after which users reported greater ease in accessing information and completing administrative processes independently. Parents specifically valued the transparency and traceability of digital payments, while students reported more interactive learning experiences supported by digital media, despite occasional technical constraints such as unstable internet connections. These positive experiences with information transparency, responsive communication, and service efficiency contributed to increased trust, a stronger institutional image, and a greater willingness among parents and community members to recommend the school to others (positive word of mouth). Nonetheless, respondents noted that continued development—particularly in addressing gaps in digital literacy and diversifying digital content, such as alumni testimonials—would further strengthen the benefits of digitalization for all users..

3.2 Discussion

The findings on the digitalization of product, price, place, and promotion align with Kotler et al.'s (2022) view that a product encompasses everything offered to satisfy customer needs, including educational services; in this case, digital learning services and evaluation platforms enrich the overall service experience, consistent with Zeithaml et al.'s (2021) argument that service quality is determined by the totality of the customer's experience. The adaptive, needs-based rollout of technology at MI Khadijah Malang also extends Muskania and MS's (2021) concept of educational digitalization, moving beyond mere device usage toward a redesign of service delivery, in line with Verhoef et al.'s (2021) notion of digital transformation as organizational change that creates more valuable service models.

The transparency achieved through digital payment systems supports earlier findings by Ariesta et al. (2025) on digital financial administration in schools, which similarly reported improved efficiency and accountability. Likewise, the expansion of place through integrated

digital platforms mirrors Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick's (2022) digital-marketing framework, in which multiple channels serve complementary roles—informational, transactional, and relational—rather than competing for the same function. The evidence-based promotion strategy identified in this study, which relies on authentic documentation rather than persuasive messaging, extends Hikmah and Handoko's (2025) findings that digitalized promotion strengthens institutional image and public trust through accessible representation of real service quality.

Regarding people, process, and physical evidence, the job-based, peer-mentoring approach to digital-competency development found at MI Khadijah Malang reinforces Abrori and Muali's (2020) argument that leadership and organizational culture are decisive in human-resource capacity building, while extending it by demonstrating a specific mechanism—function-based training followed by internal mentoring—that sustains competency development without uniform, resource-intensive training programs. The digitalization of process, especially in financial and academic administration, corroborates Rahman and Prabowo's (2025) finding that digital information systems improve the quality of educational services, and further shows that such improvements are inseparable from continuous evaluation and infrastructure development, consistent with the notion of continuous digital innovation (Kumar et al., 2021). The expanded conception of physical evidence—incorporating both physical facilities and a "digital service environment"—supports Bagaskara and Lupiyoadi's (2021) argument that physical evidence functions as tangible proof of service quality, while showing that in an educational context this evidence increasingly takes digital form.

The integration found across all seven components reflects the original conceptualization of the services marketing mix by Booms and Bitner (1984), which emphasized that the components of product, price, place, promotion, people, process, and physical evidence function interdependently rather than in isolation. The findings extend this framework into the digital era: rather than a single unified platform, MI Khadijah Malang's digital ecosystem is built from several interoperable platforms coordinated through institutional policy and cross-unit collaboration. This finding is consistent with Westerman et al.'s (2014) view that digital transformation succeeds through organizational alignment rather than technology alone, and supports Rogers's (2023) argument that digital transformation requires a rebuilt organizational logic rather than incremental digitization of existing processes.

Finally, the positive responses from users and the community, culminating in increased trust, institutional image, and word-of-mouth recommendation, align with relationship-marketing theory, in which service quality and communication transparency cultivate long-term relationships between an institution and its stakeholders (Wirtz & Lovelock, 2021). This finding also resonates with Nurohman's (2024) assertion that a strong school image is built through consistent, high-quality service and promotion. Collectively, these findings suggest that the digitalization of the 7Ps components at MI Khadijah Malang cannot be understood merely as the adoption of individual technologies, but as the formation of an integrated digital marketing ecosystem—one in which each component reinforces the others to build sustainable trust, competitiveness, and institutional image. While these findings offer analytic generalization for private madrasah with comparable characteristics, transferability to

institutions with markedly different resources, governance structures, or user demographics should be established through further comparative research.

4. Conclusion

This study shows that the digitalization of the 7Ps components at MI Khadijah Malang has transformed conventional educational service marketing into an integrated digital ecosystem. Digitalization of product, price, place, and promotion has produced adaptive academic innovation, transparent financial administration, expanded information access, and authentic, continuous promotion. Digitalization of people, process, and physical evidence has been driven by job-based human-resource development, more efficient and transparent service processes, and a digital service environment that complements physical facilities. These seven components are not digitalized in isolation but are integrated through institutional policy, cross-unit coordination, and continuous evaluation, forming what this study terms a Digital Integrated Educational Marketing Ecosystem. Users and the surrounding community responded positively to this digitalization, reporting greater trust, a stronger institutional image, and a greater willingness to recommend the school—although differences in digital literacy among users indicate that continued facilitation and content development remain necessary.

Theoretically, this study extends the services marketing mix framework (Booms & Bitner, 1984) into the context of digital transformation in basic education, showing that the 7Ps function as an interconnected digital system rather than as separate elements. Practically, the findings offer madrasah and school leaders a reference for developing a roadmap for 7Ps digitalization that prioritizes human-resource readiness, cross-unit coordination, and continuous evaluation.

This study is limited to a single-site case study conducted within a specific period, so its findings represent analytic rather than statistical generalization. Future research is encouraged to employ multi-case, longitudinal, or mixed-methods designs across schools with different levels, status, and resource characteristics, and to examine the relationships between 7Ps digitalization, service quality, user satisfaction, trust, institutional image, and enrolment decisions in more measurable terms.

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