

## Student Admission Strategy In Increasing The Quality of Students

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**ABSTRACT.** The Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Al Ersyad City of Kediri is one of the madrasas that seeks to create future generations of Muslims who are good and worthy of pride for religion, nation and state, especially in the city of Kediri. MI Al Ersyad is under the auspices of an Islamic foundation with the characteristics of the Ahlussunnah waljamaah (Aswaja) ideology. And make a real contribution in society in the educational aspect by preparing a generation of students who are ready to face the challenges of the times. Against the background of the community's social environment, the foundation has succeeded in supporting the establishment of formal institutions starting at the PIAUD, Elementary and Secondary levels, therefore many strategies are carried out in the student acceptance process (PPDB) in each new school year. The formulation of the problems in this study are, 1) What are the student admission strategies in improving the quality of students at MI Al Ersyad, Kediri City?, 2) What are the supporting and inhibiting factors for student acceptance at MI Al Ersyad, Kediri City?. This study uses a qualitative approach to the type of case study research. Data collection techniques through observation, interviews, documentation, and triangulation. The results of this study are that the New Student Acceptance Strategy (PPDB) at MI Al Ersyad, Kediri City Islamic Boarding School District is a process that is carried out every new school year. This was done by managing the acceptance of new PPDB students at MI Al Ersyad, Kediri City in improving the quality of students, such as improving the strategic management of the formulation stage which was strengthened by the implementation stage through registration of two batches from 04 January to 31 March 2022, by selecting approximately 115 people. new students, up to the evaluation stages of New Student Admissions by measuring the quantity and quality of new students based on student test scores

**Keywords:** *Strategic Management, PPDB, Quality*

### INTRODUCTION

The management of educational institutions is very important, where the growth and development of educational institutions is influenced by the administrator's ability to scan the external environment, and competitors of other institutions, taking into account internal competence, must create a qualified strategy to win the competition without leaving the essence of education itself (Amirudin et al., 2022; Azmiyah & Astutik, 2021).

Kediri City as one of the historical cities and educated cities in East Java province is a city with quite high competition for educational institutions, especially at the elementary education level (MI). The number of educational institutions at this level is very large and the distribution of students between these educational institutions is also unequal. Some educational institutions have a surplus of students, on the other hand there are educational institutions that have difficulty

getting students. This shows there are problems in the implementation of the marketing strategy (Fatimah et al., 2023; Krisbiyanto & Nadhifah, 2022; Tarwi & Naimah, 2022).

Madrasah Ibtidaiyah has a vision of "Educating students with good morals and achievements." The City of Kediri is an educational institution that was established in the 1999s, and the School Establishment Decree: D/Mm.32/MI/0036/1999, Date of Establishment Decree: 1999-12-01 . Under the auspices of the Al Irsyad Al Islamiyyah Association, it was founded on 15 Shawwal 1332 H / 66 September 1914 M.

Association of Al Irsyad Al Islamiyyah is a mass organization based on Islam, not a political organization. The essence of Al Irsyad is to form people who believe and have piety that are true and good, not mixed with all forms of thoughts, words and deeds that can pollute the values of monotheism. Through education, da'wah and community service, the Al Irsyad Al Islamiyyah association organization tries and strives to foster people to return to the Al Quran, in order to create a Quranic generation, a generation that is able to read, understand, live and practice the Al Quran. (website [mialirsyadkotakediri.com](http://mialirsyadkotakediri.com))

As an educational institution, MI Al Irsyad Kota Kediri certainly has its own marketing strategy to improve quality and competitiveness so that it can continue to exist and be accepted by the community. It has even won the 2021 best madrasa award from the Kediri City Ministry of Religion. Since its establishment MI Al Irsyad alumni have graduated around the 1980s with students spread across several regions. It was from here that the researcher was interested in conducting research related to the concept of student admissions strategies in improving the quality of students, supporting and inhibiting factors carried out by MI Al Irsyad Kediri City.

## **METHOD**

This study uses the Qualitative Research Method which is a process of research and understanding based on a methodology that investigates a social phenomenon and human problems. (Cresswell: 1994) By using a case study approach (case study). (Loraine Blaxter: 2006)

The data source in this study is the subject from which the data can be obtained. (Arikunto: 2006) direct data on the subject as the source of information sought is through interviews with the head and deputy head of MI Al Irsyad and the PPDB Committee for the 2022/2023 school year, then through observation and documentation.

The technique used by researchers in this study to collect data is the observation method (Sutrisno Hadi: 2001), interview (Masri : 1998), and documentation (Sugiyono: 2008). In analyzing the data from observations, documentation, and interviews, this study used a non-statistical analysis test (without using numerical calculations). Then the data is compiled and analyzed using inductive method analysis techniques.

Data analysis is the process of compiling data so that it can be interpreted. Organizing data means classifying data with certain patterns, themes or categories. Each interpretation of the data will give meaning to the analysis. (Saebani: 2008). The author applies several data validity techniques in accordance with data that is considered weak, including the persistence of observation intending to find characteristics and elements in situations that are very relevant to the problem being sought and then focus on these things in detail. This requires researchers to be skilled at sorting out in detail how to examine the problems that occur. (Saebani : 2008) and using the triangulation technique is a technique that utilizes something other than the data for the purposes of checking or as a comparison of the data. Through this triangulation technique, researchers make comparisons between incoming data and one data source. Investigative data collection methods and theories, for example researchers make comparisons between existing data and other data sources.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### **PPDB MI Al Irsyad Acceptance Strategy, City of Kediri**

Acceptance of new students (PPDB) is an annual routine activity carried out by all educational units from elementary to tertiary levels. In other words, each school/madrasah has the same opportunity and opportunity to meet the needs of new students who are targeted or according to the number of study groups (groups) they have. Both public and private schools are competing to increase the number of students in order to get quality students.

Therefore, every year the principal of the school/madrasah provides the widest opportunity for the PPDB committee to carry out various series of socialization or activity programs that support the achievement of new students according to the needs of the school/madrasah. Likewise, what is done by MI Al Irsyad Kediri City in carrying out a student admission strategy as an effort to continue to maintain and improve the quality of students from year to year, always implementing the right strategy to get students from the TK / RA around it. The following is a description of the implementation of the student admission strategy at MI Al Irsyad for the 2022/2023 academic year through PPDB management with three categories; strategic management, public relations management and marketing management.

Based on interviews with the PPDB MI Al Irsyad committee, which stated that all teachers basically have the same thoughts in terms of culturally accepting new students (door to door) which begins through the medium of speech to prospective student guardians around the madrasa and then directed to the PPDB committee and procedurally through online registration that has been prepared by the madrasa. This shows that all educators and educational staff have high concern in achieving the best prospective students for MI Al Irsyad because there is a shared drive to maintain and improve the quality and quantity of students in a balanced manner. The following is an explanation from the PPDB committee for the 2022/2023 school year:

“As was the custom for PPDB in previous years, the 2022 committee worked together to get a sufficient number of students according to the four classes available. We have selected and accepted 115 new students this year”.

The head of the PPDB committee for the 2022/2023 academic year stated that the strategy for admitting new students at MI Al Irsyad, Kediri City, had not changed much compared to previous years. He stated that:

“the input of new students can be said to have been fulfilled from the RA/TK level under the auspices of this foundation. Nevertheless, we continue to make selections in student admissions, to get better input and accommodate the expectations of the surrounding community (guardians of students) who want their children to study here”.

As a routine for accepting new students, MI Al Irsyad is included in the category of madrasas with good trust from the wider community.

In the context of orderly madrasa administration, the PPDB MI Al Irsyad committee accepts registration and announces prospective students divided into two waves (stages). The process of admitting new students is carried out long before the implementation of the new school year begins. According to the Head of the Madrasah, this was done to provide good service to the parents of students and to maintain the quality of students at MI Al Ershad.

“All prospective new students who fill in in batch one are selected first, and then they register (re-register) on February 16 to March 2022. In the first wave there were more than 50 students who passed the first stage. Likewise, those who are accepted in batch 2 must register at the specified time, 28-31 March 2022”.

Guidelines for admitting new students to the category of transfer students are usually carried out quite selectively by taking into account the student's academic record. The better the academic and non-academic achievements, the acceptance of the school in the superior madrasah towards the students in question is easily accepted by all parties.

The implementation of PPDB at MI Al Irsyad, Kediri City has standard evaluation stages like madrasahs in general. The existence of sophisticated social media and internet networks is really put to good use by all educators and education staff. The head of the madrasah tells about the PPDB evaluation stage as follows

“the same as madrasahs and other PPDB committees, we have several social media groups that we optimize as media for interaction and communication. Especially during the last covid or WFH pandemic. In certain situations we use zoometing to review several important points that are urgent for discussion. The first year of PPDB after this pandemic, we are still adjusting to the prevailing situations and conditions, both online and offline. When it's time to go online again, we have prepared ourselves, because we are also implementing strict health protocols.

As it is known that the implementation of learning during the Covid-19 pandemic lasted for about two years (2020-2022), learning and work activities were carried out online (online). So that requires all parties to participate in the use of internet networks and social media as a medium of communication and interaction between one another. MI Al Irsyad is no exception, which implements online learning and recently the implementation of learning has started normally, including in PPDB for the 2022/2023 academic year. The results of the evaluation of PPDB receipts that took place at MI Al Irsyad were usually followed up properly by each party according to their duties and functions. So that among the existing committees there are not many significant obstacles. As also said by Mr. Hafidz that:

“evaluation activities that are usually carried out in the internal committee take place intensively every day. At least the information in the committee group continues until there is an announcement of student acceptance in the specified wave. From the experience of the previous year we were able to quickly adjust if there were technical problems encountered. But alhamdulillah, until the new school year started, the committee was running smoothly and successfully.”

### **PPDB MI Al Irsyad Supporting Factors**

MI Al Irsyad School, Kediri City, has been accredited Superior (A) since 2010. As stated by Mr. Drs. Muh. Nuruddin, that accreditation has been going on since 12 years ago.

“Thank God, among the seventeen private MI in Kediri City, our institution is one of the achievers. In November 2021 we received an award as the best madrasah from the Ministry of Religion.”

This award was obtained in the Madrasah Award Achievement and Dedication 2021 activity at the Sekipan Tawangmangu Hotel, Central Java on Thursday, November 11, 2021. The award was given directly by the Head of the Kediri City Ministry of Religion Sub-division, Mr. Dawud Maulan. "Those who are clearly happy and grateful, it turns out that our work, our dedication is recognized by others, and we will be even happier if this work, dedication and effort are assessed as worship to get the blessing of Allah SWT." Said Moh. Nuruddin to the Jayatikediri.com team

The community relations carried out by MI Al Irsyad are quite active. A lot of information is disseminated on social media, both on the official website page [mialirsyadkotakediri.com](http://mialirsyadkotakediri.com) and through other social media such as Facebook (MI Al Irsyad Al Islamiyyah Kota Kediri) and Instagram [mi.alirsyad\\_kotakediri](https://www.instagram.com/mi.alirsyad_kotakediri). As the head of the madrasah said:

“As a superior madrasah, we set the best example for all people, especially the parents of students and alumni. In fact, we include all alumni data on the website page, so they feel they still own this school even though they are no longer here. In addition, we follow the trend of the current era because access to information must be transparent and truly provide satisfaction for all parties.”

In the 2022/2023 academic year, it will be more intensive in terms of providing information to the public who want to know more about MI Al Irsyad. Therefore, the use of YouTube audio-visual media is also activated. "We have had a Youtube channel for MI Al Irsyad called *alirsyadkediri\_official* since 2013. We have uploaded many videos, including profiles, testimonials from alumni and others.

Apart from having good management in terms of image on social media, management of the madrasa website is quite diverse and has an interesting menu. These menus are like most madrasah websites in general, it's just that there are two menus that are interesting to describe as a form of stakeholder confidence in terms of student competency, namely the 'work corner' menu. This menu displays several student works that are displayed on the website so that anyone can access them, including parents.

Based on the experience of the PPDB committee in previous years, the procedures applied by MI Al Irsyad in accepting new students did not change much. That is carried out for about 3-4 months, in 2022 registration will be open from January 4 to March 31, 2022. This procedure can be said to be the same as the procedure applied to other schools in general, including;

“(1) for offline applicants, prospective students come with their parents/guardians to the admissions section for new students; (2) then fill out the registration form given by the committee according to the registration phase (gel. 1/gel. 2); (3) after that return the form and make a registration payment of one hundred thousand rupiahs; (4) The mobile number listed will be combined in the whatsapp group; (5) Prospective students will take the acceptance test for new students; and (6) Prospective students or student guardians will receive information on test results; (7) after being declared accepted by the student's guardian, register according to the instructions given”.

As for the students who have registered at MI Al Ershad for the 2022/2023 school year, as shown in the table above, there are 115 students who are divided into four classes. This shows the success of PPDB's public relations and committee in serving and accepting student guardians as a form of the school's seriousness in maintaining the trust of the wider community. In the previous year the number of students accepted was around 116 people and two students were transferred. According to the PPDB committee, among the students accepted there were two transferees in grade four named Aisha Zahra Aribah Humaira from MI Perwanida Blitar who transferred because her parents moved to work as civil servants from Surabaya to Kediri. Meanwhile, one student in grade two named Princessa Marsya Caroline from SDI Assalam Bandar Lampung whose parents moved to work in the Islamic boarding school sub-district. In the 2022/2023 academic year, there were no students who transferred. The vice principal stated that "the school as conducting studies before actually accepting students who want to move to MI Al Irsyad, and vice versa students who join their parents move out of town, we invite them, of course, follow the applicable procedures”

Based on the results of the analysis, RA Al Irsyad Alislamiyyah is in the highest order in the category of school origin (54 students) and second place from TK Kusuma Mulya with 14 people. This shows that the surrounding schools contribute the most students because they understand the quality of students. As conveyed by the PPDB committee, "TK and RA around who always participate in the contribution of new PDs (distribute brochures)”

Adequate facilities at MI Al Irsyad are the main attraction for the surrounding community. These facilities include; Mosque, Canteen, Wifi Area Coverage, IT Center, library and parking area and others. As a technical requirement for the PPDB committee in collecting data on prospective new students, electronic facilities such as MI Al Irsyad's laptops and/or computers have an important role in registration services. The PPDB committee, Ms. Alif, stated that:

“We are helped a lot with sufficient computer facilities. All parents who come to register their children are immediately given fast and precise services. So, it doesn't take long for each student's guardian to wait for their child to be registered”

All the facilities already owned by MI Al Irsyad continue to be made improvements and additions following the needs of the school in planning madrasah work. Therefore, every year the principal plans to add facilities and or improve the facilities needed to handle them.

Various student organization activities are prepared as a forum for student self-development, namely: Futsal, Volleyball, Scouts, Badminton, Calligraphy, Qiroah, Tambourine, Samroh, Tahfidz, Zafin, Choir, Table Tennis, Drumband, Badminton, Swimming, and others . As motivation for new students, the school held a ceremony for the opening of the 2022 school year. “Monday, 1 August 2022 was the start of the ceremony for the 2022/2023 school year after it was stopped due to Covid-19. The ceremony was only attended by students of grades 4 to 6”.

### **PPDB MI Al Irsyad Inhibiting Factors**

As a bias from the Covid-19 pandemic, it results in the need for online (online) interaction and communication with internet networks. Therefore, every parent has the same opportunity to enroll their children in the madrasa of their choice, either offline or online. As it is understood that the 2021/2022 school year holiday period is marked by the Eid Al-Fitr 1443 Hijriah homecoming period or May 2022. After Eid the implementation of the new 2022/2023 school year is carried out offline but with strict health protocol procedures. Every madrasa/school must implement the government's recommendations in terms of implementing post-pandemic learning. The head of the madrasa, Moh. Nuruddin said that:

“During the pandemic and after the covid pandemic, our school implemented health protocols as recommended by the government. We obey and comply with applicable laws. Everyone reminds each other of/in the distance learning process (PJJ) via online or when carrying out offline learning by keeping a distance”.

Post-covid pandemic learning has left its own traumatic experience for many people, especially the old (old times). Among educators, some are still technology stutterers. In learning, many impacts are felt, such as the lack of students giving feedback quickly, students not understanding the material provided, the lack of communication tools makes students unable to submit assignments in a timely manner, the teacher's explanation is not clear when the signal is bad so that the material delivered was not well received. One of the solutions implemented by the policy makers is to cooperate with Smartfren in terms of fulfilling the internet network. "In order to support online activities during the pandemic, MI AL IRSYAD AL ISLAMIC YAH KOTA KEDIRI and SMARTFREN are collaborating by distributing starter packs and free data packages to the Teacher and Student Council”

As a comparison in the 2021/2022 PPDB experience Mrs. Roisudin in that since SK as head of the PPDB committee the admissions process took about 3 months, from March to May. During the registration period, according to Mrs. Roisudin, “the committee received more consultations via telephone and social media services (whatsapp). They -the parents of students- asked a lot about the technical implementation of the test. Because there is a fear of not escaping”

Registration of new students (PPDB) at MI Al Irsyad has a few other obstacles such as the incompleteness of the prospective student files. This was expressed by the PPDB committee, Alif Futulaila, that:

“PPDB receipts for the 2022/2023 school year, although there are several incomplete files, compared to the previous year's PPDB, this year there were relatively few. Weaknesses such as photos, KK and birth certificates. The biggest shortage of files is that they haven't uploaded photos, as many as 13 data from more than 100 registrants. Meanwhile, last year around 15 findings of photo data that had not been uploaded.”

According to the committee, these deficiencies were addressed interactively by notifying the applicants (parents) to immediately provide the said data deficiencies on a specified date. The tolerance limit given by PPDB is in the first week after payment of student registration both received in/in the first wave and the second batch. On another occasion, the PPDB committee also received additional documents in addition to the files required for registration. For example, an award charter or certificate/information that is a child's achievement while studying at the playgroup level, or kindergarten.

Based on PPDB records and evaluations, all incomplete files are suggested to be submitted in accordance with predetermined requirements. All prospective students who will take the test are checked again in all their completeness. Thus, all the guardians of MI Al Irsyad prospective students whose files have not been completed will receive notification from the relevant committee.

## **Discussion**

The strategy for accepting new students (PPDB) at MI Al Irsyad, Pesantren District, Kediri City is a process that is carried out every new school year. This is also done in every existing school so that every new academic year gets new students. Of the four strategies for accepting new students (PPDB) that have been stated above, they are actually part of an effort to increase excellence in competing or promoting educational institutions. In other words, efforts to market educational services (Amelia et al., 2022; Azis et al., 2022; Tajudin & Aprilianto, 2020). Educational marketing is a very important factor in the management of educational institutions. Success in the field of marketing of educational institutions has an impact on the progress of these institutions. Marketing educational institutions is different from business entities that seek profit. Marketing the production results (output) of business entities is technically easier than educational institutions that offer educational services. Various ways to improve the progress of educational institutions have been carried out, some have made uniforms free of charge, some have given gifts of school supplies and others. All of this is a marketing strategy for educational institutions in the face of increasingly fierce competition between educational institutions. In improving the progress of educational institutions, a strategy is needed that really hits the target, either by using group, regional and other sentiments. From the experience of researchers, there are many educational institutions that have been established for a long time but still do not experience progress in their institutions. According to researchers, one way to attract customers is that the education system or curriculum needs to be developed so that people will be influenced to choose their own institutions (Heriyono et al., 2021; Indawati et al., 2022; Sirojuddin et al., 2022).

## CONCLUSION

MI Al Irsyad improves the strategic management of the formulation stage which is strengthened by the implementation stage through registration of two Batches from January 4 to March 31 2022, by selecting approximately 115 new students, to the evaluation stage of New Student Admissions by measuring the quantity and quality of new students based on student test scores.

PPDB supporting factors at MI Al Ersyad include; (1) Quality Branding of Superior Accredited Madrasas (A); (2) Communicative Madrasah Public Relations; (3) Dynamic Admission Procedures; (4) Adequate Infrastructure; (5) Good program of activities; and (6) quite a lot of student achievement. While the obstacles in PPDB at MI Al Ersyad for the 2022/2023 school year, namely; (1) Pessimism of Offline Vs Online registration, (2) Coordination of the PPDB Committee which is in a dilemma, and (3) Lack of Files such as Photos, Family Cards, certificates and others. However, it was handled wisely until a good approach was completed by the committee before carrying out the PPDB test.

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