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**LEVERAGING ALUMNI LOYALTY FOR MARKET PENETRATION: A STUDY OF EMOTIONAL MARKETING IN PESANTREN BUSINESS UNITS**

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**ARTICLE INFO**

**Kata Kunci:**

Emotional Marketing; Alumni Loyalty; Market Penetration; Social Capital; Community-Based Marketing; OPOP Program.

**Cara Sitasi:**

Taufik Aris Saputra, Maria Ulfah. "Leveraging Alumni Loyalty For Market Penetration: A Study Of Emotional Marketing In Pesantren Business Units." Currency: Jurnal Keuangan dan Perbankan Syariah [Volume 04, Nomor 02](#) Juni 2026

**ABST RACT**

Studi ini meneliti peran pemasaran emosional dalam memperkuat penetrasi pasar melalui loyalitas alumni dalam unit bisnis berbasis pesantren. Dengan mengambil studi kasus dari Pesantren Banyuwangi di Indonesia, penelitian ini menyoroti bagaimana keterikatan emosional antara alumni dan pesantren berfungsi sebagai aset pemasaran strategis. Dalam beberapa tahun terakhir, perusahaan yang berafiliasi dengan pesantren seperti distribusi ritel, produksi air minum kemasan, dan lembaga keuangan mikro Islam telah menunjukkan pertumbuhan yang signifikan, sebagian besar didukung oleh jaringan alumni. Menggunakan pendekatan studi kasus kualitatif, penelitian ini mengeksplorasi bagaimana alumni berfungsi dalam tiga peran strategis: sebagai katalis untuk penetrasi pasar, sebagai agen informal promosi dan eksposur, dan sebagai konsumen yang loyal. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa ikatan emosional yang berakar pada pengalaman keagamaan, budaya, dan pendidikan bersama menciptakan rasa kepercayaan dan komitmen yang kuat, yang meningkatkan penerimaan produk dan ekspansi pasar. Bentuk pemasaran berbasis komunitas ini terbukti hemat biaya, berkelanjutan, dan tangguh di pasar yang kompetitif. Studi ini berkontribusi pada literatur tentang pemasaran emosional dan modal sosial dengan mengontekstualisasikannya dalam pengaturan kelembagaan Islam. Selain itu, buku ini juga menawarkan wawasan praktis untuk pengembangan ekosistem ekonomi pesantren, khususnya yang selaras dengan program Satu Pesantren Satu Produk (OPOP). Pada akhirnya, loyalitas alumni muncul sebagai pendorong utama dalam mentransformasikan lembaga berbasis agama menjadi entitas bisnis yang berdampak dan berkelanjutan.

*This study examines the role of emotional marketing in strengthening market penetration through alumni loyalty within pesantren-based business units. Drawing on the case of Banyuwangi Islamic Boarding School in Indonesia, this research highlights how emotional attachment between alumni and the pesantren serves as a strategic marketing asset. In recent years, pesantren-affiliated enterprises such as retail distribution, bottled water production,*

*and Islamic microfinance institutions have demonstrated significant growth, largely supported by alumni networks. Using a qualitative case study approach, this research explores how alumni function in three strategic roles: as catalysts for market penetration, as informal agents of promotion and exposure, and as loyal consumers. The findings reveal that emotional bonds rooted in shared religious, cultural, and educational experiences create a strong sense of trust and commitment, which enhances both product acceptance and market expansion. This form of community-based marketing proves to be cost-efficient, sustainable, and resilient in competitive markets. The study contributes to the literature on emotional marketing and social capital by contextualizing them within Islamic institutional settings. It also offers practical insights for the development of pesantren economic ecosystems, particularly in alignment with the One Pesantren One Product (OPOP) program. Ultimately, alumni loyalty emerges as a key driver in transforming faith-based institutions into impactful and sustainable business entities.*

## **Introduction**

In recent years, the development of pesantren-based businesses has gained increasing attention as part of Indonesia's broader agenda for strengthening community-based economic resilience. Islamic boarding schools (pesantren), traditionally recognized as centers of religious education and moral formation, have evolved into dynamic socio-economic institutions that actively contribute to local and national development. This transformation aligns closely with the One Pesantren One Product (OPOP) program initiated by the East Java Provincial Government, which aims to empower pesantren as productive economic actors through the development of competitive and sustainable business units (Maftuhatu Rosyidah et al., 2025).

The urgency of strengthening pesantren-based enterprises lies not only in their economic potential but also in their unique social structure. Unlike conventional business entities, pesantren possess deeply rooted social capital manifested in strong emotional, cultural, and spiritual bonds among their stakeholders—particularly alumni. With millions of alumni spread across various regions and socio-economic backgrounds, pesantren have access to an extensive and loyal community network. This network represents a strategic asset that, if effectively managed, can significantly enhance market reach, customer loyalty, and brand trust (Chisholm & Nielsen, 2009).

Within this context, emotional marketing emerges as a relevant and powerful strategy. Emotional marketing refers to the practice of building consumer relationships by appealing to feelings, values, and shared identities rather than purely functional product attributes. In pesantren ecosystems, emotional attachment is not artificially constructed but organically formed through shared experiences of religious learning, spiritual guidance, and communal living (Ramin, 2025). As a result, alumni often develop a lifelong sense of belonging and moral obligation toward their pesantren, which influences their consumption behavior and economic participation.

Empirical observations indicate that several pesantren-affiliated business units have experienced significant growth by leveraging this emotional connection. Business entities such as retail distribution networks, bottled drinking water companies, and Islamic microfinance institutions have successfully penetrated competitive markets by mobilizing alumni support. Alumni play multiple strategic roles: they act as catalysts for market expansion by introducing products to new communities, serve as informal marketing agents who promote products through personal networks, and function as loyal customers who consistently consume and endorse pesantren products. This triadic role positions alumni not merely as passive stakeholders but as active drivers of business sustainability.

Despite these promising developments, the academic discourse on pesantren-based business strategies remains relatively limited, particularly in relation to emotional marketing. Existing studies on Islamic entrepreneurship have largely focused on ethical principles, halal compliance, and institutional governance, while overlooking the strategic utilization of emotional and relational capital. Similarly, research on social capital has emphasized trust and networks but has not sufficiently explored how these elements are operationalized within specific marketing strategies to achieve measurable business outcomes.

Several previous studies provide partial insights into this domain. First, research on community-based marketing highlights the importance of trust and shared identity in influencing consumer behavior; however, it tends to generalize community dynamics without examining the unique religious and cultural context of pesantren. Second, studies on alumni engagement in educational institutions often focus on fundraising and institutional support, rather than their role in business development and market expansion. Third, literature on emotional branding underscores the effectiveness of emotional appeals in building customer loyalty, yet it is predominantly situated in corporate and commercial settings, leaving faith-based institutions underexplored. Fourth, studies on Islamic microfinance institutions emphasize financial inclusion and governance, but rarely connect these aspects with marketing strategies driven by emotional attachment. Fifth, research on the OPOP program primarily evaluates policy implementation and economic outputs, with limited attention to the micro-level mechanisms that drive business success within pesantren.

**Table 1: Research Gap with Prior Studies**

<i>No</i>	<i>Author(s) &amp; Year</i>	<i>Research Focus</i>	<i>Key Findings</i>	<i>Identified Gap</i>	<i>Contribution of This Study</i>
1	Muniz Jr. and O'Guinn (2001)	Brand community and consumer relationships	Brand communities are formed through shared consciousness, rituals, and moral responsibility	Focuses on commercial brands; does not address religious-based communities like pesantren	Extends the concept of brand community into pesantren context where emotional bonds are spiritually grounded
2	Kotler and Keller (2016)	Emotional marketing and customer loyalty	Emotional connection enhances customer engagement and long-term loyalty	Primarily conceptual and corporate-oriented; lacks application in community-based religious institutions	Applies emotional marketing within pesantren business units using alumni as key emotional actors
3	Putnam (2000)	Social capital and civic engagement	Social networks, trust, and norms improve collective outcomes	Does not operationalize social capital into specific marketing strategies	Translates social capital (alumni networks) into practical market penetration strategies
4	Antonio et	Islamic	Islamic financial	Focuses on financial	Integrates emotional

	al. (2012)	microfinance and institutional performance	institutions support economic inclusion and sustainability	performance and governance; neglects marketing dimension	marketing into Islamic microfinance development (e.g., KSPPS within pesantren ecosystem)
5	Anshori (2020)	Pesantren economy and OPOP program	Pesantren-based enterprises contribute to regional economic empowerment	Emphasizes policy and macro impact; lacks micro-level strategy analysis	Explains micro-level mechanisms: alumni roles as catalysts, promoters, and loyal consumers

Source: (Muniz Jr, 2001), (Kotler, 20016), (Putnam, 2000), (Antonio, 2012), and (Anshori, 2020), processed.

According to table 1, despite the growing body of literature on emotional marketing, social capital, brand community, and pesantren-based economic development, existing studies remain largely fragmented and limited in scope. Prior research has extensively examined emotional marketing as a tool for enhancing customer loyalty, yet it is predominantly situated within corporate and commercial contexts, with minimal attention to faith-based or community-driven institutions (Qasim & Tayyab, 2025). Similarly, the concept of social capital has been widely explored in terms of trust, networks, and collective action; however, its operationalization into concrete marketing strategies particularly in relation to market penetration remains insufficiently addressed.

Moreover, studies on brand communities emphasize shared identity and relational bonds among consumers, but they rarely consider the deeper spiritual and cultural dimensions embedded in religious communities such as pesantren. In parallel, research on pesantren economies and programs like One Pesantren One Product (OPOP) has primarily focused on macro-level policy outcomes and institutional empowerment, offering limited insights into the micro-level mechanisms that drive business success within these ecosystems (Maftuhatu Rosyidah et al., 2025). The role of alumni, in particular, has been narrowly understood as a source of institutional support, rather than as active agents in business development and strategic marketing.

Consequently, there is a clear lack of integrative analysis that connects emotional marketing, alumni-based social capital, and pesantren-driven entrepreneurship within a unified conceptual framework. Specifically, insufficient attention has been given to how emotional attachment can be systematically transformed into strategic marketing practices that facilitate market penetration and business sustainability. Addressing this gap, the present study advances a novel perspective by positioning alumni not merely as stakeholders, but as multifunctional marketing actors who simultaneously serve as catalysts for market expansion, informal promoters, and loyal consumers. In doing so, this research contributes to bridging the theoretical and empirical divide while offering a contextually grounded understanding of marketing strategy within pesantren-based business units.

These gaps indicate a lack of integrative analysis that connects emotional marketing, alumni loyalty, and pesantren-based business development within a unified framework. In particular, there is insufficient understanding of how emotional bonds are strategically transformed into concrete marketing practices that facilitate market penetration and business sustainability. Moreover, the role of alumni as multifunctional agents—serving simultaneously as promoters, connectors, and consumers—remains under-theorized in existing literature.

Therefore, this study aims to address these gaps by examining how emotional marketing strategies are implemented through alumni networks in pesantren business units. By focusing on the case of Banyuwang Islamic Boarding School, this research seeks to provide a nuanced understanding of how emotional attachment can be leveraged as a strategic resource for market penetration. The findings are expected to contribute not only to the theoretical development of emotional marketing and social capital in Islamic contexts but also to practical strategies for strengthening pesantren economic ecosystems in alignment with the OPOP program.

### **Literature Review**

#### **Emotional Marketing**

Emotional marketing has emerged as a strategic approach that emphasizes the role of emotions, values, and psychological attachment in influencing consumer behavior. Unlike traditional marketing, which focuses primarily on functional attributes such as price and quality, emotional marketing seeks to establish deeper connections with consumers by appealing to their feelings, identity, and sense of belonging (Kunaifi & Syam, 2021). According to Philip Kotler and Kevin Lane Keller, emotional engagement plays a crucial role in building strong brand equity and long-term customer loyalty. Consumers who feel emotionally connected to a brand are more likely to exhibit repeat purchasing behavior, advocacy, and resistance to competitors (Thomas et al., 2024).

In recent developments, emotional marketing has been increasingly linked to the concept of storytelling, shared values, and experiential consumption. This approach is particularly effective in contexts where identity and collective memory play a central role, such as religious or community-based environments. Emotional attachment in such contexts is not merely constructed through marketing communication but is often rooted in lived experiences, cultural practices, and moral obligations (Anggun et al., 2025).

Within the pesantren ecosystem, emotional marketing operates in a unique manner. Alumni relationships are formed through prolonged interaction, spiritual guidance, and shared religious values, resulting in a strong sense of loyalty and trust. This emotional bond can be strategically leveraged to influence consumption behavior and promote business products affiliated with the institution. Therefore, emotional marketing in this context transcends conventional promotional strategies and becomes a form of value-driven engagement (Bhojane L. Y. & Dr. Kapote S, 2025). This study builds on this perspective by examining how emotional attachment among alumni can be transformed into a structured marketing strategy that supports business sustainability and market expansion.

#### **Community-Based Business**

Community-based business refers to an economic model in which business activities are rooted in collective identity, shared values, and social relationships within a specific community. This approach emphasizes participation, mutual benefit, and trust as key drivers of economic activity (Kunaifi, Djameluddin, et al., 2024). Scholars such as Robert D. Putnam highlight that strong social capital—characterized by networks, norms, and trust—can significantly enhance cooperation and collective economic outcomes. In this sense, community-based businesses are not solely profit-oriented but also aim to strengthen social cohesion and community resilience (Nan et al., 2001).

The effectiveness of community-based business models lies in their ability to mobilize internal resources, including human capital, social networks, and cultural identity. These elements create a supportive ecosystem where business transactions are facilitated by trust

and long-term relationships rather than purely transactional considerations. As a result, such businesses often demonstrate higher levels of customer loyalty, lower marketing costs, and greater resilience in times of economic uncertainty (Putri Nabila Nur Nasution & Rina Susanti, 2025).

In the context of pesantren, community-based business takes on a distinctive form. The pesantren community is bound not only by social ties but also by religious and moral commitments. Alumni, students, and affiliated communities form an interconnected network that supports various economic activities. This network enables the dissemination of products, information, and trust across a wide geographical area (Geytsa Yumna Rabbania Rahman & Gunawan, 2025). However, despite its potential, the strategic management of this community resource remains underexplored, particularly in terms of marketing practices (Kunaifi et al., 2025).

This study contributes to the literature by conceptualizing pesantren-based enterprises as community-driven businesses that utilize alumni networks as a form of strategic social capital. It further examines how these networks can be operationalized into effective marketing mechanisms, thereby bridging the gap between community engagement and business performance.

### **OPOP as an Economic Policy**

The One Pesantren One Product (OPOP) program represents a strategic policy initiative aimed at enhancing the economic capacity of Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia, particularly in East Java. Introduced by the provincial government, OPOP seeks to transform pesantren into productive economic units by encouraging the development of unique, competitive, and sustainable products. The program aligns with broader national goals of strengthening micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) and promoting inclusive economic growth (Sun et al., 2021).

Existing studies on OPOP primarily focus on its role in empowering pesantren through access to capital, training, and market facilitation. The policy has been recognized for its potential to create employment opportunities, increase income levels, and reduce economic disparities in rural areas. Moreover, OPOP leverages the institutional strength of pesantren, including their extensive networks and social legitimacy, to foster local economic development (Renny Oktafia et al., 2024).

However, much of the current literature examines OPOP from a macro or policy implementation perspective, with limited attention to the micro-level dynamics that determine the success of pesantren-based businesses. Specifically, there is a lack of analysis on how internal resources such as alumni networks and emotional attachment can be strategically utilized to enhance business performance (Alwi et al., 2025). Without understanding these mechanisms, the effectiveness of OPOP may remain suboptimal.

This study addresses this limitation by exploring how emotional marketing and alumni loyalty function as internal drivers that support the objectives of OPOP. By providing empirical insights into the role of alumni in market penetration and business sustainability, this research offers a complementary perspective that enriches the policy discourse. It demonstrates that the success of OPOP is not solely dependent on external support but also on the strategic mobilization of internal social and emotional capital within pesantren ecosystems.

**Methodology**

This study employs a qualitative research design using a case study strategy to explore how emotional marketing is operationalized within pesantren-based business units. The case study approach is particularly suitable for capturing complex social phenomena within their real-life context, especially when the boundaries between the phenomenon and context are not clearly evident. In this research, the focus is on business entities affiliated with Pesantren Darul Ulum Banyuanyar, which provides a rich empirical setting due to its extensive alumni network and diverse economic activities.

Primary data were collected through in-depth engagement with key informants and direct observation of three types of pesantren-affiliated businesses, namely Islamic microfinance services (KSPPS NURI Jatim), retail distribution (Toko Bagus), and other supporting business units. The selection of informants was based on purposive sampling to ensure the relevance and depth of information. The key informants include an investor of KSPPS NURI Jatim, Mr. Fadali Rahman; a branch manager of KSPPS NURI Jatim, Mr. Hendrik; and an accountant of Toko Bagus, Mr. Ashary, M.E. In addition, supporting written information from Prof. Zainuddin Syarif, as Chairman of Peradaban, was obtained through the official website of Pesantren Darul Ulum Banyuanyar.

Secondary data were gathered from official institutional websites and relevant social media postings that reflect business activities, promotional strategies, and community engagement practices. These sources were used to complement and triangulate the primary data.

Data collection techniques consisted of structured and in-depth interviews, allowing the researcher to explore predefined themes while also capturing nuanced insights from participants. Observational data further enriched the analysis by providing contextual understanding of business operations and interactions within the pesantren ecosystem.

The data analysis process involved data verification, categorization, and interpretation. Collected information was systematically validated and then analyzed to identify core patterns and themes, particularly those related to emotional marketing strategies and alumni involvement. The findings were then synthesized to explain the main strategic mechanisms that contribute to market penetration and business sustainability within the pesantren context.

**Result and Discussion**

The findings of this study reveal that the success of pesantren-based business development at Darul Ulum Banyuanyar is not merely driven by conventional managerial or financial strategies, but rather by the effective mobilization of social capital particularly alumni networks through a structured and value-driven emotional marketing approach. The empirical evidence indicates that alumni are not positioned as passive beneficiaries of the institution, but as active agents who contribute significantly to market penetration, business sustainability, and organizational expansion. This study identifies four core strategic mechanisms through which Darul Ulum Banyuanyar optimizes its alumni-based social capital.

First, the pesantren systematically maintains and strengthens alumni relationships (*silaturahmi*) as a foundational strategy to reinforce emotional attachment. This is institutionalized through the establishment of a structured alumni network known as PERADABAN (Persatuan Alumni Darul Ulum Banyuanyar). Unlike informal alumni associations commonly found in other institutions, PERADABAN operates as a coordinated and organized network across various regions and localities. This structure enables continuous communication, coordination, and engagement among alumni, regardless of their

geographical dispersion. From a marketing perspective, this sustained relational engagement fosters a sense of belonging and collective identity, which becomes a powerful driver of trust and loyalty. As trust is a key determinant in consumer decision-making within community-based markets, the existence of PERADABAN significantly lowers market resistance and accelerates product acceptance. In this context, *silaturahmi* is not only a cultural or religious practice but also a strategic asset that underpins long-term customer relationships and network-based market expansion (Ambak et al., 2025).

Second, the pesantren actively cultivates spiritual respect (*ta'dzim*) and intellectual continuity among alumni through regular religious and educational programs. These include monthly alumni study circles (*kajian*) and annual commemorative events such as the *haul* of Bani Isbat, the founding lineage of the pesantren. These activities function as emotional reinforcement mechanisms that sustain alumni attachment beyond their formal period of study. The findings suggest that such programs play a critical role in maintaining what can be termed as "emotional resonance," where alumni continuously reconnect with the values, teachings, and historical legacy of the pesantren. This emotional resonance translates into a strong moral commitment to support pesantren-affiliated initiatives, including business ventures. From the perspective of emotional marketing, these rituals and gatherings serve as experiential touchpoints that deepen brand meaning and strengthen affective loyalty (Bhojane L. Y. & Dr. Kapote S, 2025). Unlike commercial branding strategies that rely heavily on symbolic communication, the pesantren leverages lived experiences and spiritual engagement as authentic sources of emotional connection. Consequently, alumni are more inclined to trust, promote, and consume products associated with the pesantren, as these products are perceived not merely as economic commodities but as extensions of shared values and identity.

Third, alumni are directly involved in various operational and strategic roles within pesantren-based business units, including as investors, managers, and marketing agents. This inclusive approach reflects a participatory business model in which ownership and responsibility are collectively shared. The involvement of alumni as investors provides not only financial capital but also reinforces their psychological sense of ownership toward the business. As managers and staff, alumni contribute their expertise while maintaining alignment with the pesantren's values and mission (Pribadi et al., 2020). More importantly, as informal marketing agents, alumni play a crucial role in promoting products through their personal networks, social interactions, and community engagements. This multi-layered involvement enhances the credibility and authenticity of marketing efforts, as recommendations are delivered through trusted interpersonal relationships rather than impersonal advertising channels. The findings confirm that this strategy significantly reduces marketing costs while increasing effectiveness, as word-of-mouth promotion within trusted networks tends to have higher persuasive power. In this regard, alumni function simultaneously as internal stakeholders and external market connectors, bridging the gap between production and consumption within a cohesive ecosystem (Apiatno, 2025).

Fourth, the pesantren strategically prioritizes alumni in every phase of business expansion, particularly in entering new markets across different regions. When establishing new branches or expanding distribution networks, alumni in the target area are often the first point of contact and engagement. They are entrusted with roles such as local coordinators, distributors, or even branch initiators. This approach ensures that business expansion is grounded in pre-existing trust networks, thereby minimizing entry barriers and operational risks. The presence of alumni in new markets facilitates faster adaptation to local conditions,

enhances community acceptance, and strengthens initial customer bases (Fink, 2013). Furthermore, this strategy reflects an efficient utilization of network-based resources, where expansion is driven not by anonymous market analysis alone, but by relational intelligence embedded within the alumni community. The prioritization of alumni also reinforces their sense of recognition and inclusion, which in turn strengthens their long-term commitment to the pesantren’s economic initiatives.

Taken together, these four strategies demonstrate that emotional marketing within the Darul Ulum Banyuanyar context is not a superficial or symbolic practice, but a deeply embedded and systematically managed process. Emotional attachment is continuously nurtured through social interaction, spiritual engagement, and participatory involvement, transforming alumni into loyal customers, active promoters, and strategic partners (Sharia Economics Department, Faculty of Islamic Economics and Business, Institut Agama Islam Al-Khairat Pamekasan, Indonesia et al., 2025). This integrative approach effectively converts social capital into tangible economic outcomes, particularly in terms of market penetration and business sustainability.

From a theoretical standpoint, these findings contribute to the development of emotional marketing by highlighting the importance of authenticity, shared values, and lived experiences in building strong consumer relationships. The study also extends the concept of social capital by demonstrating how relational networks can be operationalized into concrete marketing strategies within a specific institutional context. Furthermore, it enriches the discourse on community-based business by illustrating how faith-based institutions can leverage internal resources to achieve competitive advantage (Kunaifi, Syam, et al., 2024).

From a practical perspective, the strategies identified in this study offer valuable insights for other pesantren and community-based organizations seeking to develop sustainable business models (Kunaifi et al., 2023). In alignment with the OPOP program, the success of Darul Ulum Banyuanyar underscores the importance of not only providing external support such as funding and training, but also strengthening internal capacities, particularly in managing social and emotional capital. Ultimately, the case of Darul Ulum Banyuanyar demonstrates that the integration of emotional marketing and alumni engagement can serve as a powerful foundation for building resilient and impactful pesantren-based enterprises.

**Table 2: Emotional Marketing Theory and Its Implementation in Darul Ulum Banyuanyar**

No	Emotional Marketing Dimension	Theoretical Explanation	Strategy Implemented by Darul Ulum Banyuanyar	Expected Marketing Impact
1	Emotional Bonding	Emotional marketing emphasizes building deep psychological and affective connections between consumers and institutions	Strengthening <i>silaturahmi</i> through alumni network (PERADABAN) across regions	Strong sense of belonging, increased trust, and long-term customer loyalty
2	Sense of Identity & Belonging	Consumers are more engaged when they feel part of a community or shared identity	Institutionalizing alumni identity through structured organization (PERADABAN)	Alumni perceive themselves as part of the pesantren ecosystem, encouraging active participation in business support
3	Emotional Experience	Repeated emotional interactions reinforce	Monthly alumni religious studies ( <i>kajian</i> ) and	Sustained emotional engagement leading to

4	Value-Based Engagement	attachment and brand recall Emotional marketing connects products with shared values, beliefs, and meaning	annual <i>haul</i> of Bani Isbat Embedding religious values, respect ( <i>ta'dzim</i> ), and knowledge continuity in alumni programs	consistent product preference and advocacy Products are perceived as value-driven (not purely commercial), increasing moral commitment to support
5	Trust-Based Relationship	Trust is a key outcome of emotional connection and drives purchasing decisions	Continuous interaction between pesantren and alumni through formal and informal channels	Reduced market resistance and higher acceptance of pesantren-based products
6	Word-of-Mouth & Advocacy	Emotionally connected consumers tend to promote products voluntarily	Alumni act as informal marketing agents in their communities	Cost-efficient promotion and wider market reach through trusted networks
7	Customer Loyalty	Emotional attachment leads to repeat purchases and long-term loyalty	Alumni prioritized as primary consumers of pesantren business products	Stable demand and sustainable revenue streams
8	Co-Creation & Participation	Consumers become active participants in value creation	Alumni involved as investors, managers, and business partners	Increased sense of ownership and responsibility toward business success
9	Network-Based Expansion	Emotional ties facilitate expansion through relational networks	Alumni prioritized in market expansion across regions	Faster market penetration with lower entry barriers
10	Authentic Engagement	Authenticity strengthens emotional credibility and brand integrity	Emotional ties rooted in real experiences (education, spirituality, history of pesantren)	Stronger brand legitimacy and differentiation from conventional businesses

Source: Data collection (primary and secondary), processed.

Based on table 2, it demonstrates that the implementation of emotional marketing at Darul Ulum Banyuanyar is not incidental, but rather reflects a systematic and multidimensional strategy grounded in strong theoretical foundations. Each dimension of emotional marketing ranging from emotional bonding, identity formation, and trust-building to participation and authenticity is translated into concrete and context-specific practices within the pesantren ecosystem. This indicates that emotional marketing is operationalized not merely as a communication tool, but as an integrated institutional strategy.

The strengthening of *silaturahmi* through PERADABAN illustrates how emotional bonding and a sense of belonging are cultivated in a structured manner, resulting in sustained alumni engagement. Similarly, religious activities such as *kajian* and *haul* function as recurring emotional experiences that reinforce alumni attachment while embedding shared values into economic behavior. These practices demonstrate that emotional engagement in this context is deeply rooted in spiritual and cultural continuity, rather than artificial branding efforts.

Furthermore, the active involvement of alumni as investors, managers, and informal marketing agents highlights a shift from passive consumption to participatory value creation. This aligns with the co-creation dimension of emotional marketing, where stakeholders contribute directly to business development. The prioritization of alumni in market expansion further confirms that emotional ties are strategically leveraged to reduce market barriers and accelerate penetration.

## Currency:

## Jurnal Ekonomi dan Perbankan Syariah

Volume 04, Nomor 02, Juni 2026

ISSN: 2963-9387//e-ISSN: 2963-7465

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Overall, the findings affirm that emotional marketing at Darul Ulum operates as an “ecosystem strategy,” integrating relational, spiritual, and economic dimensions into a cohesive and sustainable business model.

### Conclusion

This study concludes that emotional marketing plays a pivotal role in driving the success of pesantren-based business units, particularly through the strategic mobilization of alumni loyalty as a form of social capital. The case of Darul Ulum Banyuanyar demonstrates that emotional attachment rooted in shared spiritual experiences, cultural values, and long-standing institutional relationships can be effectively transformed into a sustainable marketing strategy that enhances market penetration and business resilience.

The findings highlight four key strategies: maintaining alumni *silaturahmi* through structured networks (PERADABAN), reinforcing emotional and spiritual bonds through regular religious activities, involving alumni as active participants in business operations, and prioritizing alumni in market expansion efforts. These strategies collectively position alumni as multifunctional actors who serve not only as loyal customers but also as promoters, connectors, and investors within the pesantren economic ecosystem.

Theoretically, this study contributes to the integration of emotional marketing and social capital within a faith-based institutional context, offering a more holistic understanding of community-driven marketing strategies. Practically, it provides actionable insights for pesantren and similar institutions seeking to develop impactful and sustainable business models, particularly in alignment with the OPOP program.

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## Currency:

## Jurnal Ekonomi dan Perbankan Syariah

[Volume 04, Nomor 02](#), Juni 2026

ISSN: 2963-9387//e-ISSN: 2963-7465

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### Jurnal Ekonomi dan Perbankan Syariah

[Volume 04, Nomor 02](#), Juni 2026

ISSN: 2963-9387//e-ISSN: 2963-7465

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