



# Integrated Inbound Marketing Model and Its Impact on Increasing Student Enrollment

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## Abstract

The purpose of this study is to analyze and empirically verify the Integrated Inbound Marketing Model, as well as measure its specific impact on increasing the number of students in educational institutions, as a strategic solution to overcome the inefficiency of traditional marketing methods in the digital era. This research will be conducted at MTs Al-Amiriyyah Darussalam, Indonesia. The approach used in this study is qualitative with a case study research type. The main data collection techniques include in-depth interviews to explore the perspectives and experiences of informants, participant observation. The data analysis technique used is the Three-Flow Interactive Model from Miles and Huberman (data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing). The results of this study show that MTs Al-Amiriyyah Darussalam has developed several special class programs such as the Tahfidz Class and the Academic Strengthening Class (Excellent) which are the main attractions for prospective students, especially students from outside Banyuwangi, the village *diniyyah* program carried out by students and *ustadz*. MTs Al-Amiriyyah is one of the superior activities that strengthens the relationship between the madrasah and the community around the Islamic boarding school, and the practice teaching and outing class activities carried out by MTs Al-Amiriyyah students in outside schools, partner educational institutions, or religious institutions have a significant impact on increasing the school's digital exposure.

## INTRODUCTION

Educational marketing is now shifting from traditional (outbound) to digital (inbound) methods (Abdessamad & Taoufik, 2025; Laverie et al., 2020). Changes in the behavior of prospective students and parents who now predominantly seek information through online channels, such as search engines and social media, making content marketing the main point of contact before making educational decisions (Disalvo et al., 2016; Hammer et al., 2021). It can be seen from survey data showing that more than 70% of parents conduct online research before enrolling their children, and schools that have blogs or online guides tend to have more qualified leads (Gilleece & Eivers, 2018; Plantin & Daneback, 2009). That the integration of informative and engaging digital content (inbound) is a strategic necessity, no longer an option, to attract and maintain the interest of prospective students.

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There is a disparity in access to information and the quality of educational content between large and small institutions (Goode, 2010). Implementing an Integrated Inbound Marketing Model requires significant investments in technology (CRM, marketing automation) and human resources (content specialists and SEO), which are often only affordable for educational institutions with large budgets (Hassinen, 2022; Järvinen & Taiminen, 2016). Observed from online search results (SERP) rankings where favored private or public schools with adequate resources dominate, (Anuyah et al., 2020) while schools with limited resources struggle to compete for content visibility (Limongelli et al., 2022). The success of the inbound marketing model often reinforces market gaps in student admissions, which has the potential to become an educational equity issue.

The "user experience" in the online student registration process is now a key determinant of its impact on increasing student enrollment (Zardari et al., 2021). Prospective education consumers expect convenience and personalization, from initial content exploration through the application process (Huang & Zhou, 2018; Kang & Namkung, 2019), in line with modern digital service standards in other sectors (e-commerce, banking). High drop-off rates (students abandoning the registration process) due to complicated online application forms or school websites that are not mobile-friendly (Chabot & Hell, 2023; Güntem & Kılıç, 2025). The positive impact of an Integrated Inbound Marketing Model depends not only on the quality of the content, but also on the efficiency and user-friendliness of the digital system as a whole, which acts as a critical touchpoint in converting applicants into students.

An integrated inbound marketing model can significantly increase student enrollment by leveraging digital communication strategies and interactive marketing tools (Jain & Rao, 2024; Royo-Vela & Hünernmund, 2016). Numerous studies demonstrate the effectiveness of this approach, finding that interactive marketing communication tools have a substantial impact on students' decision-making processes (Kisiolek et al., 2021; Nguyen et al., 2019), leading to a change in perceptions of educational institutions. They specifically identify key digital strategies such as university webinar platforms, social media presence, and mobile-friendly websites as crucial factors in influencing enrollment decisions. Specifically, they show a concrete example where inbound marketing techniques generated over 1,000 website visits and a 2.12% conversion rate for a public master's program. Evidence suggests that even institutions with limited resources can effectively use this integrated marketing approach to increase brand awareness and attract students.

The main novelty of this research lies in the shift in focus and depth of analysis, which differ significantly from previous literature. Although various studies have substantially proven the effectiveness of Inbound Marketing in increasing enrollment, the main focus of the literature tends to be on the Student segment or higher education programs (such as the success of public master's programs), while this research specifically targets the impact on increasing the Number of Students (for elementary and secondary education levels), where the decision-making process involves a dominant role of parents and requires a more unique and differentiated content nurturing strategy. In addition to the difference in audience, the uniqueness of this research is the attempt to construct and empirically verify a comprehensive and specific Integrated Inbound Marketing Model for the pre-university segment; this model will elaborate on the synergy between content pillars, marketing automation using CRM, and digital platforms in a single system, which goes beyond simply identifying the effectiveness of individual digital tools, thus contributing to a proven and relevant operational model guide for non-university educational institutions in Indonesia.

The urgency of research on "Integrated Inbound Marketing Models and Their

Impact on Increasing Student Enrollment" is very high and relevant to the current socio-economic dynamics of education, making this research absolutely worth conducting. Changes in societal behavior have created a large gap between traditional promotional methods (Outbound Marketing), which are expensive and less effective, and the expectations of prospective students and parents who now demand transparency, 24/7 access to information, and personalized content through digital platforms. Amidst increasingly fierce competition among educational institutions, schools that fail to adopt a structured digital marketing system integration will risk experiencing a continuous decline in enrollment numbers. This research is urgent because it has the potential to offer a strategic solution in the form of a tested model that can help educational institutions, especially those with limited resources, optimize their marketing investments. By empirically mapping how Integrated Inbound Marketing Models affect lead conversion and retention, this research will produce a practical, data-driven framework that can be immediately implemented. Therefore, this research is crucial to ensure the sustainability and growth of educational institutions in the digital era. The purpose of this study is to empirically analyze and verify the Integrated Inbound Marketing Model, as well as to measure its specific impact on increasing the number of students in educational institutions, as a strategic solution to overcome the inefficiencies of traditional marketing methods in the digital era.

## METHODS

This research will be conducted at MTs Al-Amiriyyah Darussalam, Banyuwangi, Indonesia. This location was chosen purposively due to its relevance to the research title: the school is a private educational institution operating in a highly competitive region and facing specific challenges in retaining and increasing student numbers. MTs Al-Amiriyyah Darussalam, Banyuwangi, Indonesia has demonstrated early initiatives in implementing various elements of Inbound Marketing, such as active social media management and digital content development, but their implementation has not been fully integrated systematically. By selecting this location, the researcher can observe in-depth (case study) how a detailed integrated inbound marketing model influences the dynamics of new student enrollment, providing rich empirical data from the context of an institution transitioning to a modern marketing strategy.

The approach used in this research is a qualitative case study (Aryasutha et al., 2025; Engkizar et al., 2023, 2024, 2025; Putri et al., 2025; Wekke et al., 2024). This qualitative approach was chosen because the researcher aims to understand holistically the processes, mechanisms, and internal factors that shape the Integrated Inbound Marketing Model, as well as how the model is perceived and implemented by stakeholders at the school. The case study was chosen because it allows the researcher to investigate a contemporary phenomenon (the application of the inbound marketing model) in a real-life context (a school), gathering rich data from multiple sources to achieve a comprehensive description and explanation of the model's impact on increasing student numbers.

The selection of research informants was conducted purposively, involving parties directly involved in the formulation and implementation of marketing strategies, such as the principal, the new student admissions team, and content creator or public relations staff, as they are the primary sources of information regarding the implemented model and student enrollment data. The primary data collection techniques included in-depth interviews to explore informants' perspectives and experiences, participant observation to directly observe the implementation of the marketing model in the field (e.g., webinar processes or social media responses), documentation (including student enrollment data, promotional

financial reports, and website/social media statistics), and audio-visual analysis of online promotional materials.

Finally, the data analysis technique used is Miles and Huberman's Three-Stream Interactive Model (data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing). This model was chosen because of its iterative nature and ability to manage large amounts of qualitative data from case studies, allowing researchers to move back and forth between stages of analysis to build theory from field findings. Meanwhile, data validity checks will be conducted through triangulation, which includes source triangulation (comparing information from the principal, PSB team, and marketing staff), method triangulation (comparing interview results, observations, and documents), and observer triangulation (involving independent reviewers to interpret the findings), to ensure the credibility, validity, and completeness of the data presented (Engkizar et al., 2022; Kaema & Ulwi, 2025; Oktavia et al., 2020).

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Special Class Programs at MTs Al-Amiriyyah Darussalam

Research results show that MTs Al-Amiriyyah Darussalam has developed several special class programs, such as the Tahfidz Class and the Academic Strengthening Class (Excellent), which are a major draw for prospective students, particularly students from outside Banyuwangi. These special class programs are the most frequently accessed content on the MT's website and social media, particularly posts related to memorization achievements, religious subject achievements, and special coaching activities. Field observation data indicates that parents of students are more attracted to schools that offer Islamic boarding school-based religious strengthening. This aligns with the findings of Kotler & Fox (2019) that differentiation of academic and religious services is a strategic factor in school selection decisions.

These special class programs serve as a key pillar of MTs Al-Amiriyyah's inbound marketing strategy because their content contains religious values and achievements that are easily shared and generate high engagement. Documentation of special classes, whether in the form of photos, videos, or testimonials from the supervising *ustadz*, serves as an information magnet that strengthens the MT's identity as a *pesantren* (Islamic boarding school) with balanced academic and religious standards. This strategy aligns with (Shaikh & Alam Kazmi, 2022) concept of content-driven engagement, which states that effective inbound marketing utilizes educational content that showcases the institution's unique characteristics. Thus, the special class program not only strengthens the madrasa's reputation but also has a direct impact on increasing enrollment each year and strengthening the sustainability of the school's operations. The following is a documentation of the special tahfidz class program:



Fig 1. Documentation of the Special Tahfidz Class Program



The documentation above is one of the activities of the Tahfidz Class program at MTs Al-Amiriyyah Darussalam Blokagung Banyuwangi which is part of an inbound marketing strategy based on religious content typical of Islamic boarding schools (Hafid & Putri, 2024; Hidayah, 2021; Sudir et al., 2025). Through the publication of photos, videos, and reports on student memorization achievements, this program not only demonstrates the quality of Quran coaching, but also strengthens the image of the madrasah as an institution committed to strengthening Islamic values (Zulkarpian et al., 2024). The tahfidz content regularly uploaded by the madrasah public relations team has been proven to attract the attention of prospective parents, especially from families who prioritize Islamic boarding school-based education and mastery of the holy book, thus contributing significantly to the increase in the number of applicants each year (Baulch & Loh, 2025; Htay et al., 2025; Mahsusi et al., 2024). This kind of publication strategy is in line with the concept of content-driven engagement in inbound marketing, which emphasizes that authentic information with high spiritual value can increase public trust and support the sustainability of Islamic school operations.

### MTs Al-Amiriyyah Village Diniyyah Program

Research has found that the village *diniyyah* program, conducted by students and *ustadz* (teachers) of MTs Al-Amiriyyah, is one of the leading activities strengthening the relationship between the madrasah and the community surrounding the Islamic boarding school. This program not only serves as a means of religious learning outside the school environment, but also serves as a form of student devotion to the village community in areas such as Seneporejo, Siliragung, and the surrounding Darussalam area. Documentation of village *diniyyah* activities uploaded to the madrasah website, particularly photos of teaching activities, student lectures, and worship training, has attracted the attention of parents from the villages targeted by the program. This finding supports (Achmadin & Fattah, 2023) view that socio-religious involvement improves the school's public image and encourages community interest in enrolling their children.

character of Islamic boarding schools. Regular publication of these activities confirms that MTs Al-Amiriyyah focuses not only on internal education but also on engaging the surrounding community as partners in da'wah and learning. From an educational marketing perspective, programs like this serve as social proof, demonstrating the quality of student character development while simultaneously strengthening the school's social role (Arif et al., 2024; Kholisussa'di et al., 2022). Because these activities are consistently publicized on the madrasah's digital platform, the community is increasingly aware of the contributions of MTs Al-Amiriyyah, thus increasing the number of prospective students from the area where the village *diniyyah* program is implemented and supporting the sustainable operation of the madrasah.



Fig 2. Documentation of the Special Tahfidz Class Program

The documentation above is one of the activities of the village *diniyyah* foster child program at MTs Al-Amiriyyah Darussalam Blokagung Banyuwangi which is part of an inbound marketing strategy based on religious content typical of Islamic boarding schools. The documentation above is one of the activities of the Village Diniyyah Foster Child program at MTs Al-Amiriyyah Darussalam Blokagung Banyuwangi which is part of an inbound marketing strategy based on religious content typical of Islamic boarding schools (Hafid & Putri, 2024). Through the publication of Quran teaching activities, worship assistance, and yellow book recitation (Achmadin & Fattah, 2023). This content strengthens the image of MTs Al-Amiriyyah as an institution that not only focuses on formal education, but also actively contributes to strengthening the religious character of the local community (Marantika & Fauzi, 2025; Saepudin et al., 2023). Regular publication of village *diniyyah* activities on the madrasah website and social media has been proven to increase community involvement and expand the reach of prospective applicants, in line with the view of Hemsley-Brown & Oplatka (2015) that socio-religious activities can be effective social proof in increasing public trust in Islamic educational institutions.

### **MTs Al-Amiriyyah Students' practice teaching/Outing Class Activities (To External Schools & Institutions)**

Research findings indicate that practice teaching and outing class activities undertaken by MTs Al-Amiriyyah students at external schools, partner educational institutions, or religious institutions significantly increase the school's digital exposure. Activities such as basic teaching practice, administrative services, literacy visits, and observations of the external school environment are regularly publicized by the madrasah's public relations team. Media observations indicate that posts about practice teaching activities have a high level of reach and are among the most frequently shared content by parents and alumni. This finding aligns with the view of (Marantika & Fauzi, 2025; Utami & Jelita, 2021) that documenting students' real-life activities enhances the institution's credibility in the public eye.

Practice teaching and outing class activities showcase MTs Al-Amiriyyah students' competencies in real social contexts, creating authentic content that strengthens the madrasah's branding. When these activities are publicized on the website and social media, the public sees concrete evidence that students are able to demonstrate confidence, interact, and play an active role in environments outside the Islamic boarding school. This strategy supports the concept of authentic engagement in inbound marketing (Shaikh & Alam Kazmi, 2022), which involves presenting a strong narrative based on real-life activities that can increase public trust. Thus, practice teaching/outing classes directly contribute to improving the reputation of the madrasah, expanding inter-institutional networks, and ultimately positively impacting the increase in enrollment and the operational sustainability of MTs Al-Amiriyyah.



**Fig 3. Documentation of the Special Tahfidz Class Program**

The documentation above is one of the outing class program activities at Elementary School Darussalam Blokagung Banyuwangi carried out by students of MTs Al-Amiriyyah Darussalam Blokagung Banyuwangi, which is also part of an inbound marketing strategy based on religious content typical of Islamic boarding schools (Bin Lahuri et al., 2024; Shaikh & Alam Kazmi, 2022). Through this activity, students not only learn outside the classroom, but also interact directly with partner institutions, thereby demonstrating the competence, independence, and religious character fostered by the madrasah (Napi'ah & Ayuningsih, 2025; Rofiah et al., 2025). Publication of this kind of outing class activity in the form of photos, videos, and narratives of the activity helps strengthen the image of MTs Al-Amiriyyah as an institution that actively provides contextual learning experiences and is oriented towards moral formation (Hung et al., 2022; Zhao et al., 2025). This authentic and engaging outing class content serves as authentic engagement in inbound marketing, as it showcases real student activities that can increase public trust and support an increase in the number of madrasah registrants each year.

## CONCLUSION

The Integrated Inbound Marketing Model at MTs Al-Amiriyyah Darussalam has proven highly effective in increasing student enrollment by leveraging the differentiation of Islamic boarding school-specific religious services as the main pillar of digital content. This strategy centers on three flagship programs: the Special Tahfidz/Excellent Class, the Village *Diniyyah* Program, and the practice teaching/Outing Class Activity. These three pillars produce content with highly religious, achievement-based, and social values that is easily shared, thus attracting the specific interests of prospective students, especially from outside Banyuwangi, who prioritize Islamic boarding school-based religious strengthening. The Tahfidz/Excellent Program functions as a content magnet that showcases academic achievements and memorization, while the Village *Diniyyah* serves as social proof of the *madrasah's* contribution and dedication to the surrounding community. The practice teaching/Outing Class serves as authentic engagement that showcases students' competence and independence in the external environment.

Overall, the success of the Inbound Marketing Model at MTs Al-Amiriyyah Darussalam lies in the madrasah's ability to transform its institutional strengths (the unique characteristics of the Islamic boarding school) into high-value digital assets. The content generated from these authentic and routine activities successfully creates emotional and spiritual connections with prospective parents, increasing engagement and shareability levels far beyond traditional promotional methods. Implementing this strategy ensures that all school operational activities, from Tahfidz (Quran Recitation) training to community service, automatically become the most credible and authentic promotional materials. Thus, the Special Class Program, Village *Diniyyah*, and Outing Class serve as the foundation of the Inbound Marketing Model that is able to consistently strengthen the reputation, expand the reach of potential applicants, and ultimately, contribute significantly to the increase in the number of applicants each year, which ensures the sustainability of the madrasah's operations amidst the competitive Islamic education market.

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