

Marketing Strategy of a Pesantren-Owned Souvenir Enterprise: Integrating the 7Ps Marketing Mix and Islamic Values in Al-Fithrah Islamic Boarding School of Surabaya, Indonesia

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Abstract: Despite the growing economic role of pesantren enterprises in Indonesia, limited studies have examined how marketing strategies can integrate the 7Ps marketing mix with Islamic values to support sustainable business development. This study investigates the marketing strategy of the souvenir business operated by Pondok Pesantren Assalafi Al-Fithrah Surabaya. Employing a qualitative case study approach, data were collected through in-depth interviews with four key informants involved in the management and operation of the business, supported by observations and document analysis. The findings indicate that the enterprise possesses significant strengths in community trust, religious identity, and local market reach. However, challenges remain in branding consistency, digital marketing capability, inventory management, promotional planning, and operational standardization. Based on the 7Ps marketing framework, the study proposes a strategic roadmap emphasizing integrated branding, omnichannel distribution, digital marketing adoption, student-led marketing initiatives (santripreneurship), and values-based performance measurement. The study contributes to the literature on Islamic marketing and pesantren entrepreneurship by demonstrating how modern marketing practices can be aligned with Islamic values such as *amānah*, *ṣidq*, and *ihsān* to enhance business sustainability. As a single-case study, the findings provide context-specific insights that may not be directly generalizable to all pesantren enterprises.

Keywords: Halal Branding, Halal Marketing, Marketing Mix, Pesantren Business, Santripreneurship, Small And Medium Enterprises (SME)

INTRODUCTION

Pesantren (Islamic boarding schools) are educational institutions that have an important role in the social and religious life of Indonesian society (Nurhasanah et al., 2024). In the context of Islamic education in Indonesia, pesantren have a crucial role in shaping the character and morals of the younger generation through both formal and non-formal education (Budiarti & Amin, 2025).

Moreover, pesantren also contribute significantly to various aspects of community life, including developing the community's economy (Nurrachmi et al., 2024), empowering surrounding communities (Asrol et al., 2023; Priyanto & Fathoni, 2019; Zaki et al., 2022), and preserving local cultures (Nurhasanah et al., 2024).

Pesantren are historical educational institutions that also function as socioeconomic hubs. The emergence of Nahdlatul Tujjar in 1918, which was initiated by the traditionalist pesantren group, is historical evidence that pesantren have had concerns about the economics of society, as it established itself (Mahzumi, 2017). Pesantren contribute to the economic development of society in many ways. They serve as a medium for empowerment in the economic sector for society and have the potential to play a role not only in the field of education, but also to contribute to community development (Priyanto & Fathoni, 2019). They also provide skills training, employment opportunities, contribute agricultural products, stimulate trade, grow small industries, and provide financial capital to village communities (Jazil et al., 2021).

Islamic boarding schools are institutions that are adaptive and anticipatory of changes and progress in times and technology, without abandoning their religious values (Patimah et al., 2021). In recent decades, many pesantren have deliberately nurtured entrepreneurship to bolster financial independence and fund religious and educational programs. One expression of this shift is the establishment of pesantren-owned shops selling souvenirs and Islamic lifestyle products—garments such as koko shirts, gamis, veils, sarongs, caps; prayer accessories (sajadah, tasbih, mukena); religious books; herbal items; and memorabilia bearing the pesantren's symbols. These enterprises occupy a niche where faith identity, community belonging, and practical utility converge.

The marketing of goods associated with pesantren represents a unique intersection of cultural, religious, and economic factors that require tailored strategies to engage target audiences effectively. As pesantren goods often encompass a diverse range of products, including educational materials, religious artifacts, and community-driven services, understanding the nuances of their marketing is crucial for their success.

Pondok Pesantren Assalafi Al-Fithrah in Surabaya (Al-Fithrah) is a large pesantren whose religious gatherings attract broad audiences; its social capital underpins a steady demand for

pesantren-branded goods purchased by *santris* (students), alumni, pilgrims, and visitors. This research aims to explore the importance of strategic marketing in enhancing the visibility and accessibility of pesantren goods, particularly in the context of Indonesia's vibrant Islamic culture. It studies the marketing strategy of such products. While the goods are functionally similar to mainstream Islamic products, buyers ascribe added symbolic value (identity, affiliation, and perceived *barākah*). The central research question is: How can a pesantren shop professionalize its marketing strategy—without diluting spiritual identity—to grow sustainably in Indonesia's hybrid offline–online retail environment?

Although previous studies have examined pesantren entrepreneurship, community empowerment, Islamic marketing, and digital promotion strategies, several important gaps remain. First, most existing studies focus on pesantren cooperatives, food businesses, or entrepreneurship education programs (Hanif et al., 2023; Nurrachmi et al., 2024), while limited attention has been given to souvenir-based pesantren enterprises that combine commercial, cultural, and religious functions. Second, few studies have systematically employed the 7Ps marketing mix framework to evaluate the marketing practices of pesantren-owned businesses. Third, while Islamic values such as *amānah* (trustworthiness), *ṣidq* (honesty), *ihsān* (excellence), and *barakah* (divine blessing) are frequently discussed in the literature, their practical integration into marketing strategies for pesantren enterprises remains underexplored (El-Bassiouny, 2014; Wilson & Liu, 2010). Consequently, there is insufficient understanding of how pesantren businesses can professionalize their marketing systems while preserving their religious identity and social mission. This study addresses these gaps through a qualitative case study of the souvenir business operated by Pondok Pesantren Assalafi Al-Fithrah Surabaya.

This study offers some research contributions. First, academically, the paper contextualizes the 7Ps marketing mix within pesantren enterprises and shows how Islamic values function as relational and reputational assets. Second, methodologically, it offers a rich case synthesis based on primary field materials combined with up-to-date literature on SME digitalization and halal consumption. Third, practically, it yields an actionable roadmap for Al-Fithrah and comparable pesantren shops.

The structure of the paper is as follows: After a literature review on SME/OMNI marketing, halal/Islamic consumption, and pesantren entrepreneurship, the paper explains the case study method. It then presents findings on Al-Fithrah's current practices and discusses strategic options, before concluding with implications and recommendations.

Literature Review

A review of existing literature reveals that the marketing of Islamic products, including those from pesantren, operates within a unique framework where religious and cultural values are central to consumer decision-making. Traditional marketing strategies, which often focus on a product's features and benefits, must be adapted to resonate with the specific needs and values of the target market. Within the Islamic context, this means that marketing efforts must be perceived as ethical, transparent, and in alignment with Sharia principles. Research indicates that consumers are drawn to products that not only meet their needs but also reinforce their identity and cultural beliefs.

Despite the growing market for Islamic products, there are significant challenges in effectively promoting goods from pesantren. One major obstacle is the presence of misconceptions about Islamic products, which can limit their appeal to a broader audience. Furthermore, the traditional marketing reliance on localized, word-of-mouth networks often results in a limited reach. This limited reach is a key gap in current marketing approaches, as it prevents these products from competing effectively in a wider marketplace.

To address these challenges, there is a clear need for innovative marketing solutions that move beyond traditional methods. Recent academic work highlights the transformative potential of digital marketing strategies for institutions like pesantren. For instance, a comprehensive analysis by Munawwaroh and Rahayu (2024) explores how digital marketing strategies can be used to enhance branding in Islamic boarding schools. Their research suggests that leveraging digital platforms can significantly broaden the audience base and help these institutions transcend geographical limitations.

The literature also emphasizes the importance of building strategic partnerships to amplify a brand's message. Fayzullayev (2022) discusses the role of industrial development in the national economy, and this principle can be applied to pesantren, where cultivating a unique identity through partnerships can drive economic growth. This is supported by Munawwaroh and Rahayu

(2024) work, which notes that partnerships with local influencers and community leaders can foster a deeper connection with the target market by enhancing the authenticity of the goods.

Another key theme in the literature is the concept of community-driven marketing. Studies on traditional entrepreneurial communities in the Muslim world show that economic activities are often sustained by kinship networks and shared values. This highlights the importance of fostering a sense of community and shared purpose among consumers, transforming them into advocates for the products and the values they represent. A holistic marketing strategy must therefore intertwine economic objectives with cultural enrichment to be truly effective and sustainable.

Furthermore, there have been some studies concerning marketing strategies that may be grouped as follows:

1. Marketing strategy and the 7Ps in hybrid retail

The classical 4Ps (product, price, place, promotion) remain foundational; however, services and retail experiences prompted the extension to 7Ps—adding people, process, and physical evidence—particularly salient to on-site shops (e.g., pesantren stores) that rely on service encounters and atmospherics. Contemporary practice integrates data-driven and digital elements—content, community, and commerce—into these levers. Recent syntheses emphasize omnichannel strategy, customer journey mapping, and marketing technologies for SMEs (Chaffey et al., 2025; Kotler et al., 2021).

The 7Ps framework remains particularly relevant for small and medium-sized enterprises because it provides a comprehensive lens for evaluating both customer-facing and operational dimensions of marketing performance. Recent studies have emphasized that the effectiveness of marketing strategies increasingly depends on the integration of traditional marketing elements with digital technologies, customer experience management, and relationship-building activities. For faith-based enterprises such as pesantren businesses, the framework offers a useful structure for balancing commercial objectives with social and religious missions (Chaffey et al., 2025; Dwivedi et al., 2021; Kotler et al., 2021; Ocasio et al., 2023).

2. Digital marketing and SMEs in Indonesia

Indonesia has experienced rapid e-commerce expansion, with marketplaces (e.g., Shopee, Tokopedia) and social commerce formats (e.g., live selling). For SMEs, social media provides

low-cost targeting and community building, yet capability gaps remain (content quality, analytics, inventory integration, and compliance). Recent Indonesian studies show social media marketing's positive association with e-commerce performance and loyalty when supported by customer satisfaction and consistent execution (Fitriani et al., 2023; Wiweko & Anggara, 2025). Regulatory changes—especially the 2023 restriction on direct social media transactions and the 2024 TikTok–Tokopedia integration—shape channel choices and compliance, while not diminishing the broader shift toward digital discovery and purchasing (Editorial Team, 2023; Tarigan & Karmini, 2023).

3. Halal/Islamic consumption and branding cues

Purchase intention among Muslim consumers is influenced by halal awareness, certification signals, and perceived religious congruence. In apparel and lifestyle goods, overt halal marks may be less central than in food and cosmetics, yet ethical positioning, modest fashion norms, and religious endorsements remain credible cues. Recent Indonesian studies Pradana et al., (2024) update the evidence that halal salience, social identity, and attitudes (TPB) affect intention. For pesantren goods, the pesantren's own brand (logos, kyai endorsements, event memorabilia) serves as an implicit halal/ethical signal, conveying authenticity and trust.

4. Islamic Values in Marketing Practices

In Islamic marketing, business activities are not solely oriented toward profit maximization but are also guided by ethical and spiritual principles (Bando & Ridha, 2026). Core values such as *amānah* (trustworthiness), *ṣidq* (truthfulness), *ihsān* (excellence), and *barakah* (divine blessing) shape business conduct and influence relationships between producers, consumers, and society. These values encourage transparency, product quality, fairness in pricing, and responsible promotion (Wilson & Liu, 2010). Consequently, marketing performance in Islamic enterprises should not be evaluated exclusively through financial indicators but also through the extent to which business practices reflect ethical accountability and social benefit (El-Bassiouny, 2014; Hassan et al., 2022). For pesantren-owned enterprises, the integration of Islamic values into marketing activities constitutes an important source of differentiation and legitimacy within Muslim markets.

5. Pesantren entrepreneurship (santripreneurship)

A growing literature documents pesantren economic units: cooperatives, food and beverage outlets, bookstores, sewing workshops, and souvenir shops. Entrepreneurship programs train *santris* in basic business functions and values-based enterprise, with income helping subsidize operational costs (Hanif et al., 2023). Case studies report that student-led business units strengthen skills and community welfare when governance and mentorship are robust. However, many units remain informal, underbranded, and underdigitized, relying on events and walk-in traffic rather than structured marketing.

The literature review points to a gap in the understanding of how traditional practices and modern consumer behaviors can converge harmoniously. While the benefits of digital marketing are clear, there is a need for research that explores how pesantren can maintain their cultural integrity and traditional values while adapting to contemporary expectations. This involves not just selling a product but also marketing a lifestyle and a set of values that resonate with the target audience. The existing literature provides a strong foundation for understanding the challenges and opportunities in marketing pesantren goods. It highlights the limitations of traditional, network-based marketing and the immense potential of digital strategies to expand reach and engagement. The reviewed studies collectively suggest that a successful marketing framework for pesantren goods must be innovative, culturally sensitive, and capable of integrating both digital tools and traditional community-based values.

Differing from these previous studies, this paper will outline a robust research methodology, detailing data collection methods and analysis techniques that will inform the development of marketing strategies tailored for pesantren goods. Key aspects such as target market identification, branding and positioning, distribution channels, and promotion strategies will be examined to create a holistic marketing framework. Through the examination of successful case studies, the research will elucidate effective marketing practices and the lessons learned from these experiences, ultimately contributing to a deeper understanding of how to enhance the market presence of pesantren goods. In conclusion, this research will not only summarize the findings related to the marketing strategies for pesantren goods but will also provide recommendations for future research, ensuring that the insights gained can be leveraged for continued growth and development in this vital sector.

To synthesize the theoretical perspectives discussed above, this study proposes a conceptual framework that integrates Islamic values, the 7Ps marketing mix, halal branding, and santripreneurship as key drivers of sustainable pesantren business development (Figure 1).

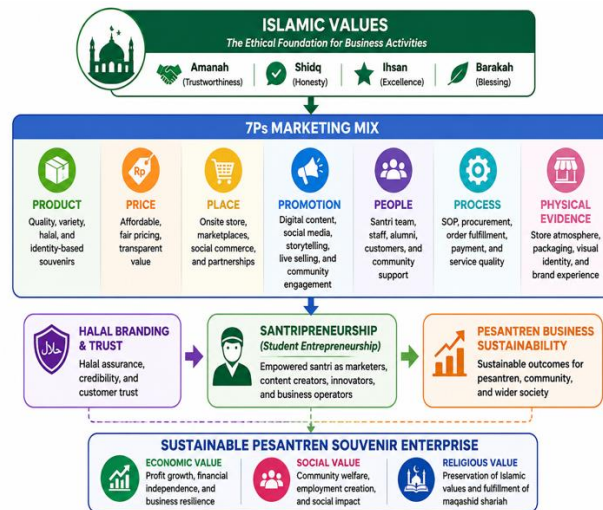


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework for Sustainable Marketing Strategy in Pesantren-Owned Enterprises
Source: Developed by the authors based on Hanif et al. (2023), Kotler et al. (2021), Nurrachmi et al. (2024), and Wilson & Liu (2010)

Figure 1 illustrates the conceptual framework adopted in this study. Islamic values constitute the normative foundation that guides marketing activities within pesantren enterprises. These values are operationalized through the implementation of the 7Ps marketing mix, influencing product development, pricing practices, distribution channels, promotional activities, human resources, operational processes, and physical evidence. Effective implementation of the marketing mix contributes to halal branding and customer trust, which subsequently strengthens santripreneurship initiatives and supports the long-term sustainability of pesantren-owned enterprises. Sustainability in this context encompasses not only economic performance but also social impact and the preservation of religious values.

METHOD

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative case study approach Creswell & Poth (2024) to explore the marketing strategies implemented in the souvenir business of Pondok Pesantren Assalafi Al-Fithrah Surabaya. A case study design was considered appropriate because it enables an in-depth

examination of contemporary phenomena within their real-life context and facilitates a nuanced understanding of organizational practices, decision-making processes, and stakeholder perspectives (Yin, 2018). Given the unique characteristics of pesantren-owned enterprises, this approach allows for a comprehensive exploration of how marketing strategies are shaped by both commercial considerations and Islamic values.

Participants and Sampling

Participants were selected through purposive sampling to ensure that informants possessed direct knowledge and experience related to the management and operation of the souvenir business. Four key informants participated in the study, representing managerial, administrative, operational, and supervisory functions within the enterprise, as presented in Table 1. These informants were selected because of their active involvement in decision-making processes, daily business operations, and customer interactions, enabling them to provide rich and relevant information regarding marketing practices, challenges, and development opportunities.

Informant	Position	Role in Business
I1	Business Manager	Strategic planning and marketing
I2	Administrative Staff	Inventory and finance
I3	Sales Staff	Customer service and sales
I4	Pesantren Representative	Supervision and policy

Table 1. Profile of Research Informants

Data Collection

Data were collected from February to May 2025 through semi-structured interviews, direct observations, and document analysis. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the four selected informants and focused on marketing activities, branding practices, customer engagement, operational management, and future business development. Each interview lasted approximately 90 minutes, allowing participants to elaborate on their experiences and perspectives in depth. To enrich the findings and enhance contextual understanding, interview data were complemented by field observations and the examination of relevant business documents and promotional materials (Creswell & Poth, 2024; Kothari, 2023).

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using the interactive model proposed by Miles et al. (2020) , which consists of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. Interview

transcripts, observation notes, and documentary evidence were systematically coded and organized into thematic categories aligned with the 7Ps marketing mix framework. Through an iterative analytical process, recurring patterns, strategic strengths, operational challenges, and opportunities for business improvement were identified and interpreted.

Trustworthiness

To enhance the trustworthiness of the findings, several validation strategies were employed. Source triangulation was conducted by comparing information obtained from interviews, observations, and documentary materials. Member checking was also undertaken by sharing summaries of key findings with selected informants to verify the accuracy of interpretations and ensure that participants' perspectives were represented appropriately. Furthermore, detailed field notes and documentation were maintained throughout the research process to strengthen the credibility and dependability of the study (Creswell & Poth, 2024).

Ethical Considerations

Participation in the study was voluntary. Before data collection, all informants were informed about the objectives of the research and their right to withdraw from the study at any stage. Verbal informed consent was obtained from each participant before the interviews were conducted. To protect confidentiality, findings are reported in a manner that does not disclose personal information or sensitive organizational details beyond what was necessary for the study.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Results

Aligning with the 7Ps of marketing, the findings from the interviews, observations, and documentation are presented as follows, incorporating direct feedback from the Al-Fithrah shop management to provide a richer, grounded perspective.

1. Product (core, actual, augmented)

The core value of Al-Fithrah's products lies in their dual function: practical utility as Islamic apparel and accessories, combined with the symbolic value of affiliation, remembrance, and perceived barākah. The assortment includes garments (koko shirts, gamis, sarongs, veils, peci), prayer accessories (mukena, sajadah, tasbih), books, herbal items, and memorabilia.

However, the actual product execution reveals inconsistencies. Quality control is a recognized challenge, as the shop relies on various local workshops. The Administrative Staff, I2, explained: *“Kualitas bahan kaos kadang tidak konsisten dari satu supplier ke supplier lainnya. Kami coba cek satu per satu, tapi kalau lagi banyak orderan agak sulit untuk detail”* (“The quality of the shirt material is sometimes inconsistent from one supplier to another. We try to check them one by one, but when there are many orders, it's difficult to be detailed”). This variation in supplier quality directly impacts the final product's uniformity. Furthermore, while standardized sizing and fabric labels exist, their application is inconsistent, creating confusion for customers. Packaging is similarly varied, ranging from plain plastic bags to custom paper bags, with a few items including care labels or brand story cards to enhance the post-purchase experience.

Branding is fragmented. The store alternates between generic descriptors like “Toko Al-Fithrah” and product-line names such as “Kaos Ndalem/Official.” Visual assets (logos, color palette, typography) are not consistently applied across tags, labels, signage, and digital banners, which limits brand recall and weakens the overall brand identity. Augmented elements like warranties or returns are handled informally and depend on staff discretion, lacking a standardized policy.

2. Price

Al-Fithrah positions its prices in the mid-market segment for Surabaya's religious goods, making them affordable for students and visitors while offering premium variants (e.g., embroidered koko, thicker sajadah) at modest mark-ups. While student and alumni discounts are occasionally offered, they are not systematically communicated, missing opportunities to build loyalty. Bundles (e.g., prayer set packages) are rare, representing a missed chance to increase the average transaction value.

A cost-plus model dominates the pricing process. Event-based opportunistic pricing is used for limited-edition items, such as T-shirts for large gatherings, but it is done without analysis of price elasticity or customer cohort data. The Business Manager, I1, noted a reliance on simple calculations: *“Untuk harga, kami biasanya hitung dari modal ditambah sedikit keuntungan. Kalau lagi ada acara besar, kadang kita naikkan sedikit karena permintaan pasti tinggi”* (“For pricing, we usually calculate from the capital plus a small profit. During a big event, we sometimes raise

it a little because demand is definitely high”). This approach, while straightforward, overlooks the potential for data-driven pricing strategies, especially for digital channels where marketplace fees and promotional mechanics must be factored in to maintain margins.

3. Place (distribution)

Distribution is a critical area requiring immediate attention. The primary channel is the on-site shop(s), strategically located near high-traffic areas like dormitories and the mosque complex. This location ensures steady internal demand and significant sales spikes during religious events. However, the shop layout is functional but becomes cramped during peak flows, and Point of Sales (POS) systems are rudimentary, primarily cash-based, with limited Quick Response (QR) code payment options.

External events through pop-up stalls significantly boost sales volume but are logistically demanding. The Pesantren Representative, I4, highlighted the operational strain: *“Kalau ada acara di luar, kami harus bawa semua stok, siapkan tenaga, dan urus pembayaran tunai di lapauh. Kadang ada kesulitan koordinasi dan risiko barang kurang”* (“When there's an outside event, we have to bring all the stock, prepare the staff, and handle cash payments on the ground. Sometimes there are coordination difficulties and the risk of stock shortages”).

Online presence is nascent and experimental. There are basic listings on marketplaces like Shopee and inconsistent cataloging on social media. Fulfillment is entirely manual (Direct-to-Consumer/D2C shipping from shop stock), and there is no centralized order management system. This leads to significant risks of stock-outs and overselling, particularly during event periods when sales channels are not synchronized. The Sales Staff, I3, lamented, *“Stok yang di toko dan yang di online kadang tidak sama. Ada yang beli online, tapi barangnya sudah habis di toko karena habis terjual di acara haul sebelumnya”* (“The stock in the shop and online is sometimes not the same. Someone buys online, but the item is already sold out in the shop because it was sold at the previous ‘haul’ event”).

4. Promotion

Promotion relies heavily on owned channels and community networks. In-store displays, notice boards, and word-of-mouth remain the primary methods. Social media content is irregular and largely informational (e.g., event posters, announcements) rather than product-led storytelling.

Visual consistency and copywriting quality are uneven, limiting engagement.

The most powerful promotional asset is the community network. Alumni and visitors act as natural advocates, while endorsements from the *kyais* (Islamic clerics) and the association with religious events serve as promotional anchors. However, these efforts are informal and not systematized. There are limited themed campaigns (e.g., Ramadan bundles, *haul* (commemoratives of the day of Pesantren founders' passing away)), and a promotional calendar is not maintained. Critically, there is no measurement of effectiveness, as A/B testing or basic analytics are absent, making it impossible to determine which promotional efforts yield the best return.

5. People

The staff is a key asset, recognized for their courtesy and religious knowledge, which buyers appreciate. However, retail-specific skills—such as visual merchandising, suggestive selling, upselling, and structured complaint handling—vary among employees. There is no dedicated full-time digital marketing role; students are occasionally enlisted to help on an ad-hoc basis, but this lacks continuity and strategic oversight. The Business Manager, I1, pointed out the structural gap: *“Kami belum ada tim khusus yang fokus di marketing, apalagi digital. Semua dikerjakan oleh pegawai toko yang juga urusan penjualan sehari-hari. Jadi kadang kelewat”* (“We don't have a dedicated team that focuses on marketing, let alone digital. Everything is handled by shop staff who are also busy with daily sales. So, things sometimes get missed”).

6. Process

The sales process is a straightforward browse-select-pay flow, but queues grow significantly during events, and receipts are often manual. Exchange policies depend entirely on staff discretion, leading to potential customer dissatisfaction. Back-office processes are a major bottleneck. Procurement is based on relationships with local suppliers rather than a formalized system. Stock counts are conducted manually, and SKU coding is inconsistent, as the Administrative Staff, I2, revealed: *“Pencatatan stok masih pakai buku, kadang lupa dicatat. Kode barang juga tidak baku, jadi sulit cari data di kemudian hari”* (“Stock recording is still done in a book, sometimes we forget to write it down. The product codes are also not standardized, making it difficult to find data later”). Demand forecasting is minimal, leading to either stock shortages or overstock situations.

7. Physical evidence

The shop's physical environment communicates authenticity. It is clean and modest, with serviceable shelving and hangers. However, it under-leverages its visual identity. Branded signage exists but is often mixed with generic banners for events. Packaging (bags, labels) is not standardized, missing an opportunity to reinforce the brand with every purchase. The overall ambience, while trustworthy, does not create a memorable or immersive “pilgrimage” experience that could further strengthen customer loyalty and encourage social sharing.

Discussion

The marketing of goods produced by pesantren, or Islamic boarding schools, is a complex endeavor that intersects cultural, religious, and economic factors. Historically, pesantren have been centers of religious education and community life in Indonesia (Budiarti & Amin, 2025). The goods they produce, which can range from educational materials and religious artifacts to community-driven services, are deeply rooted in this cultural and religious heritage. These products are not merely commodities; they are tangible expressions of the pesantren's values, ethos, and commitment to self-reliance. The traditional approach to marketing these goods has often relied on word-of-mouth and kinship networks, leveraging the strong social fabric of Muslim communities where shared values and mutual support are paramount. This method, while authentic and effective within a localized context, presents significant limitations in a modern, globalized marketplace.

In recent years, the landscape for pesantren goods has evolved, largely due to the integration of digital marketing techniques. The rise of social media and e-commerce platforms has transformed consumer behavior, creating new avenues for outreach and engagement. This shift allows pesantren to transcend geographical barriers and connect with a broader audience, bridging the gap between local production and a wider consumer base. For example, leveraging digital media facilitates interactive campaigns that resonate particularly with younger demographics, effectively merging tradition with modernity. The success of various pesantren in using these platforms demonstrates that a digital approach can foster greater awareness and engagement with their products.

Moreover, the integration of digital strategies can significantly enhance the visibility and accessibility of pesantren goods. By using targeted online advertising and strategic partnerships with influencers, pesantren can cultivate a unique identity that appeals to both local and global markets. This not only enhances outreach but also allows for the promotion of the authenticity and messaging of these goods, fostering a deeper connection with the target market. The strategic use of digital channels is crucial for aligning with contemporary consumer expectations while still honoring traditional values. This approach is vital for the economic growth and sustainability of the pesantren sector, positioning them as key players in the broader market of Islamic products.

Beyond economic considerations, the sale of pesantren goods is a vehicle for social and cultural development. The products often embody values inherent in Islamic teachings, such as social justice and mutual support. By purchasing these goods, consumers are not just engaging in a transaction; they are participating in a system that reinforces social cohesion and cultural identity. This approach aligns with the communal nature of traditional entrepreneurial networks in the Muslim world.

Furthermore, marketing these goods can play a pivotal role in creating a sense of shared purpose and belonging among consumers. By highlighting the cultural significance of the products, pesantren can transform consumers into advocates for the goods and the values they represent. This creates a holistic marketing strategy that intertwines economic goals with cultural enrichment, nurturing the social fabric of the communities served by the pesantren.

Our findings at Al-Fithrah reveal an enterprise rich in intangible assets—strong identity, community trust, and local reach—but constrained by operational and strategic limitations. The direct feedback from informants confirms that the challenges are not abstract but are lived, daily realities that hinder growth. This discussion integrates these findings with existing literature to propose a path toward professionalization that preserves the business's spiritual core.

The literature highlights the tension between traditional, network-based marketing and the expansive potential of digital strategies (Munawwaroh and Rahayu, 2024). Al-Fithrah exemplifies this tension. Its strength lies in its community, but this reliance becomes a weakness when it prevents the adoption of systematic processes. The manual stock management and fragmented branding described by our informants are not mere inefficiencies; they represent a failure to

translate the trust of amānah into operational reliability. For a business whose value proposition is rooted in Islamic principles, inconsistent product quality and unreliable stock availability can erode the very trust it seeks to build.

Relating this to the 7Ps framework, we can outline a strategic roadmap:

1. Differentiation through identity and trust (Product & Brand)

The narrative positioning must articulate how the goods fuse function with identity and values. This requires a cohesive brand architecture: a master brand like “Al-Fithrah Official” with consistent visual assets, and sub-lines for Apparel, Prayer Essentials, etc. The inconsistency in supplier quality noted by the Administrative Staff must be addressed through a formalized vendor selection and quality control process. This operationalizes the Islamic value of *ihsān* (excellence). Furthermore, standardized packaging with QR codes linking to the brand story or a message from the kyai can transform a simple bag into a medium for spiritual connection, reinforcing *barakah*.

The findings indicate that product attractiveness extends beyond functional utility and is closely associated with symbolic and religious value. Consumers often perceive pesantren products as representations of Islamic identity and community affiliation. This finding supports previous studies suggesting that religiously grounded products can generate stronger emotional attachment and trust among Muslim consumers (Pradana et al., 2024; Wilson & Liu, 2010). In the context of Al-Fithrah, the perceived authenticity of pesantren-produced goods is an important competitive advantage that sets them apart from conventional souvenirs.

2. Pricing discipline for accessibility and sustainability

Moving beyond a simple cost-plus model requires a transparent tiered pricing strategy (Value, Core, Premium). For marketplaces, prices must be modeled to include platform fees while leveraging promotional tools like vouchers. Introducing bundles (e.g., Ramadan sets, alumni gift packs) can increase the average order value. This data-driven approach to pricing is essential for SMEs navigating the complexities of e-commerce in Indonesia (Wiweko & Anggara, 2025).

From an Islamic marketing perspective, pricing is not merely an economic decision but also an ethical practice. The emphasis on affordability, transparency, and fairness observed in the Al-Fithrah souvenir business reflects the Islamic principles of amānah and justice. Such practices can

strengthen customer trust and encourage long-term relationships, particularly within faith-based markets where ethical considerations influence purchasing decisions (El-Bassiouny, 2014)

3. Omnichannel distribution that respects regulation (Place)

The operational chaos described during events and the disconnect between online and offline stock underscore the urgent need for an omnichannel strategy. This involves more than just being present on multiple channels; it requires integrating them. As noted in recent analyses of Indonesian SMEs, integrating inventory and order management is a critical step toward digital maturity (Chaffey et al., 2025). A low-cost Order Management System (OMS) or even a well-structured cloud spreadsheet could sync inventory across the physical store, pop-up events, and marketplaces. This directly addresses the informants' concerns about stock discrepancies and logistical challenges. Adopting QRIS for cashless payments and a lightweight POS system would also professionalize the in-store experience and capture valuable sales data.

4. Promotion: from announcements to storytelling

The current ad-hoc promotion must evolve into a content strategy built on clear pillars: product education, identity stories, community moments, and offers. The lack of a dedicated marketing person, as mentioned by the Business Manager, is the primary constraint. The solution lies in empowering the community itself. A formalized alumni-ambassador program that offers discount codes and exclusive content could create a powerful, authentic marketing force. User-generated content campaigns, such as “My Al-Fithrah Journey,” can turn customers into brand storytellers. This community-driven approach aligns with findings that show economic activities in Muslim communities are sustained by kinship and shared values (Fayzullayev, 2022).

The increasing importance of digital promotion reflects broader changes in consumer behavior and communication patterns. Recent studies demonstrate that social media engagement, content marketing, and digital storytelling significantly influence customer awareness and purchase intentions, particularly among younger consumers (Dwivedi et al., 2021; Fitriani et al., 2023; Zulkarnain & Alkadrie, 2026). Even simple emoji-based communication can positively influence various dimensions of consumer engagement and contribute to favorable consumer outcomes, including trust, brand attitudes, purchase intentions, electronic storytelling, and brand loyalty (Huzaen, 2026). The findings suggest that pesantren enterprises can preserve their

religious identity while simultaneously adopting modern promotional tools to expand market reach and improve competitiveness (Nurhayati et al., 2026).

As the landscape of marketing continues to evolve, integrating digital strategies into the promotion of pesantren goods can significantly enhance outreach and engagement with a broader audience. The rise of social media platforms and e-commerce has transformed consumer behavior, necessitating a shift in how pesantren goods are marketed to align with contemporary expectations while still honoring traditional values. For instance, leveraging digital media not only allows for a more extensive reach but also facilitates community engagement through interactive campaigns that resonate with younger demographics, thus bridging the gap between tradition and modernity (Munawwaroh & Rahayu, 2024). By fostering strategic partnerships with influencers and utilizing targeted online advertising, pesantren can cultivate a unique identity that appeals to both local and global markets, ultimately driving economic growth and sustainability within the sector (Fayzullayev, 2022).

5. People and Process: building a student-led marketing unit

The most sustainable solution to the human resource gap is to create a Santripreneur Marketing Unit (SMU) composed of trained students. This directly addresses the lack of dedicated staff while providing invaluable practical experience. Such units have been shown to strengthen skills and community welfare when supported by robust mentorship (Hanif et al., 2023). The SMU could manage social media, content creation, marketplace listings, and basic analytics, operating under clear Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs). This not only solves the marketing problem but also aligns with the pesantren's educational mission, transforming marketing from a business task into a form of *khidmah* (service).

A particularly noteworthy finding concerns the strategic role of *santris* in business development. Rather than functioning solely as workers or trainees, *santris* can become active contributors to marketing innovation, content creation, customer engagement, and digital promotion. This finding extends previous discussions of pesantren entrepreneurship by highlighting santripreneurship as a mechanism through which educational objectives and business development can be pursued simultaneously. In this regard, the enterprise serves not only as a

commercial entity but also as a learning ecosystem that cultivates entrepreneurial competencies among *santris* (Hanif et al., 2023; Nurrachmi et al., 2024).

The findings further demonstrate that operational standardization is essential for sustaining business growth. While *pesantren* enterprises often possess strong social capital and community support, organizational effectiveness depends on the existence of clear procedures, accountability mechanisms, and performance monitoring systems. The implementation of standard operating procedures can therefore enhance consistency, service quality, and managerial transparency without diminishing the institution's religious character.

6. *Physical evidence: make the shop a pilgrimage experience*

The physical store should be transformed from a simple retail point into an immersive brand experience. Consistent signage, category headers, and even a subtle, pleasant scent can enhance the atmosphere. A small wall panel detailing Al-Fithrah's history and an infographic showing how purchases support educational programs can connect the act of buying to a larger purpose, reinforcing the value of *sidq* (honesty) and transparency. A modest, well-lit photo corner with a branded backdrop can encourage visitors to take pictures and share them online, generating free, organic promotion.

Physical evidence functions as a tangible representation of organizational identity. Consistent visual branding, attractive packaging, and a professional retail environment can reinforce customer perceptions of quality and credibility. For *pesantren* enterprises, physical evidence also serves as a medium through which religious values and institutional identity are communicated to broader audiences.

7. *Managerial implications*

The findings provide practical implications for managers of *pesantren*-owned enterprises. First, strengthening branding and visual identity can enhance product differentiation and customer recognition. Second, investment in digital marketing capabilities is essential for expanding market reach beyond traditional community networks. Third, involving *santris* in marketing activities can simultaneously improve business performance and support entrepreneurship education. Finally, the adoption of standardized operational procedures and performance monitoring systems can improve efficiency, accountability, and long-term sustainability.

In addition to the marketing strategies discussed, it is essential to consider the role of digital innovation in enhancing the reach and impact of pesantren goods. The integration of digital marketing techniques, such as social media campaigns and e-commerce platforms, can significantly broaden the audience base, allowing pesantren to transcend geographical limitations and engage with a global community of potential consumers. Furthermore, leveraging partnerships with local influencers and community leaders can amplify the messaging and authenticity of these goods, fostering a deeper connection with the target market (Munawwaroh & Rahayu, 2024). As the landscape of consumer behavior continues to evolve, adapting to these digital trends will not only enhance visibility but also contribute to the economic sustainability of pesantren, positioning them as pivotal players in the broader market of Islamic products (Fayzullayev, 2022).

Essentially, the evolution of marketing for pesantren goods is a story of adaptation. It's about preserving a rich cultural and religious heritage while embracing modern tools to achieve economic sustainability and broader social impact. The strategic integration of digital and traditional methods, supported by community-focused initiatives, is crucial for enhancing the market presence and continuing the growth of this vital sector. In conclusion, for pesantren shops, competitive advantage arises from identity-based differentiation (brand/story), community channels (alumni, visitors), and credibility signals (religious affiliation, quality consistency). To scale, they must adopt omnichannel discipline—coordinating onsite retail with marketplaces and compliant social commerce—while building lightweight tech stacks (catalog/Order Management System (OMS), POS, analytics) appropriate to SME resources.

Theoretically, this study contributes to the literature on Islamic marketing and pesantren entrepreneurship by demonstrating how the 7Ps marketing mix framework can be adapted within a faith-based business environment. The findings suggest that marketing effectiveness in pesantren enterprises is influenced not only by conventional marketing variables but also by the integration of Islamic values, community trust, and educational objectives. Consequently, the study proposes a conceptual linkage among Islamic values, halal branding, santripreneurship, and business sustainability that may serve as a foundation for future research on faith-based entrepreneurship (Figure 1).

Finally, for the improvement of the souvenir business at Pondok Pesantren Assalafi Al-Fithrah in Surabaya, this managerial roadmap is recommended.

- *Phase 1 (Months 1–3): Foundations* - Appoint SMU team and supervisor; define SOPs (SKU codes, photo styles, listing template). - Standardize visual identity (logo files, type, colors) and apply to tags, bags, storefront banners. - Implement QRIS, receipt issuance, and a simple POS/inventory sheet. - Launch official marketplace store with 20–40 SKUs; optimize five hero products. - Publish a content calendar; produce 30 product photos and 10 storytelling posts.
- *Phase 2 (Months 4–8): Omnichannel expansion* - Add size charts; introduce bundles and limited editions tied to events. - Pilot 2 live demo sessions/month; work with 5 alumni ambassadors. - Expand to 80–120 SKUs; test shipping vouchers and free-shipping thresholds. - Conduct customer survey ($N \approx 150$) on satisfaction and suggestions; adjust assortment.
- *Phase 3 (Months 9–12): Optimization and capability building* - Analyze sales by category/SKU; prune underperformers; deepen winners. - Introduce loyalty program for *santris* and staff; collect first-party contacts (opt-in). - Train a second cohort of *santris*; document SOPs as playbooks; plan next year's range.

In conclusion, the path forward for Al-Fithrah—and similar pesantren enterprises—is not to abandon its roots but to professionalize its expression. The competitive advantage lies in identity-based differentiation, community channels, and credibility signals. To scale, this must be supported by omnichannel discipline and lightweight, appropriate technology. By framing marketing as both *khidmah* and *amānah*, the business can expand its impact while preserving its authenticity. The 7Ps framework, adapted to incorporate Islamic values and empowered by accessible digital tools, offers a viable path for transforming a modest community shop into a resilient micro-retail ecosystem. Future research should explore the implementation of this proposed SMU model, as it represents a promising synthesis of education, enterprise, and faith-based values.

CONCLUSION

From a theoretical perspective, this study contributes to the literature on Islamic marketing and faith-based entrepreneurship by demonstrating how the 7Ps marketing mix framework can be adapted within a pesantren business environment. The findings suggest that marketing effectiveness in pesantren enterprises is shaped not only by conventional marketing variables but also by the integration of Islamic values, community trust, and educational objectives. Accordingly, the study proposes a conceptual linkage among Islamic values, halal branding, santripreneurship, and business sustainability.

Practically, the study offers insights for managers of pesantren-owned enterprises seeking to strengthen competitiveness while preserving their religious identity. The findings highlight the importance of branding consistency, digital marketing adoption, student participation in business operations, and the implementation of standardized management systems. These strategies may assist pesantren enterprises in achieving sustainable growth while maintaining their social and religious missions.

This study has several limitations. First, it focuses on a single case study, which limits the generalizability of the findings to other pesantren contexts. Second, the analysis primarily reflects the perspectives of internal stakeholders and does not directly incorporate customer perceptions. Third, the study does not quantitatively evaluate the effectiveness of the proposed marketing strategies. Future research may employ comparative case studies, mixed-method approaches, or quantitative assessments involving multiple pesantren enterprises to examine the broader applicability of the proposed framework.

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