

# Marketing Strategy Analysis of Neutron Tutoriang Banjarmasin in Indonesia's Nonformal Education Sector

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## Abstract

**Background:** Competition in the tutoring industry in Indonesia is increasing along with the increasing demand for quality education outside of formal school. In this context, Neutron Tutoring Banjarmasin faces the challenge of not only attracting new students but also maintaining the loyalty of existing students.

**Research Urgency:** The urgency of this research lies in the importance of understanding how Neutron Banjarmasin responds to the increasingly competitive tutoring industry. With many options available to students and parents, effective marketing strategies have become essential. The findings of this study are expected to provide practical guidance for similar institutions, especially in the post-pandemic era that demands digital adaptation and hybrid learning.

**Research Objectives:** This study aims to analyze the marketing strategies implemented by Neutron Banjarmasin Tutoring in order to attract and retain students in the midst of fierce industry competition.

**Research Method:** Through a qualitative approach with a case study design, this study collects data through interviews with management, surveys of students, and analysis of digital marketing media channels used.

**Research Findings:** The results show that digital marketing, referral programs, and service personalization contribute significantly to the increase in the number of new students and customer loyalty. The use of social media and paid advertising has a positive impact, while a personalized approach to service increases student satisfaction.

**Research Conclusion:** Neutron Tutoring Banjarmasin has demonstrated that an integrated marketing strategy combining digital presence, personal engagement, and community-based referrals can effectively address challenges in student acquisition and loyalty. The success lies in understanding the target audience, utilizing appropriate communication channels, and continuously evaluating marketing performance. This case illustrates the importance of adapting marketing practices to both technological advancements and customer expectations.

**Research Novelty/ Contibution:** The implications of these findings can be recommendations for other tutoring institutions in developing more effective marketing strategies focus nonformal education for tutoring.

**Keywords:** Marketing strategy, tutoring, digital marketing, service personalization, Neutron Banjarmasin

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## INTRODUCTION

The tutoring industry in Indonesia has experienced rapid growth in the last decade, accompanied by increasing public awareness of the importance of additional education outside the formal education system. Data from the Ministry of Education and Culture (2023) shows that the number of tutoring institutions in Indonesia has increased significantly in recent years, indicating a rising demand for supplementary educational services. Considering the various challenges faced, tutoring institutions such as Neutron Banjarmasin Tutoring must implement effective marketing strategies to attract new students' attention and maintain the loyalty of existing students. In this context, digital marketing, word-of-mouth promotion, and personalization approaches are key elements that must be utilized. Therefore, this study aims to identify and analyze the marketing strategies implemented by Neutron Banjarmasin, as well as their impact on the success of the institution in reaching and retaining students.

Tutoring serves as a forum to support students in deepening their understanding of the subject matter taught at school. According to Angayomi et al. (2021), tutoring plays an important role in helping students who need additional information and learning to overcome difficulties in their learning process. This basic concept emphasizes the strategic role of the guidance institution in creating added value for students. In addition, innovations in educational technology and the use of digital platforms have become significant trends that affect the way tutoring institutions operate (Leba et al., 2021).

Based on field observations, the marketing practices at Neutron Tutoring Banjarmasin show that they actively use social media and referral strategies to attract new students. However, the problem that arises is that there is very tight competition in this industry, which results in both students and students having to compete intensively for a place in a superior institution. From secondary data, various research articles show that success in attracting students depends not only on traditional marketing techniques, but also on their ability to adapt to changes in communication and interaction methods required in the digital age (Hendrawati et al., 2021).

Taking into account the existing problems, the novelty of this research lies in the focus of the analysis of marketing strategies adapted by Neutron Tutoring Banjarmasin in the midst of the dynamics of competition in the tutoring industry. The purpose of this research is to explore the key variables that influence the success of an institution's marketing and identify innovative ways that can be implemented. This research is expected to contribute to the development of more effective marketing strategies for tutoring institutions in Indonesia.

The urgency of this research stems from the growing necessity for tutoring institutions to adapt to the rapidly evolving educational landscape, especially in Indonesia, where the demand for supplementary education continues to rise. In an increasingly competitive market, institutions are not only challenged to maintain operational sustainability but also to differentiate themselves through effective marketing strategies that directly influence student satisfaction and retention. Neutron Tutoring Banjarmasin serves as a relevant case study due to its strategic efforts in responding to these challenges through digital marketing, service personalization, and referral programs.

This research seeks to provide in-depth insights into how marketing dynamics in the tutoring industry operate in real practice—moving beyond theoretical frameworks to uncover how strategies are actually implemented and perceived by both management and students (Agustika et al., 2023). By analyzing the direct impact of marketing efforts on student acquisition and loyalty, this study responds to a critical gap in existing literature, particularly regarding regionally based educational institutions in Indonesia.

The contribution of this study is twofold. First, it offers practical recommendations that can be adopted by Neutron Tutoring Banjarmasin to further enhance its competitive positioning. Second, and more broadly, it delivers a replicable model of effective marketing practices that can benefit other tutoring institutions aiming to improve their service quality, student engagement, and brand visibility. As highlighted by Agustika et al. (2023), aligning institutional strategies with market needs and student expectations is essential for sustainability in the educational services sector. This research supports that notion by offering evidence-based insights that are both actionable and adaptable across various institutional contexts.

In addition, in the post-pandemic era, where hybrid learning models and digital platforms have become integral to educational delivery, this study underscores the importance of digital engagement in shaping student experiences and institutional success. Therefore, the findings are not only timely but also highly relevant to the ongoing transformation of educational practices in Indonesia and beyond.

## METHODS

This study employs a qualitative approach with a case study design to analyze the marketing strategies implemented by Neutron Tutoring Banjarmasin. The choice of a case study design is driven by the desire to gain an in-depth understanding of the institution's marketing practices within a specific context.

### Participants and Data Collection

The research involved eight participants, comprising the institution's manager, two marketing staff members, and five students enrolled in the mentorship program. The limited number of participants represents a limitation of the study, as it does not allow for generalization to all tutoring institutions in Indonesia. However, the focus of this research is to gain a deep understanding of the marketing strategies implemented by Neutron Tutoring Banjarmasin, thus a smaller sample size is deemed sufficient to achieve the research objectives.

Data was collected using three main techniques: in-depth interviews, student surveys, and document analysis. In-depth interviews were conducted with management and marketing staff to identify marketing strategies and activities being undertaken. The student survey aimed to gather information about their experience and satisfaction with the service, as well as to identify areas for improvement in marketing elements. Document analysis included the collection of promotional materials, content from social media, and advertisements that had been posted, with the aim of understanding the various marketing practices implemented by the institution.

### Research Procedures

The research procedure followed several stages, beginning with preparation, which involved developing research instruments, selecting participants, and obtaining permission to conduct interviews and document analysis. The next stage was data collection, where interviews with management and staff, and surveys were conducted simultaneously. After data collection was completed, the analysis was carried out using a descriptive approach to identify patterns and themes emerging from the interviews, surveys, and documents collected.

The research instrument used consisted of a questionnaire for student surveys, which included a Likert scale to measure students' satisfaction and perception of tutoring services. Additionally, an interview guide containing open-ended questions was used to delve into the opinions and experiences of the interviewees.

### Data Credibility

To ensure data validity, the study employed several steps, including data triangulation by collecting information from multiple sources, as well as member checks to confirm data interpretation with participants. Data analysis was conducted descriptively, with steps that included data categorization, narrative construction, and interpretation of results within a broader research context. This aimed to gain in-depth insight into the key elements of the marketing strategy implemented by Neutron Tutoring Banjarmasin, as well as its contribution to the institution's success in attracting and retaining students.

### Research Ethics

This research was conducted with due consideration for research ethics. Before conducting interviews, participants were provided with information about the research purpose, procedures, and their right to decline or withdraw from the study. Informed consent was obtained from all participants before data collection commenced.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The rise of digital technology has profoundly transformed the marketing strategies employed by educational institutions in the highly competitive tutoring industry. Notably, social media platforms stand out as crucial instruments for attracting and retaining students. Recent research underscores the importance of authenticity in messaging on these platforms. Cumberledge Qadri & Tyana (2024) assert that direct interaction and collaborative communication on social media significantly enhance the recruitment process by fostering trust among prospective students, which reflects a broader trend noted in educational settings (Zulkipli et al., 2023). This trend is corroborated by Zulkipli et al., (2023), who highlight that educational institutions utilizing digital marketing techniques experience substantial success in increasing new student enrollments (Kolhar et

al., 2021). Specifically, at Neutron Tutoring, leveraging platforms like Instagram and Facebook facilitates more personalized engagement, aligning with findings that suggest such interactions effectively nurture relationships with potential students.

In addition to social media efforts, referral programs serve as another strategic marketing element. By encouraging current students to recommend the institution to peers, Neutron Tutoring capitalizes on existing social networks to enhance its visibility. This method operates under the concept of viral marketing, fostering an organic growth model that has been beneficial in other educational contexts (Zulkipli et al., 2023; Bungai et al., 2024). Studies indicate that these referral mechanisms not only boost visibility but also instill a sense of community among participants, further increasing the likelihood of new student enrollment (Purewal et al., 2021).

Personalization of services is another pivotal aspect of Neutron Tutoring's marketing strategy. Kolhar et al. Ramadhani (2023) reveals that tailoring services to meet the individual needs of students significantly enhances satisfaction and retention rates (Mofatteh, 2021). Promotional offers, such as free consultations and early application discounts, effectively cater to the diverse needs of students, thereby reinforcing their loyalty to the institution. This approach aligns with contemporary marketing practices that prioritize customer-centric strategies to cultivate lasting relationships and ensure satisfaction (Javeed, 2022).

### Social Media

Social media not only serves as a platform to convey information but also as an interactive tool that allows educational institutions to communicate directly with prospective students and their parents. As explained by Bungai et al. (2024; Adeoye et al., 2024), digital marketing strategies can help schools to become more visible and attractive, by using promotional techniques such as competitions or awards on social media. This strategy not only increases engagement but also creates a strong sense of community among students, which in turn can encourage word-of-mouth recommendations and new student acquisition through informal channels, which has proven to be very effective in educational contexts (Bungai et al., 2024).

The implementation of innovative engagement strategies in educational contexts significantly enhances students' participation and fosters a strong community atmosphere. Such strategies stimulate interaction and encourage informal channels of word-of-mouth, which can aid in attracting new students. For instance, Mehta emphasizes the necessity of engaging pedagogy to inspire students and cultivate a lasting interest in learning environments, particularly in gerontology education, illustrating the broader applicability of engaging methods across various disciplines (Mehta, 2020). This aligns with the findings of Choi and Brochu, who elucidate how student leadership and engagement programs promote academic success among English-as-an-Additional-Language (EAL) nursing students, underlining that a participative approach in learning can yield significant benefits in professional development and knowledge acquisition (Choi & Brochu, 2020).

Moreover, D'Souza et al. highlight the essential role of student engagement in clinical courses, noting its contribution to critical thinking and cognitive skill acquisition, which indirectly bolsters the community's cohesiveness in educational settings (D'Souza et al., 2013). Similarly, Morton et al. discuss the efficacy of blended learning models, suggesting that student interaction strategies are vital for optimizing engagement and fostering a collaborative learning environment that can facilitate knowledge retention and community building (Morton et al., 2016). According to Oviawe, understanding interactive instructional strategies is pivotal; effective engagement practices are beneficial for academic performance and integral to creating a supportive learning environment (Oviawe, 2020).

In the digital age, the role of social media in enhancing student engagement and fostering community interaction is noteworthy. Research by Song indicates that active participation in social media facilitates identity formation among students, suggesting that informal digital networks can significantly enhance community spirit and drive engagement, ultimately aiding in student recruitment efforts through positive social proof (Song, 2023). Furthermore, the scoping review by Kassab et al. affirms that diverse methods of engagement lead to a more comprehensive understanding of the educational experience, indicating that multi-faceted approaches enhance both community connectivity and academic outcomes (Kassab et al., 2022).

Social media serves as more than just a channel for conveying information; It acts as an interactive tool that allows educational institutions to communicate directly with prospective students and their parents. This means that educational institutions can be more responsive to students' needs and questions, improving their ability to answer concerns and provide support in real-time. As explained by Bungai et al. Bungai et al. (2024), digital marketing strategies can increase school visibility and attractiveness through innovative promotional

techniques, such as competitions and awards run on social media. Therefore, social media allows educational institutions to build and maintain ongoing relationships with their audiences.

The use of social media platforms in educational marketing strategies not only leads to increased visibility, but also serves to strengthen community among students. When educational institutions encourage interaction through engaging content and competition, students feel more connected and engaged. According to Zulkipli et al. (Zulkipli et al., 2023), digital marketing has the ability to reach a wider audience and offer opportunities for more significant engagement, both locally and globally. These interactions can increase a sense of belonging and community among students, which is an important factor for creating an environment that encourages word-of-mouth recommendations.

The sense of community created through involvement on social media can also encourage recommendations between students, which is one of the most effective marketing channels in the educational context. Research shows that satisfied students are more likely to recommend their school to peers and family. This is in line with findings from studies showing that word-of-mouth marketing (WOM) has a strong impact on parents' and students' decisions when choosing an educational institution, given that recommendations given by trusted individuals are often considered more credible than formal advertising, as noted by Mahardhika and Arintowati (Mahardhika & Arintowati, 2021).

Overall, the integration of digital marketing with strong interaction and community built through social media can provide a meaningful competitive advantage for educational institutions. An effective marketing strategy should focus on building strong relationships with potential students through digital channels, and leveraging these interactions to strengthen user loyalty as well as drive the growth of new student enrollments. In this regard, educational institutions must continue to adapt to new and innovative marketing techniques, maximizing the opportunities offered by the digital age.

### **Referral-based promotion program**

The referral-based promotional program implemented has proven to be effective, where students who are already registered get an incentive to recommend their friends. Research shows that referral programs can create a higher sense of trust in the institution, as recommendations from close people are often considered more credible (Langan et al., 2019). In addition to attracting new students, the program also contributes to strengthening social connections between students, which is an important element in creating a solid learning community.

The referral program implemented by Neutron Tutoring is a concrete example of a good marketing strategy. Students who are already enrolled are incentivized to recommend their friends, which not only increases new student enrollment but also strengthens the social network within the institution. Research by Ziółkowska (2021) shows that this practice can strengthen customer loyalty by creating a positive experience that is divided among students. When students feel valued and benefit from the program, they are more likely to share their positive experiences, which then creates a more cohesive learning community.

The referral-based promotional program implemented by Neutron Tutoring has proven to be effective in increasing new student enrollment. In this system, students who have been enrolled get an incentive to recommend the institution to their friends. Recommendations from close people tend to be perceived as more credible, which in turn creates a high sense of trust in the institution. However, there is no specific literature to support this claim in the context of Neutron Tutoring, so references stating this cannot be sustained.

The implementation of a referral-based promotional program, as exemplified by Neutron Tutoring, capitalizes on the inherent trust fostered by personal recommendations. In such a program, currently enrolled students are incentivized to refer their friends, effectively using their personal networks to enhance new student enrollment. Research indicates that recommendations from acquaintances and close contacts are often perceived as more credible, which reinforces trust in both the referring party and the institution being promoted. This is supported by Chen and Hao, who assert that referral programs are widely recognized as effective marketing strategies for increasing a company's customer base and profitability. Their study highlights the three primary actors involved in such programs: the company, the referrer, and the referee, elucidating how the dynamic between these roles creates a favorable environment for growth through trust and reliability built on personal connections (Chen & Hao, 2023).

Furthermore, studies suggest that the social networks formed by referrers significantly shape perceptions and behaviors, as shown in the research by Obukhova and Rubineau. They emphasize that understanding network dynamics from a referrer perspective can enhance our comprehension of social interactions in recruitment contexts, which is directly applicable to educational institutions aiming to attract new students



through personal endorsements (Obukhova & Rubineau, 2020). Additionally, the insights from Barrientos–Báez and Domínguez underline the effectiveness of structured marketing communication in referral and loyalty programs, demonstrating how systematic approaches can outperform spontaneous word-of-mouth strategies. By creating targeted messaging, organizations can better control how potential students perceive their offerings, resulting in higher engagement and trust among new enrollees (Barrientos–Báez & Domínguez, 2022).

Moreover, the role of trust in referral mechanisms is underscored in Yang's work, which discusses optimal designs of referral priority programs. The study suggests that when individuals perceive a referral as valuable, this reinforces the relationship between the referrer and the institution, leading to improved marketing outcomes (Yang, 2021). In this context, it is essential to note that as educational institutions like Neutron Tutoring implement such strategies, they inherently gain a competitive edge, as prospective students are more likely to trust and enroll based on a friend's positive experience, thus facilitating organic growth.

Overall, the collective findings from recent literature substantiate the effectiveness of referral programs in the educational landscape, highlighting how such initiatives not only enhance credibility but also foster community trust, which is critical for student recruitment and retention strategies. In addition to attracting new students, the referral program is expected to strengthen social relationships between students. When students feel that they have a role in recommending friends to the institution, this can create stronger social bonds between them. However, the references used earlier (Ziółkowska Holliday et al. (2019) are irrelevant to support this claim and should be removed.

This sense of community is a crucial element in creating a solid learning environment. When students connect with each other and feel belonging, they are more likely to be actively involved in learning activities at the institution. However, it should be noted that no reference is provided to support this claim specifically. Overall, it is important for educational institutions to consider social and emotional elements in their marketing strategies, so as to build a learning community that is not only effective in attracting new applicants but also in creating a meaningful learning experience for students.

### **Service personalization**

When it comes to personalizing services, more individualized approaches such as free study consultations and discounts for early enrollees contribute to increased student satisfaction. Research shows that the development of services that are responsive to the needs of students can increase loyalty (Bungai et al., 2024). Students tend to feel more cared for and valued when they are provided with services tailored to their individual preferences (Patawar et al., 2024). This is in line with research that emphasizes the importance of responsive communication and services tailored to individual needs, which in turn can increase student satisfaction and loyalty (Rajasekar & Aithal, 2022).

While the results of this study provide valuable insights, there are some limitations that need to be considered. First, this study is limited to one tutoring institution in Banjarmasin, so the generalization of results may not include all existing tutoring institutions. In addition, the survey conducted only involved the segment of students enrolled in the program, without taking into account those who did not continue or who were not enrolled. For follow-up research, it is recommended that it be conducted in various tutoring institutions and involve more participants from different demographic groups to gain a more comprehensive view of the effectiveness of marketing strategies in the education sector.

To enrich future research, it is essential for educational institutions to conduct comprehensive market research that identifies the specific needs and preferences of various demographic groups Bungai et al. (2024). Such an approach ensures that the marketing strategies developed are not only relevant but also tailored to the targeted audience, thus enhancing their effectiveness. Furthermore, incorporating a wider demographic scope—including students who did not enroll or who left the program—can yield insights into attrition factors and areas for improvement. For instance, Boettler et al. describe how community engagement and learning environments impact student retention, which suggests that understanding the experiences of all student segments can contribute valuable data for institutions aiming to refine their marketing strategies (Boettler et al., 2020).

Moreover, institutions should leverage modern communication strategies to enhance their visibility and appeal to diverse student populations (Budnikevych et al., 2023). This involves utilizing various digital marketing platforms to showcase institutional strengths and successes, which can ultimately improve student recruitment and retention rates. Lessons drawn from Nurdin and Aratusa reinforce the idea that interactive and engaging online content can also play a critical role in attracting potential students (Nurdin & Aratusa, 2020).

If institutions focus only on the experiences of enrolled students, they miss out on a comprehensive understanding of marketing efficacy.

The assertion that interactive and engaging online content is crucial for attracting potential students is well-supported by existing literature. According to Cheng and Chau, effective online learning environments that combine various modes of participation can significantly enhance student engagement and satisfaction. Their study indicates that a blended learning approach, which includes both in-person and online activities, fosters higher levels of student motivation and engagement when aligned with individual learning styles Cheng & Chau (2014). This underscores the need for educational institutions to curate online content that is not only informative but also interactive, thereby enhancing the overall learning experience.

In addition, Zheng et al. highlight the transformative potential of engaging online curricula in capturing students' interest. Their research emphasizes the effectiveness of designing learning tasks that promote active participation, creativity, and collaboration among students, which aligns with educational marketing goals (Zheng et al., 2021; Maulidan et al., 2024). This framework is particularly relevant in marketing strategies where prospective students are drawn to programs that offer practical engagement opportunities and community-building elements.

Egorova et al. further explains how interactive education systems can effectively mobilize resources to develop key competencies among learners. By emphasizing interactive content and facilitating connections among students, these systems create a dynamic learning environment that is attractive to potential students (Egorova et al., 2021). Such frameworks not only appeal to prospective learners but also prepare them for collaborative engagements in their future academic and professional endeavors.

Moreover, the findings of Li et al. on online education reinforce that student engagement extends beyond mere content delivery. Their research demonstrates that the quality of interactions—between peers and between students and instructors—directly influences learning outcomes and satisfaction, further supporting the premise that interactive online platforms foster greater engagement and, consequently, more successful student recruitment strategies (Li et al., 2014; Gumelar et al., 2024).

Lastly, broadening research to include multiple educational entities enhances the validity of the results and provides insights into internationalization trends and the operational dynamics of the educational services market (Treshchevsky et al., 2019; Amin et al., 2024). This could include analyzing competing local and international institutions and their marketing approaches, thereby offering a more nuanced understanding of what factors contribute to student choice in education.

The service personalization approach at Neutron Tutoring Banjarmasin, including free study consultations and discounts for early applicants, has proven to contribute significantly to increased student satisfaction. Research shows that the development of services that are responsive to the individual needs of students can increase loyalty, where students feel more cared for and valued when they are provided with services tailored to their preferences Bungai et al. (2024). This is closely related to the findings of Bungai et al. (2024) who stated that educational institutions that can understand and adapt to the needs of their students have a greater chance of attracting and retaining students.

In research by Patawaran et al., (2024), it was found that when the services provided by educational institutions are tailored to the wants and preferences of students, this not only increases student satisfaction but also creates a positive learning experience. This positive experience is especially important because students are more likely to share their good experiences with others, which in turn can drive new student enrollment through word-of-mouth recommendations. The emphasis on responsive communication is especially important in this context, where tailored services can respond effectively to the needs of students (Zulkipli et al., 2023; Melania et al., 2024). Research by Rajasekar and Aithal Konvalova et al. (2023) further shows that a personalization approach can strengthen students' loyalty to institutions. By providing tailored services and paying attention to feedback from students, educational institutions not only increase satisfaction but also build more solid long-term relationships with their students. This creates a higher sense of attachment and loyalty, which is especially important in a competitive educational environment.

While the results of this study provide valuable insights, there are some limitations that need to be considered. First, this study is limited to one tutoring institution in Banjarmasin, so the generalization of the findings may not include all tutoring institutions. The survey was conducted only on the segment of students enrolled in the program, without taking into account students who are not continuing their education or who are not enrolled in the institution. Future research is recommended to be conducted in various tutoring institutions and involve more participants from different demographic groups in order to provide a more comprehensive view of the effectiveness of marketing strategies in the education sector. In order to strengthen

the quality of the program and the results obtained, it is important for institutions to conduct follow-up research with a broader design and more diverse involvement of subjects in the field. This will help identify best practices and innovations in education marketing that can improve the competitiveness of institutions.

Taking these findings into account, colleges and tutoring institutions are advised to continue optimizing digital marketing and improving personalization programs in order to be able to compete in an increasingly competitive education market (Bobrytsky & Štríteský, 2024). Further research is needed for a deeper exploration of the influence of digital marketing on student perceptions and experiences, as well as innovative ways to improve marketing strategies to be more effective and relevant to the needs of consumers in the future.

## CONCLUSION

Neutron Tutoring Banjarmasin implements effective marketing strategies through digital marketing, referral programs, and service personalization, significantly contributing to attracting new applicants and increasing student satisfaction. These findings offer valuable insights for other non-formal educational institutions seeking to remain competitive. Recommendations include tailoring digital marketing to the specific characteristics of non-formal learners and implementing sustainable loyalty programs. This research underscores the importance of supporting non-formal education policy development in Indonesia. Neutron Banjarmasin's continued growth hinges on its ability to innovate, adapt to market needs, and leverage data analytics for informed decision-making.

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