



New Student Admission Promotional Strategy Through Flagship Programs in an Effort to Increase Student Number at SD Kreatif Muhammadiyah Bangil

Strategi Promosi PPDB Sekolah Melalui Program Unggulan dalam Upaya Peningkatan Perolehan Peserta Didik di SD Kreatif Muhammadiyah Bangil

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Abstract

This study aims to describe the promotion strategy of New Student Admissions (PPDB) through flagship programs in an effort to increase student acquisition at SD Kreatif Muhammadiyah Bangil. The method used is descriptive qualitative research, with data obtained through interviews, observations and documentation. The results of the study show that the main flagship programs of 3T (Tajdid, Tahfidz, Tamyiz) are the main attractions. Promotions are carried out through social media, open tables and visits to partner schools. The evaluation of this promotion strategy showed an increase in the number of students by 13% compared to the previous year. The 3T flagship program is the dominant factor in the decision of students' parents to choose a school. However, challenges still arise in the form of public perception of private schools and limited promotional competence in some teachers. It is necessary to strengthen communication strategies and collaboration with local communities to increase the effectiveness of promotions.

Keywords: Collaboration, Communication, Student Admission, Superior Program 3T, Promotional Strategy.

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan mendeskripsikan strategi promosi Penerimaan Peserta Didik Baru (PPDB) melalui program unggulan dalam upaya peningkatan perolehan peserta didik di SD Kreatif Muhammadiyah Bangil. Metode yang digunakan adalah penelitian kualitatif deskriptif, dengan data yang diperoleh melalui wawancara, observasi dan dokumentasi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa program unggulan utama 3T (Tajdid, Tahfidz, Tamyiz) menjadi daya tarik utama. Promosi dilakukan melalui media sosial, open table dan kunjungan ke sekolah mitra. Evaluasi strategi promosi ini menunjukkan adanya peningkatan jumlah peserta didik sebesar 13% dibandingkan tahun sebelumnya. Program unggulan 3T menjadi faktor dominan dalam keputusan wali murid memilih sekolah. Namun, tantangan masih muncul berupa persepsi masyarakat terhadap sekolah swasta dan keterbatasan kompetensi promosi pada sebagian guru. Diperlukan penguatan strategi komunikasi dan kolaborasi dengan komunitas lokal untuk meningkatkan efektivitas promosi.

Kata Kunci: Kolaborasi, Komunikasi, PPDB, Program Unggulan 3T, Strategi Promosi.

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INTRODUCTION

New student admission is the first step to take in entering basic education to increase student potential towards the national education goal (BPK 2003). Sujana (2019), one of the goals of education is to enlighten the nation's life in growing the potential for scientific intelligence, technological advancements, and also to develop people with role model attitudes and hearts of gold. However, the decrease in the number of students because of the zoning system leads to private schools needing to increase their attractiveness through creative marketing, flagship programs, and advanced facilities. Private schools that are in the same level as public schools are at risk of experiencing a decline in student admission if they do not have a unique appeal (Darya 2020), while zoning regulations necessitate students to enroll in the nearest schools (Malik dkk 2023).

In this digital and globalization era, there are many schools in many regions of the country competing in new student admission. Competitive strategy is one of the key components in marketing to build competitive dominance in order to attract consumers (Ardiyanto dkk., 2018). Therefore, it is necessary for an educational organization to possess the ability to actuate a good strategy in maintaining its existence in order to be the top school with high quality and high interest with potential students.

People receive standard-assured quality education at schools. The standard-assured quality education is the important base in creating a conducive and effective learning experience. According to Mulyana AZ (2012) the factors influencing the rate of student number include the curriculum, textbooks, facilities and accommodations, fees, and flagship programs. The flagship programs itself hold an important position in building student character to be a multi talented human resource. These programs are designed in order to optimally develop student potential, giving them the ability to be competent in fulfilling the demands of this era.

Furthermore, when structuring an education program, the school must keep in mind and pay attention to the local geographical condition. This is in accordance with the mandate of the Law no. 20 Year 2003 which necessitates education based on regional autonomy in order to fulfill local needs. (Kemendikbud 2003). It is also for schools to socialize with student guardians and the public as the key in a successful implementation

of the aforementioned education programs. This effort will help build trust and support from various parties.

The research by Destyana dan Budi (2015) also put emphasis in the variation of the promotion related to new student admission, without delving too deeply into the characteristics of a region or said region's needs. Whereas geographical context and local needs are factors in designing a school's flagship program. They also mentioned that a variety of promotion and a superior flagship programs have become the main attraction point, despite it only focusing on new student admission. Though despite the number of researches that have discussed the promotional strategies surrounding new student admission and flagship programs, the majority of the researches only focused on promotional media such as brochures, billboards, or general student admission strategies (Lestari, 2018; Fadillah, 2017).

Based on the theory gap research by Miles (2017), this research is in the *empirical gap* category, which is the lack of comprehensive study integrating new student admission promotional strategy with flagship programs, specifically in analyzing the suitability of the program with local needs, as per the mandate based on regional autonomy. Therefore, this research aims to answer said needs by offering strategic frameworks in promoting new student admission with the basis of flagship programs, that are relevant with local societal needs. This research scientifically contributes in expanding knowledge in promotional strategy that not only focuses on promotional media, but prioritizes the relevance of the school's programs in a local context. This research is expected to increase new student admission promotion and support the continued increase in student number.

Promotion and school superiority, specifically its unique traits, deeply affects potential students' decision. To increase student number, a well planned strategy is needed. Based on the newest data from the academic year of 2024/2025, the total number of active elementary students in SD Kreatif Muhammadiyah Bangil (Muhammadiyah Bangil Elementary Creative School) is as follows:

Tabel 1. Student Data

Academic Year	Number of Students
2019/2020	95
2020/2021	82
2021/2022	69
2022/2023	73
2023/2024	74

This data describes how, despite the challenges in the academic year of 2021/D022, the school is successful in stabilizing the number of students by fixing its flagship programs, directing its promotion, and establishing a closer communication with the public. According to the Headmaster, the cause for this change is through the public's preference in choosing school based on a kyai's (a term for a religious public figure) recommendation. The public don't account for quality, despite the school's programs.

According to the data on *datasekolahkita.id*, out of the total 35 elementary schools in the Bangil Region, SD Kreatif is one of the private school that has a full day approach in religious teaching. From the results of the interviews, a lot of parents and guardians chose this school because it is in line with their needs, especially with the 3T (Tahfidz, Tajdid, Tamyiz) program the school has. Other than that, this school also uses edutainment approach and life skill approach that are gaining in popularity among the students' guardians.

Within the context of rivalries caused by zoning regulations and the changing of public preference, private schools must have promotional strategies that are not only creative, but can show exactly what programs they offer and how they are superior. Thus, this research aims to analyze the strategies SD Kreatif Muhammadiyah Bangil used in developing improvements in their flagship programs in order to sustain the school's existence and to keep increasing its student number.

It is important to research these strategies to find out how far can they reach to attract people's interest amid other competitive schools in an area with a strong preference to tradition. Other than that, there are not many researches that specifically focus on the effects of the 3T (Tajdid, Tahfidz, Tamyiz) Program towards the increase of student number, making this research an important contribution academically and practically in management and marketing disciplines.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses qualitative method. Sugiyono (2017) said the research is conducted from the results of the exploration of the observed objects. This study aims to analyze the new student admission strategy through the flagship program at SD Kreatif Muhammadiyah Bangil as an effort to increase student admission. Subjects include the

principal, student admission chairman, teachers, and guardians who provide information related to the program and school promotional strategy.

Margareta et al. (2023), research instruments are tools used to measure or obtain data for use in research. Informants were selected purposively based on their direct involvement in the student admission promotion process and the implementation of flagship programs, as well as their knowledge of the school's strategies. (Etikan 2016).

No	Nama	Jabatan	Data yang digali	Metode
1	Marisa Izzah	Kepala Sekolah	Latar belakang sekolah dalam proses PPDB	Wawancara
			Tantangan dalam PPDB	
			Kebijakan dan program unggulan sekolah	
2	Lina Yasmin	Ketua PPDB	Strategi promosi PPDB yang telah dilakukan	Wawancara
			Kegiatan promosi PPDB	Studi dokumen (dokumen terkait PPDB)
3	Abdul Latif	Guru	Promosi PPDB, program unggulan sekolah	Wawancara
4	Ika Lestari	Guru		
5	Ana Susilowati	Guru		
6	Bu Fauziah	Wali Murid		
7	Bu Diyah	Wali Murid		
8	Bu Yanti	Wali Murid		
9	Bu Hanum	Wali Murid		

Figure 1. Research Sample

Data were obtained through three data collection techniques: observation, semi-structured interviews, and documentation. The tools that were used in data collection included notebooks, cameras, and recorders. Semi-structured interviews were chosen to provide flexibility to informants in expressing their opinions openly. (Fadillah 2017). The data obtained is then analyzed using the Miles and Huberman analysis model, which includes data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions (Hardani dkk 2020).

Hardani et al (2020) The validity of the data is tested using triangulation techniques with both source and technique triangulation. Source triangulation is done by comparing data from interviews, observations, and documentation, while technique triangulation checks the consistency of interview data with related documents. This technique ensures the validity and reliability of the data obtained in the study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Student Admission Promotional Strategy Planning Through Excellent Programs in an Effort to Increase the Number of Students at SD Kreatif Muhammadiyah Bangil

Based on the observations and interviews with informants connected to the headmaster; the head of student admission, other teachers that were part of the admission team, and a few parents/guardians, it is known that the planning of the student

admission promotional strategy uses the flagship program as one of the promotional media.

There are three flagship programs that the school has, which are the 3T (Tajdid, Tahfidz, Tamyiz), Edutainment Learning, and Assembly

The main program in this elementary is the 3T (Tajdid, Tahfidz, Tamyiz), because it is the main attraction point to many student guardians

It is the 3T (Tajdid, Tahfidz, Tamyiz) to my knowledge, because this program receives feedback from parents because of its effectiveness. This program may interest parents to sign up their children here because there is no program like this in Bangil, usually only Tahfidz

First, identify the flagship program as an initial plan. The student admission promotion strategy at SD Kreatif Muhammadiyah Bangil is designed by prioritizing the 3T flagship program (Tajdid, Tahfidz, Tamyiz) as the main attraction of promotion to prospective parents. Based on the results of interviews with several related informants, this program is designed to meet the needs of education based on Islamic values and creativity which are one of the characteristics of the school. Interview data with several religion teachers shows that the flagship program is the main one to compare with other schools in the Bangil area. According to the coordinator of the 3T program, Latif, the 3T is in great demand because one of the target factors is parents who aim to continue their education to Islamic boarding schools, and this program can be the main supplement for students to study the Qur'an. Another factor that is based on the interviews with parents of students is that the effectiveness of the 3T program activities (Tajdid, Tahfidz, Tamyiz) can help students to read the Qur'an fluently. This is also feedback from parents of students of the school on the success of implementing the program.

"Before carrying out the promotion, us from the admission team held a special working meeting to discuss the admission to divide tasks to all teachers so that the promotion that we will carry out runs smoothly"

Second, the design of new student admission preparations, based on the results of an interview with the student admission chairman conducted on October 23, 2024, was found that the student admission team designed a strategy through a work meeting, starting from establishing a special team with a specific division of tasks so that planning runs smoothly. Next, in the work meeting, the student admission team determined the

target; 100 students in the 2025/2026 academic year. The next draft is to create a work plan that includes promotional activities such as outreach strategies, visits to partner kindergartens and social media as the main media for promotion and a schedule of activities that will be carried out during the new student admission. All of these are proven with document data in the form of a powerpoint file that includes the work plan and was used for presentations during work meetings.

Third, determine the media or promotional activities that would be used for new student admissions. Based on the results of observations, it is known that SD Kreatif Muhammadiyah Bangil carried out various promotions through social media such as Instagram, TikTok, YouTube and WhatsApp. Other promotional media included putting up billboards, distributing brochures at every school activity and carrying out promotional activities through open tables. This was proven through observations during the research and several documentations showing the promotional activities carried out.

The Implementation of Student Admission Promotional Strategy Through Excellent Programs in an Effort to Increase the Number of Students at SD Kreatif Muhammadiyah Bangil

Based on the results of the interviews with the student admission. Observations that were made during the implementation of the promotional strategy showed that the promotional activities carried out succeeded in attracting the attention of prospective students and prospective parents. The strength of the 3T program (Tajdid, Tahfidz, Tamyiz) had also been proven to attract the attention of the public according to the educational needs in the Bangil area. The chairman and several teachers who are part of the admission team explained that the implementation of the strategy had three main activities.

The promotion was done through social media, then there was the open table at sunday, all teachers took turns, so everyone did promotion.

There are three activities: the first one is the open table, the a visit to kindergartens for trial class, and then all social media we have we would use.

We also have billboards in front of the school, near the market, and by the streets in Bangil

First, the implementation of the promotional strategy that wad carried out was digital promotion through social media by sharing photos or videos of student doing the school's programs. The digital media team publishes all school activities in creating

promotional content. From the researcher's observations, it is concluded that the programs have all been inserted into promotional content to attract the attention of prospective parents to register their children at SD Kreatif Muhammadiyah Bangil. Other promotional media was used, such as billboards in several areas of Bangil to inform the public. Brochures were also included in the promotional media used during school activities or during open table activities.

Open table is an activity held every sunday at Bangil's town square, there children perform, including my kid, and this event attracts a lot of attention. It's always so lively.

Second, promotion is also done through an open table event. Based on the interview data with the headmaster, this event is held every sunday at the townsquare near the school. This event is usually crowded; a point of community for the people of Bangil. Open table is sometimes also held at housing areas to reach more people. This event was designed to show off the students' talents such as dancing, drama performance, etc, including the school's 3T program. Other than as a form of promotion, it is also the place for students to show off their creativity and talents that they have develop at school. This was proven by the documentation of the event. Based on the researcher's observation, this endeavor is proven to be an effective promotional medium with its success in building a closer relationship with students' parents and the public.

Third, another promotional strategy that the school used was outings to partner kindergartens with the purpose to promote the school in an interactive way, ie. a trial class. The outing team demonstrated the 3T method to prospective students and their guardians. Other activities include a robotics simulation and other demonstrative programs that the school had. These outings are done in scales. This was proven by the documentation they have regarding the activity.

Evaluation Results of the Implementation of New Student Admission Promotion Strategy Through the School's Flagship Program in an Effort to Increase the Number of Students at SD Kreatif Muhammadiyah Bangil

The result of the evaluation shows an increase in student number, which is approximately 102 new students; a 7% increase than last year which was only 95 students out of the target of 100 students.

Hasil evaluasi pelaksanaan strategi promosi, menunjukkan adanya peningkatan jumlah siswa baru yaitu 102 dengan kenaikan persentase 7% dibandingkan tahun sebelumnya yang hanya mendapat 95 siswa dari target 100 siswa. These results are backed by the data from the 2025/2026 academic year :

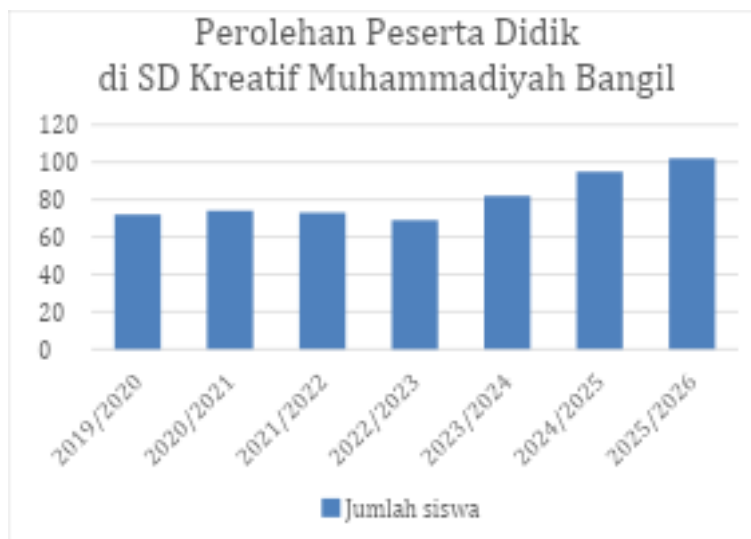


Figure 2. Student Admission Data

The parents of the new students explained in the interviews that they chose this school because of the 3T program for their children to learn the Qur'an in a complete package. There are also parents who explained that they chose the school because a lot of the school's activities are student-centered and help support students build their confidence. This seems to be a new finding in this research.

The main reason I put my child in this school is clear, the school has a good program package, the service here is good and the teachers are kind and friendly, I always recommend the school to my neighbors, friends or family.

I have two children here, one in fourth grade and one in sixth grade. I was first recommended about this school by a family member that has a child in the school. My child who is in sixth grade was first a quiet kid who turns to be more confident because a lot of the activities here that involve the students, not to mention the quran program also makes everything complete. I end up enrolling the younger child into the school as well.

I enroll my kid here because of my family's social media, I did my own digging and I feel the programs are fitting, with the full day and the

Qur'an program, children immediately go home to rest, no time to play their phones.

Based on the documentation and reports, it is shown that the promotional strategy is successful in increasing student numbers, especially through social media and the open table event. According to Lina, the chairman of the student admission division, the open table event was very effective in direct interaction with potential students and their guardians, with the teachers having a lot of room to explain the school's programs.

The evaluation of the student admission promotion implementation shows success in achieving the target student admission by 90% until December. From the target that was chosen by the admission team which was 100 students, the admission instead reached 102 new enrollments and will keep climbing until the maximum number of 112 students. Despite the success, there are challenges that the school will face.

In the interviews, the teachers and head of the admission team explained that the main challenge of the promotional strategy is from an external factor related with negative perceptions some people has with Muhammadiyah. This is in line with how the Bangil area has a religious heavy background where people still prioritize schools that certain religious groups or figures have recommended. Another challenge also forms as an internal factor that not all teachers have optimized promotions about the school. Training is recommended to increase communication with the local people.

DISCUSSION

From all the data obtained, SD Kreatif Muhammadiyah Bangil seeks to implement a student admission promotion strategy through its flagship program as an effort to increase the number of students, starting with planning, implementation, and evaluation. The formulation of the problem has achieved the objectives of the research conducted. The findings of this research will be discussed in more depth to provide a comprehensive understanding of the research in detail and will be linked to the underlying theoretical concepts, and also criticized according to the research context.

Student Admission Promotional Strategy Planning Through Flagship Programs in an Effort to Increase the Number of Students at SD Kreatif Muhammadiyah Bangil

The results show that the promotional strategy have considered the school's internal potential, which is the 3T (Tajdid, Tahfidz, Tamyiz) flagship program. This strategy is in line with the marketing mix theory which emphasizes the importance in

product differentiation or services to attract consumer's interest (Helmold 2022). A previous study by Budiarti et al (2023) also supports that the superiority based differentiation strategy have been proven to increase public interest towards education services. SD Kreatif Muhammadiyah Bangil have formed a special team for student admission. They collaboratively identified relevant promotional media (social media, the open table event, outings). The main strategy in this instance optimized the 3T program as the main selling point. Based on the interviews with the teachers and the headmaster, this program was made to create a lead amid the competitive field of other public schools in the Bangil region. This shows a combination between theory and practice that strengthens the school's identity.

Implementation of Student Admission Promotional Strategy Through Flagship Programs in an Effort to Increase the Number of Students at SD Kreatif Muhammadiyah Bangil

In the implementation of the promotional strategy, the school utilized an approach through social media (Instagram, WhatsApp, Youtube, TikTok) along with direct promotion with the open table event, outings, and the use of banners, billboards, and brochures. This is in line with Mubarakah dan Susilawati (2023) who stated that social media is an effective tool in marketing and promotion with its wide reach to certain audiences. Bakoil dan Tuhana (2023) emphasize that promotion and marketing is very important to build trust with consumers. Thus, SD Kreatif Muhammadiyah Bangil is successful in utilizing these two approaches. The open table event and outings show personal selling strategies which were proven to be effective in building emotional bonds (Ardiyanto et al., 2018). This strategy may influence parents to enroll their children. The budget allocation used in promotional planning comes 90% from the school's admission income and 10% from other costs from the school's operational funds.

Evaluation Results of the Implementation of the Student Admission Promotional Strategy Through the Flagship Program in an Effort to Increase the Number of SD Kreatif Students at Muhammadiyah Bangil

The result of the evaluation shows that the 3T program is the main factor in increasing the number of new student admissions. This program is the component in differentiating this school from other private schools in the area. This strengthens the differentiation strategy that states that a unique product or service has a competitive edge in the market (Amalia 2022). The 3T program has relevance for local needs.

This is in line with Budiarti et al (2023) which shows that programs that fills local needs are more favored with those who only rely on the standard curriculum. It was also found that external challenges that need to strengthen the relationship with the local community in facing public perceptions. The internal challenge the school has is to optimize the teachers and staff communication to promote the school's programs to the public.

This research proves that the promotional strategy SD Kreatif Muhammadiyah Bangil have used with the 3T flagship program not only increased student admission numbers but also created a competitive lead between other private schools. The combination of digital and personal selling that is in line with local needs is a main differentiating factor. However, this research is limited in terms with generalization because it only focuses on one school without weighing other broader external factors. Future studies should include a bigger range of schools to obtain a more thorough picture.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research on the student admission promotional strategy through the flagship program in an effort to increase student number at SD Kreatif Muhammadiyah Bangil, it can be concluded that the promotion strategy in the school has highlighted the 3T flagship program (Tajdid, Tahfidz, Tamyiz) in its promotional planning by involving a special admission team and utilizing various promotional media to attract the attention of prospective students. The implementation of the promotional strategy has involved digital social media promotion, open table activities, and visits to partner kindergartens, which have proven effective in attracting prospective parents. The evaluation showed that the promotion strategy succeeded in increasing the number of students by 7%, with the 3T flagship program being the main factor in the interest of parents. However, there are external challenges in the form of public perception of the school and competition with surrounding private schools, as well as internal challenges, namely that not all teachers have optimized school promotion.

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