Crafting Excellence: A Strategic Marketing Analysis of Segmentation, Targeting, and Positioning in Jember's Islamic Primary Schools

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Abstract

People now increasingly understand the importance of school quality for the future of their generation. As a result, schools with certain advantages become the leading choice, while schools that do not stand out are increasingly abandoned. In response to this phenomenon, school administrators, including Islamic educational institutions in various regions, are trying to show their superiority over other schools. The aim is to meet the community's needs, hopes, and desires and become the first choice for users of its services. This research uses a qualitative approach with a multisite case study method at Al-Furqan Primary School (SD Al-Furqan) Jember, utilizing in-depth interview techniques, participant observation, and document study. Data analysis was carried out simultaneously using data reduction techniques, data presentation, and concluding and tested through credibility, transferability, and confirmability. The research results show that SD Al-Furqan uses market segmentation by considering socio-economic phenomena, religious attitudes, affiliation with Islamic organizations, and community educational orientation. The target market set is upper-middle-class Muslims who want a balance between learning the Koran, Islamic religious education, and academic achievement. By offering a comprehensive education program, SD Al-Furqan strives to meet holistic educational needs and attract the interest of people who prioritize quality education.

Masyarakat kini semakin memahami pentingnya kualitas sekolah untuk masa depan generasi mereka. Sebagai hasilnya, sekolah-sekolah dengan keunggulan tertentu menjadi pilihan utama, sedangkan sekolah yang tidak menonjol semakin ditinggalkan. Menyikapi fenomena ini, pengelola sekolah,

termasuk lembaga pendidikan Islam di berbagai daerah, berupaya menunjukkan keunggulan mereka dibandingkan sekolah-sekolah lain. Tujuannya adalah untuk memenuhi kebutuhan, harapan, dan keinginan masyarakat, serta menjadi pilihan utama bagi para pengguna jasanya. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan metode studi kasus multisitus di SD Al-Furqan Jember, memanfaatkan teknik wawancara mendalam, observasi partisipatif, dan studi dokumen. Analisis data dilakukan secara simultan dengan teknik reduksi data, penyajian data, dan penarikan simpulan, serta diuji melalui kredibilitas, transferabilitas, dan konfirmabilitas. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa SD Al-Furqan melakukan segmentasi pasar dengan mempertimbangkan fenomena sosial-ekonomi, sikap keagamaan, afiliasi organisasi keislaman, dan orientasi pendidikan masyarakat. Target pasar yang ditetapkan adalah masyarakat muslim kelas menengah-atas yang menginginkan keseimbangan antara pembelajaran Al-Qur'an, pendidikan agama Islam, dan prestasi akademik. Dengan menawarkan program pendidikan komprehensif, SD Al-Furqan berupaya memenuhi kebutuhan pendidikan holistik dan menarik minat masyarakat yang mengutamakan kualitas pendidikan.

Keyword: *Strategic Marketing, Segmentation, Targeting, Positioning, Islamic Primary Schools*

INTRODUCTION

Competition between schools in urban and rural areas shows significant differences, especially regarding the segments of society that use educational services. Urban communities, especially the upper middle class, are more educated, rational, and critical in choosing schools, thus requiring schools to understand market trends and the needs of service users that continue to develop. Weinstein notes that they are very selective and prioritize the best value.[1] Suprayogo[2] emphasized that this condition is a big challenge for administrators of educational institutions to provide high-quality education. Kartajaya,[3] Kotler and Keller[4] agree that schools must continue to monitor

[1] Monica Paula Rațiu and Emanuela Maria Avram, "Optimizing The Marketing Mix - An Essential Element in Developing Competitive Strategies in the Field of Higher Education," *Romanian Economic Business Review, Romanian-American University* 8, no. 1 (2013): 57 & 63, https://doi.org/RePEc:rau:journl:v:8:y:2013:i:1:p:57-65.
[2] Imam Suprayogo, *Reformulasi Visi Pendidikan Islam* (Malang: STAIN Press, 1999), 41–42.
[3] Hermawan Kartajaya, *Hermawan Kartajaya on Differentiation* (Jakarta: MarkPlus&Co dan Mizan, 2007a), 15–17.

and adapt their marketing strategies to market changes to remain competitive and satisfy service users. Hunger and Wheelen[5] confirmed this, stating that sensitivity to market trends is the key to achieving sustainable competitive advantage. According to Muhaimin et al.,[6] the right marketing strategy will increase prospective students' interest and help schools select potential students. Ratiu and Avra[7] emphasized the importance of developing marketing strategies to win the public's hearts and maintain a competitive advantage.

Various studies have examined education marketing strategies in Indonesia, showing the importance of segmentation, targeting, and positioning (STP) in managing Islamic educational institutions. M. Firdaus examined the implementation of STP at the Banjarmasin Muhammadiyah College Complex, finding that geographic segmentation and targeting of children in orphanages were the main strategies.[8] Atika and Imam Machali revealed that MAN Yogyakarta III used a double-segmentation approach to create the "Madrasah of The Champions" position.[9] Aris Nurbawaniemphasizes the need for human-oriented marketing strategies in the Marketing 4.0 era.[10] Sugeng Lubar Prastowo and Bagus Manunggal

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[4] Philip Kotler and Kevin Lane Keller, *Marketing Management*, 14th ed. (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 2012), 4.

[5] J. David Hunger and Thomas L. Wheelen, *Manajemen Strategis* (Yogyakarta: Penerbit ANDI, 2003), 4.

[6] Muhaimin, Suti'ah, and Sugeng Listyo Prabowo, *Manajemen Pendidikan: Aplikasinya Dalam Penyusunan Rencana Pengembangan Sekolah* (Jakarta: Kencana, 2018), 107.

[7] Raṭiu and Avram, "Optimizing The Marketing Mix - An Essential Element in Developing Competitive Strategies in the Field of Higher Education," 57 & 63.

[8] M. Firdaus, "Strategi Segmentasi, Targeting, Dan Positioning Pada Lembaga Pendidikan Di Komplek Perguruan Muhammadiyah Banjarmasin" (Master thesis, Banjarmasin, UIN Antasari, 2022), https://idr.uin-antasari.ac.id/20867/.

[9] Atika and Imam Machali, "Segmentasi Dan Positioning Jasa Pendidikan Di MAN Yogyakarta III," *MANAGERIA: Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan Islam* 1, no. 2 (2016), https://doi.org/10.14421/manageria.2016.12-01.

[10] Aris Nurbawani, "Strategi Kepala Sekolah Dalam Pemasaran Jasa Pendidikan Di Lembaga Pendidikan Baru Pada Era Marketing 4.0 (Studi Kasus Di SMK BP Subulul Huda)," *Southeast Asian Journal of Islamic Education Management* 2, no. 1 (2021), https://doi.org/10.21154/sajiem.v2i1.41.

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focus on using digital marketing to improve the image of education.[11] Nur Wahid Sugiyanto evaluated Islamic boarding school-based marketing strategies at MA Al-Ma'had An-Nur,[12] while Rizky Maulida studied STP at MTsN 1 Malang City through digital promotions.[13] These studies confirm that adaptation to changing market trends and a deep understanding of market segments are essential to achieving sustainable competitive advantage in Islamic educational institutions.

This research explores the segmentation, targeting, and positioning strategies of SD Al-Furqan in the context of competition with other primary schools. This research substantively enriches the knowledge of Islamic education management through field research on marketing strategies to increase the competitiveness of Islamic schools. Formally, this research integrates the STP theory from Kartajaya,[14] the marketing mix theory from Zeithaml et al.,[15] and Kotler and Fox,[16] with Porter's competitive advantage theory, resulting in the development of marketing strategy theory in increasing institutional competitiveness. Islamic education. Practically, this research provides benefits for policymakers at the Ministry of Education and Culture and the Ministry of Religion in developing competitive marketing principles for educational institutions, providing practical marketing strategy concepts for managers of Islamic educational institutions, as well as

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[11] Sugeng Lubar Prastowo and Bagus Manunggal, "Manajemen Marketing Jasa Pendidikan Di Era Digital," *Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan* 13, no. 1 (2022), https://doi.org/10.21009/jmp.v13i1.28335.

[12] Nur Wahid Sugiyanto, "Strategi Pemasaran Sekolah Berbasis Pesantren," *AN NUR: Jurnal Studi Islam* 13, no. 1 (2021), https://doi.org/10.37252/an-nur.v13i1.105.

[13] Rizky Maulida, "Strategi Manajemen Pemasaran: Segmenting, Targeting, Dan Positioning Dalam Menarik Minat Masyarakat Di Madrasah Tsanawiyah Negeri 1 Kota Malang" (Undergraduate thesis, Malang, UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, 2023), http://etheses.uin-malang.ac.id/50189/.

[14] Hermawan Kartajaya, *Hermawan Kartajaya on Segmentation* (Bandung: Mizan dan MarkPlus&Co., 2007c); Hermawan Kartajaya, *Hermawan Kartajaya on Positioning* (Bandung: Mizan dan MarkPlus&Co., 2007b); Hermawan Kartajaya, *Hermawan Kartajaya on Tergetting* (Bandung: Mizan dan MarkPlus&Co., 2007d).

[15] Valarie Zeithaml et al., *Services Marketing: Integrating Customer Focus Across the Firm* (New York: McGraw-Hill International, 2009).

[16] *Strategic Marketing for Educational Institutions* (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1994).

providing insight into segmentation, targeting and positioning to school principals, teachers, and employees to increase the competitive advantage of Islamic educational institutions in the eyes of the community.

This research departs from the argument that in competition with other schools, STP is essential for Islamic primary schools to develop sustainable competitive advantages. Segmentation allows schools to identify and understand different groups of students based on their needs, interests, and demographic characteristics. SD Al-Furqan can design appropriate and relevant educational programs by understanding specific market segments. Targeting further helps schools to focus on the most potential market segments, ensuring efficient and effective use of resources. The correct position in the public's minds is critical to differentiate SD Al-Furqan from its competitors. With solid positioning, schools can build a positive image and unique advantages that attract the interest of parents and students. Exemplary STP implementation increases the attraction and enrollment of new students and strengthens loyalty and satisfaction among existing students and parents. Thus, STP is a crucial strategy to face increasingly fierce competition and ensure the sustainability and growth of Islamic primary schools.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research adopted a qualitative approach to explore and understand the meaning behind existing views, attitudes, behavior, and phenomena, with the aim of analyzing in-depth and comprehensively the meaning that emerges from field data. In line with its approach, this research used a case study method, focusing on SD Al-Furqan as an Islamic educational institution that implements marketing strategies to increase its competitiveness among other schools. Despite higher rates than other schools, SD Al-Furqan has shown a surplus of students in recent years, indicating significant community interest in this school.

This research used qualitative data consisting of oral information, events, activities, writing, images, and recordings. Oral data were obtained from in-depth interviews with foundation administrators, school principals, teachers, school committee members, and parents with at least five years of experience in SD Al-Fuqan. Data on events and activities is collected through participatory observation at schools to monitor daily conditions and activities, including personnel performance and publicity of achievements. Written, image, and recording data were collected from document studies covering a variety of school-related materials, such as letters, reports, photos, and videos. Data collection was carried out using three main techniques: semi-structured interviews, participant observation (passive and moderate), and document study, with digital tools used to record interviews and record observations to ensure the accuracy and consistency of information.

All the techniques above were carried out simultaneously and reinforce each other. Something needs to be positioned as a primary technique and a complementary technique. All three provide the information researchers need to answer the research focus. All three was carried out continuously until the data collected reaches the saturation point (no new data) so the researcher can stop data collection activities. Note that if additional data is needed, researchers will go back to the field to complete it.

Researchers used the Miles and Huberman[17] analysis model to analyze the data, which consists of three interactive stages: data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions/verification. At the data reduction stage, researchers group and select data relevant to the research focus, namely segmentation, targeting, and positioning. This reduction continued throughout the study. The next stage is data presentation, where the researcher organizes and conveys the data in the form of narrative text, tables, graphs, and pictures, as well as presenting the interpretation of the

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[17] Matthew B. Miles and Alan M. Huberman, *Qualitative Data Analysis: An Expanded Sourcebook* (London: Sage, 1994).

results from interviews, observations, and document studies. The final stage is drawing conclusions and verification, which aims to find the overall meaning of the data collected. This verification is done by checking field notes, returning to the field, consulting with experts, and discussing with colleagues to ensure a credible conclusion.

In this research, three main activities are used to test the validity of the data: credibility, confirmability, and transferability. Credibility testing ensures conformity between field data and researcher findings through triangulation of sources (foundation heads, school principals, teachers, etc.), data collection techniques (interviews, observations, document studies), theory (analysis with various theories), confirmation of findings to the provider data, discussions with academic colleagues, and use of references such as transcripts of recordings. The transferability test evaluates the extent to which research results can be applied in other contexts by compiling a detailed and systematic report so that readers can understand and apply the findings in other schools. The confirmability test verifies that the research results reflect the process by examining physical evidence such as interview recordings, transcripts, field notes, and official documents.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Segmentation of the School Market

SD Al-Furqan's market segmentation must be distinct from the history of the founding of this school. M. Cholid Baktir,[18] Chairman of the Al-Furqan Foundation, said that his father, Abubakar Ahmad Baktir, was concerned about the many urban Muslims who sent their children to Catholic Slementary Schools Mari Fatima of Jember (SDK Maria Fatima Jember) because they were considered high quality. At that time, in the early 1970s, there were no schools that excelled in general and Islamic subjects.

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[18] M. Cholid Baktir, Interview, October 12, 2021.

"My father saw that in Jember, there were no Islamic schools with general but Islamic learning, whereas in Jember, what was strong was SDK Maria Fatima. Many of the sons of bureaucrats, doctors, and rich people were sent to SDK Maria Fatima to seek quality."[19]

This reality arises because existing schools have been unable to meet the needs of the upper middle class and the rich for quality education. In order to pursue quality, they prefer to send their children to SDK Maria Fatima. Even though the number is not as large as the lower middle class, this segment needs to be facilitated with quality and Islamic schools. On this basis, an Islamic school called SD Al-Furqan was opened.

The educational concept offered by SD Al-Furqan is not solely the result of Abubakar Ahmad Baktir's thinking alone. He discussed it with his family, Muhammadiyah figures, NU figures, and colleagues. "... friends of my father from Muhammadiyah, and also among my father's friends from the Nahdliyin circle, who helped a lot in formulating an Islamic school (SD Al-Furqan)."[20]

The results of discussions and analysis by the founders of SD Al-Furqan show that this school needs to meet the needs of the upper-middle class and rich Muslim community for high-quality education and, at the same time, be able to compete with non-Islamic schools that are considered well-established. Because, at that time, the SDK Maria Fatima was established, the educational concept of SD Al-Furqan was designed to compete with SDK Maria Fatima. "(The presence of SD Al-Furqan is) to compete with the SDK Maria Fatima. It is valid for rich people, business people, bureaucrats, and employees. That is the SD Al—Furqan."[21]

Apart from that, the foundation's management is also aware that the Muslim community in the city of Jember is relatively diverse, especially in terms of mindset and affiliation with Islamic organizations. The biggest ones

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[19] Baktir.
[20] Baktir.
[21] Baktir.

are, of course, NU and Muhammadiyah. The foundation management does not want to be in one of the two or any other group. That is the reason this school emphasizes its principle: "SD Al-Furqan is independent for all groups."

Regarding independence for all groups, Hari Jumarto added, "Al-Furqan does not stand on one flag. So all the elements are there. Both the Nahdliyin community and the Muhammadiyah community all get along. Everything about learning about NU was explained in this way, and Muhammadiyah liked it. How to package it at home."[22]

The above segmentation became more stable in the 1990s when SD Al-Furqan had a comparative study with schools such as Al-Azhar Jakarta, Al-Hikmah Surabaya, SD Muhammadiyah Sapen, Yogyakarta, and MIN Malang I. The results of the comparative study were then further strengthened by participating in networking in the Indonesian Education Consortium (KPI), which has now changed its name to Indonesian Education Quality. This KPI has, until now, been a mentor in developing SD Al-Furqan, including how to carry out segmentation sharply, creatively, and effectively.

The segmentation strategy above is, at a certain point, in line with what Kartajaya calls static attribute segmentation and dynamic attribute segmentation. Static attribute segmentation is based on geographic and demographic approaches, while dynamic attribute segmentation is based on psychographic and behavioral approaches.[23]

From a geographical perspective, city communities' character differs from village communities' character. The term "city" is described as a symbol of progress, fast movement, modernity, full of facilities, comfortable living, deliciousness, and so on. City people are considered more advanced, cultured, and modern than village people. City people are also considered rational, individualistic individuals who regard time as relatively important;

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[22] Hari Jumarto, Interview, November 12, 2021.
[23] Kartajaya, *Hermawan Kartajaya on Segmentation*, 21–24.

interactions are driven more by interest factors, life needs are linked to prestige, and are somewhat loose in religious life.[24]

Apart from that, demographically, some middle-upper and affluent classes really need quality education. If we elaborate on the World Bank's criteria, what is called the upper middle class are people who have a per capita income of U$ 4,000 – U$ 7,200 (around Rp. 60,000,000,- – Rp. 108,000,000,-) per year or Rp. 5,000,000,- – Rp. 9.00,000,- per month. Meanwhile, the rich class is the economic class that has a per capita income of more than U$ 7,200 per year, assuming an exchange rate of Rp. 15,000,- per U$ 1 [25]. A few Muslim people from this class send their children to non-Islamic schools based on quality. From an economic perspective, this social class can pay school fees that are generally higher than other school fees as a logical consequence of efforts to achieve quality education. As a private school whose financial needs are not widely supported by the government, this class segment is considered to have the potential to meet quite large educational unit cost needs.

Indeed, as Supriadi found, the ability to pay and willingness to pay sometimes go hand in hand. According to this UPI Bandung professor, there are segments whose ability to pay is high, and some are low. Likewise, some segments are willing to pay, and some are low. When the two are combined, four quadrants will be formed: (1) high ability to pay, high willingness to pay; (2) high ability to pay, low willingness to pay; (3) low ability to pay, high willingness to pay; and (4) low ability to pay, low willingness to pay.[26]

However, because the majority are highly educated and understand the relationship between cost and quality, there are bound to be some segments of the upper middle class and the rich who fall into the first quadrant. In

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[24] Soerjono Soekanto, *Sosiologi* (Jakarta: Raja Grafindo Persada, 2016), 140–43.

[25] Taufik, *Rising Middle Class in Indonesia* (Jakarta: Gramedia dan MarkPluss Insight, 2012), 107–11.

[26] Dedi Supriadi, *Satuan Biaya Pendidikan Dasar Dan Menengah* (Bandung: Remaja Rosdakarya, 2010), 228–29.

Suprayogo's language, they are the segment that understands the future demands of their children. They know that expensive fees result from schools being managed professionally.[27]

The analysis above also aligns with Kartajaya's opinion that competing in the lower segments is less profitable because you always have to reduce gross margins. Schools can see the most significant market opportunities, namely the upper-middle and affluent segments, that have yet to be exploited so far. They have different expectations so they need to be responded to with different products. They not only need functional benefits but also emotional benefits.[28]

Then, SD Al-Furqan psychographically sees the diversity of motivations of Muslims in choosing a school. Some Muslims choose because they are interested in school performance. Others choose because the school is seen as having the same vision and mission or relatively the same as the values they adhere to. Some choose schools because they are oriented towards balancing general education and Islamic religious education. There are also quite a few who choose school because it is driven by the proximity to their home or place of work. Some are even based on the view that "what is important is school."

As for the behavior of school service users, SD Al-Furqan identified differences in their status: some young families were sending their children to school for the first time, and some were sending their children to school for the second or umpteenth time. Some prospective parents observe or compare several schools before choosing, while others immediately feel confident with the information they hear from relatives, neighbors, colleagues, etc. There are also prospective student guardians loyal to school attributes: public/religious, school/madrasah, state/private, or a combination of the

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[27] Suprayogo, *Reformulasi Visi Pendidikan Islam*, 42.
[28] Kartajaya, *Hermawan Kartajaya on Tergetting*, 47; W. Chan Kim and Renee Mauborgne, *Blue Ocean Strategy: How to Create Uncontested Market Space and Make the Competition Irreleva* (Massachusestts: Harvard Business School, 2005), 79.

three. Some are dynamic when choosing a school without really considering such attributes.

Apart from the four approaches above, SD Al-Furqan also uses another approach, namely the religiosity approach. In this approach, SD Al-Furqan maps the affiliation of Muslims with mass organizations or Islamic groups. Apart from NU and Muhammadiyah, the two largest Islamic organizations in Jember, there are Al-Irsyad Al-Islamiyah and Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia (HTI), as well as groups such as Jamaah Tabligh, Salafi, Tarbiyah, and so on. Each of them has a different typology of Islam, which contributes to choosing an educational institution for their children.

Still related to religiosity, SD Al-Furqan sees that some Muslims seem to imitate Western lifestyles and culture even though it is contrary to the Shari'a, while other Muslims are aware of the negative impact of Western lifestyles and culture and want to strengthen the internalization of religious values from an early age in their children. In the last decade or so, there has been a trend of increasing public interest in taḥfiż Al-Qur'an in many regions, not only among teenagers and adults but also for children. As a result, several Islamic schools in several regions include taḥfiż Al-Qur'an as one of their extracurricular activities or even their flagship program.

The combination of static and dynamic attribute segmentation above is intended to make it easier for SD Al-Furqan to carry out targeting. Targeting is determining the priority of potential segments that will be served by SD Al-Furqan and facilitating the process of adjusting their resources into selected segments.[29] In this process, Kartajaya suggested that schools base their views on themselves. After looking at the market creatively, he chooses a segment that suits the marketing strategy he will implement.[30]

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[29] Kartajaya, *Hermawan Kartajaya on Tergetting*, 15–16.
[30] Hermawan Kartajaya, *Boosting Field Marketing Performance: From Strategy to Execution* (Jakarta: MarkPlus&Co., 2006), 51.

Targeting of the School Market

Based on the segmentation above, SD Al-Furqan targets the upper-middle class and rich urban Muslim community, which is generally educated, rational, and critical. These people are willing and able to pay and are aware of the importance of quality academic education and Islamic religious education and guidance *in reciting* the Koran. Coupled with the principle *of independence for all groups,* SD Al-Furqan seeks to reach segments of the urban Muslim community interested in schools that do not emphasize the attributes of specific religious organizations.

SD Al-Furqan targeted this segment because other schools had not explored it at that time. The presence of SD Al-Furqan was initially intended to compete with SDK Maria Fatima, which are considered well-established in terms of academic achievement.[31] This is a potential and profitable target for the development of SD Al-Furqan, which simultaneously offers academic achievement, Islamic religious education, and Al-Qur'an learning.

This means that SD Al-Furqan captures the existence of the city's Muslim community, who are busy on the one hand but want to equip their sons/daughters with Islamic religious knowledge and *recite* the Koran on the other hand. In SD Al-Furqan's analysis, the urban Muslim community wants *simple* processes but rich results. Once you go to school, everything is achieved: learning general subjects, Islamic studies, and, at the same time, *reciting* the Koran. This is what A. Mustain Billah. calls, "…*Ben ndak mikir. Jadi, pulang kerja orang tua tinggal jemput anaknya. Gitu aja.*" (…So that parents do not worry about their children. When parents come home from work, they must pick up their children. That is it."[32]

According to M. Cholid Baktir,[33] this aspect has its plus value regarding the consideration of upper-middle and rich social class

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[31] Baktir, Interview.
[32] A. Mustain Billah, Interview, June 14, 2021.
[33] Baktir, Interview.

backgrounds: they can be invited to collaborate. The word "cooperation" is related to student learning achievement and the quality of schools in general. This includes cooperation in meeting SD Al-Furqan 's rates, which are the highest compared to other schools in Jember; for example, the starting fee for *new students* reaches 10 million, and monthly tuition fees are one million rupiah.[34]

Table 1. SD Al-Furqan Parents Education Level

Educational level	Father (%)	Mother (%)
Primary-middle school	0.62	1.86
Senior High School	19.25	22.98
Diploma 1- Diploma 3	4.35	15.53
Bachelor	62.73	52.80
Master	11.80	6.21
Doctor	1.24	0.62
Amount	**100**	**100**

(Source: Processed by researchers, 2021)

SD Al-Furqan has generally succeeded in attracting its target segment. The parent profile data shows that most parents at SD Al-Furqan are highly educated: 80.12 percent on the father's side and 75.16 percent on the mother's side have a doctoral, master's, bachelor's, or diploma degree. The rest have secondary education. Very few have primary education. A complete description of the educational background of SD Al-Furqan Al-Furqan's parents is shown in the following table 1.

The five largest professions for parents of SD Al-Furqan students are self-employed, private employees, civil servants, teachers, and BUMN/BUMD employees. A complete description of the profession of parents at SD Al-Furqan is visualized in the following table 2.

The table 2 confirms that the SD Al-Furqan segment is generally an upper-middle class, rich urban Muslim community that is reasonably well-educated. With their educational background and profession, the parents of

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[34] Jumarto, Interview.

SD Al-Furqan students are willing and able to pay the starting fee for *new students* of up to 10 million and monthly tuition fees of one million rupiah. If you are not from the upper-middle social class and are rich, you will most likely have difficulty meeting the educational rates set by SD Al-Furqan.

Table 2. SD Al-Furqan Parent Profession

Type of Profession	Father (%)	Mother (%)
Self-employed	37.48	14.91
Private sector employee	21.12	4.97
Civil servants	13.04	16.15
Teacher	6.21	9.94
State-owned enterprises (BUMN/D) employees	6.21	1.86
Police	4.97	1.24
Doctor	3.73	3.11
Lecturer	3.11	3.11
TNI	3.11	-
Bank employees	1.86	1.24
Retired	1.24	-
Judge	0.64	-
Midwife	-	1.24
Member of Regional People's Representative Assembly	-	0.62
Pharmacist	-	0.62
Housewife	-	40.99
Amount	**100**	**100**

(Source: Processed by researchers, 2021)

Following Kartajaya's advice, SD Al-Furqan targets segments oriented towards *reciting* the Koran, Islamic religious education, and academic achievement. SD Al-Furqan captures the parents' desire for their children to be able *to recite* the Koran and be adequately equipped with Islamic teachings, which is balanced with optimal academic achievement. At that time, no primary schools facilitated this segment's desires, so SD Al-Furqan saw it as a potential target that needed to be worked on optimally.

SD Al-Furqan can identify the anxieties and desires of urban Muslim communities to capture their minds, hearts, and spiritual sides.[35] Sociologically, if urban society is considered somewhat loose in religious life, some people are "uneasy" with this phenomenon. This anxiety strengthens their desire to instill Islamic values in their children from an early age. Adopting Hidayat's thesis, they do not want their children to be alienated from the Almighty due to positivistic science and technology, nor do they hope to be alienated from their social environment due to future shock.[36]

However, at the same time, they do not deny that the quality and academic achievement of schools is an essential aspect for the "future" of their children. In Covey's observations, almost everyone trusts schools to create a child's future. Around the world, some many parents and teachers struggle together, sometimes against great odds, to give their children the best opportunities. Most parents agree that educating children is not only the solution to overcoming poverty – physically, mentally, and spiritually – but also the key to the future of this planet.[37]

This means that apart from Islamic education, they also need schools that can forge their children to face a future that requires everyone to have confident professionalism. They will look for schools that promise and lead to a good future. They will also be very selective and dare to make sacrifices for the optimal education of their children.

The target market for SD Al-Furqan is in line with the *targeting criteria* put forward by Kartajaya[38] and Lhotáková and Klosová.[39] A potential target

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[35] Hermawan Kartajaya and Abdullah Gymnastiar, *Berbisnis Dengan Hati: The 10 Credos of Compassionate Marketing.* (Jakarta: MarkPlus&Co., 2004); Hermawan Kartajaya and Stephanie Hermawan, . . *Marketing with Heart: The Seven Drivers of the Real Marketeers* (Jakarta: Gramedia dan Marketeers, 2013), 21–22.

[36] Komaruddin Hidayat, *Psikologi Kematian* (Bandung: Mizan, 2009), 32.

[37] Stephen R. Covey, *The 3rd Alternatif* (Jakarta: Gramedia, 2012), 258.

[38] Kartajaya, *Hermawan Kartajaya on Tergetting*, 17–24; Kartajaya and Hermawan, . . *Marketing with Heart: The Seven Drivers of the Real Marketeers*, 83.

[39] Markéta Lhotáková and Anna Klosová, "Identification of a Target Consumer in Process of Positioning – Theoritical and Practical Aspects," *Acta Oeconomica Pragensia* 3 (2009): 10, https://aop.vse.cz/pdfs/aop/2009/03/01.pdf.

market, in their view, must meet five criteria. First, the market size targeted by SD Al-Furqan is not too big or too small. It will not be profitable for the school if it is too small. It will attract many competitors to compete for the same target if it is too big. Second, the growth of this segment is relatively high, making it easier for schools to market their services. Third, expectations are relatively homogeneous, namely a balance between Islamic quality, *recitation* of the Koran, and academic achievement. Fourth, the selected segments are based on the school's capabilities, core competencies, and excellence in implementing differentiation to win the competition. Fifth, initially, there were practically no schools working in this target market. However, recently, several schools have appeared to compete in the field. This intensity encourages them to develop further advantages that can provide more value to users of educational services.

Apart from the five criteria above, the purchasing power of the target market chosen by SD Al-Furqan is also high because it comprises the upper middle class and the rich. This target market has the potential to fall into the first and second types of Lewison and Hawes' three typologies of educational *buyers*. The first type is the quality *buyer*. These buyers want high-quality service and only care a little about how much it costs. He wants the best and is willing to pay for it. The second type is the value *buyer*. These buyers want a balance between the quality they receive and the money they pay. The third type is the economic *buyer*. These buyers tend to look for services whose quality could be better; the important thing is that the price is low.[40]

Positioning of SD Al-Furqan

In the observations of the Al-Furqan Foundation, in the city of Jember, there is already a SD Katolik Maria Fatima Jember that, since the 1970s, has

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[40] Dale M. Lewison and Jon M. Hawes, "Student Target Marketing Strategies for Universities," *Journal of College Admission* Summer (2007): 17–18, https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ783948.

been well-established in terms of academic achievement.[41] Then, in the 1990s, Public Primary School (SDN) Jember Lor 1, SDN Jember Lor 3, SDN Kepatihan 6, and SDN Kepatihan 1 also had exemplary academic achievements. If SD Al-Furqan only emphasizes academic achievements, it is expected compared to existing schools. On that basis, SD Al-Furqan includes Al-Qur'an education in its curriculum.[42]

> Al-Qur'an education activities have been carried out since SD Al-Furqan was founded on January 3, 1972. The Al-Qur'an is used as a local content subject taught to all students, with the hope of accelerating students' ability to read it. Students study the Koran at school and at home, both in prayer rooms and mosques. This is the statement from Susiasti, Head of the Library, who has served at SD Al-Furqan since 1987.[43]

Abdul Holik said that Al-Qur'an education was initially intended as something other than a flagship program at SD Al-Furqan. Its sole purpose is to equip students to read the Al-Qur'an fluently even though they study in public schools. However, in its development, Al-Qur'an education turned out to be the main reason the majority of parents sent their children there. On that basis, starting in 1992, the Al-Quran Learning Center (TPA) was made a superior program at SD Al-Furqan.

> Based on the results of the interviews, every time we accept new students, we ask them about their motivation for entering Al-Furqan. Most of it is because of the Koran. That is why it is a motivation for us. That is society's expectation. Assuming that the Qur'an in Al-Furqan is good, they send them to school here. Because of these assumptions and expectations, we prioritize them in the Koran.[44]

Not only a priority, M. Cholid Baktir even mentioned Al-Qur'an education as the Al-Furqan SD brand. "We make the Koran a brand because what the community needs is for their children to be able to recite the Koran

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[41] Baktir, Interview.
[42] Holik, Interview, June 14, 2021.
[43] Susiati, Interview, June 14, 2021.
[44] Holik, Interview.

well. The TPAs that cunducted afternoon were not effective, so we included the Al-Qur'an curriculum in schools," he said.[45]

In line with this, the SD Al-Furqan profile uploaded on YouTube on June 10, 2012, also shows TPA activities. This profile does not at all display the academic achievements of SD Al-Furqan students. This 7.20-second profile begins with the statement of the school principal, Abdul Holik, "Together with SD Al-Furqan, we are creating a generation of Muslims who love and are loved by the Koran." Followed by a message from SD Al-Furqan Qur'an teacher Fajar Khairun, "Children are God's trust, which he entrusts to parents so that they are raised, educated, and developed based on Islamic values as a whole (*kaffah*). One of the most important ways to guide and develop a child is to teach him to read and write the Koran from childhood."

Positioning as a "school plus TPA" is supported, especially with achievements. Regarding this, M. Cholid Baktir stated:

> The public's interest is in how their children can absorb general knowledge and also be able to recite the Koran. We have targeted class III to have 30 juz parks. Class IV is *taḥfiż*. That is what stands out, sir. Meanwhile, the others (who do not attend SD Al-Furqan) are served it in the afternoon. It's complicated. Secondly, from the science side, we always participate in championships, representing Jember, East Java, Indonesia, Mathematics and Physics. That is the brand that we highlight.[46]

It is proven that SD Al-Furqan also emphasizes its academic achievements. This can be captured, among other things, from the publicity in Jawa Pos Radar Jember on January 9, 2017, and April 28, 2017. These two publicities are rich in the nuances of the achievements SD Al-Furqan students achieved. Apart from photos of students holding trophies or wearing medals, there is also a list of achievements they have achieved in various competitions. In addition, the achievements were published on the website,

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[45] Baktir, Interview.
[46] Baktir.

and banners were displayed large in front of the school. All of this emphasizes that SD Al-Furqan is a school plus TPA with regional, national, and international academic achievements.

At first glance, the choice of TPA looks simple. However, if observed in the context of urban Muslim communities, the existence of TPA is not only new and unique but also fulfills parents' needs for Islamic education and learning the Koran. More than that, parents do not need to take their children to study religion and recite the Koran in other places because these activities are already carried out at school. This positive image is put into the minds of the urban Muslim community so that they have strong reasons to choose SD Al-Furqan.

SD Al-Furqan has the competence to choose this positioning. Apart from teaching the Koran since its inception, SD Al-Furqan has TPA teachers, who comprise around 36 percent of the total existing teachers. SD Al-Furqan continues to innovate in the TPA field, including changing from the Qiroati method to the Ummi method, which requires TPA teacher certification. All of this is a commitment to fulfill the positioning promise of SD Al-Furqan to its service users. Borrowing Kartajaya's statement, SD Al-Furqan does not want to be seen as a braggart with sweet words and false promises that disappoint its service users.[47]

As a result, SD Al-Fuqan's creative reading of its market segments combines the Kartajaya segmentation approach, including static and dynamic attributes. Determining potential target markets for SD Al-Fuqan developed five targeting criteria for Kartajaya[48] and Lhotáková and Klosová[49]: (1) community population (market size), (2) community growth (market growth), (3) the exact expectations of society (homogeneous expectations), (4) the

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[47] Kartajaya, *Hermawan Kartajaya on Positioning*, 11.

[48] Kartajaya, *Hermawan Kartajaya on Positioning*.

[49] Markéta Lhotáková and Anna Klosová, "Identification of a Target Consumer in Process of Positioning – Theoritical and Practical Aspects," *Acta Oeconomica Pragensia* 3 (2009), https://aop.vse.cz/pdfs/aop/2009/03/01.pdf.

competitive advantage of schools (competitive advantage), and (5) competitive situation with other schools (competitive setting). Meanwhile, the choice of SD Al-Furqan positioning strengthens Kartajaya's four positioning recipes: unique, in line with the core competencies of Islamic schools, relevant to educational dynamics, and positively perceived by users of Islamic school services.

Conclusions and Suggestions

SD Al-Furqan market segmentation was done by creatively reading socio-economic phenomena, religious attitudes, affiliation with Islamic organizations, community education orientation, and the competition map between schools. This process was combined with the results of comparative studies, suggestions from religious leaders, and the views of education experts in Jember. This segmentation is the basis for selecting targets that are considered potential, namely upper-middle-class urban Muslim communities oriented towards a balance of learning the Koran, Islamic religious education, and academic achievement. SD Al-Furqan targets this segment by offering a comprehensive and quality educational program that focuses on academic aspects and strengthens Islamic values and life skills. This approach aims to meet holistic educational needs, including spiritual, intellectual, and social aspects, to attract the interest and trust of the community that prioritizes the quality of education for their children.

This research contributes to the development of market segmentation classification in educational marketing by adding religious attributes to the segmentation model proposed by Kartajaya, which includes static (geographic and demographic) and dynamic (psychographic and behavioral) attribute segmentation. This research shows that using multiple segmentation with all attributes provides a more comprehensive understanding of the education market. Apart from the four criteria proposed by Kartajaya— market size, market growth, competitive advantage, and competitive

situation—this research adds a new criterion: similarity of expectations. This criterion increases the accuracy of target market selection. This research also supports Kartajaya's four positioning recipes—uniqueness, conformity with core competencies, relevance to educational dynamics, and positive perception—as essential factors in building the school's credibility in the eyes of users and potential users of its services.

Further research could focus on a deeper exploration of how religious attributes in market segmentation influence parents' decisions in school choice by examining additional variables such as the level of religious community involvement and the influence of daily religious practices. This study could employ a mixed methodology that combines quantitative surveys to measure the impact of religious attributes on parents' preferences and qualitative interviews to gain in-depth insight into their motivations. In addition, this research can evaluate the effectiveness of the compound segmentation model by comparing the results of its implementation in various educational contexts, both urban and rural, as well as in various types of educational institutions, from primary schools to higher education. Analysis of how shared expectations play a role in choosing school target markets will also expand understanding of more accurate targeting strategies. Hopefully, this research can provide practical guidance for education managers in designing more effective and relevant marketing strategies.

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