International Journal of Education, Vocational and Social Science
https://e-journal.citakonsulindo.or.id/index.php/IJEVSS
E-ISSN : 2963 4954
IJEVSS

Dynamics Of New Student Enrollment In Madrasah Ibtidaiyah: A Study Of The Factors Causing Fluctuations

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Abstract

New student admission is a critical indicator for the sustainability of educational institutions, including Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (Islamic elementary school). This study aims to analyze the dynamics of fluctuation in new student admissions at MI Bahrul Ulum Tangsil Kulon, Bondowoso, focusing on three aspects: internal factors within the madrasah, external factors influencing community interest, and relevant solutions to address the fluctuation. This research employs a qualitative approach using a case study design. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with the madrasah head, teachers, and parents, three weeks of field observation, and documentation studies of admission records and institutional policy documents from 2023 to 2025. Data were analyzed through data reduction, data display, and verification. The findings reveal that the number of new students declined from 14 in 2023 to only 7 in 2025. The dominant internal factors were limited facilities and weak digital promotion, while the Qur'an memorization (tahfidz) program emerged as an underutilized strength. The main external factors were the emergence of new public elementary schools and shifting population demographics. The study recommends an integrated three-cluster solution strengthening digital promotion, improving service quality, and building community partnerships to be implemented synergistically to stabilize new student admissions.

Keywords: new student admission, fluctuation, madrasah ibtidaiyah

INTRODUCTION

The admission of new students (PPDB) is a crucial aspect of the sustainability of

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educational institutions, including Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (Sutarni & Mahmudah, 2025). A stable student enrollment serves as an indicator of the institution's successful management and the level of public trust in the quality of education provided (Samsudin, 2025). In recent years, various madrasahs have experienced significant annual fluctuations in applicant numbers (Sirozi, 2025). This situation is influenced by various factors, both within and outside educational institutions. In addition, government policies regarding student admission systems, changes in public perceptions of religious education, and developments in information technology also influence the dynamics of new student enrollment (Sirozi, 2025). This phenomenon indicates that fluctuations in student enrollment are not merely administrative issues but are closely related to management quality, educational marketing strategies, and the institution's ability to adapt to societal changes (Kamaludin et al., 2025).

Fluctuations in the number of new students are also observed at MI Bahrul Ulum Tangsil Kulon in Bondowoso. Based on initial observations, the number of applicants at this madrasah has not always been stable from year to year. In certain years, the number of new students has increased, but in the following year, it has decreased. This situation is believed to be influenced by several factors, including limited educational facilities, suboptimal strategies for promoting madrasahs, and competition with other schools in the surrounding area (Yunus, 2024). In addition, external factors such as changes in public preferences regarding educational institutions, limited access to information, and the influence of the social environment also affect parents' interest in enrolling their children in these madrasahs (Nuroniah et al., 2024; Yunus, 2024). The impact of these fluctuations can affect the continuity of learning activities, madrasah program planning, and human resource management at these educational institutions (Prasetyaningrum & Marmoah, 2022). Therefore, an in-depth analysis is needed to identify the factors causing these fluctuations and to find appropriate solutions so that the number of new students can be more stable in the future.

Several previous studies have examined various aspects related to the admission of new students to madrasahs. Research shows that the strategies of madrasah principals, the planning of the new student admission program, and the management of the new student admission committee play a crucial role in increasing the number of applicants (Nuroniah et al., 2024). Other studies also emphasize the importance of promotional strategies, disseminating information to the public, and strengthening the institution's image through religious activities and student achievements as efforts to attract prospective students (Wahid et al., 2025). Furthermore, the use of information technology in digital-based enrollment systems is considered capable of

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streamlining administrative processes and improving public access to information (Anggara et al., 2025; Sholikah et al., 2026). However, most of these studies have focused primarily on student admission management strategies or enrollment administration systems. Research that specifically analyzes the internal and external factors causing fluctuations in the number of new students at the Madrasah Ibtidaiyah level remains relatively limited. Therefore, this study highlights the dynamics of fluctuations in new student enrollment at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah by contextually revealing internal and external factors, distinguishing it from previous studies that focused on increasing the number of applicants.

Research on fluctuations in new student enrollment at madrasahs is of considerable urgency in the context of the development of Islamic educational institutions (Muiz et al., 2024). Stability in student enrollment is closely linked to the operational sustainability of madrasahs, including in the planning of learning programs, human resource management, and the development of educational facilities and infrastructure (Sutarni & Mahmudah, 2025). If student enrollment continues to decline, this could impact the effectiveness of teaching and learning activities as well as the sustainability of the educational institution itself (Muiz et al., 2024). Furthermore, understanding the factors that influence public interest in madrasahs is also crucial for formulating institutional development strategies that are more adaptable to social change (Choir & Sujono, 2021). Through this study, it is hoped that madrasahs can gain a clearer picture of the internal and external factors affecting fluctuations in new student enrollment. The results of this study are also expected to serve as a basis for evaluation by madrasah administrators in improving the quality of educational services and enhancing the institution's appeal in the eyes of the public.

Based on this background, this study aims to analyze the various factors that influence fluctuations in new student enrollment at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah, specifically at MI Bahrul Ulum Tangsil Kulon Bondowoso. More specifically, this study seeks to answer several research questions: first, what internal aspects of the madrasah influence fluctuations in new student enrollment at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah? Second, what external factors influence the interest of the community or parents in enrolling their children in this madrasah? Third, what are relevant solutions to address fluctuations in new student enrollment so that student numbers can be more stable from year to year? By answering these questions, this study is expected to provide a more comprehensive picture of the dynamics of new student enrollment as well as strategies that madrasahs can implement to increase the number of applicants.

This study is based on the assumption that fluctuations in the number of new students are

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not influenced by a single factor but rather result from the interaction of various interrelated internal and external factors. Internal factors may include the quality of madrasah management, the institution's promotional strategies, the availability of educational facilities, and the quality of teaching staff (Pauji & Badruzaman, 2025). Meanwhile, external factors may include public perception of the madrasah, the socioeconomic conditions of the surrounding community, government education policies, and competition with other educational institutions (Pauji & Badruzaman, 2025). If these factors can be systematically identified, madrasahs can formulate more effective strategies to increase public interest in enrolling their children. Thus, the results of this study are expected not only to make an academic contribution but also to provide practical implications for madrasah management in developing new student enrollment strategies that are more effective, sustainable, and aligned with community needs.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative research design using a case study approach. The qualitative method was chosen because this study aims to gain an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon of fluctuations in new student enrollment and the factors influencing it in a real-world context (Septiana & Khoiriyah, 2024). Through this method, the researcher can comprehensively gather information regarding conditions in the field based on the perspectives of informants directly involved in the new student admission process (Assyakurrohim et al., 2022; Ilhami et al., 2024). A case study was chosen because this research focuses on a specific educational institution, allowing the researcher to conduct a more in-depth exploration of the phenomenon under study (Pahleviannur et al., 2022). The unit of analysis or subject of study in this research is Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Bahrul Ulum, located in Tangsil Kulon, Bondowoso Regency. The selection of this research location was based on the phenomenon of year-to-year fluctuations in the number of new student admissions. The information sources for this study were obtained from several informants considered to have knowledge and experience related to the new student admission process, namely the school principal, teachers, and students at the madrasah. These informants were selected because they are directly involved in educational activities and can provide relevant information regarding the internal and external conditions that influence the number of applicants to the madrasah.

Data collection in this study was conducted using several techniques, namely observation, interviews, and documentation (Ardyan et al., 2023). Observations were conducted to obtain a firsthand understanding of the conditions at the madrasah, learning activities, and various factors

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related to the institution's appeal to the community (Jailani, 2023). Through observation, the researcher was able to record various phenomena occurring in real-time within the madrasah environment. Furthermore, in-depth interviews were conducted with the principal, teachers, and students to gather information regarding the factors influencing fluctuations in new student enrollment, from both internal and external aspects of the madrasah (Jailani, 2023). Documentation techniques were also used to supplement the research data, such as data on the number of new students, archives of madrasah activities, and other documents relevant to the study (Jailani, 2023; Rosmita et al., 2024). The collected data was then analyzed using qualitative data analysis techniques, which include three main stages: data reduction, data display, and data verification (Rosmita et al., 2024). Data reduction is carried out by selecting, simplifying, and focusing on data relevant to the research objectives. Subsequently, the reduced data is presented in the form of a descriptive narrative through a data display process, thereby making it easier for researchers to understand the patterns of relationships among the data. The final stage is data verification or drawing conclusions, which is carried out in stages to obtain valid and accountable research findings (Ardyan et al., 2023; Nurfajriani et al., 2024).

RESULT

Internal factors at madrasahs that influence fluctuations in new student enrollment at madrasah ibtidaiyah

This study reveals various internal aspects of the madrasah that directly influence fluctuations in new student enrollment at MI Bahrul Ulum Tangsil Kulon Bondowoso. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with the madrasah principal, three teachers, and three parents of students who were purposively selected. The interview results indicate that several internal dimensions play the most dominant role in influencing prospective students' interest, namely: the quality of educational facilities and infrastructure, the institution's promotional strategies, the competence of teaching staff, and the management of extracurricular activities. During the interviews, the madrasah principal acknowledged that the limited availability of adequate classrooms and the lack of modern learning equipment are major obstacles in attracting parents. Additionally, promotional strategies that remain conventional and rely on word-of-mouth were deemed ineffective in today's digital age. These findings align with the view that the institution's internal aspects are key factors in determining the madrasah's appeal to the community.

The following is a summary of the interview results, which outlines the main themes,

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representative statements from the informants, and the frequency of each internal aspect mentioned by the respondents. This table systematically organizes the interview findings so that patterns in the informants' responses can be more clearly identified.

Table 1. Summary of Interview Results: Internal Aspects of the Madrasah Affecting Fluctuations in New Student Admissions

No.	Internal Aspect	Representative Informant Statement	Informant	Frequency	Impact Category
1	**Facilities and Infrastructure**	*"Our classrooms are still inadequate, and we do not yet have modern instructional media."*	Head of Madrasah	7/9	Negative (Barrier)
2	**Promotion Strategy**	*"We have not actively utilized social media for new student admission (PPDB) promotion."*	Teacher 1	6/9	Negative (Barrier)
3	**Teacher Competence**	*"Several teachers have not participated in training on current teaching methodologies."*	Teacher 2	5/9	Negative (Barrier)
4	**Extracurricular Activities**	*"The Qur'an memorization (Tahfidz) and Islamic cultural arts programs are unique attractions of this madrasah."*	Parent 1	5/9	Positive (Supporting Factor)
5	**Institutional Image**	*"This madrasah is well known for its strong religious values."*	Parent 2	4/9	Positive (Supporting Factor)
6	**New Student Admission (PPDB) Management**	*"The PPDB committee is poorly organized, and*	Parent 3	4/9	Negative (Barrier)

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		information is often delivered late."			
7	**Madrasah Principal's Leadership**	*"There have been positive changes since the new principal assumed office."*	Teacher 3	3/9	Positive (Supporting Factor)

Based on the data presented in Table 1, it can be explained that of the seven internal aspects identified through the interviews, four act as barriers and three act as enablers for the admission of new students. The aspect that appeared most frequently in the informants' statements was facilities and infrastructure, mentioned by 7 out of 9 informants (77.8%), followed by promotional strategies, which were mentioned by 6 informants (66.7%). Teacher competence and extracurricular activities were each mentioned by 5 informants (55.6%), while institutional image and the new student admission management process each received 4 mentions (44.4%). The leadership of the madrasah principal was mentioned the least, by 3 informants (33.3%). In terms of impact, four aspects were categorized as barriers that led to a decline in prospective students' interest, while the other three aspects were assessed as supporting factors that helped maintain the madrasah's existence amid competition with other educational institutions in the surrounding area.

Patterns emerging from the interview data reveal that physical infrastructure dominated the informants' concerns, particularly among parents and madrasah principals. This reflects a growing trend in society toward prioritizing the quality of the learning environment as a key factor in selecting an educational institution. Promotional aspects ranked second, indicating that limitations in modern marketing strategies represent a significant gap that madrasahs have yet to fully capitalize on. Interestingly, Islamic-values-based extracurricular activities hold a unique appeal for parents, positioning them as a competitive asset that has not yet been fully maximized. This illustrates a duality within the madrasah's internal conditions: on one hand, some shortcomings need to be addressed; on the other, there are strengths that need to be reinforced. Grouping these aspects into "obstacles" and "supporting factors" reveals that fluctuations in new student enrollment do not stem from a single factor but rather from a complex configuration of various interacting internal elements.

From an analytical standpoint, the dominance of facilities and infrastructure in informants' perceptions can be explained through the perspective of educational marketing, in which the

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physical condition of an institution is the most tangible element that prospective education consumers can easily observe and evaluate (Indriani et al., 2021). When physical facilities are deemed inadequate, this directly creates a negative image in the public's mind, which can reduce enrollment interest. Weak promotional strategies reflect the institution's unpreparedness to respond to shifts in the public's information-seeking behavior, which is now digital-based (Rumra et al., 2025). Meanwhile, the high appreciation for Islamic-based extracurricular activities indicates that madrasahs still possess strong comparative advantages when managed and communicated effectively to the public. This interpretation confirms that fluctuations in student enrollment are not solely due to external factors but also reflect the institution's internal readiness to manage service quality, image, and public communication. Thus, strengthening these internal aspects is a strategic step that must be prioritized by madrasah leadership.

External Factors Affecting Interest in PPDB Enrollment

In addition to internal factors, this study also identified external factors that influence fluctuations in new student enrollment at MI Bahrul Ulum Tangsil Kulon. Data were collected through direct observation conducted over three weeks, including observations of the madrasah's surrounding environment, the activities of competing educational institutions, and parents' mobility patterns when dropping off and picking up their children. Observations were also made regarding the demographic conditions of the area, which revealed a shift in the elementary-school-age population due to migration from rural to urban areas. Additionally, the researcher noted the presence of several public and private elementary schools within a two-kilometer radius of the madrasah that offer more comprehensive facilities and a wider variety of specialized programs. The accessibility of roads leading to the madrasah and the availability of public transportation were also key focuses of the observations, given that these two aspects directly influence how easily parents can choose an educational institution for their children.

Documentation data, supported by field observations, shows a fluctuating trend in the number of active students and new students over the past three years. The following graph presents a comparison of the number of active female and male students and new students from 2023 to 2025, which visually reflects the dynamics of student enrollment and retention at madrasahs.

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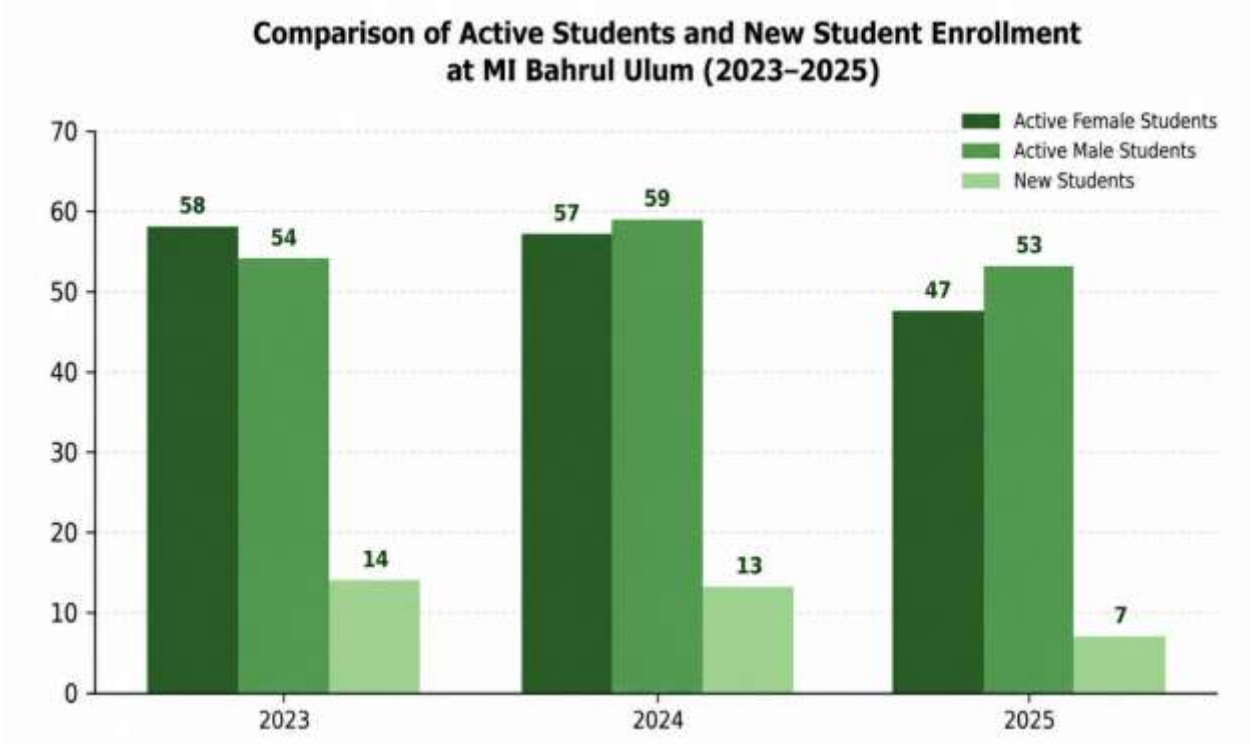


Figure 1. Comparison of the Number of Active Students and New Enrollees at MI Bahrul Ulum for 2023–2025 (Source: Madrasah records, compiled by the researcher)

The graph above presents comparative data on the number of active students and new students over three consecutive years (2023–2025) at MI Bahrul Ulum. In 2023, the number of active female students was recorded at 58 and male students at 54, with 14 new students. The year 2024 showed a slight shift, with the number of active female students decreasing slightly to 57 while the number of male students increased to 59; meanwhile, the number of new students dropped slightly to 13. In 2025, there was a more significant decline across all categories: the number of active female students fell to 47, male students to 53, and most notably, the number of new students dropped to just 7—nearly half the 2023 figure. Overall, the total number of active students in 2023 was 112, in 2024 it was 116, and in 2025 it dropped to 100. The trend in new student enrollment shows a consistent downward pattern over the last three years, falling from 14 to 13 and then to 7.

The information depicted in the observation graph clearly shows a progressive downward trend, particularly in the number of new students. While the decline from 2023 to 2024 was still

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relatively moderate (a decrease of only 1 student, or about 7.1%), the decline from 2024 to 2025 was drastic, with a decrease of 6 students, or nearly 46.2%. This is a highly concerning indicator for the institution's sustainability. The pattern of a sharper decline in the number of active female students compared to male students also suggests the possible influence of demographic factors or gender preferences in the selection of educational institutions within the local community. Field observations revealed that there are at least three major external factors correlated with this downward trend, namely: (1) the presence of public elementary schools with more adequate facilities; (2) a decline in the number of elementary-school-aged children in the village due to the migration of young families to the city; and (3) the perception among some members of the community that public schools offer better academic continuity because they are directly supported by the government.

From an analytical perspective, the drastic decline in the number of new students in 2025, which reached nearly 50%, can be interpreted as a collective response by the community to changes in the local educational landscape. The emergence of public elementary schools with government-funded facilities has created an uneven competitive pressure on private madrasahs that rely on self-generated resources. This phenomenon represents a displacement effect, in which the availability of quality educational options shifts the preferences of a community that previously had few alternatives (NH & Setiawan, 2025). The decline in the school-age population in rural areas is also a structural factor that madrasahs cannot directly control, yet it serves as a backdrop that exacerbates the situation. This interpretation suggests that madrasahs need to proactively assess demographic and competitive changes in their surrounding environment. Without appropriate adaptation strategies to address these external dynamics, fluctuations in new student enrollment will continue and could potentially threaten the institutions' operational sustainability in the medium term.

Relevant Solutions for Addressing Fluctuations in New Student Enrollment

To obtain a comprehensive overview of relevant solutions for addressing fluctuations in new student enrollment, this study analyzed various documents available at MI Bahrul Ulum, including: the madrasah's annual work plan, evaluation reports on the new student enrollment program (PPDB) for the past two years, educational policy documents from the Ministry of Religious Affairs, and previously submitted institutional development proposals. In addition, the researcher also reviewed literature from other elementary madrasahs that have successfully increased their new student enrollment through innovative programs. The document analysis

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yielded three main clusters of solutions relevant for implementation at MI Bahrul Ulum, namely: (1) strengthening digital-based marketing and promotion strategies, (2) gradually improving the quality of educational services and facilities, and (3) building strategic partnerships with the local community and government agencies. These three solution clusters were consistently found in the analyzed documents and were supported by the interview and observation data presented earlier.

The following flowchart presents the recommended solutions derived from the documentation analysis, illustrating the stages of implementing the three main solution clusters in an integrated manner, from problem diagnosis to impact evaluation.

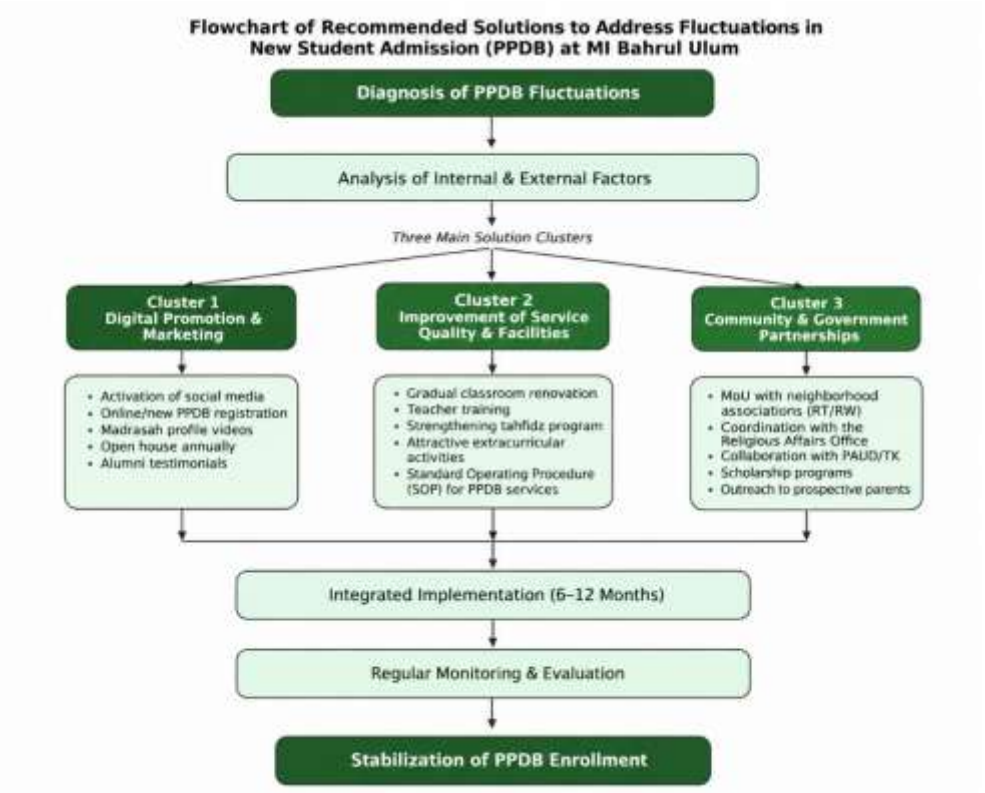


Figure 2. Flowchart of Recommended Solutions to Address Fluctuations in Student Enrollment at MI Bahrul Ulum (Source: Document Analysis, adapted by the researcher)

The following flowchart presents the recommended solutions derived from the documentation analysis. The flowchart in the figure above illustrates an integrated solution framework consisting of three main clusters designed systematically and sequentially. The process

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begins with diagnosing fluctuations in the student admission process (PPDB), followed by an analysis of internal and external factors as identified through interviews and observations. From this analysis, three solution clusters emerged that operate in parallel: Cluster 1 focuses on strengthening digital promotion and marketing through five sub-strategies, including social media activation and the implementation of an online-based PPDB; Cluster 2 centers on improving the quality of services and facilities, including phased renovations, teacher training, and strengthening the Quran memorization (tahfidz) program; and Cluster 3 emphasizes building partnerships with the community and government, including collaboration with early childhood education (PAUD)/kindergarten (TK) institutions as feeder schools and scholarship programs to attract low-income families. These three clusters then converge into an integrated implementation phase expected to last between six and twelve months, followed by periodic monitoring and evaluation, with the ultimate goal of stabilizing the number of new student enrollments, illustrating the stages of implementing the three main solution clusters in an integrated manner, from problem diagnosis to impact evaluation.

The documentation flowchart reflects a holistic, multi-layered approach to solutions, rather than a piecemeal one. The three clusters are designed to work synergistically, such that weaknesses addressed by one cluster are reinforced by the others. The digital promotion cluster addresses the institution's low visibility in the public sphere; the service quality cluster addresses public perceptions of inadequate facilities, while the partnership cluster addresses the need for a stronger external support network. The flowchart also illustrates a structured, phased approach: solutions are not expected to produce immediate results but are designed through a continuous cycle of diagnosis, planning, implementation, and evaluation.

From an analytical perspective, the integrated solution framework outlined in the documentation reflects an awareness that fluctuations in new student enrollment are a multidimensional issue that cannot be resolved by a single solution alone. The digital promotion cluster serves as a response to the shifting information ecosystem now internet-based where a madrasah's absence from digital platforms is tantamount to its absence from the minds of prospective parents. The service quality improvement cluster reflects the principle that public trust is built through real experiences, not merely through promotion thus, the quality directly experienced by students and parents will serve as the most effective long-term marketing tool. The partnership cluster underscores the importance of social and institutional networks in the context of community-based education such as madrasahs. The simultaneous and planned implementation of these three clusters has the potential to create a multiplier effect whose

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impact is far greater than that of partial interventions. Thus, this research paper affirms that the recovery and stabilization of new student enrollment at MI Bahrul Ulum require a long-term commitment, transformative leadership, and active collaboration among all madrasah stakeholders.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study indicate that internal aspects of the madrasah, specifically the condition of facilities and infrastructure and promotional strategies, are the dominant factors influencing fluctuations in new student enrollment at MI Bahrul Ulum Tangsil Kulon Bondowoso. Interview results revealed that 77.8% of informants cited limited physical facilities as the main obstacle, while 66.7% of informants assessed the institution's still-conventional promotional strategies as a crucial weakness. These findings align with the views of Pauji and Badruzaman (2025), who assert that the quality of educational marketing strategy management directly influences an institution's ability to increase the number of new students (Pauji & Badruzaman, 2025). Furthermore, research by Sutarni and Mahmudah (2025) also emphasizes that the role of a professional madrasah principal is crucial for the sustainability and appeal of elementary madrasahs amid increasingly intense competition among educational institutions (Sutarni & Mahmudah, 2025). These conditions indicate that improving internal aspects is not merely a strategic choice but a fundamental necessity that must be addressed immediately so that madrasahs can remain competitive and relevant in the eyes of the public.

On the other hand, the findings of the observation show that external factors also play a significant role in shaping the downward trend in new student enrollment. The data show a drastic decline in the number of new students from 14 in 2023 to just 7 in 2025, which is strongly correlated with the presence of higher-quality public elementary schools in the surrounding area and a decrease in the population of elementary-school-aged children due to population migration. This phenomenon aligns with the findings of Sirozi (2025), who states that competition among educational institutions in the digital age is becoming increasingly intense and requires madrasahs to strengthen their competitiveness more proactively (Sirozi, 2025). Kamaludin et al. (2025) also found similar results in the context of elementary schools, where the implementation of customer relationship management proved effective in retaining and increasing student enrollment amid external competitive pressures (Kamaludin et al., 2025). Thus, madrasahs' response to changes in the local educational landscape can no longer be reactive but must be based on a deep understanding of the demographic and competitive dynamics of their surrounding environment.

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Interestingly, despite facing significant internal and external pressures, the study's findings also identified potential competitive advantages of madrasahs that have not yet been fully optimized. The Qur'an memorization program and extracurricular activities based on Islamic values have proven to be a unique draw for some parents, as reflected in the statements of 55.6% of the informants interviewed. This finding reinforces the argument by Choir and Sujono (2021) that elementary madrasahs' strategies for fostering public interest heavily depend on the institutions' ability to effectively communicate the strengths of their Islamic values (Choir & Sujono, 2021). Wahid et al. (2025) also emphasize that strengthening an institution's image through student achievements and religious activities constitutes a form of organic marketing that yields a stronger long-term impact compared to paid promotions (Wahid et al., 2025). This suggests that madrasah development strategies should ideally be grounded in an authentic institutional identity while simultaneously modernizing the ways in which these strengths are communicated to a public that is increasingly digitally connected.

Further analysis of the documentation yielded a three-cluster integrated solution framework that reflects a comprehensive approach to addressing fluctuations in new student enrollment. The digital promotion cluster, the service quality improvement cluster, and the community partnership cluster are designed to work synergistically, thereby producing a multiplier effect that could not be achieved through partial interventions. These findings align with Samsudin's (2025) recommendations, which emphasize the importance of comprehensive strategic breakthroughs to increase student enrollment in educational institutions, rather than relying solely on a single flagship program (Samsudin, 2025). The use of a website-based information system and online student admission (PPDB) has proven capable of significantly expanding the reach of madrasah information to prospective students. Therefore, the integrated and planned implementation of the three solution clusters over a period of six to twelve months is a realistic and measurable strategic step for MI Bahrul Ulum to begin reversing the downward trend in new student enrollment.

Overall, this study confirms that fluctuations in new student enrollment at madrasah ibtidaiyah are a multidimensional phenomenon that cannot be explained by a single variable but rather result from the complex interaction of interrelated internal and external factors. Nuroniah et al. (2024) previously demonstrated that the effective implementation of the new student admission policy (PPDB) impacts the overall effectiveness of madrasah management; therefore, improvements to the new student admission system must be viewed as an integral part of institutional management reform. Prasetyaningrum and Marmoah (2022) add that a systematic

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SWOT analysis of student management serves as a crucial foundation for designing adaptive and sustainable PPDB strategies (Prasetyaningrum & Marmoah, 2022). Thus, the findings of this study offer both theoretical and practical contributions: theoretically, they enrich our understanding of the dynamics of the PPDB process in private elementary madrasahs; and practically, they provide a concrete roadmap for MI Bahrul Ulum and similar institutions to address the issue of fluctuations in new student enrollment through an integrated approach grounded in the strength of the institution's Islamic identity.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings and discussion presented, it can be concluded that fluctuations in new student enrollment at MI Bahrul Ulum Tangsil Kulon Bondowoso are influenced by a complex interplay between internal and external factors affecting the madrasah. The downward trend in the number of new students from 14 in 2023 to 7 in 2025, representing a decline of nearly 50% over the past three years, indicates that this issue is serious and requires a comprehensive approach, rather than piecemeal, partial solutions.

First, the interview results revealed that internal aspects of the madrasah are the dominant factors shaping public perception. Limited facilities and infrastructure (cited by 77.8% of informants) and weak digital-based promotional strategies (cited by 66.7% of informants) are the two main obstacles. However, on the other hand, the tahfidz program and extracurricular activities based on Islamic values (cited by 55.6% of informants) proved to be competitive advantages that have not yet been optimally utilized as a draw for the institution.

Second, the results of the observations indicate that external factors specifically the emergence of two new public elementary schools in the surrounding area and demographic shifts resulting from the migration of young people to the city have also accelerated the decline in enrollment interest. This phenomenon represents a displacement effect that is shifting community preferences regarding educational choices and requires madrasahs to interpret environmental dynamics more proactively and adaptively.

Third, the results of the documentation analysis yielded an integrated solution framework consisting of three strategic clusters: strengthening digital promotion and marketing; improving the quality of services and facilities; and building partnerships with communities and government agencies. These three clusters are designed to work synergistically and have the potential to generate a multiplier effect if implemented in an integrated manner over a period of six to twelve months, followed by periodic monitoring and evaluation.

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Thus, it can be concluded that stabilizing and increasing the number of new students at MI Bahrul Ulum cannot be achieved through a single intervention but requires a long-term commitment, transformative leadership from the madrasah principal, and active collaboration among teachers, parents, the community, and the government, all while continuing to emphasize the strengthening of Islamic identity as the institution's primary selling point.

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