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Strengthening the Brand Identity of MIS Muhammadiyah Sempulur and MIS Muhammadiyah 02 Manyaran through a Parenting Program as a School-Family Partnership Strategy

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Abstract

Strengthening school branding has become an important strategy for enhancing the competitiveness of educational institutions, particularly Muhammadiyah elementary schools. One promising approach to strengthening school image is parental engagement through parenting programs. This article aims to (1) describe the implementation of a school branding enhancement program through parenting at MIS Muhammadiyah Sempulur and MIS Muhammadiyah 02 Manyaran; (2) analyze the improvement in parents' understanding after participating in the program at both schools; and (3) examine the implications of parenting programs as a school branding strategy for these institutions. The program was a follow-up to a capacity-building workshop for Muhammadiyah elementary school principals across the Boyolali Regional Muhammadiyah Education Council, which identified parenting as a priority school development program. The methods included interactive training, group discussions, case studies, and pretest–posttest evaluations. The program involved 76 parents and guardians, comprising 46 participants from MIS Muhammadiyah Sempulur and 30 from MIS Muhammadiyah 02 Manyaran. The results showed improved parental understanding of positive parenting, family communication, bullying prevention, supervision of children's gadget use, and school–family collaboration. The proportion of positive responses increased from 95.15% to 96.82% at MIS Muhammadiyah Sempulur and from 99.15% to 99.60% at MIS Muhammadiyah 02 Manyaran. These findings indicate that parenting programs not only enhance parents' capacity but also strengthen the school's image as an educational institution that delivers family-partnership-based educational services.

Keywords: school branding, parenting, school–family partnership, Muhammadiyah, community engagement

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Introduction

Amid increasing competition among primary educational institutions, schools can no longer rely solely on the quality of instruction as their main attraction for the public. Instead, they need to develop a strong identity and positive brand that enhances public trust and strengthens institutional competitiveness [1],

[2]. School branding is not merely reflected through promotional activities or students' academic achievements but also through the quality of educational services, communication with stakeholders, and the positive experiences that communities associate with the school [3], [4], [5]. For Muhammadiyah schools, branding is part of the broader effort to establish progressive and high-quality educational institutions that embody the values of Al-Islam and Muhammadiyah in educational services.

One educational service with considerable potential to strengthen school branding is the parenting program [6]. Such programs provide parents with opportunities to learn about parenting practices, family communication, children's learning support, and various issues related to child development [7]. Parental involvement in school activities has been shown to contribute to improved academic achievement, character development, and stronger school–family relationships [8], [9]. When parents directly experience the benefits of services provided by the school, their trust in the institution tends to increase, thereby enhancing the school's public image. Accordingly, parenting programs function not only as family education initiatives but also as service-oriented strategies that can strengthen a school's reputation within the community [10].

The urgency of strengthening school branding through parenting programs is also evident among Muhammadiyah schools in Boyolali Regency. During a capacity-building workshop for Muhammadiyah elementary school principals organized in collaboration with the Primary, Secondary, and Nonformal Education Council (Dikdasmen and PNF) of the Boyolali Regional Leadership of Muhammadiyah (PDM Boyolali), participants discussed several school development strategies, including parenting programs, benchmarking visits, and foreign culture introduction programs. The needs assessment indicated that parenting received the strongest support, leading to its selection as the priority program for subsequent implementation.

The community engagement partners in this program were MIS Muhammadiyah Sempulur and MIS Muhammadiyah 02 Manyaran, two private Muhammadiyah Islamic elementary schools operating under the supervision of the Dikdasmen and PNF Council of PDM Boyolali. Both schools are committed to improving educational service quality while strengthening institutional competitiveness through programs involving school communities and local stakeholders. Nevertheless, both institutions still require strategies that can foster stronger partnerships between schools and families as part of their efforts to build a positive institutional image. Therefore, the parenting program was selected as an intervention expected not only to enhance parents' capacity to support their children's education but also to strengthen public trust through more participatory educational services.

Previous studies [11], [12], [13], [14], [15], [16] have primarily examined parenting as a means of improving parenting competence or increasing parental involvement in children's education. However, studies linking parenting programs to school branding, particularly within the context of Muhammadiyah schools, remain relatively limited. Addressing this gap, the present study positions parenting as a school branding strategy developed through school–family partnerships as an integral component of educational services.

Based on this background, this article aims to (1) describe the implementation of a school branding enhancement program through parenting at MIS Muhammadiyah Sempulur and MIS Muhammadiyah 02 Manyaran; (2) analyze the improvement in parents' understanding after participating in the parenting-based branding program at both schools; and (3) examine the implications of parenting programs as a school branding

strategy for MIS Muhammadiyah Sempulur and MIS Muhammadiyah 02 Manyaran.

Method

This community engagement activity employed a participatory approach implemented through three main stages: preparation, implementation, and evaluation. The preparation stage consisted of a capacity-building training program for school principals, the implementation stage involved conducting parenting programs at partner schools, and the evaluation stage assessed changes in participants' understanding through pretest and posttest assessments.

The first stage, preparation, consisted of a capacity-building training program for principals of Muhammadiyah elementary and Islamic elementary schools (SD/MI) under the Boyolali Regional Leadership of Muhammadiyah (PDM Boyolali), conducted on January 9–10, 2026. The training aimed to introduce various school development strategies and identify priority programs based on partners' needs. During the training, participants discussed several alternative school development programs, including parenting programs, benchmarking visits, and foreign culture introduction. The needs assessment indicated that the parenting program received the strongest support and was therefore selected as the priority program for implementation at the partner schools.

The second stage involved the implementation of the parenting program on June 13, 2026, at two partner schools: MIS Muhammadiyah Sempulur, with 46 participants, and MIS Muhammadiyah 02 Manyaran, with 30 participants, for a total of 76 parents/guardians. The activities included an opening session, pretest, presentation of materials, interactive discussions and case studies, posttest, and closing session. The parenting materials covered parents' roles in children's education, positive parenting, effective parent–child communication, bullying prevention, supervision of children's mobile phone and social media use, support for children's learning motivation, fathers' roles in parenting, and strengthening positive family relationships. The materials were delivered interactively to enable participants to relate the content to their parenting experiences and the challenges they encounter in everyday family life.

The third stage involved evaluating the outcomes of the activity using pretest and posttest instruments. The instrument consisted of 25 yes/no statements covering parents' roles and involvement in children's education, understanding of bullying, supervision of mobile phone and social media use, support for children's learning motivation and study habits, as well as fathers' roles, communication, and positive family relationships. The same instrument was administered before and after the activity to identify changes in participants' understanding. Each answer corresponding to the answer key was assigned a score of 1, while an incorrect answer was assigned a score of 0, resulting in a maximum score of 25. Pretest and posttest data were analyzed using descriptive quantitative analysis by calculating participants' scores and achievement percentages and then comparing the pretest and posttest results to describe changes in understanding following the parenting program. In addition, five commitment statements were administered after the activity as supporting data to describe participants'

tendency to apply the outcomes of the program in their family lives.

Result and Discussion

1. Implementation of the Branding Strengthening Program through Parenting

The community engagement program was implemented through a series of activities, beginning with capacity-building training for school principals and continuing with the implementation of parenting programs at the partner schools. The training, conducted on January 9–10, 2026, served as the initial stage for identifying needs and determining relevant school development programs. Among the various alternatives discussed, the parenting program received the strongest support. This finding indicates that strengthening school-family relationships was perceived as an important need in the development of Muhammadiyah schools.

The parenting program was subsequently implemented on June 13, 2026, at MIS Muhammadiyah Sempulur and MIS Muhammadiyah 02 Manyaran. The activity involved 76 parents/guardians, comprising 46 participants from MIS Muhammadiyah Sempulur and 30 participants from MIS Muhammadiyah 02 Manyaran. The activities consisted of an opening session, pretest, material presentation, interactive discussions, case studies, posttest, and closing session. The materials addressed issues closely related to family life, including parenting practices, parent–child communication, bullying prevention, supervision of gadget use, learning support, fathers' involvement in parenting, and harmonious family relationships.



Figure 1 Implementation of the Parenting Program at MIM Sempulur

The use of interactive lectures, discussions, and case studies provided participants with opportunities not only to receive information but also to facilitate knowledge transfer from the resource persons to the participants and peer-to-peer knowledge sharing among participants [17]. This interaction played an important role in strengthening the relationship between the school and parents.

In the context of school branding, positive experiences gained by parents through beneficial services can serve as social capital in shaping a positive perception of the school [18], [19], [20]. Thus, branding is not built solely through promotional activities but also through the quality of services and the direct experiences perceived by school stakeholders.



Figure 2 Implementation of the Parenting Program at MIM 02 Manyaran

2. Improvement in Parents' Understanding

The impact of the community engagement program was assessed by examining changes in participants' understanding before and after participating in the parenting program implemented at MIM Sempulur and MIM Manyaran. The assessment used pretest and posttest instruments covering various aspects of child parenting, family communication, bullying prevention, supervision of gadget and social media use, and parental involvement in supporting children's growth and development.

The evaluation results indicated changes among the target participants following the implementation of the community engagement program. Overall, the findings demonstrated an improvement in participants' understanding at both schools, indicating that the parenting program contributed to strengthening parents' capacity to fulfill their educational and parenting roles within the family environment. The following data present the improvement in parents' understanding after participating in the parenting program.

MIM Sempulur

Comparison of participants' evaluation results before and after the program.

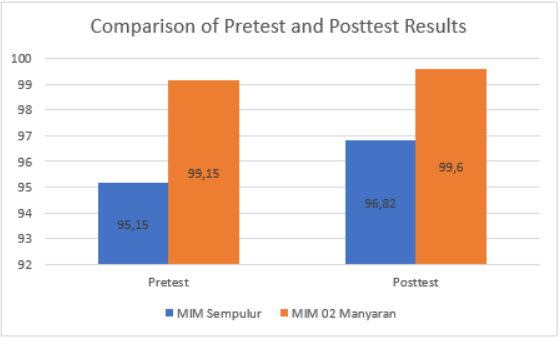


Figure 3 Comparison of Pretest and Posttest Results at MIM Sempulur

Based on the evaluation results, the percentage of participants providing positive responses increased from 95.15% in the pretest to 96.82% in the posttest. Conversely, the percentage of negative responses decreased from 4.85% to 3.18%. These findings indicate that the community engagement program improved participants' understanding of child parenting, bullying prevention, supervision of gadget use, and the importance of parental involvement in children's development.

The pretest results showed that, overall, participants' initial understanding of the parenting materials was already high, with an average achievement of 95.15%. Nevertheless, several aspects remained relatively lower. Understanding of monitoring children's activities outside the home reached only 74.42%, while parents' knowledge of the applications or social media platforms used by their children reached 69.77%. These findings indicate that although parents had a good understanding of general parenting principles, there was still a need to strengthen their understanding of monitoring children's activities and digital technology use. Another aspect requiring attention was fathers' involvement in daily parenting, which received a positive response rate of 86.05%.

Table 1. Key Findings from the Pretest and Posttest Results at MIM Sempulur

Statement	Pretest			Posttes		
	Y	N	% Y	Y	N	% Y
I know the activities my child engages in outside the home.	32	11	74,42 %	35	9	79,55 %

I know the applications or social media platforms used by my child.	30	13	69,77 %	39	5	88,64 %
Fathers need to be involved in daily parenting.	37	5	86,05 %	39	5	88,64 %
Teasing friends is considered bullying behavior.	39	3	90,70 %	43	1	97,73 %
Parents should promptly follow up on bullying cases involving their children.	39	4	90,70 %	42	2	95,45 %
Children who receive insufficient parental attention are at risk of developing behavioral problems.	39	3	90,70 %	43	1	97,73 %

Note: Y = Yes; N = No; % Y = Percentage of Yes responses.

Overall, all statements showed an increase in the percentage of "Yes" responses in the posttest. The largest increase at MIM Sempulur was found for the statement, "I know the applications or social media platforms used by my child," which increased from 69.77% to 88.64%, representing an increase of 18.87 percentage points. This finding indicates a substantial improvement in parents' understanding of the importance of being aware of their children's use of digital media.

The next largest increases were observed in participants' understanding that teasing friends constitutes bullying behavior and that insufficient parental attention may increase the risk of behavioral problems. Both indicators increased from 90.70% to 97.73%, representing an increase of 7.03 percentage points.

Meanwhile, the smallest increase was found for the statement, "Fathers need to be involved in daily parenting," which increased from 86.05% to 88.64%, representing an increase of 2.59 percentage points. Although the increase was relatively small, the percentage of "Yes" responses in the posttest remained high, indicating a strong level of understanding regarding fathers' involvement in daily parenting.

MIM 02 Manyaran

Descriptive analysis showed that parents' understanding of child parenting in Manyaran was already at a high level in the pretest. Based on the evaluation results, the percentage of positive responses increased from 99.15% in the pretest to 99.60% in the posttest. The bar chart indicates an improvement in participants' understanding after the program, while the posttest pie chart shows that almost all responses were positive (99.60%), with only 0.40% negative responses. Most statements received "Yes" responses from nearly all participants, with several indicators reaching 100% in the posttest. These findings indicate that participants already had a strong level of initial understanding, resulting in relatively limited room for further improvement in the posttest.

3. Implications of Parenting as a School Branding Strategy

Parenting programs have implications beyond improving parents' understanding of parenting practices. Through parenting activities, schools demonstrate their commitment to children's development while providing parents with opportunities to gain knowledge, engage in discussions, and share experiences related to parenting challenges. Topics covering parent–child communication, bullying, gadget and social media use, learning support, fathers' involvement, and harmonious family relationships demonstrate the school's responsiveness to the comprehensive needs of families.

From a branding perspective, parenting programs can strengthen the school's identity as an educational institution that is caring, responsive, and collaborative. Positive experiences gained by parents through relevant and beneficial activities can shape positive perceptions of the school. Thus, school branding is built not only through promotional activities but also through the quality of services and meaningful interactions between the school and parents as part of the brand experience.

Therefore, parenting programs can be positioned as a branding strategy based on services and stakeholder experiences. Sustaining the program through regular parenting sessions, parent communication forums, family digital literacy education, and father involvement activities can strengthen the consistency of the school's identity. Although this activity did not directly measure school branding, the parenting program demonstrates strategic potential for strengthening the school's image and school-family relationships.

Conclusion

The school branding enhancement program through parenting was implemented through three stages: preparation, implementation, and evaluation at the partner schools. The program provided opportunities for schools and parents to establish communication and collaboration in supporting children's parenting and development. The materials covered parent–child communication, bullying prevention, supervision of gadget and social media use, learning support, fathers' involvement, and harmonious family relationships, making them relevant to the parenting needs of families.

The evaluation results showed that parents' understanding was already at a high level and generally improved after participating in the program. At MIM Sempulur, the percentage of positive responses increased from 95.15% to 96.82%, while at MIM Manyaran it increased from 99.15% to 99.60%. The findings also indicate that monitoring children's digital activities, family communication, attention to children's behavior, and fathers' involvement were important aspects strengthened through the parenting program.

The parenting program therefore has the potential to be developed as a school branding strategy based on services and stakeholder experiences. Parenting activities can strengthen the school's image as a caring, responsive, and collaborative institution in supporting children and families. Accordingly, program sustainability through regular parenting sessions, parent communication forums, and parenting education can contribute to strengthening school-family relationships while building a positive and consistent school identity.

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