



<https://doi.org/10.61650/ajis.v4i1.1377>

ORIGINAL RESEARCH ARTICLE

Strategies to Strengthen Madrasah Competitiveness in the Context of Public School Choice: A Narrative Review

Dwi Putri Ayu Lestari^{1*}, Muslih Qomarudin¹, Ismail Fahmi¹, Sujari Rahmanto¹, Moh. Solikul Hadi¹ 

¹*Institut Agama Islam Al-Hikmah Lampung, Indonesia*

Correspondence: dwi207154@gmail.com

Article History: 20 February 2026 • Revised: 25 March 2025 • Accepted: 15 April 2026 • Published: 30 April 2026
date pending

ABSTRACT

This narrative review synthesizes scholarship on how madrasahs can strengthen their competitiveness when families also consider public schools. The supplied manuscript discusses strategic management, educational quality, distinctive programs, leadership and teacher development, institutional image, digital communication, and partnerships. We reorganize these themes into a proposed sequence: assess local conditions; strengthen teaching and graduate outcomes; develop coherent flagship programs; build staff capacity; communicate evidence of quality; collaborate with stakeholders; and review progress. Examples include Quran memorization, language learning, research activities, entrepreneurship, and character education, whose value depends on local needs and actual implementation. Published studies suggest that leadership, human resource practices, and institutional image can shape a school's appeal. The manuscript reports database names and broad criteria but not replicable search strings, record counts, a complete screened study set, or formal quality appraisal. Consequently, this article is a narrative conceptual synthesis rather than a systematic review or an empirical comparison of enrollment between madrasahs and public schools. Proposed indicators for future evaluation include learning, graduate progression, student participation, family trust, and access.

Keywords: Madrasah Competitiveness; Educational Quality; School Choice; Strategic Management; Institutional Image



ABSTRAK

Tinjauan naratif ini menyintesis strategi penguatan daya saing madrasah ketika keluarga juga mempertimbangkan sekolah negeri. Naskah sumber membahas manajemen strategis, kualitas pembelajaran, program unggulan, pengembangan guru dan kepemimpinan, citra lembaga, komunikasi digital, serta kemitraan. Tema-tema tersebut disusun menjadi urutan usulan: memetakan kondisi setempat; memperkuat pembelajaran dan hasil lulusan; mengembangkan program unggulan yang selaras; meningkatkan kapasitas staf; mengomunikasikan bukti mutu; bekerja sama dengan pemangku kepentingan; dan meninjau hasil secara berkala. Contoh program meliputi tahfiz, bahasa, riset, kewirausahaan, dan pendidikan karakter, yang manfaatnya bergantung pada kebutuhan dan penerapan setempat. Naskah menyebut basis data dan kriteria umum, tetapi tidak melaporkan strategi pencarian yang dapat diulang, jumlah artikel yang diseleksi, himpunan studi lengkap, ataupun penilaian mutu formal. Karena itu, artikel ini merupakan sintesis konseptual naratif, bukan tinjauan sistematis atau perbandingan empiris pendaftaran siswa antara madrasah dan sekolah negeri.

Kata kunci: Daya Saing Madrasah; Mutu Pendidikan; Pilihan Sekolah; Manajemen Strategis; Citra Lembaga

How to cite: Lestari, D. P. A., Qomarudin, M., Fahmi, I., Rahmanto, S., & Hadi, M. S. (2026). Strategies to Strengthen Madrasah Competitiveness in the Context of Public School Choice: A Narrative Review. *Assyfa Journal of Islamic Studies*, 4(1), 717–723. Retrieved from <https://journal.assyfa.com/index.php/ajis/article/view/1377>

1. INTRODUCTION

Families may consider teaching quality, safety, character formation, costs, location, reputation, and opportunities when choosing a school. For a madrasah, the presence of public schools in the same locality makes it important to explain the educational value it offers and to deliver that value consistently. Competition is therefore understood here as a question about quality, access, and public trust, not merely promotional reach.

Madrasahs can combine academic learning with Islamic education, language development, student activities, and community engagement. Evidence from Indonesian madrasahs links strategic management, leadership, and human resource practices to perceived institutional advantage (Bintoro et al., 2025; Waruwu et al., 2022). Such associations do not establish that one program will attract pupils in every setting.

Brand image and digital communication can help families learn about a school, but reputation is credible only when claims reflect students' experience. Studies of Islamic educational branding and digital strategy suggest ways to communicate a school's identity (Kholil et al., 2022; Handayani & Sirozi, 2025). Educational quality, teacher capacity, and graduate outcomes must supply the substance behind that communication.

This article revises the supplied literature manuscript into a narrative synthesis of quality improvement, program differentiation, leadership, branding, partnerships, and evaluation. It proposes an integrated framework that madrasahs can adapt locally, identifies the limits of the available review record, and sets out indicators that could test the framework in future empirical work.

2. RESEARCH METHODS

The supplied manuscript describes a qualitative literature review using Google Scholar and Scopus and keywords related to madrasah competitiveness, strategic management, school branding, and educational marketing. Its date statements differ: one passage specifies 2021–2025, while another specifies sources published from 2022 to 2026. We do not infer a single verified search window from those inconsistent descriptions.

The source states that relevance, publication year, and bibliographic completeness informed study selection, with non-peer-reviewed items and unrelated conference abstracts excluded. However, it reports no exact search strings, search dates, database-specific results, duplicate counts, reasons for exclusion, or full list of included studies. A systematic review claim would require these details and explicit appraisal (Snyder, 2019).

We therefore treat the work as a narrative conceptual synthesis. The supplied matrix groups a small selection of studies under branding and graduate competitiveness, and additional cited works address leadership, strategic management, and school image. We compare themes across these sources, distinguish an authorial proposal from evidence of effectiveness, and avoid calculating pooled effects.

The synthesis arranges strategies into local diagnosis, educational quality, differentiation, staff capacity, trustworthy communication, external partnerships, and iterative evaluation. The proposed indicators are intended for subsequent field testing; no interviews, enrollment series, school comparison, or direct observation were conducted for this review. Unpublished interviews listed in the source are not treated as published literature evidence.

3. RESULTS AND FINDINGS

Educational quality emerged as the foundation of the proposed model. The source identifies classroom instruction, literacy and numeracy, student achievement, character development, and graduate progression as relevant dimensions. Research on teacher professional development supports focused, sustained learning and opportunities to apply new practices (Desimone, 2009; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). The source does not provide measured outcomes for a sample of madrasahs.

Distinctive programs may offer a coherent identity where they answer actual community needs. The source discusses tahfiz, Arabic and English learning, research, entrepreneurship, competitions, and environmental work. Local-excellence approaches are described in madrasah strategic management research (Bintoro et al., 2025). These examples form a menu of possibilities, not a requirement to implement every program.

Leadership and human resource management are identified as enabling conditions. Waruwu et al. (2022) examine authentic leadership and human resource practices in private madrasahs, while other leadership studies associate school leadership with teacher and student outcomes (Robinson et al., 2008). In the proposed framework, a principal sets priorities, supports teacher learning, and coordinates resources and quality assurance.

External communication, branding, and partnerships complete the framework. The source identifies parents, alumni, government, community organizations, universities, and businesses as possible partners. Brand image can communicate real strengths, and digital channels can make information accessible (Zakaria et al., 2023; Handayani & Sirozi, 2025). Continuous review would compare promises with instruction, access, satisfaction, and outcomes.

4. DISCUSSION

An initial local diagnosis should ask why families select or avoid a particular madrasah. Mapping transport, fees, access, facilities, curriculum, and community expectations can identify needs that a generic branding campaign overlooks. The source proposes SWOT analysis, but does not supply a completed assessment for an actual school. A future field study could compare family interviews with enrollment and retention records.

Instructional and graduate quality should anchor the strategy. Clear measures might include learning progress, literacy and numeracy, attendance, student wellbeing, and transition to further study. Professional development research emphasizes coherent opportunities to learn and apply practice (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Garet et al., 2001). An attractive program name should be evaluated against these substantive outcomes.

Program differentiation can make a madrasah recognizable when it arises from staff capability and student needs. Tahfiz, bilingual instruction, research, and entrepreneurship each demand different teachers, time, resources, and assessment. Local excellence is a plausible strategic direction (Bintoro et al., 2025), but the review cannot rank the listed programs or estimate their effects on family choice.

Principal leadership and staff capacity connect plans to delivery. Evidence on authentic leadership and human resource practices in private madrasahs points to institutional processes that may support advantage (Waruwu et al., 2022). Broader school leadership research also suggests that leadership effects vary by practice and outcome (Robinson et al., 2008). A madrasah should specify staff development and classroom support alongside each promised program.

Institutional image can help families understand a madrasah's identity when communication is accurate and specific. Branding studies in Islamic education describe how distinctive values and achievements enter public perception (Kholil et al., 2022; Zakaria et al., 2023). Claims about graduate success or teaching quality should be supported by dated and interpretable evidence to protect trust.

Digital communication can make admission requirements, programs, costs, accessibility, and achievements easier to find. It also creates a need to update information and respect families who rely on offline channels. The source discusses digital marketing but does not evaluate a particular platform or quantify its contribution to enrollment. Digital communication should thus be monitored as one part of a broader service strategy.

Partnerships with parents, alumni, local organizations, public agencies, and universities may bring expertise, mentoring, facilities, or scholarships. Their value depends on specific commitments and whether benefits reach students. Collaboration can also provide feedback about community needs.

The review offers a conceptual rationale for partnerships but no comparative estimate of which type works best.

The proposed sequence—diagnose, improve teaching, differentiate, build staff capability, communicate, partner, and evaluate—is an organizing framework. Its evidentiary limit is that the source does not report a reproducible search, full appraisal, or observed change in madrasah competitiveness (Snyder, 2019). Future multi-site work should compare implementation, family choice, equity of access, student outcomes, and retention over time.

5. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

This narrative synthesis proposes that madrasah competitiveness be strengthened through demonstrable educational quality, locally appropriate flagship programs, capable staff and leadership, accurate communication, constructive partnerships, and continuous evaluation. The model integrates themes in the supplied literature manuscript and should be tailored to community context.

The review does not establish causal gains in enrollment, achievement, or public trust. Future studies should document a transparent literature search and test the proposed framework with actual school and family data, including access and learning outcomes.

REFERENCES

- Avalos, B. (2011). Teacher professional development in teaching and teacher education over ten years. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 27(1), 10–20. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2010.08.007>
- Azis, Z. A., Mutohar, P. M., & Sujianto, A. E. (2024). Competitive Advantage dalam Peningkatan Mutu Pendidikan Islam: Studi Kasus pada SMAS Islam Sunan Gunung Jati Ngunt Tulungagung. *Katalis Pendidikan: Jurnal Ilmu Pendidikan dan Matematika*, 1(3), 123–137. <https://doi.org/10.62383/katalis.v1i3.568>
- Bintoro, A., Yusuf, M., & Mispani. (2025). Strategic Management in Improving Madrasah Competitiveness Based on Local Excellence. *Assyfa Journal of Islamic Studies*, 3(1). <https://doi.org/10.61650/ajis.v3i1.1187>
- Borko, H. (2004). Professional development and teacher learning: Mapping the terrain. *Educational Researcher*, 33(8), 3–15. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X033008003>
- Darling-Hammond, L., Hyler, M. E., & Gardner, M. (2017). *Effective teacher professional development*. Learning Policy Institute. <https://doi.org/10.54300/122.311>
- Desimone, L. M. (2009). Improving impact studies of teachers' professional development: Toward better conceptualizations and measures. *Educational Researcher*, 38(3), 181–199. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X08331140>
- Garet, M. S., Porter, A. C., Desimone, L., Birman, B. F., & Yoon, K. S. (2001). What makes professional development effective? Results from a national sample of teachers. *American Educational Research Journal*, 38(4), 915–945.

- <https://doi.org/10.3102/00028312038004915>
- Handayani, & Sirozi, M. (2025). Strategi peningkatan daya saing madrasah di era digital. *Pendas: Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan Dasar*, 10(1). <https://doi.org/10.23969/jp.v10i01.21112>
- Hattie, J., & Timperley, H. (2007). The power of feedback. *Review of Educational Research*, 77(1), 81–112. <https://doi.org/10.3102/003465430298487>
- Ilyasin, M., & Muadin, A. (2026). Learning Organization Leadership and Competitive Advantage in Madrasahs: A Conceptual Business Strategy Approach. *Southeast Asian Journal of Islamic Education*, 8(2). <https://doi.org/10.21093/sajie.v8i2.12897>
- Kennedy, M. M. (2016). How does professional development improve teaching? *Review of Educational Research*, 86(4), 945–980. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654315626800>
- Kholil, M., Rozi, F., & Fadholi, A. (2022). Peningkatan daya saing madrasah di era Society 5.0 dengan strategi manajemen branding image di madrasah. *Tafâqquh: Jurnal Penelitian dan Kajian Keislaman*, 10(2), 317–335. <https://doi.org/10.52431/tafaqquh.v10i2.1144>
- Leithwood, K., & Jantzi, D. (2006). Transformational school leadership for large-scale reform: Effects on students, teachers, and their classroom practices. *School Effectiveness and School Improvement*, 17(2), 201–227. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09243450600565829>
- Miles, M. B., Huberman, A. M., & Saldaña, J. (2019). *Qualitative data analysis: A methods sourcebook* (4th ed.). SAGE.
- Muttaqin, I., Tuah, D. B., Zaini, M., Rianawati, Zurayah, H., & Suhaimi. (2026). Competitive Advantage Management of Madrasah in the Artificial Intelligence Era. *Munaddhomah: Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan Islam*, 6(4). <https://doi.org/10.31538/munaddhomah.v6i4.2292>
- Opfer, V. D., & Pedder, D. (2011). Conceptualizing teacher professional learning. *Review of Educational Research*, 81(3), 376–407. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654311413609>
- Prayogi, L. S., & Muslihun. (2024). Strategi membangun brand image untuk meningkatkan daya saing lembaga pendidikan di MAN 2 Yogyakarta. *Dirasat: Jurnal Manajemen dan Pendidikan Islam*, 10(2). <https://doi.org/10.26594/dirasat.v10i2.4866>
- Robinson, V. M. J., Lloyd, C. A., & Rowe, K. J. (2008). The impact of leadership on student outcomes: An analysis of the differential effects of leadership types. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 44(5), 635–674. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0013161X08321509>
- Rohmawati, Y. N., Amrullah, A. M. K., & Slamet. (2026). Transformational Leadership and the TLIM Model for Strengthening Organizational Capacity and Competitive Advantage in Madrasah. *Mudir: Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan*, 8(1). <https://doi.org/10.55352/mudir.v8i1.3092>
- Ross, J. A., & Gray, P. (2006). Transformational leadership and teacher commitment to organizational values: The mediating effects of collective teacher efficacy. *School Effectiveness and School Improvement*, 17(2), 179–199. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09243450600565795>
- Rusmini, Chaniago, F., & Piola, H. (2023). Strategi branding image dalam meningkatkan daya saing di Madrasah Tsanawiyah. *Islamic Pedagogy: Journal of Islamic Education*, 1(1), 18–

28. <https://doi.org/10.52029/ipjie.v1i1.144>
- Snyder, H. (2019). Literature review as a research methodology: An overview and guidelines. *Journal of Business Research*, 104, 333–339. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2019.07.039>
- Stoll, L., Bolam, R., McMahon, A., Wallace, M., & Thomas, S. (2006). Professional learning communities: A review of the literature. *Journal of Educational Change*, 7, 221–258. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10833-006-0001-8>
- Tofaynudin, J. I. (2023). Strategi membangun brand image dalam meningkatkan daya saing lembaga pendidikan. *Journal on Teacher Education*, 4(3). <https://doi.org/10.31004/jote.v4i3.12406>
- Vescio, V., Ross, D., & Adams, A. (2008). A review of research on the impact of professional learning communities on teaching practice and student learning. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 24(1), 80–91. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2007.01.004>
- Waruwu, N., Effendi, M. S., Muhab, S., & Komariah, A. (2022). Authentic Leadership and Human Resource Practice for Competitive Advantage in Private Madrasas in Indonesian Context. *Journal of Educational and Social Research*, 12(4), 267. <https://doi.org/10.36941/jesr-2022-0112>
- Yin, R. K. (2018). *Case study research and applications: Design and methods* (6th ed.). SAGE.
- Yunus, R. M. (2024). Model madrasah unggul; strategi daya saing lulusan di MTsN 1 Bireuen. *Re-JIEM (Research Journal of Islamic Education Management)*, 7(1), 1–17. <https://doi.org/10.19105/re-jiem.v7i1.12123>
- Zainul, M. (2024). Enhancing Competitiveness in Vocational Education: The Role of Strategic Marketing in Schools. *Al-Tanzim: Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan Islam*, 8(3). <https://doi.org/10.33650/al-tanzim.v8i3.9255>
- Zakaria, W., Yuniati, U., & Puspitasari, E. E. (2023). Strategi membangun brand image dalam meningkatkan daya saing lembaga pendidikan. *Indonesian Journal of Digital Public Relations*, 1(2), 64–75. <https://doi.org/10.25124/ijdpr.v1i2.5545>