

# Building Student Engagement Through Personalized Marketing: The Key to Student Loyalty in Educational Services

Moh. Rofiki<sup>1</sup>, Safira Mahrosa<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1,2</sup>Manajemen Pendidikan Islam, Universitas Nurul Jadid, Indonesia

<sup>1</sup>[mohrofiki1984@unuja.ac.id](mailto:mohrofiki1984@unuja.ac.id), <sup>2</sup>[mpi.2210900037@unuja.ac.id](mailto:mpi.2210900037@unuja.ac.id),

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## ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the application of personalized marketing in education and its impact on emotional engagement and student loyalty. The study was conducted at Madrasah Aliyah Nurul Jadid, an Islamic boarding school-based institution that emphasizes personalized services, effective communication, and a relevant curriculum. The study used a qualitative case study approach, with teachers, students, and parents as subjects. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, participant observation, and documentation, and then analyzed thematically with triangulation to ensure validity. The results show that personalization, which tailors interactions, academic guidance, and extracurricular services to individual student characteristics, can create meaningful learning experiences, increase attention, foster feelings of appreciation, and strengthen emotional engagement. This approach also encourages students' social engagement in the school community and reduces the risk of disengagement. The findings emphasize the importance of integrating personalized interactions with Islamic boarding school culture to build stable, supportive, and sustainable educational relationships, as well as to strengthen the relationships among students, teachers, and the institution. This study contributes to the development of the concept of personalized marketing in the educational context, particularly in Islamic boarding schools, by highlighting the design, implementation, and significance of personalization strategies to increase student loyalty and retention.



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## A. INTRODUCTION

The education sector is currently in an increasingly competitive environment, where every institution must attract new students while retaining existing ones. In this context, student engagement is a strategic element that influences student satisfaction, retention, and loyalty to educational institutions (Carvalho et al., 2023; Mundi et al., 2025). Conceptually, student engagement not only reflects the emotional and psychological connection between students and the institution but also encompasses behavioral, emotional, and cognitive dimensions that indicate the level of active participation and cognitive investment of students in the learning process (Baharun et al., 2023; Fabris et al., 2024). This engagement develops through ongoing interactions and positive experiences in the educational environment (Irvine & Cunningham, 2025). From a relationship marketing perspective, engagement is understood as the result of long-term relationships that create shared value between institutions and students (Mishra, 2023; Rozi et al., 2020). Therefore, educational institutions need to design learning experiences that focus not only on academic aspects but also on the quality of interactions, communications, and services that meet individual student needs and strengthen long-

term, sustainable relationships. This requires more personalized and adaptive communication and service strategies.

Madrasah Aliyah Nurul Jadid implements personalization practices through intensive communication patterns between the school, students, teachers, and parents. These practice is reflected in various services, including individual mentoring, personalized information delivery, and active parental involvement in student activities. Warm interactions between teachers and students foster a culture of ongoing closeness, potentially strengthening students' emotional attachment to the institution. Based on administrative observations and interviews, student enrollment increased from 1,134 in 2021 to 1,252 in 2025. Although this growth cannot be fully attributed to personalization factors such as academic programs, teacher quality, alumni involvement, and local demographics also contributeit, it provides an empirical context for analyzing personalization practices without claiming causality. Through these personalized approaches, the institution can tailor services and communications to individual student needs, making the learning experience more meaningful and psychologically relevant.

Studies on personalization as a strategic approach integrated into services, communications, and direct interactions in educational settings are still limited. Several previous studies have shown that personalization in digital platforms can increase student satisfaction, but have not linked this to institutional engagement (Enyoojo et al., 2024). Other studies have highlighted relationship-based marketing in education, but have not examined personalized communication in depth (Katiyar et al., 2024). Studies on user experience on digital platforms have shown a positive impact on satisfaction, but have not examined the institution's overall personalization strategy (Icaza et al., 2024). The use of social media for student engagement has been discussed, but personalized communication has not been analyzed (Yuan Su et al., 2025). Furthermore, data-driven marketing research continues to focus on academic loyalty and fails to examine personalization within specific sociocultural contexts (Luo, 2024). Based on this mapping, it appears that research on personalized marketing in Islamic boarding school-based educational institutions is still scarce, particularly regarding the integration of services, communication, and direct interaction with students and parents.

Considering the gaps in previous research, a new perspective is needed in the form of an in-depth analysis of the personalization strategies implemented in the formal institutional environment under the auspices of the Nurul Jadid Islamic Boarding School, which has a unique cultural character, communication system, and social relationship patterns, different from other general educational institutions. This approach opens up space to reveal that personal interactions between teachers, homeroom teachers, students, and parents not only function as social practices but also as educational marketing strategies that significantly shape students' emotional attachment and loyalty. In line with that, this study was conducted to analyze how the implementation of personalized marketing can increase emotional and psychological attachment in educational institutions, thereby strengthening student loyalty.

## **B. METHODS**

This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study to gain an in-depth understanding of the application of personalized marketing to enhance spirituality and psychological well-being in Islamic boarding school-based educational institutions. A qualitative approach was chosen because this research focuses on the meaning, experience, and dynamics of social interactions that quantitative methods cannot adequately capture (Tverskoi et al., 2023). The case study was chosen because the

research focused on a single institutional context with unique social and cultural characteristics, allowing for an in-depth analysis of the naturally occurring practices of personalized service and communication (Berliano & Fajri, 2025). The research was conducted at Madrasah Aliyah Nurul Jadid, a formal educational institution under the auspices of the Nurul Jadid Islamic Boarding School. This location was chosen for its consistent personalized service and communication practices, characterized by year-over-year student growth, easy access to research data, and openness and support from the school. Furthermore, the choice of an Islamic boarding school context also provides theoretical insights, considering the cultural characteristics, social relationship patterns, and communication systems that differ from those of general educational institutions.

Data collection was conducted through participant observation, semi-structured interviews, and documentation, using triangulation. Participant observation was used to observe communication patterns, personal interactions, and indicators of student engagement, both behavioral, emotional, and cognitive, in Islamic boarding school learning and habituation activities (Tormanen et al., 2023). Semi-structured interviews were conducted through purposive sampling, involving strategic informants: 1 Madrasah Principal, 1 Deputy Head of Public Relations, 2 Homeroom Teachers, 1 Guidance and Counseling Teacher, 1 Extracurricular Activity Coordinator, 2 Alumni, 2 Student Guardians, and 5 Active Students. Informants were selected based on their direct involvement in the implementation of personalized services and communication, and had a minimum of two years of experience or intensive involvement in student training activities. The number of informants was considered adequate because they represented various key roles and reached data saturation, namely, the point at which the data collection process no longer yields significant new information. Administrative documentation and training activity archives were used as supporting data. Data analysis was conducted using the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, which includes a continuous process of data condensation, data presentation, and conclusion drawing (Fleddermann et al., 2023). Data validation was ensured through triangulation of sources and techniques to ensure the credibility and consistency of the findings. The technical flow of data collection and analysis can be seen in the following flowchart:



**Figure 1.** Technical Flow of Data Collection and Analysis

## C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

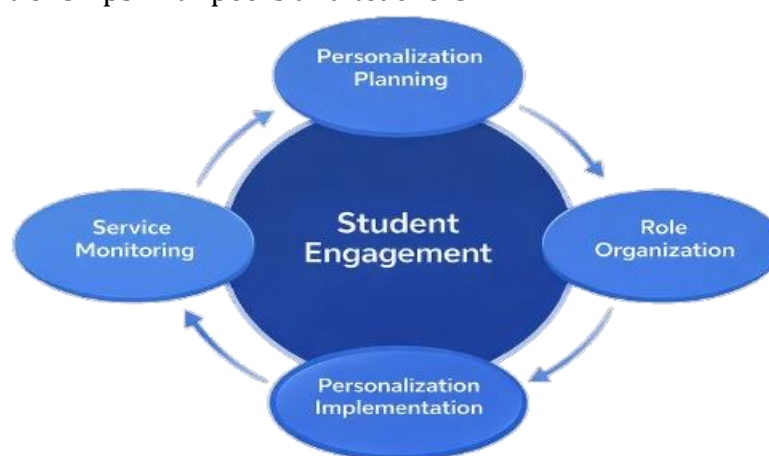
### 1. Personalized Planning in Building Initial Student Engagement

Personalization planning at Madrasah Aliyah Nurul Jadid begins at the initial student admission stage, through efforts to understand individual characteristics, including academic aspects, emotional states, interests, and social backgrounds. This process involves collecting administrative data and engaging in direct interactions with teachers, students, and parents to gain a comprehensive understanding of student needs. One student reported:

“When teachers ask about my daily challenges and interests, I feel that my learning experience is understood and valued.”

These interactions allow the institution to design educational services responsive to diverse student characteristics while fostering positive initial relationships. The early experiences of personalized attention create emotional engagement, which develops into sustained involvement in learning activities. According to Emotional Attachment Theory (Baharun et al., 2022), emotional engagement is the primary foundation for building long-term relationships between students and institutions. For example, engagement driven by personalized interactions strengthens affection and attachment to the institution.

Building on this initial understanding, personalization practices continue as a cyclical process encompassing student character recognition, role coordination, and ongoing monitoring. Integration with Islamic boarding school values and culture through religious habituation activities, collective discipline, community service and social interactions reinforces the institution's culture while enabling students to build meaningful relationships with peers and teachers.



**Figure 2.** Personalisation Cycle Model in Building Student Engagement

The model in Figure 2. illustrates that educational personalization occurs through interconnected processes. This cycle enables institutions to maintain ongoing emotional and psychological engagement with students. Therefore, the personalization planning stage not only aims to identify students' academic needs but also serves as the initial foundation for building positive relational experiences between students and the educational institution. These early experiences form the foundation for positive relational experiences, crucial for developing stronger emotional engagement in the learning process.

## **2. Organization of Teacher Roles and Communication Systems in Personalized Education**

The implementation of personalization at Madrasah Aliyah Nurul Jadid is realized through educational interaction practices that treat each student as an individual with diverse academic, emotional, and social needs. This approach includes personal communication between teachers and students, ability-based academic mentoring, and the provision of non-academic services that support the development of student interests and character. Through this approach, students receive individualized attention without eliminating the collective learning context, thereby fostering a sense of security and comfort during the educational process. Activities integrated with the Islamic boarding school culture also strengthen social closeness and students' collective awareness as part of a learning community with religious and

social values. This organizational structure is designed to ensure the continuity of personalized services and continuous monitoring of each student’s development.

**Table 1.** Distribution of Roles and Functions in Personalized Education

<b>Role</b>	<b>Academic</b>	<b>Emotional</b>	<b>Communication</b>
Head of Madrasah	Establishes academic policies	Provides guidance related to emotional support	Determining institutional communication strategies
Deputy Head of Public Relations	Monitoring teaching quality	Coordinating emotional support	Coordinating communication with homeroom teachers and parents
Homeroom Teacher	Daily academic assistance	Monitoring student motivation and emotional condition	Conveying personal information and motivation to students and parents
Guidance and Counselling Teacher	Academic counseling	Emotional intervention, individual counseling	Acting as a special communication liaison regarding student needs
Extracurricular Activities Coordinator	Guiding academic support activities	Facilitating the development of interests and talents	Communication related to student activity participation

In daily educational practice, homeroom teachers employ a communicative approach through addressing students by name, engaging in dialogue about their learning and emotional state, and providing academic support when students experience learning challenges. A consistent approach by homeroom teachers, guidance counselors, and extracurricular activity coordinators fosters positive interactions among students and between students and teachers, fostering a sense of belonging and emotional attachment to the madrasah. These ongoing activities also support students’ social and emotional development in a supportive, collective-learning context.

Personal service monitoring is also conducted on an ongoing basis to assess students’ academic progress, behavior, and emotional well-being, while maintaining consistent implementation of personalized education. This monitoring enables educators to better understand students’ psychosocial dynamics in context and to intervene appropriately when needed. Through structured coordination among teachers, homeroom teachers, and activity managers, student progress information is not fragmented and can be acted on collectively. Thus, a continuous monitoring system plays a crucial role in maintaining stable relationships between students, teachers, and the institution, ultimately strengthening students’ emotional attachment to the madrasah as a responsive and supportive learning environment.

### **3. Implementation of Personalized through Communicative Interaction and Holistic Services**

The implementation of personalization is realized through educational interaction practices that recognize each student as an individual with unique needs. This approach includes personalized communication, ability-based academic mentoring, and the provision of non-academic services that support the development

of student interests and character. This integration demonstrates that personalization is not only an educational service strategy but also a process of building an institutional identity that instills values of togetherness and social responsibility.

Activities integrated with Islamic boarding school culture such as prayers, class discussions, and collaborative project strengthen social closeness, collective awareness, and a sense of belonging. One student remarked:

“Teachers check in regularly and ask about my challenges. It makes me feel understood and supported.”

Daily teacher-student interactions, guidance and counseling, and flexible extracurricular programs ensure personalized support while maintaining group engagement. These practices foster social skills, cooperation, and positive peer relationships, creating a safe, inclusive, and supportive learning environment.

Findings indicate that personalization practices occur consistently across various contexts, from learning interactions and counseling services to Islamic boarding school activities such as congregational prayer, class discussions, and collaborative activities. These practices create a safe, inclusive, and supportive learning environment, while fostering a sense of belonging for students in the madrasah. This is consistent with Emotional Attachment Theory, which suggests that warm interpersonal relationships help foster students’ emotional attachment to the institution, forming the basis for long-term loyalty.

#### **4. Personal Service Monitoring to Maintain Student Engagement Consistency**

Personal service monitoring at Madrasah Aliyah Nurul Jadid is conducted as an ongoing evaluation of students’ academic progress, behavior, and emotional well-being to ensure consistent implementation of personalized education. Homeroom teachers and guidance counselors use attendance records, behavior logs, academic results, and daily interactions to capture a comprehensive picture of student engagement.

“When I don't come to school or participate in activities, teachers often ask what's going on. They care so much about my condition.”

Monitoring aims to detect early changes in students' emotional states or engagement patterns that could impact their relationship with the madrasah. When there are signs of decreased motivation, behavioral changes, or reduced participation in school activities, teachers provide personal support and adjust services accordingly. In addition to formal mechanisms, monitoring is also conducted through daily boarding school activities, such as prayers, duties, and deliberations. These activities enhance educators' sensitivity to students' psychosocial dynamics, allowing for a better contextual understanding while maintaining emotional and psychological engagement.

The findings of this study show that the implementation of personalized marketing in educational services is closely related to the formation of emotional and psychological attachment among students, which serves as a foundation for developing loyalty to the institution. This study emphasizes that relationship marketing in education helps create long-term, mutually beneficial relationships between institutions and students (Mishra, 2023).

Research results show that the implementation of personalized marketing in educational services is closely related to the formation of emotional and psychological attachments among students, which serve as a basis for developing loyalty to the

institution. An institution's success is determined not only by academic achievement but also by the ability to sustainably manage students' relational experiences. From a student engagement perspective, student engagement encompasses emotional, psychological, and social aspects formed through meaningful interactions with the institution (Baharun et al., 2022; Immanuella et al., 2023). Personalized marketing is a strategic approach to designing services, communications, and interactions that align with individual student needs, creating meaningful learning experiences and strengthening long-term relationships (Katiyar et al., 2024). Personalization planning from the early stages of education is crucial for establishing a positive first impression, increasing students' sense of security, social acceptance, and psychological well-being. Understanding student characteristics including academic needs, emotional states, and interests reflects the principle of customer orientation in service marketing as the basis for creating long-term value. These findings align with institutional attachment theory, which emphasizes the importance of initial experience in sustaining student engagement (Baharun et al., 2022; Sarker et al., 2025). Unlike previous research that emphasized technology-based personalization and data analytics (Enyoojo et al., 2024; Luo, 2024), this study confirms that personalization through direct relationships and a cultural approach can create psychological safety and strengthen emotional attachment from the early stages of education (Mundiri et al., 2025; Namjildorj, 2023).

In addition to planning, organizing teacher roles, and implementing a structured internal communication system, these have been shown to increase the effectiveness of personalized education implementation. Coordination between the madrasah principal, homeroom teachers, guidance and counseling teachers, and student activity managers creates a support network that allows students' needs to be monitored and responded to more responsively. From an internal marketing perspective, the quality of service received by users is strongly influenced by the coordination, commitment, and clarity of roles among internal organizational actors (Alzrayer, 2024). Role clarity and effective internal communication are associated with the development of trust among students, parents, and educational institutions (Diana & Sain, 2025; Kerneza & Kordigel Abersek, 2024). This trusting relationship is a crucial foundation for building student engagement, as students interact not only with specific individuals but also with the broader support system within the educational environment. Therefore, personalized marketing practices in education are not solely individualized but develop as a collaborative work system that enables the creation of stable relationships between students and institutions.

Personalization is implemented through educational interactions that recognize students as individuals with diverse academic, emotional, and social needs. Personal communication practices, adaptive academic mentoring, and non-academic services that support the development of interests and talents reflect the comprehensive fulfillment of students' relational needs. Activities integrated with Islamic boarding school culture strengthen students' social closeness and collective awareness as part of a learning community with religious and social values. These findings are consistent with self-determination theory, which asserts that supporting basic individual needs—namely, relationships, competence, and autonomy—plays a crucial role in increasing students' intrinsic engagement (Winarto, 2025; Yengkopiong, 2025). Other studies have also shown that warm interpersonal interactions between teachers and students positively influence students' sense of belonging and emotional attachment (Wells, 2024). Compared to previous research that emphasized digital platform-based interactions, this study confirms that direct interactions integrated with Islamic boarding school culture have

greater relational power because they build communal identity, interpersonal closeness, and sustainable social meaning.

Personalized service monitoring is conducted continuously to monitor students' academic progress, behavior, and emotional well-being, while ensuring consistent implementation of personalized education. Formal and daily activities, such as congregational prayer attendance, class duty, and student deliberations, strengthen educators' sensitivity to students' psychosocial dynamics and enable contextual service adjustments. This practice relates to the concept of relationship maintenance in service marketing, which is the effort to sustain long-term relationships between service providers and service users through ongoing communication and attention (Zumpe et al., 2025). An adaptive monitoring system serves as an early warning system to prevent student disengagement (Icaza et al., 2024), while parental involvement through regular communication supports a holistic understanding of child development.

Conceptually, the relationship among personalized marketing, student engagement, and loyalty can be understood as a connected, sustainable mechanism. Personalized planning builds an initial sense of security, role organization ensures service consistency, personal interactions create emotional closeness, and ongoing monitoring maintains the continuity of the relationship. This sequence aligns with service-dominant logic, which views value as the result of ongoing interactions between service providers and users (Fang, 2024). Student loyalty is reflected not only in the continuation of studies but also in alumni's long-term engagement with the institution, resulting from consistent, supportive, and meaningful educational experiences (Carvalho et al., 2023; Guo, 2025). Other findings suggest that the emotional attachment built through immersive educational experiences influences students' and alumni's long-term commitment to the institution (Baharun et al., 2022), underscoring the importance of personalized marketing in establishing stable, sustainable educational relationships.

#### **D. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS**

The application of personalized marketing in educational services has proven to play an important role in building sustainable emotional and psychological attachment among students, thereby strengthening their loyalty to educational institutions. This attachment is built through a series of interconnected personalization processes, from service planning in the early stages of education to organizing educators' roles and internal communication systems, to implementing communicative and holistic personal interactions, and to continuous service monitoring. This series of processes contributes to creating a sense of security, emotional closeness, and psychological connection between students and the institution, thereby reflecting in student loyalty not only the continuity of the learning process but also the long-term attachment of students and alums to the educational institution. These findings indicate that the quality of consistent, meaningful relational experiences is a key factor in building long-term relationships between students and educational institutions, while also strengthening the institution's position as a trusted, relevant learning environment.

This study has limitations in its context, which is confined to one educational institution with specific socio-cultural characteristics. The results of this study cannot be generalized to educational institutions with different systems and cultures. The qualitative approach used focuses more on understanding relational processes and dynamics, and does not yet provide a more quantified analysis of the relationship between variables. Further research is recommended to expand the study's context to include various types of educational institutions and levels of education, including non-pesantren

education and digital learning environments. The use of both quantitative and qualitative approaches can provide a more comprehensive, measurable analysis of the relationship among personalized marketing, student engagement, and student loyalty. Further research is also recommended to explore the cultural and social aspects of personalized marketing, providing deeper insights into the factors that influence the success of personalization in education.

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