

Enhancing School Image Through Strategic Digital Marketing: A SOSTAC Based Approach

Endah Windiastuti,[✉] Kharisma Adi Tama²

¹ Universitas Negeri Jakarta, Jakarta, Indonesia.

² Sekolah Tinggi MMTC Yogyakarta, Yogyakarta, Indonesia.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.21009/JPI.091.06>

Article History

Submitted : Des 2025

Accepted : Jan 2026

Published : Mar 2026

Keywords

Digital marketing;
SOSTAC; Education;
School image; Brand
equity.

Abstrak

Penelitian ini mengkaji strategi pemasaran digital yang diterapkan oleh SMP Budi Mulia Dua Yogyakarta dalam memperkuat citra sekolah, yang sebelumnya dipersepsikan sebagai sekolah “mahal” dan “eksklusif.” Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan teknik pengumpulan data berupa wawancara, observasi, dan dokumentasi, serta dianalisis menggunakan model interaktif Miles dan Huberman. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa sekolah menerapkan kerangka SOSTAC (*Situation Analysis, Objectives, Strategy, Tactics, Action, dan Control*) secara sistematis dalam pengelolaan media digital. Berbagai platform seperti Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, dan situs web resmi dimanfaatkan untuk menyebarkan informasi serta menampilkan program akademik dan non-akademik. Konten yang konsisten dan menarik secara visual berhasil meningkatkan kesadaran publik dan mengubah persepsi masyarakat terhadap sekolah. Strategi digital tersebut efektif memperkuat empat dimensi ekuitas merek menurut Keller, yaitu brand identity, brand meaning, brand response, dan brand resonance. Meskipun memiliki keterbatasan sumber daya, komitmen sekolah dalam produksi konten berdampak positif pada peningkatan citra sekolah secara keseluruhan.

Abstract

This study examines the digital marketing strategy implemented by SMP Budi Mulia Dua Yogyakarta to strengthen its school image, which had previously been perceived as “expensive” and “exclusive.” Using a qualitative approach, data were collected through interviews, observations, and documentation, and were analyzed using the Miles and Huberman interactive model. The findings show that the school systematically applies the SOSTAC framework (Situation Analysis, Objectives, Strategy, Tactics, Action, and Control) in managing its digital presence. Various platforms, including Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, and the official website, are utilized to share information and highlight academic and non-academic programs. Consistent and visually appealing content successfully enhances public awareness and reshapes perceptions of the school. The digital strategy effectively strengthens the four dimensions of brand equity according to Keller: brand identity, brand meaning, brand response, and brand resonance. Despite limited human resources, the school’s commitment to continuous content production has positively influenced its overall public image.

[✉] Corresponding author : Endah Windiastuti
Alamat : Universitas Negeri Jakarta, Jakarta, Indonesia.
E-mail : endah.windiastuti@unj.ac.id

INTRODUCTION

Education plays a crucial role in developing high-quality individuals who are capable of contributing positively to society. Education serves as a strategic investment that enhances national dignity and produces broad social and personal benefits. Schools, as the core institutions delivering formal education, function as organized environments where teaching and learning take place.

Competition among educational institutions has intensified, particularly in Yogyakarta, where 453 junior high schools are registered in the 2024/2025 academic year, including 239 private schools (Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology, 2025). This heightened competition requires schools to implement strategic marketing to attract prospective students. A strong institutional image plays a decisive role in school-selection decisions, can be the primary differentiating factor among schools.

In this era, competition to attract prospective students in the education sector is becoming increasingly intense, particularly in the Special Region of Yogyakarta. According to data from the Education Data Center (Dapodik), in the first semester of the 2024/2025 academic year there were a total of 453 junior high schools, consisting of 214 public schools and 239 private schools (Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology, 2025). The large number of private schools has created a highly competitive environment, with institutions striving to showcase their respective strengths and unique characteristics. These include adequate learning facilities, strategic locations, high-quality academic programs, and national or international curricula that are adaptable to current needs. Such competition and the variety of offerings from different schools influence the community, particularly parents and prospective students to be more selective in choosing an institution that aligns with their needs.

Therefore, choosing a school is a crucial process that has long-term implications for a child's future. In making this decision, it is essential for prospective students and parents to thoroughly consider various aspects and gather sufficient information about the available school options to ensure that the choice made is aligned with their needs (Indriani et al., 2021). Consequently, it is important for schools to develop and implement marketing strategies that not only attract prospective students but also enhance the school's image and maintain its relevance amid increasingly intense competition.

School image refers to public perceptions formed through continuous information exposure. A positive image can enhance trust, attract new students, and strengthen reputation. SMP Budi Mulia Dua (BMD), a private junior high school in Yogyakarta, faces a unique challenge: it is widely perceived as an "expensive". This perception misrepresents the school's identity and can discourage prospective students.

In response, the school has intensified its use of digital marketing. Considering the high penetration of internet use—79.50% nationally, with Gen Z (87.02%) and millennials (93.17%) being the most active groups. Digital media has become an effective marketing channel. SMP BMD uses Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, and its official website to reframe its image by showcasing facilities, programs, activities, and student achievements.

This study therefore examines the implementation of digital marketing to improve the school's public image, structured under the title: "Enhancing School Image Through Strategic Digital Marketing: A SOSTAC Based Approach."

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a qualitative research approach to explore the strategies undertaken by School in Yogyakarta in improving its school image through digital marketing. The qualitative method was chosen because it allows the researcher to understand natural settings in depth and to capture participants' experiences directly (Creswell John and Creswell David, 2023). The research site was SMP Budi Mulia Dua, located in Sleman, Yogyakarta.

Data were collected from three key informants who were selected using purposive sampling based on their direct involvement with the school's digital marketing activities. These informants included the Head of School, a member of the social media team, and a senior teacher. Primary data were gathered through semi-structured interviews, enabling the researcher to probe deeper into participants' insights regarding the digital marketing strategy. Non-participant observations were also conducted to examine how the digital team carried out content creation, distribution, and platform management. In addition to interviews and observations, documents such as social media posts, analytics reports, school profiles, and content planning materials were used as secondary data to support the findings.

The data analysis procedure followed the interactive model of Miles and Huberman, which consists of four stages: data collection, data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing (Ridder et al., 2014). All data collected from interviews, observations, and documents were first compiled and then reduced by selecting the most relevant information related to digital marketing and school image enhancement. The reduced data were subsequently organized and displayed in descriptive form to facilitate interpretation. Conclusions were drawn inductively based on emerging patterns, themes, and relationships within the data. To ensure the validity of findings, triangulation was conducted by comparing perspectives from the Head of School, the social media team, and the teacher. Each provided distinct yet complementary information regarding the planning, execution, and evaluation of digital marketing activities, allowing the researcher to construct a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon. The focus of the study remained limited to analyzing qualitative strategies using the SOSTAC framework and the influence of these strategies on school image during the 2025 research period.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This study focuses on the marketing strategies of educational institutions using the SOSTAC analysis framework. SOSTAC is a model specifically designed for planning a digital marketing strategy, encompassing the entire cycle of digital marketing planning from start to finish. Start with an analysis of the current situation and concluding with the methods used to measure the outcomes. SOSTAC stands for Situation, Analysis, Objectives, Strategy, Tactics, Actions, and Control (Smith, 2018).

The findings of this study reveal that SMP Budi Mulia Dua Yogyakarta has implemented a structured and consistent digital marketing strategy that effectively enhances its school image (Aldiella Utami Talahatu, 2023). The school actively manages several digital platforms, including Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, and its official website, all of which serve as channels for disseminating information and showcasing school activities. These platforms have sizable followings, reflecting increasing public engagement. The school integrates various academic and non-academic activities into digital content, including student achievements, daily learning routines, extracurricular

activities, and special programs. Through this strategy, SMP Budi Mulia Dua aims to reshape the persistent public perception of being an “expensive” and “exclusive” institution. Digital content is designed to present the school as friendly, approachable, and balanced in both academic and Islamic character-building dimensions. The Head of School noted that digital platforms allow the public to witness the vibrant culture of the school, giving audiences an opportunity to “experience” the school virtually before making enrollment decisions.

The school’s digital marketing objectives focus primarily on expanding the reach of information and strengthening brand awareness rather than targeting sales or high view counts. Content consistency is emphasized as the key indicator of success; therefore, the social media team prioritizes producing high-quality visual materials that reflect the identity and professionalism of the school. The findings show that digital marketing has enabled SMP Budi Mulia Dua to reach audiences beyond Yogyakarta, with some prospective students from other regions discovering the school through its online presence. This suggests a shift in brand response and the development of brand resonance, as parents and students begin forming emotional and cognitive connections with the school based on digital impressions (Martinović, 2024).

The digital marketing strategy employed by SMP Budi Mulia Dua aligns with the SOSTAC framework. The school began by identifying its existing image problem, concluding that the impression of being an expensive school hindered broader public acceptance. This formed the basis of the situation analysis. It then formulated objectives centered on increasing awareness and rebuilding its image into one that communicates value, quality, and accessibility. Its strategy involved selecting platforms most relevant to its target audiences: Instagram and TikTok for students, and YouTube and the website for parents. Tactics were carried out through daily uploads, the use of popular content formats such as “POV” videos, and the inclusion of identifiable visual elements such as the school’s logo and mascot.

The execution of these strategies, or actions, was supported by a small digital team equipped with adequate facilities, including smartphones, microphones, and lighting equipment. Teachers were also trained in content creation, which proved especially useful during and after the pandemic era when digital learning materials were widely produced. Evaluation and control were conducted using analytics tools available on each platform, allowing the team to assess engagement levels and adjust content strategies accordingly. Although the school does not fixate on achieving viral results, the consistent improvements in engagement, coupled with positive feedback from the community, indicate a strengthening of its school image (Winit et al., 2023).

These findings correspond with Keller’s model of brand equity, demonstrating that SMP Budi Mulia Dua has successfully enhanced all four dimensions of brand identity, brand meaning, brand response, and brand resonance (Keller & Swaminathan, 2020). The school identity has become more recognizable, its meaning has been aligned with values of quality and balance, audience responses have grown more positive, and some forms of resonance such as loyalty and emotional connection are emerging. This study therefore supports the broader understanding in educational marketing literature that digital marketing, when executed consistently, is an effective tool for improving school image, especially for institutions competing in saturated educational markets.

Situation analysis is the first stage in the SOSTAC framework. Situation analysis must be conducted comprehensively because the better the analysis, the easier it becomes to make strategic decisions (Smith, 2018). This stage is carried out to identify conditions

that may have an impact on the company's digital marketing. Situation analysis is part of the planning phase in improving brand image. By analyzing the situation, a company is able to understand who they are, what they intend to do, and how they will interact and conduct marketing activities online. In this planning stage, educational institutions prepare a thorough plan regarding the content to be uploaded.

The social media team of SMP Budi Mulia Dua conducted an analysis of their school programs and strengths. A further analysis was then carried out regarding the programs offered by schools in the surrounding area. Information about the school's programs and advantages was initially provided only on the school website. The use of social media began to intensify when COVID-19 occurred. In 2019, the school realized that social media had significant potential. This potential could enhance the school's image through platforms widely used by the public during the COVID-19 era. Based on this analysis, SMP Budi Mulia Dua increased the intensity of its social media use to strengthen public brand awareness.

The second step is Brand Meaning. This stage explains how the company intends to achieve its goals. In determining a marketing strategy, the company must ensure that it has sufficient resources to implement the chosen strategy. This strategy belongs to the planning and organizing stages. The strategy is established when the institution prepares its digital marketing plan and determines how the social media team will be formed (Keller & Swaminathan, 2020).

One of the strategies implemented by SMP Budi Mulia Dua to support its digital marketing efforts is producing and uploading high quality videos. Good video quality, along with consistent posting every day, demonstrates that the school is able to provide positive experiences. These positive experiences are both visual and emotional. As a result, the public begins to form new perceptions built upon previous ones. For example, the old perception suggested that SMP Budi Mulia Dua was an expensive school. This perception gradually shifted toward viewing the school as an institution that is educational and aligned with both academic and non academic needs.. There are three types of content: documentation, self produced content, and marketing content. These three types of content are uploaded according to the schedule arranged in the monthly content plan.

However, not all planned content can be uploaded. This is due to the limited human resources in the social media team. The social media team at SMP Budi Mulia consists of only two people. In addition to the small size of the team, another challenge is the large number of video documentation materials from school activities. SMP Budi Mulia organizes numerous academic and non academic activities. To address this challenge, the social media team created a schedule for uploading the school's documentation content.

After the strategy and tactics are determined, the next step is to implement them, and this stage ensures that the strategy is executed properly (Smith, 2018). Good strategy execution can be achieved by using procedural checklists and paying attention to every detail. This action is included in the implementation stage. SMP Budi Mulia has carried out digital marketing procedures by producing relevant and engaging content. Content creation at SMP Budi Mulia Dua begins with a brainstorming process. The social media team prepares an analysis and a daily content schedule. This content schedule is based on the academic calendar and content pillars, which include documentation, educational content, and promotional content. In scheduling these materials, SMP Budi Mulia Dua utilizes assistance from ChatGPT.

Following the content plan, the social media team begins the video recording process. Documentation is captured using mobile phones for reasons of convenience and

practicality. The content is then edited until it is ready to be uploaded. One important aspect that receives significant attention is the sharpness of the uploaded videos. The social media team, the principal, and the foundation leadership all monitor this aspect. The audience will feel more comfortable and experience better visual quality when watching videos with good sharpness. High quality videos make it easier for the target audience to absorb information. This can attract prospective students and parents.

Brand resonance, which includes loyalty and long term emotional attachment, represents the highest stage of brand equity (Smith, 2018). This is demonstrated through strong emotional bonds, high levels of loyalty, and a sense of togetherness toward a brand. SMP Budi Mulia Dua enrolls students from various regions across Indonesia. In addition, some parents choose to enroll their second or third children in the same school. Loyalty is further shown by former students who, after becoming parents, enroll their own children in this school. As a result, several generations have studied at SMP Budi Mulia Dua.

At this stage, an evaluation is conducted to determine what will be monitored, how often it will be monitored, and who will be responsible for monitoring the implemented strategy. This stage produces information regarding the outcomes of the strategy, and the institution must understand how to process and utilize that information. This control process is part of the controlling phase. In this stage, monitoring and performance measurement are carried out based on the objectives established in the previous stage. Attention is given to the tactics that were set, and control is exercised during their implementation (Jannah et al., 2023).

SMP Budi Mulia Dua has implemented control measures regarding the uploaded content. This control includes evaluating which content is appropriate or inappropriate for the school's account. Performance evaluation of the content itself is not emphasized. The primary purpose of uploading content is to enhance the school's image through high quality videos. The videos posted on social media form part of the school's identity and image. Increasing student enrollment is not the main focus of SMP Budi Mulia Dua. This can be seen in the consistently high quality of the visuals, audio, and editing of the content uploaded.

In this control stage, analysis is conducted on the audience's responses (Wahyunto et al., 2024). The responses received from each uploaded video vary depending on the type of content. One of the indicators used is the number of viewers for each video. Instagram content tends to show stable performance. However, when examined by content type, documentation content generally receives a higher number of viewers. On TikTok, educational content tends to attract a higher number of viewers.

SMP Budi Mulia Dua has carried out efforts to enhance the institution's image. This improvement was achieved through the use of the SOSTAC digital marketing strategy. As a result, the institution's image has strengthened. This is evidenced by the increase in public brand awareness. Through the uploaded content, the public can learn about the school's programs. In addition, documentation content showcasing achievements has generated positive responses, as reflected in the number of viewers and comments from the general public.

In its efforts to enhance institutional image, SMP Budi Mulia Dua has made use of digital technology. Digital technology facilitates public access to information. This convenience is one of the factors that influences a person's perception of a product or object. SMP Budi Mulia Dua currently receives attention and a positive reputation as a high quality private school in the Special Region of Yogyakarta. This can be observed,

among other indicators, in TikTok content discussing educational institutions in the region (ALKAF, 2024).

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study demonstrate that SMP Budi Mulia Dua Yogyakarta has effectively utilized digital marketing as a strategic tool to enhance its school image. Through the consistent and structured application of the SOSTAC framework, the school has successfully reshaped the public's perception from viewing it as an "expensive" and exclusive institution to recognizing it as a modern, religious, and engaging educational environment. The school's active use of digital platforms particularly Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, and its official website has significantly expanded its visibility and strengthened its brand identity. By presenting authentic and varied content that showcases both academic and non-academic activities, SMP Budi Mulia Dua has been able to convey a balanced and positive image that resonates with its target audiences. Despite limited human resources within the social media team, the school's commitment to maintaining high-quality content and consistent posting has resulted in increased engagement and wider recognition, even beyond the Yogyakarta area. In alignment with Keller's brand equity model, the digital marketing efforts have succeeded in reinforcing brand identity, enhancing brand meaning, generating positive brand responses, and beginning to establish brand resonance. In summary, digital marketing has proven to be a powerful and effective approach for improving the institution's reputation, strengthening community trust, and supporting its competitive positioning within the educational landscape.

REFERENCES

- Aldiella Utami Talahatu. (2023). Pengaruh Bauran Promosi Terhadap Citra Sekolah Pada Grage Kids Playschool Cirebon. *Jurnal Riset Manajemen, Bisnis, Akuntansi Dan Ekonomi*, 2(1). <https://doi.org/10.58468/jambak.v2i1.61>
- ALKAF, R. (2024). DIGITAL MARKETING STRATEGY TO INCREASE THE NUMBER OF NEW STUDENTS. *Didaktika : Jurnal Kependidikan*, 18(1), 52–58. <https://doi.org/10.30863/didaktika.v18i1.5673>
- Creswell John and Creswell David. (2023). *Research Design, Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Methods Approaches*. In SAGE Publications, Inc.: Vol. Sixth Edit (Issue 1). <https://medium.com/@arifwicaksanaa/pengertian-use-case-a7e576e1b6bf>
- Indriani, F., Diba, F., Ubaedullah, D., & Pratama, A. I. (2021). Strategi Pemasaran Pendidikan Dalam Meningkatkan Citra Lembaga Pendidikan Islam. *Jurnal Isema : Islamic Educational Management*, 6(2), 131–148. <https://doi.org/10.15575/isema.v6i2.13656>
- Jannah, A. N., Ulfatin, N., & Gunawan, I. (2023). Strategi Pemasaran Jasa Pendidikan dalam Membangun Citra di Sekolah Dasar Islam. *Jurnal Pembelajaran, Bimbingan, Dan Pengelolaan Pendidikan*, 3(5), 384–393. <https://doi.org/10.17977/um065v3i52023p384-393>
- Keller, K. Lane., & Swaminathan, Vanitha. (2020). *Strategic brand management : building, measuring, and managing brand equity*. Pearson Education Limited.

- Martinović, M. (2024). The API Model of Strategic and Tactical Marketing Thinking for Management Education. *International Review of Management and Marketing*, 14(6), 87–98. <https://doi.org/10.32479/irmm.17099>
- Ridder, H. G., Miles, M. B., Michael Huberman, A., & Saldaña, J. (2014). *Qualitative data analysis. A methods sourcebook.* Zeitschrift Fur Personalforschung. <https://doi.org/10.1177/239700221402800402>
- Smith, P. R. . (2018). *SOSTAC® guide to your perfect digital marketing plan.* PRSmith.
- Wahyunto, M., Hidayati, D., & Sukirman, S. (2024). Strategi branding Sekolah di era digital dalam meningkatkan animo masyarakat melalui pemanfaatan digital marketing. *Academy of Education Journal*, 15(2). <https://doi.org/10.47200/aoej.v15i2.2419>
- Winit, W., Kantabutra, S., & Kantabutra, S. (2023). Toward a Sustainability Brand Model: An Integrative Review. *Sustainability (Switzerland)*, 15(6), 1–26. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su15065212>