

School Branding Strategies to Increase the Appeal to Prospective Students at SDIT Insan Madani Madiun

Fatha Ardli Kusuma¹, Syamsul Arifin², Azid Syukroni³

^{1,2,3}Universitas Muhammadiyah Ponorogo

fathaardlik22@gmail.com¹, syamsularifin@umpo.ac.id², azidsyukroni@gmail.com³

ABSTRACT

School branding strategies are a key factor in the competitive landscape of educational institutions, particularly in attracting prospective students. This study aims to examine the school branding strategies implemented by the Insan Madani Integrated Islamic Elementary School in Madiun to attract prospective students, identify the impact of these strategies, and determine the supporting factors and challenges in their implementation. This study employs a qualitative method using a case study approach. Data were collected through observation, interviews, and documentation involving various stakeholders, such as the foundation chairperson, the school principal, the student recruitment team, teachers, and parents. Research findings indicate that Insan Madani Integrated Islamic Elementary School in Madiun implements a school branding strategy through character development, academic achievement, tahsin and tahfiz programs, extracurricular activities, and the use of digital branding. The implementation of school branding has had an impact on several aspects, such as increased trust and loyalty among parents toward the school, an increase in student enrollment, the establishment of a positive image in the public's mind, and enhanced institutional competitiveness. This serves as proof that the Insan Madani Integrated Islamic Elementary School in Madiun has successfully established itself as a top choice and the first choice for parents. Factors supporting the institution's branding include educators or teachers, an Islamic-themed environment, the involvement of parents or guardians, and adequate facilities and infrastructure. However, the obstacles or challenges faced include the emergence of educational institutions with nearly identical branding and the need to meet the increasingly diverse needs of students. This study is expected to enrich the discussion on the management of effective school branding strategies so that schools can excel and remain relevant within the community.

Keywords : *School Branding Strategy, Attractiveness to Prospective Students, School Brand Image, Integrated Islamic Elementary School.*

INTRODUCTION

Competition in the field of education is a reality that cannot be ignored, given the proliferation of educational institutions (Anugrah, 2025). The proliferation of educational institutions both public and private is a result of the era of globalization, which has spurred rapid growth in the number of schools. This has led to a sharp increase in competition among institutions, requiring each school to demonstrate its strengths and maintain a strong competitive edge. (Alfiani et al., 2024). High competition has led to many schools being overlooked and even abandoned by prospective students and parents (Bariroh, 2022). This challenge arises from the public's critical scrutiny of the quality of educational institutions, which requires these institutions to continually improve their standards and quality in order to attract prospective students (Yuliana & Wisda, 2025).

Educational institutions must be able to differentiate themselves through quality, flagship programs, and continuous innovation, given the increasingly complex competition among schools. Furthermore, competencies in today's digital age are evolving at a rapid pace, including within the field of education. Schools are expected not only to provide formal education but also to develop students' character, digital skills, and critical thinking abilities so they are prepared to face global challenges. A noticeable trend is that many schools have not yet been able to demonstrate sufficient competitiveness, causing them to lose their position in the education market. As a result, some schools have been forced to close or merge with other, more competitive schools (Anwar et al., 2024).

In addition to external factors, the lack of internal readiness within educational institutions poses a significant challenge. Managerial aspects, the use of technology, and program innovation are critical areas that must be strengthened so that schools can compete (Rumra et al., 2025). On the other hand, competition with private schools is becoming increasingly fierce, as they offer superior facilities, curricula, and more modern and adaptive teaching approaches, along with various new innovations. This situation has made it difficult for some educational institutions to maintain their position within the educational ecosystem (Suryana, 2022). Many educational institutions have also been unable to retain customer loyalty and gain a competitive edge due to a lack of understanding of market needs. Therefore, the right strategy is essential for attracting and capturing market share amid intense competition (Kholik & Laeli, 2020). Therefore, a school branding strategy is an effective way for educational institutions to introduce their uniqueness, strengths, and programs to consumers or the public, and to build a positive image and reputation for the institution (Saputri et al., 2023).

Several studies on school branding have focused on internal branding aspects to enhance the school's image, strengthen the school's branding vision, and examine school branding from a financial perspective. Among these studies are those by Islam and Khadavi (2024). The study confirms that branding strategies are rooted in an institution's unique values, such as the implementation of a full-day school program to strengthen the school's image and quality. Then, the research conducted by Zarastri et al. (2024) found that the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum and flagship programs such as the Learning Community and the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project, supported by collaboration among teachers, students, and parents, is capable of shaping students' character and skills while also serving as a branding tool for the institution. However, the research conducted by Maulana (2025) focuses on the mission, processes, and challenges of branding, including vision-mission planning, strengthening the Islamic curriculum, improving the quality of educators, academic implementation, and the use of digital media, with obstacles such as budget constraints, human resource limitations, competition, and public economic perceptions. This study shares a similar background but differs in its research focus.

Based on this literature review, no studies have been found that specifically focus on the impact of school branding in terms of year-over-year increases in student enrollment as evidence of the success of the branding strategies implemented. Research on school branding highlights the importance of implementing school branding strategies to showcase an institution's uniqueness and strengths as a draw for prospective students and to build a positive brand image or reputation for the school in the eyes of the community. Therefore, the implementation of branding efforts serves as the foundation for educational institutions to maintain their presence in society and to compete effectively in the modern era.

This study aims to present efforts to implement school branding strategies to increase the number and attractiveness of prospective students amid competition among educational institutions. In addition, this study also focuses on explaining how the implementation of branding strategies impacts the strengthening of a school's image, builds public trust, and supports the sustainability or continued existence of educational institutions in an era of intense competition. This article will address three questions: 1) How do school branding strategies increase the appeal to prospective students? 2) What is the impact of school branding on increasing the appeal to prospective students? Furthermore, 3) What are the supporting factors and challenges of school branding strategies in increasing the appeal to prospective students?

School branding strategies are one of the key approaches schools must adopt to highlight the institution's uniqueness and strengths through various initiatives. The implementation of school branding strategies is expected to have a positive impact on educational institutions, including enhancing the school's positive image, building public trust particularly among prospective students in the institution's quality, increasing interest among prospective students, and maintaining consistency in the institution's branding efforts to ensure its continued relevance amid competition among educational institutions. The involvement of teachers and educational staff can serve as a supporting factor in institutional promotion efforts and can be a key factor in achieving the desired goals.. Meanwhile, obstacles in branding implementation such as intense competition with other schools can serve as a basis for evaluation to foster greater innovation and creativity in the application of school branding.

THEORETICAL REVIEW

School Branding

School branding refers to an educational institution's efforts to build the school's reputation in the eyes of the public, thereby generating interest in enrolling their children there. Through school branding, prospective parents will become more familiar with the educational institution through the information provided (Najwa & Hidayah, 2025). A positive image of an educational institution is also built

through school branding efforts. Branding encompasses core values related to culture, quality, and distinctive characteristics, as well as the experiences offered. Through branding programs, educational institutions can build public trust and ensure a school's continued existence in the future. This is because the greater the level of interest from the public or prospective students in a school, the higher (Nisa et al., 2025). In addition, school branding serves as a strategy for enhancing competitiveness among educational institutions. Educational institutions must be able to demonstrate their ability to deliver significant, better, faster, and more meaningful results to the relevant parties (Mustika, 2020). In line with Van Gelder's branding theory, strengthening a brand requires a targeted strategy that encompasses brand positioning, brand identity, and brand personality (Fradika & Priyono, 2025). Therefore, a school's branding strategy should not focus solely on promotional efforts, but rather on building a positive image and reputation, trust, and the sustainability and competitiveness of the educational institution in the face of increasingly fierce competition.

Appeal to Prospective Students

Prospective students' interest is closely tied to the image that educational institutions project. Educational institutions need to build a positive image to attract attention and increase their appeal to prospective customers that is, users of educational services. The users of educational services referred to here are prospective new students (Astika et al., 2024). Schools that are attractive to the public generally have a unique selling point, a distinctive institutional identity, and a positive reputation among the general public (Budiyatmo & Iriani, 2022). In line with Koler & Keller's theory, educational institutions that are able to present their brand clearly and consistently tend to be more appealing to prospective students and parents (Mubarok & Niswatin, 2024). This indicates that a positive image will increase parents' interest in choosing a school for prospective students.

The Relationship Between School Branding and Attractiveness

School branding plays a crucial role in enhancing the appeal to prospective students. Consistency in branding efforts contributes to a more positive school image as well as improved overall educational quality. School branding is a key factor in attracting the attention and interest of parents and students when choosing an educational institution, as it is closely tied to the actual experiences they have (Rahmawati, 2025). Amid the ever changing landscape of the education sector, school branding strategies are essential to enhance competitiveness among schools, particularly in the race to attract prospective students (Ramadhan et al., 2025). School branding efforts involve careful planning, implementation, and evaluation. These efforts are undertaken with the aim of increasing public trust in educational institutions. In the context of branding, this is particularly relevant, as educational institutions with strong branding are better able to attract students, build a positive

reputation within the community, and have a positive impact on education (Fitria, 2024). According to Kotler & Keller, a marketing strategy for educational services is not only about attracting new customers, but also about maintaining their loyalty by creating a consistent experience (Munawwaroh et al., 2025). Therefore, the brand value demonstrated will influence consumer interest in and loyalty to the educational institution.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employs a descriptive qualitative method aimed at exploring in depth the phenomenon or issue under investigation (Dedi Rianto Rahadi, 2020). Penelitian ini berlokasi di Sekolah Dasar Islam Terpadu Insan Madani. Sekolah ini terletak di Jln. Griya segaran permai Ds. Jatisari Kec. Geger Kab. Madiun. Jawa Timur, Indonesia. The research context pertains to the school branding strategy of the Insan Madani Integrated Islamic Elementary School in Madiun. The context of this study relates to efforts to implement a school branding strategy at the Insan Madani Integrated Islamic Elementary School in Madiun. The research subjects or informants consisted of six individuals, including the Chair of the Foundation, the Principal, one member of the New Student Admissions Team, one teacher, and two parents. The informants were selected using purposive sampling based on their involvement in the implementation of the school branding strategy. The researcher sought to understand how the school branding strategy was implemented and the impact of branding on the school, as well as the opportunities and challenges faced in implementing the branding strategy. The researcher explored the views, experiences, and perceptions of various parties in depth, so that the data collection process would be richer and more varied.

The data analysis technique employed thematic analysis based on the Miles and Huberman model, which includes the stages of data collection, data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions (Mubarok & Niswatin, 2024). The analysis process was conducted systematically by analyzing the results of interviews, observations, and documentation to gain a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under study and to present the findings.

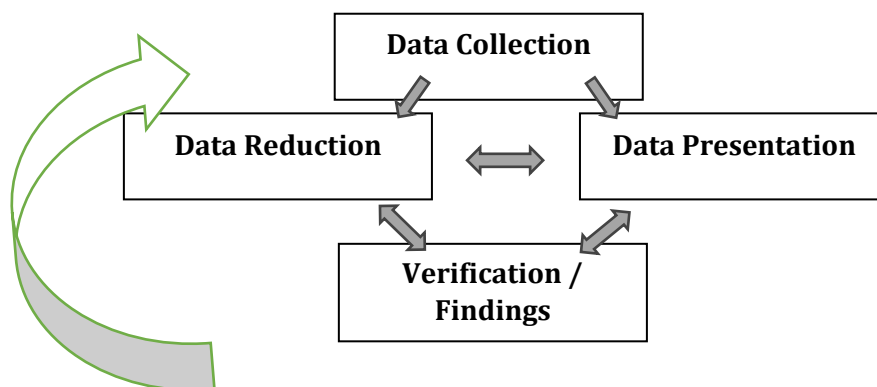


Figure 1. Data Analysis Techniques

Data collection methods included observation, interviews, and documentation. Research instruments consisted of a semi-structured interview guide, observation sheets, and a documentation checklist, which were used to gather in-depth data regarding strategies, impacts, and supporting and hindering factors in the implementation of school branding. All information obtained was recorded and transcribed; the data reduction stage involved identifying raw data, which was sorted and summarized, coded, and categorized based on the research questions. The researcher endeavored to understand all interview transcripts carefully and thoroughly by reading them repeatedly (Arifin et al., 2023).

Table 1. Data Collection Process

1. Observation	School Environment, Teaching and Learning Process, Student Recruitment Activities	Observation Guide & Checklist	Observing firsthand the facts on the ground and actual activities.
2. Interview	1) Cairman of The Fondation 2) Principal 3) PSB Team 4) Teacher 5) Parents	Interview Guidelines	Gathering in-depth information, perspectives, and policies from various stakeholders.
3. Documentation	School Records, PSB Reports, Curriculum Documents, Photos.	List of Documents (<i>Document Checklist</i>)	Gathering statistical data, historical records, and physical evidence to support the findings.

Data validity was assessed using source, method, and temporal triangulation, supplemented by member checks, audit trails, peer debriefings, and increased researcher engagement in the field to ensure the credibility and validity of the data (Rahayu & Rindrayani, 2025).

Table 2. Data Credibility Testing Process

1. Data Triangulation	Collecting data from various sources (people), time periods, and methods (observation/interviews).	Eliminating bias and ensuring data consistency.
2. Member Check	Discuss the findings again with the original informants/sources	Ensuring that the researcher's report

		accurately reflects what the informant intended.
3. Audit Trail	Documenting the entire research process from start to finish in a transparent manner.	Allows others to see how conclusions were reached.
4. Prolonged Engagement	Extending the duration of observation or fieldwork.	Building rapport and gaining a deeper understanding of the context.
5. Reability & Confirmability	Conduct process audits (reliability) and outcome audits (confirmability).	Ensuring that research results are reliable and not manipulated by researchers.
6. Peer Debriefing	Presenting research findings to peers or experts for critique.	Gain new perspectives and identify unconscious biases.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

School Branding Strategy

The results of the study indicate that the Insan Madani Madiun Integrated Islamic Elementary School has implemented several school branding strategies, emphasizing the institution's strengths and unique characteristics. The Insan Madani Madiun Integrated Islamic Elementary School serves as an educational institution that integrates formal education with religious education into a comprehensive system (Agustina et al., 2024). The school strives to create an educational system that balances academic knowledge with Islamic values. It integrates various Islamic activities designed to foster strong and effective character development (Harisnur, 2021).

1. Character Education

Character education through values instilled from an early age is a hallmark of the school and serves as the institution's brand in the community. Principal Ustadzah Dwi Sugiarti explained:

Branding is essentially a character that is shaped from the very beginning and eventually becomes ingrained in and evident in the students' personalities. It is something that is consistently practiced and eventually becomes part of their character.

This statement indicates that the values instilled in students through character education can serve as both the school's core values and distinctive characteristics, as well as the institution's brand. Students are encouraged to participate in congregational prayer, dhikr, Dhuha prayer, rawatib prayers, ma'tsurat, and Islamic etiquette such as greeting others

with “salam,” showing respect to teachers, speaking politely, practicing daily prayers, and so on. These practices aim to cultivate students’ character and instill noble moral values.



Figure 2. Cultivating the Habit of Worship

Character development among students is also reinforced through the Islamic Character Development Program. The Islamic Character Development Program is one of the flagship programs of the Integrated Islamic Schools Network. In its implementation, students are organized into small groups to ensure a more intensive mentoring process and foster a closer relationship between students and teachers. Through these groups, they are mentored, guided, and provided with a comprehensive understanding of Islamic etiquette, the cultivation of virtuous behavior, and



the application of Islamic values in daily life.

Figure 3. Islamic Personal Development

In the context of student development, character education plays a vital role in shaping students’ spiritual development (Hakim, 2025). Character development is achieved through a process of habit formation and

direct action (Amirullah et al., 2021). The practice of religious rituals and Islamic etiquette, which are upheld within the school environment, helps instill noble character in students while also fostering a positive image in the minds of the community, particularly among parents (Syukroni, 2018). The character of students that is shaped and nurtured also serves as a unique strength and distinguishing feature for educational institutions. In the theory of school branding, the strengths and distinctive characteristics demonstrated by the Insan Madani Madani Integrated Islamic Elementary School in the context of character education can serve as a draw for prospective students and parents when selecting an educational institution. The findings of this study are consistent with previous research (Rusman & Zakir, 2025) which states that character-based branding strategies or the instillation of Islamic values are driven by a growing public awareness of the importance of education that goes beyond a focus on academic achievement. Parents are becoming increasingly selective in choosing educational institutions for their children, particularly regarding character education which encompasses moral conduct, religious culture, exemplary behavior, and the values being instilled.

2. Academic Achievement

Insan Madani Madiun Integrated Islamic Elementary School prioritizes the educational development of its students. Students are taught and guided by professional staff—teachers who are experts in their respective fields. This is evidenced by one of the achievements earned at the East Java Integrated Islamic Schools Olympiad. The school forms an Olympiad group for children who excel in academic fields as a platform to develop their potential. This demonstrates that academic achievements play a role in establishing the institution's brand as tangible proof of the quality of education provided. Research conducted by the school (Zarastri et al., 2024) shows a correlation: academic excellence and student achievements can serve as a promotional tool to enhance the school's positive image regarding the quality of its education. However, this finding is not consistent with research conducted by (Suryono & Baidi, 2026). The research conducted focuses more on sports as a means of institutional branding. Sports are positioned as a competitive strategy on par with academic achievement. Institutional branding is centered on sports, which are positioned as a competitive strategy equivalent to academic achievement. With structured management, sports provide students with a space to channel and explore their abilities and potential, as well as a venue for achievement. This becomes a unique value of the school in the eyes of the community amidst competition among educational institutions to increase their appeal to prospective students.



Figure 4. Academic Achievement

3. Recitation and Memorization

The tahsin and tahfizh programs are an integral part of the school's curriculum. These activities not only serve to improve reading and memorization skills, but also help instill in students a disciplined, meticulous, and Quran-loving character from an early age (Zilfan et al., 2024). The tahsin and tahfizh programs at Insan Madani Integrated Islamic Elementary School in Madiun utilize the systematic and engaging Wafa method, which emphasizes understanding and practice. Through tahsin, students are guided to gradually improve their recitation, articulation of letters, and tajwid, while tahfizh is conducted with memorization targets appropriate for each grade level through talaqqi, muraja'ah, and regular recitation sessions. These activities are held every morning before classes begin. In line with research conducted by (Zainiya Anisa, 2022), The Quran memorization program run by the Integrated Islamic School serves as both a distinctive feature and a brand for the institution in building its image and maintaining its presence amid competition among schools.



Figure 5. Tahsin and Tahfizh Activities

4. Extracurricular

In addition to Quranic and academic aspects, the school provides a platform to nurture and identify students' interests and talents, particularly in non-academic areas, through extracurricular activities. The extracurricular programs offered are quite diverse, ranging from karate, Habsyi, calligraphy, futsal, Scouting, Quran memorization, badminton, swimming, MTQ, MHQ, and many others. With the support of competent and experienced coaches, students not only have the opportunity to develop their interests and talents but are also encouraged to excel through various competitions organized by the school. As an educational institution, the Insan Madani Integrated Islamic Elementary School in Madiun demonstrates strong competitiveness compared to other schools. This is reflected in its active participation in various tournaments and competitions across a range of fields. Extracurricular activities can serve as a school branding strategy to attract students and parents while also distinguishing the school from other educational institutions. This aligns with Kotler's theory of branding, which defines a brand as the identification of goods and services to differentiate oneself from competitors. The results of this study are similar to those of a study conducted by (Violetasari & Rohmadi, 2024), Extracurricular activities serve as one of the branding strategies implemented. In addition, the extracurricular activities offered are designed to nurture students' interests and talents so they can develop their full potential.



Figure 6. Computer Extracurricular Activities

5. Digital Branding

Digital branding is a school branding strategy that leverages the development and use of digital technology to build channels for consumers of educational services (Wahyunto et al., 2024). Insan Madani Integrated Islamic Elementary School in Madiun implements the following digital branding strategies: 1) posting updates on all school activities and events across all social media platforms, such as Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube.

Activities published include civic initiatives, market day, family gatherings, reading corners, Teacher's Day celebrations, learning activities, and various other events; 2) establishing collaborations with the Integrated Islamic Schools Network to disseminate information through social media. Collaboration is carried out with regional and local branches of the Integrated Islamic Schools Network to broaden the media reach and increase the number of views or viewers; 3) The school's media team continuously innovates in creating engaging content by presenting school information, activities, and events in an attractive manner. Teachers and educational staff also actively assist in posting documentation of activities. Every homeroom teacher is required to upload student activities at least once a week, ranging from lessons, extracurriculars, Quran recitation and memorization, to daily prayers. This demonstrates the high level of teacher involvement in actively engaging on social media to promote the school.

These efforts are not without reason; rather, they are driven by the rapid pace of technological advancement, which requires educational institutions to keep up with the times particularly by using social media platforms as a means of outreach and interaction to capture the public's attention (Ayu Suci Saputri et al., 2024). In addition, digital technology makes it easier for educational institutions to share school information with the general public, so that parents and prospective students can easily find out more about the school (Ayub Hermanto et al., 2024). These findings are supported by research (Rahmawati, 2025) which states that branding through digital media is crucial in today's era and has an impact on prospective customers, given that the institution's primary target audience is parents and prospective students.

Based on this study, efforts to implement a school branding strategy through character education, academic achievement, tahsin and tahfizh programs, extracurricular activities, and digital branding indicate a systematic approach to building the institution's identity and brand. This finding aligns with the concept proposed by Kotler and Keller that strong branding is built through consistency in the values, quality, and experiences offered to consumers in this context, parents and prospective students. (Hermawan & Carnawi, 2024). Thus, the strategies implemented by the school have reflected a focused and sustainable approach to branding.

Impact of School Branding Strategy

The impact of school branding is one of the key indicators of the success of the implemented strategies. The success of school branding is marked by improvements in several areas that can be seen and felt directly (Susilo, 2023). This improvement is evident not only in quantitative terms but also in the shift in public perception of the school. The success of the school's branding can be analyzed

through several indicators that demonstrate positive and significant progress, in terms of image, public trust, and the school's competitiveness. Insan Madani Madiun Integrated Islamic Elementary School has demonstrated the quality and competence of its services. The visible and directly felt impact of school branding is:

First, the community's trust and loyalty toward the school. In one of the interviews with Ms. Nika, a parent, she said:

As parents, we are satisfied with the school's services and the quality of its education, as our child is constantly cared for, nurtured, and guided throughout the day, helping them grow into a person of good character and high achievement, just as we had hoped.

Research findings indicate that Insan Madani Madiun Integrated Islamic Elementary School has become the school of choice for parents and prospective students. This is evidenced by the increasing number of students from its first year to the present. These findings are consistent with the research (Az-zahra et al., 2026) which states that trust and loyalty are key factors in the success of a school's branding and also contribute to an increase in the number of applicants. This indicates that the quality of education and services provided by the institution plays a role in building public trust in the school.

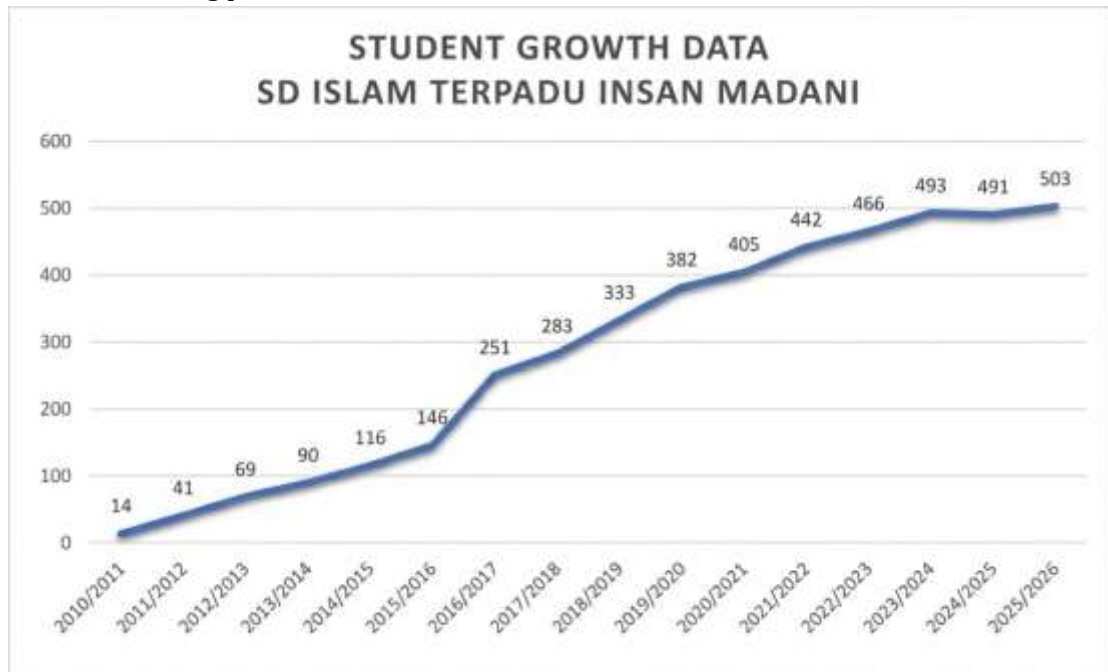


Figure 7. Graph Showing the Increase in the Number of Students

Second, the establishment of a positive image and reputation in the public's mind. Insan Madani Madiun Integrated Islamic Elementary School is known as a school that excels in both academic and non-academic fields. The quality and success demonstrated by the school have fostered a positive image and reputation in the public's mind, while also serving as tangible proof of the educational institution's

commitment to quality assurance. The head of the Insan Madani Mulia Foundation, Al-Ustadz Husein, stated:

Among the perceptions the public has of the school are that the children are well-behaved, polite, devout, skilled in reciting the Quran, of good character, and high-achieving and that is precisely what we aim to uphold so that parents will entrust their children to the school.

On-the-ground evidence shows that the majority of the community is pleased with the presence of the Insan Madani Integrated Islamic Elementary School in Madiun. They are eager to enroll their children at SDIT Insan Madani. In fact, many parents enthusiastically recommend it to friends, relatives, and family members as the best choice for their children's education. This, of course, did not happen by chance. The trust of guardians and parents stems from the school's commitment to providing the best service and maintaining the quality of education for their children. From these experiences and satisfaction, the school's positive image and reputation have gradually taken shape and grown stronger within the community. The findings of this study are supported by research conducted (Fradito et al., 2020) Educational institutions with a good, positive image and reputation are more likely to be chosen by the public. Therefore, schools must demonstrate a commitment to quality, service, and instruction in order to establish a positive image and reputation in the eyes of the public.

Third, enhancing school competitiveness. The implementation of school branding strategies contributes to increased competitiveness among educational institutions (Lulu et al., 2024). Insan Madani Madiun Integrated Islamic Elementary School is one of the schools that has maintained the quality of its educational institution by consistently upholding its teaching system amid increasingly fierce competition. Innovations and breakthroughs continue to emerge, particularly in the area of school branding. Furthermore, these efforts are made to ensure the school's continued relevance within the community. Insan Madani Madiun Integrated Islamic Elementary School is able to compete fiercely and fairly for prospective students with other schools, specifically in the southern Madiun area. The findings of this study indicate that school branding not only enhances the institution's positive image but also strengthens its competitiveness in the race to attract prospective students. This differs from previous research (Hidayati & Susilo, 2026) In that study, school branding strategies focused on enhancing the institution's image and appeal without examining aspects of competitiveness. Thus, this study expands the discussion of branding as a competitive strategy in the field of education.

Based on the research findings, the implementation of school branding has a positive impact on increasing public trust and loyalty, fostering a positive image in the public's mind, and enhancing the school's competitiveness. These findings align with the branding theory proposed by Kotler and Keller. Kotler and Keller explain that the success of a brand is determined by the positive perceptions and experiences felt by consumers (Hermawan & Carnawi, 2024). In addition, the

findings of this study also reinforce previous findings. The study indicates that effective branding can increase the public's interest in and attraction to educational institutions (Budiarti et al., 2023).

Factors that support and hinder school branding strategies

Supporting factors and challenges are key considerations in the implementation of a school branding strategy (Lestari et al., 2024). Evidence from the field shows that the Insan Madani Integrated Islamic Elementary School in Madiun has several supporting values that contribute to its school branding. The school leverages these supporting values as a strength in introducing the educational institution to prospective students and parents. Some of the supporting factors the school possesses include: *First*, the teaching staff. The presence of competent and professional educators in their respective fields serves as a key strength of the school and a supporting factor in the implementation of its branding. The teaching staff assists the school's media in promoting the institution to the wider community, both in person and through social media; *Second*, the environment. The school designs an environment with an Islamic atmosphere, incorporating etiquette, worship, and the Quran into daily life. This Islamic learning atmosphere enables students to continuously learn and grow in every activity at school, not just during classroom instruction.

Third, parents or guardians. The school consistently maintains good relations with parents and guardians. The school facilitates these interactions through direct communication as well as via parent-teacher associations. Parents and guardians are provided with these channels to access and receive all school-related information. Additionally, the school frequently involves guardians in various events such as civic initiatives, family gatherings, market days, reading corners, and others. This is done to foster a closer relationship between guardians and the school while simultaneously building the institution's brand. *Fourth*, facilities and infrastructure. The provision of facilities across all areas of activity is more than sufficient and well-equipped. The school strives to provide adequate facilities and infrastructure to support teaching and learning needs, ranging from a mosque, a field, classrooms, a teachers' room, a library, a storage room, restrooms, a parking lot, and so on. This is evidenced by the fact that the infrastructure of the Insan Madani Madiun Integrated Islamic Elementary School has developed significantly from its first year until now.

Insan Madani Madiun Integrated Islamic Elementary School also faces several challenges in implementing school branding, particularly the emergence of educational institutions with similar or nearly identical concepts and branding. As a school that promotes a balance between Quranic values, etiquette, and academics with the vision of "good character and high achievement," the emergence of similar branding requires the school to continuously innovate, introducing compelling approaches and new strategies to remain competitive. This finding is supported by

research conducted (Sukhoiri, 2022) which states that many educational institutions adopt nearly identical branding approaches to highlight their flagship programs and institutional image in order to attract public interest. Additionally, challenges also stem from internal factors, particularly the increasing needs of students as times and technology evolve. This situation demands that schools continue to adapt, one way being through enhancing teachers' capabilities via training and professional development, to optimize the teaching process and student support. Principal Ustadzah Dwi Sugiarti stated in one of her interviews that:

In this regard, how can we ensure that something continues to exist while maintaining its existing quality and remaining consistent across all aspects of the school's teaching and services.

The interview results indicate that consistency is a key factor in maintaining a school's brand identity amid the emergence of similar educational institutions. This aligns with Kotler and Keller's theory, which states that educational institutions must uphold their values and maintain consistency over the long term in order to sustain their standing within the community (Rambe et al., 2025). The school has implemented several initiatives to maintain its reputation among consumers and the community. These efforts are designed to ensure that the Insan Madani Madiun Integrated Islamic Elementary School remains the top choice for parents when enrolling their children, while also demonstrating the school's commitment to meeting the needs of both students and parents.

According to the research findings, the success of school branding strategies is closely tied to the ability of educational institutions to leverage supporting factors and address various challenges. These findings align with the theory proposed by Van Gelder, which emphasizes the importance of managing brand positioning, brand identity, and brand personality in building brand strength (Pradana et al., 2020). Thus, consistency in maintaining quality and the ability to adapt to change are key to ensuring the survival and competitiveness of educational institutions.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study shows that the school branding strategy at SDIT Insan Madani Madiun is built through the strengthening of the institution's identity, which integrates Islamic and academic values. The implementation of the school's branding strategy is carried out through a quality manual that encompasses Islamic character education, academic achievement, tahsin and tahfizh programs, and extracurricular activities. The use of digital branding is also part of these branding efforts. The implementation of these strategies has led to increased public trust and loyalty, as evidenced by a rising number of students year after year, the establishment of a positive image, and the school's enhanced competitiveness amidst the proliferation of educational institutions.

This success is supported by the competence of the teaching staff, an Islamic environment, the involvement of parents, and adequate facilities and infrastructure.

However, there are several challenges faced, such as the existence of institutions with similar or nearly identical branding and the increasing demands of students. Therefore, consistency and innovation are key factors in maintaining the institution's values and branding. This study confirms that school branding strategies play a role in increasing the appeal to prospective students; thus, schools need to continue optimizing their strengths and adapting to developments, particularly in the use of digital branding. Furthermore, further research can delve deeper into the use of school branding strategies in other aspects of internal branding, particularly in digital branding specifically, how the school institution presents itself in the virtual world or on social media.

REFERENCES

- Agustina, A. M., Mulia, H., & Asmuri. (2024). Kebijakan Pendidikan Islam di Sekolah Terpadu. *Indonesian Journal of Education and Development Research*, 3(1), 780–790. <https://doi.org/10.57235/ijedr.v3i1.4952>
- Alfiani, J., Yunita, F., Rasyid Ridha, M., & Usman. (2024). Implementasi strategi pemasaran lembaga pendidikan dalam meningkatkan citra di pondok pesanten Al Mahsyad. *Jurnal Pengabdian Masyarakat*, 2(2), 51–55. <https://doi.org/10.32520/landmark.v2i2.3489>
- Amirullah, Arifin, S., & Fajri, M. D. (2021). Implementasi Pendidikan Karakter di Masa Pandemi Covid-19 Melalui Kuliah Kemuhammadiyah Berbasis Pemberdayaan Keluarga Dhuafa. *MUADDIB: Studi Kependidikan Dan Keislaman*, 32(3), 167–186.
- Anugrah, R. L. (2025). Dinamika Persaingan Antar Lembaga Pendidikan Islam di Pekan Baru. *Al-Ma'lumat: Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Keislaman*, 3, 24–31. <https://doi.org/10.56184/jam.v3i1.373>
- Anwar, K., Negeri, U., Thaha, S., & Jambi, S. (2024). Membangun Competitive Advantage Sekolah Dalam Menghadapi Globalisasi. *Journal Genta Mulia*, 15(2), 1–10.
- Arifin, S., Aryani, S. A., & Prayitno, H. J. (2023). Improving The Professional Teacher Competence Through Clinical Supervision Based on Multicultural Values in Pesantren. *Nazhruna: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam*, 6, 386–402. <https://doi.org/10.31538/nzh.v6i3.4037>
- Astika, L., Solih, M., & Daulay, N. A. (2024). Strategi Kepala Sekolah dalam Meningkatkan Daya Tarik Sekolah dan Jumlah Peserta Didik Baru di SMP SWT yayasan Perguruan Utama. II(Iv), 129–136.
- Ayu Suci Saputri, S., Kusumaningrum, H., & Munawwaroh, Z. (2024). Strategi Digital Marketing Dalam Meningkatkan School Branding. *Educational Journal of Bhayangkara*, 3(1). <https://doi.org/10.31599/s2r3fj13>
- Ayub Hermanto, Ammar Zainuddin, & Nurida Aini. (2024). Strategi Branding SMP Berbasis Pesantren Amanatul Ummah Dalam Membangun Citra Program Unggulan. *Al-Abshor: Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam*, 1(4), 275–285.

<https://doi.org/10.71242/j07cjq44>

- Az-zahra, R., Hariyati, F., & Yuliani, M. (2026). Strategi Emotional Branding dalam Membangun Loyalitas Orang Tua di Sekolah Inklusif (Kampung Inggris Jakarta Islamic School). *Riwayat: Educational Journal of History and Humanities*, 242–255. <https://doi.org/10.24815/riwayat.v9i1.49>
- Bariroh, Z. (2022). Manajemen Pemasaran Pendidikan Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Qita Kota Malang Sebagai Lembaga Pendidikan Baru. *Ar-Rosikhun: Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan Islam*, 1(3), 175–184. <https://doi.org/10.18860/rosikhun.v1i3.16317>
- Budiarti, E., Anggreini, D., Agus, D., Susanti, P., & Damayanti, Y. (2023). Strategi Branding Sekolah dalam meningkatkan Kepercayaan Masyarakat di Indonesia. *JiIP: Jurnal Ilmiah Ilmu Pendidikan*, 6, 3568–3576. <https://doi.org/10.54371/jiip.v6i5.2074>
- Budiyatmo, B., & Iriani, A. (2022). Membangun Citra Sekolah Berdasarkan Marketing Mix untuk Meningkatkan Jumlah Peserta Didik. *Kelola: Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan*, 9(2), 238–252. <https://doi.org/10.24246/j.jk.2022.v9.i2.p238-252>
- Dedi Rianto Rahadi. (2020). Konsep Penelitian Kualitatif. In *PT. Filda Fikrindo, Bogor* (Issue September).
- Fitria, R. (2024). *Strategi Komunkasi Branding Dalam Upaya Peningkatan Jumlah Peserta Didik Baru di SMA IT Ash-Shiddiiqi Jambi*. 6(1), 91–111. <https://doi.org/10.54396/alfahim.v6i1.1164>
- Fradika, D. A., & Priyono, E. F. (2025). Strategi Branding dalam Mengembangkan Citra Perumahan Modern Quinland Group di Bumiayu Kabupaten Brebes. *Jurnal Komunikasi Peradaban*, 3(1), 38.
- Fradito, A., Suti'ah, S., & Mulyadi, M. (2020). Strategi Pemasaran Pendidikan dalam Meningkatkan Citra Sekolah. *Al-Idarah: Jurnal Kependidikan Islam*, 10(1), 12–22. <https://doi.org/10.24042/alidarah.v10i1.6203>
- Hakim, N. M. L. (2025). Peran Shalat Berjamaah dalam Membangun Karakter Spiritual dan Adab Islam di Lingkungan Sekolah Menengah Pertama Swasta Islam Al-Fadhli Medan. *Doctoral Dissertation, Fakultas Agama Islam, Universitas Islam Sumatera Utara*, 1–51.
- Harisnur, F. (2021). Pengembangan Kurikulum Jaringan Sekolah Islam Terpadu (Jsit) Untuk Sekolah/Madrasah. *Genderang Asa: Journal Of Primary Education*, 2(2), 52–65.
- Hermawan, I., & Carnawi. (2024). Konsep Membangun Branding Image Untuk Meningkatkan Kepercayaan Terhadap Lembaga Pendidikan Islam. *ASCENT: Al-Bahjah Journal of Islamic Education Management*, 2(1), 12–26. <https://doi.org/10.61553/ascent.v2i1.96>
- Hidayati, U. N., & Susilo, M. J. (2026). Strategi Branding Sekolah Berbasis CERAH dalam Meningkatkan Daya Tarik Calon Peserta Didik di SDN Giripurno 1. *Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan*, 11(1), 1029–1036.

<https://doi.org/10.34125/jmp.v11i1.1632>

- Islam, I., & Khadavi, M. J. (2024). Implementasi Full Day School sebagai Strategi Branding Sekolah di MTs Zainul Falah. *Al-Jadwa: Jurnal Studi Islam*, 4(1), 92–103. <https://doi.org/10.38073/aljadwa.v4i1.1883>
- Kholik, A., & Laeli, S. (2020). Keunggulan Bersaing Berkelanjutan Sekolah Alam Berbasis Model Resource-Based View. *Tadbir Muwahhid*. <https://doi.org/10.30997/jtm.v4i1.2540>
- Lestari, A. D., Zulkarnain, W., Djum, D., Benty, N., & Timan, A. (2024). Optimalisasi School Branding Program Smanda Cup Sebagai Upaya Meningkatkan Animo Masyarakat dalam Menyekolahkan Anaknya di SMAN 2 Malang. *Proceedings Series of Educational Studies*, 2018.
- Lulu, L. I. M., Hamidsyukrie, H., & Fahrudin, F. (2024). Strategi Meningkatkan Daya Saing Sekolah Melalui Brand Image. *(JPAP) Jurnal Praktisi Administrasi Pendidikan*, 8(2), 31–40. <https://doi.org/10.29303/jpap.v8i2.638>
- Maulana, A. I. (2025). *Strategi School Branding Dalam Meningkatkan Daya Tarik Calon Peserta Didik Baru di Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Raja Unggulan Jenggawah Jember*. Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang.
- Mubarok, M. Z., & Niswatin. (2024). Efektivitas Branding dalam Meningkatkan Reputasi Lembaga Pendidikan Islam. *Jurnal Kompetensi Ilmu Sosial*, 3(1), 25–35. <https://doi.org/10.29138/jkis.v3i1.52>
- Munawwaroh, Z., Alifia, N., Syahidah, M. M., & Aidil, M. (2025). *Strategi Pemasaran Online dalam Membentuk Branding Sekolah TK Islam Kencana*. 4(4), 687–694. <https://doi.org/10.54259/diajar.v4i4.5398>
- Mustika. (2020). Strategi Membangun School Branding Dalam Meningkatkan Daya Saing Sekolah Di Smk Dr. Soetomo Surabaya. *Jurnal Manajerial Bisnis*, 4(1), 11–19. <https://doi.org/10.37504/jmb.v4i1.278>
- Najwa, L. N., & Hidayah, B. (2025). *Strategi Manajemen Humas Dalam Menciptakan School Branding*. 4(2), 2668–2678.
- Nisa, D. C., Siswanto, S., & Sya'roni, A. (2025). *School Branding*.
- Pradana, W., Asta, D., Sulandjari, R., Nanda, A., Wijaya, I. S., Al Amin, M., Universitas Padjadjaran, Universitas Padjadjaran, Universitas Padjadjaran, & Widiyanti, W. (2020). Strategi Branding Rabbani dalam Mempertahankan Brand Loyalty Rabbani Branding Strategy in Maintaining Brand Loyalty. *Jurnal Perspektif*, 4(21), 152–169.
- Rahayu, R., & Rindrayani, S. R. (2025). Menguji Keabsahan Data Penelitian Kualitatif. *JURPERU: Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Keguruan*, 3(2), 341–345.
- Rahmawati, I. (2025). Strategi Branding Sekolah untuk Meningkatkan Daya Tarik Calon Peserta Didik Baru di SDIT Harapan Bunda. *MAJALAH ILMIAH EKONOMI & PEMBANGUNAN*, 18.
- Ramadhan, M. A., Ulfa, M., Hakim, I., Shakila, Z., Gunawan, A., & Tasya, C. A. (2025). Pemasaran Sekolah dalam Meningkatkan Minat Peserta Didik Baru di SMA Negeri 4 Tapung. *Edu Society: Jurnal Pendidikan, Ilmu Sosial Dan Pengabdian*

Kepada Masyarakat, 5(2), 747–762.

- Rambe, L., Siregar, F. E., Gunawan, G., Rudianto, R., & Juliyatno, J. (2025). Strategi Pemasaran Pendidikan Untuk Peningkatan Mutu Lulusan Sekolah. *RIGGS: Journal of Artificial Intelligence and Digital Business*, 4(2), 5994–5999. <https://doi.org/10.31004/riggs.v4i2.1547>
- Rumra, M. J. R., Rusmiaty, Usman, S., & Ondeng, S. (2025). Madrasah Dalam Pusaran Tantangan Zaman : Upaya Strategis Memperkuat Institusi Pendidikan Islam. *AL-IRSYAD: Jurnal of Education Science*, 4(2), 447–459. <https://doi.org/10.58917/aijes.v4i2.266>
- Rusman, D., & Zakir, S. (2025). PAI Berbasis Nilai : Membangun Branding Reputasi Lembaga Pendidikan yang Autentik dan Berkelanjutan. *AL-AFKAR: JURNAL PEMIKIRAN DAN PENDIDIKAN ISLAM*, 01(3), 250–259. <https://doi.org/10.0111/afkar.v1i3.97>
- Saputri, S. A. S., Kusumaningrum, H., & Munawwaroh, Z. (2023). Strategi Digital Marketing Dalam Meningkatkan School Branding. *Educational Journal of Bhayangkara*, 3(1), 75–84. <https://doi.org/10.31599/edukarya.v3i1.2375>
- Sukhoiri. (2022). Sekolah Islam Terpadu: Reformasi Baru Lembaga Pendidikan Islam Di Indonesia. *Jurnal Pendidikan Indonesia: Teori, Penelitian, Dan Inovasi*, 2(5). <https://doi.org/10.59818/jpi.v2i5.246>
- Suryana, A. T. (2022). Perencanaan Strategis Dalam Meningkatkan Daya Saing Lembaga Pendidikan Islam di Kawasan Perkotaan. *Journal of Scientech Research and Development*, 4(1), 176–189. <https://doi.org/10.56670/jsrd.v4i1.1097>
- Suryono, & Baidi. (2026). Integrating Sports Innovation into School Branding: Promoting Character Development and Institutional Image in Religious-Based Education. *Journal of Society and Development*. <https://doi.org/10.57032/jsd.v6i1.328>
- Susilo, M. J. (2023). Strategi Branding Sekolah Dalam Meningkatkan Animo Siswa dan Awareness Masyarakat. *DIRASAH: Jurnal Study Ilmu Dan Manajemen Pendidikan Islam*, 6(2), 1–6. <https://ejournal.iaifa.ac.id/index.php/dirasah>
- Syukroni, A. (2018). Strategi Penanaman Pendidikan Adab di MI Tahfizh Al Furqan Ponorogo. *Al-ASASIYYA: Journal of Basic Education*, 02(02), 1–13. <https://doi.org/10.24269/ajbe.v2i2.1114>
- Violetasari, A. M., & Rohmadi, S. H. (2024). Manajemen Strategi Humas dalam Menciptakan School Branding melalui Ekstrakurikuler. *INNOVATIVE: Journal Of Social Science Research*, 4, 8887–8901. <https://doi.org/10.31004/innovative.v4i6.16044>
- Wahyunto, M., Hidayati, D., & Sukirman, S. (2024). Strategi branding Sekolah di era digital dalam meningkatkan animo masyarakat melalui pemanfaatan digital marketing. *Academy of Education Journal*, 15(2), 1260–1271. <https://doi.org/10.47200/aoej.v15i2.2419>
- Yuliana, Y., & Wisda, R. S. (2025). Strategi Humas Sekolah Swasta Menarik Peserta

Reslaj: Religion Education Social Laa Roiba Journal

Volume 8 Nomor 4 (2026) 203 – 223 P-ISSN 2656-274x E-ISSN 2656-4691

DOI: 10.47476/reslaj.v8i4.11801

Didik Baru ditengah Persaingan Antar Sekolah Pada Era Globalisasi.

JAMBURA: Journal of Educational Management, 6(1), 280–294.

<https://doi.org/10.37411/jjem.v6i1.3767>

Zainiya Anisa. (2022). Branding Sekolah Islam Modern: Sekolah Islam Terpadu, Madrasah/Sekolah Alam, dan Tahfiz Al-Qur'an. *EL-HIKMAH: Jurnal Kajian Dan Penelitian Pendidikan Islam*, 16(1), 49–64.

<https://doi.org/10.20414/elhikmah.v16i1.6191>

Zarastri, R., Chairunnisa, C., Ardhani, D., & Supriadi, S. (2024). Strategi Branding Dalam Meningkatkan Daya Tarik Sekolah : Studi Kasus Di Sma Negeri 3 Kota Jambi. *Journal of Economic Education*, 3(2), 43–47.

<https://doi.org/10.22437/jeec.v3i2.39146>

Zilfan, M., Ilham, I., & Masitha, D. (2024). Implementasi Program Tahfidz Qur'an dalam Pembentukan Karakter Religius pada Siswa Madrasah Ibtidaiyah.

Journal of Instructional and Development Researches, 4(4), 223–233.

<https://doi.org/10.53621/jider.v4i4.336>