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MARKETING INNOVATION OF EDUCATIONAL SERVICES THROUGH PPDB INDENT MI MUHAMMADIYAH SPECIAL PROGRAM KARTASURA

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Kata Kunci:	ABSTRACT
Inovasi; Pemasaran; Jasa Pendidikan; PPDB Indent	Penelitian ini menganalisis inovasi pemasaran jasa pendidikan dalam PPDB Indent di MI Muhammadiyah Program Khusus Kartasura. Metode kualitatif studi kasus digunakan dengan pengumpulan data melalui observasi, wawancara (Kepala Sekolah, Humas, dan guru), serta analisis dokumen. Temuan menunjukkan inovasi pemasaran seperti branding kuat, pemanfaatan media sosial, kemitraan, event khusus, testimoni, dan reward pembiayaan berhasil meningkatkan pendaftaran hingga 90% kuota (2025/2026), meski sempat turun di 2024/2025 karena promosi kurang optimal. Tantangan utama adalah persaingan dengan sekolah swasta baru. Simpulan penelitian menegaskan bahwa integrasi pemasaran jasa dan manajemen pendidikan dapat meningkatkan daya saing institusi.

Keywords:	ABSTRACTS
<i>Innovation; Marketing; Educational Service; Indent Admission</i>	<i>This study examines the marketing innovation of educational services in the Indent New Learner Admission Programme (PPDB) at MI Muhammadiyah PK Kartasura using a qualitative descriptive case study approach. Data was collected through observations, interviews, and document analysis, involving the Principal, Public Relations Department, and teachers. Key innovations included strong branding, social media use, partnerships, special events, testimonials, and financing rewards. The programme successfully achieved 90% of its quota for the 2025/2026 academic year, though participation dropped in 2024/2025 due to suboptimal promotion and teacher engagement. Challenges included ineffective marketing and competition with new private schools. The study concludes that integrating service marketing and education management in PPDB Indent enhances institutional competitiveness, recommending improved promotional strategies and teacher involvement</i>

A. INTRODUCTION

Private educational institutions, in a competitive landscape, are required to continue to innovate in various aspects, including marketing. Marketing innovation is crucial to attract prospective students and maintain the existence of the institution (Prieto-Sandoval et al., 2022). Creative and adaptive marketing strategies enable educational institutions to highlight their strengths and reach target audiences effectively. In this digital era, marketing innovation is not only limited to conventional methods, but also reaches online platforms and social media (Fazel and Sayaf 2025). By utilizing technology and understanding consumer behavior, private educational institutions can increase visibility, build a positive image, and ultimately increase the number of applicants.

The PPDB Indent program is a form of innovation in accepting new students, where prospective students register long before the school year begins (Nurkarim and Muin 2023). With the aim of providing sufficient time for schools to conduct thorough selection and preparation. This innovation not only simplifies the registration process, but also allows schools to focus more on assessing the potential and needs of each student, so that they can create a more optimal learning environment (Alfeld and Bhattacharya 2012). This can also provide certainty for schools in planning the capacity and resources needed (Skhosana et al., 2023).

PPDB Indent also provides benefits for parents, such as ease in financial planning and children's education. This program is not just an initial registration mechanism, but also a strategy to build loyalty and trust in educational institutions.

"Through this program, schools can provide comprehensive information about the curriculum, facilities, and excellent programs to prospective students and parents." (FF/HM/09-09-2024).

Intensive interaction since the beginning of registration also allows schools to understand the needs and expectations of prospective students, so that they can provide more personalized and relevant educational services. Thus, PPDB Indent can be an important instrument in improving the quality of education and customer satisfaction.

Implementation of PPDB *Indent* can also be seen as a proactive effort by educational institutions to face demographic challenges and competition between schools (Johnson 2019). By recruiting prospective students early, schools can secure market share and reduce the risk of student shortages in the coming school year. This program also provides flexibility for private schools in arranging admission schedules and preparing the resources needed, so as to improve operational efficiency and the quality of educational services.

This research was conducted because of various problems that became the basis for thinking from observations, interviews, and literature reviews related to PPDB *Indent*. From initial observations, it was found that MI Muhammadiyah Special Program Kartasura has successfully implemented the PPDB Indent program quite successfully, but there has been no documentation or in-depth analysis of the personalization of services and simple technology in supporting marketing innovation through the program. Interviews with the school showed a need to innovate the image and competitiveness of private schools. In addition, there are problems related to previous literature on formal PPDB, which is not fully relevant to the context of PPDB Indent at the private Madrasah Ibtidaiyah level.

Many private schools hold Indent PPDB programs. As mentioned in the Jawa Pos Radar Solo newspaper, these schools implement Indent PPDB, but the registration is for data collection purposes so that it does not violate the schedule rules of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology or the Ministry of Religion (Argiandini 2023). Then the previous research on Indent PPDB was related to its marketing strategy within the scope of private elementary schools (Nurkarim and Muin 2023). Furthermore, research on school governance management which began with the Indent wave in general (Lestari, 2022; Kuscarera, H. N. E., & Susanto, 2023; Pangestika et al., 2024 and Hadi et al., 2023). While this study focuses on research, analysis methods, and research subjects.

This study uses a unique research subject, namely the Muhammadiyah Elementary School Special Program Kartasura. This school implements a New Student Admissions (PPDB) system through the PPDB Program *Indent* in the Kartasura area. In addition, this school has a positive reputation, this madrasah can be seen from several indicators, such as the high level of community acceptance, the quality of recognized alumni, and academic and non-academic achievements achieved by students. MIM Special Program Kartasura is also known for its extensive educational network and consistently produces outstanding students in various competitions (Edutrend 2024; MIM PK Kartasura 2024).

The subject of this study provides an opportunity for researchers to study best practices in educational service marketing innovation, as well as its implementation. This study uses a comprehensive analytical framework, which combines the concepts of service marketing and educational management. This analytical framework will help researchers to understand educational service marketing innovation through the PPDB Indent program comprehensively, as well as its implications for customer satisfaction, the image of educational institutions, and school competitiveness.

Schools must take strategic action if they want to continue to develop according to the needs and advantages of the situation. The Ministry of Education and Culture released data in Kartasura District, Sukoharjo Regency itself, there are 38 Public Elementary Schools, 10 Private Elementary Schools, and 8 Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (Kemendikbudristek 2024). Each educational institution has a value from its school culture which makes it attractive to the community in registering for school.

In an interview conducted with the Head of Madrasah MI Muhammadiyah Special Program Kartasura, it was revealed that the PPDB Indent program is a marketing innovation for private schools that begins from the month of the regulations set from the usual PPDB time, because the months when the PPDB Indent marketing is held are more widely obtained than regular registration or in accordance with government regulations, namely approaching the new school year.

This study aims to analyze the marketing innovation of educational services through the PPDB Indent program at MI Muhammadiyah Special Program Kartasura. The purpose of this study is to describe the marketing innovation of educational services through PPDB Indent and its implementation. The urgency of this study is based on several considerations. First, marketing innovation is becoming increasingly important for private educational institutions in facing tight competition and changing customer needs. Second, the PPDB Indent program is one form of innovation that promises to increase the efficiency of accepting new students and building customer loyalty. Third, there has not been much research that specifically discusses the PPDB Indent program

at the elementary madrasah level, so this study is expected to provide a significant contribution to the development of educational management science and service marketing.

B. RESEARCH METHOD

In writing this article using qualitative methods, by taking data from observations, interviews and documents. The location of this research is at MI Muhammadiyah Special Program Kartasura in September 2024 to February 2025. The data sources in completing this article are field observations, interview results with the Head of Madrasah, Madrasah Public Relations Section and several teachers related to the madrasah and document analysis both official documents from the school, articles on the official madrasah website/social media, and related journal articles.

This study uses a triangulation approach to sources and methods in its data validity techniques. Furthermore, the qualitative data analysis method refers to the Miles and Huberman approach, which states that the analysis process is carried out repeatedly until it reaches the point of data saturation, namely when no new relevant information is found. The collection of research data was obtained from (1) collecting field data, (2) data condensation, (3) presentation, and (4) drawing conclusions (Huberman 2014).

C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

Marketing Innovation of PPDB Indent Program at MI Muhammadiyah Special Program Kartasura

The findings of the results of educational service marketing innovation, namely through the PPDB Indent program through several strategies designed to attract the interest of prospective students and parents. These innovations include the following:

1. Have a Clear Master Plan and Accountability Report

MI Muhammadiyah Special Program Kartasura has a clear and structured master plan and accountability report as a guide to the program's vision and mission. This helps schools plan and implement the PPDB Indent program in a structured manner. With a regular schedule, promotions become more focused and effective. This master plan also ensures that all activities run according to the goals that have been set. This master plan is updated in the program evaluation every year.

2. Profitable Financing Program

Schools offer various financing discounts to attract prospective students to the program. These discounts include Infaq Pembangunan and the implementation of the old SPP, as well as special discounts for siblings who register. For the older sibling, the SPP is cut by 50% until graduation, while the younger sibling gets a 50% discount on Infaq Pembangunan. This program provides financial convenience for parents, especially those with more than one child. Thus, schools become more affordable and attractive to the community.

3. Branding of Leading Program Based on *Multiple Intelligence*

MI Muhammadiyah Special Program Kartasura has a superior program based on *multiple intelligence* with the tagline "Human School, School of Champions, and School of Stars". In addition, MI Muhammadiyah Special Program is one of the inclusive schools in Kartasura. This program provides space for the development of students' talents and interests, including children with disabilities. The school encourages students to excel and appreciate their talents. By focusing on developing individual potential, the school is an attractive choice for parents. MI Muhammadiyah Special Program Kartasura as an educational institution under the auspices of Muhammadiyah is one of the brands that attracts people in the Kartasura area and its surroundings. In addition, it has a vision and mission that are relevant to the needs of market education with superior programs such as tahfidz classes and international classes. The tahfidz class targets memorization of 1-3 juz, while the international class uses bilingual and offers programs *study exchange* to Singapore and Malaysia. The program attracts parents who want a faith-based and global education.

4. Establishing Cooperation with Kindergarten Schools

Cooperation and synergy with various schools or other educational institutions aims to promote MI Muhammadiyah Special Program Kartasura to prospective students and their parents. The form of partnership that is actively and continuously established includes cooperation with early childhood education institutions, such as Kindergarten, PAUD, BIMBA, Playgroup, and KB located around the school environment. MI Muhammadiyah PK Kartasura itself has cooperation with TK schools that have agreed/signed an MoU to help each other, especially in terms of promoting the PPDB Indent program with a total of 15 schools spread across the Colomadu, Gentan and Kartasura Districts. For example, providing *reward* to schools or kindergartens that provide recommendations for prospective students and promote MI Muhammadiyah Special Program in the kindergarten school. In return, the school provides the needs of the kindergarten in activities needed by the kindergarten such as magic activities, parenting activities and so on, then MI Muhammadiyah Special Program will provide speakers.

5. Creative Promotion Based on Social Media

Schools optimize digital platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, Whatsapp and YouTube, premium and regular brochures and banners with innovative and contemporary promotional content. Graphic designs are made attractive by following current trends, such as Reels/Short Video templates, interactive infographics, and parent/student testimonials in creative formats. Content is also designed based on prospective student behavior data, such as *highlight* flagship programs (tahfidz, inclusion) through short videos or *challenge* which went viral. This is like collaboration with domestic and foreign educational figures wrapped in testimonials and recommendations. This strategy not only increases *engagement* but also build a modern and adaptive school image in the eyes of the community. This can be seen in the example of the brochure below:



Figure 1. PPDB Indent Program Brochure

The PPDB Indent program itself is to open PPDB or acceptance of new students for the upcoming school year, namely for the 2025/2026 and 2026/2027 school years. This has received a positive response from the public with concrete evidence for the 2025/2026 school year which received 90% prospective students, namely 97 prospective students from a quota of 108 students. This program is maximized from July to the end of September for the upcoming school year. So that the acquisition of prospective students is known to have increased the number of registrants in the PPDB Indent program from the 2022/2023 school year to the 2023/2024 school year and decreased in the 2024/2025 school year compared to the 2025/2026 school year. This is data taken in the last four years where PPDB Indent was implemented massively at MI Muhammadiyah Special Program Kartasura. The data is as seen in the table below:

Table 1. Number of Indent PPDB Registrants

School year	Quota Amount	Registrar's Turnover <i>PPDB Indent</i>	Percent
2022/2023	108	45	42%
2023/2024	108	51	47%
2024/2025	108	89	82%
2025/2026	108	97	90%

Source: Document MI Muhammadiyah Special Program Kartasura

Meanwhile, the total number of students at MI Muhammadiyah Special Program Kartasura for the 2021/2022 academic year is 510 students with 4 classes, 2022/2023 academic year totaling 512, 2023/2024 academic year totaling 511 and the 2024/2025 academic year totaling 511. The data shows an increase in the number of students in the 2022/2023 academic year and stagnation in 2024/2025.

This will of course be achieved with a structured strategy in the marketing process.

Then, based on detailed data on prospective students from PPDB Indent by schools, it is known that in the 2022/2023 academic year the number of registrants up to the first semester reached 80 students. Then after the program period ended, further promotions were carried out with different terms, such as "special waves" or "interest waves", the essence of which remains the same, namely providing early registration opportunities for prospective students to fulfill the quota. This is done so that there are no violations of the regulations regarding the official opening time of formal PPDB.

Implementasi Program PPDB Indent at MI Muhammadiyah Special Program Kartasura

The findings of the implementation of the PPDB Indent program at MI Muhammadiyah Special Program Kartasura for the 2025/2026 Academic Year were implemented on Academic Year 2024/2025, starting from July to September 2024 with two registration waves. Official registration closes in February 2025 after quota is fulfilled. Based on promotion through social media, student acquisition until September 2024 in this program reached 97 students, showing an increase 8% compared to the previous year.

This program is a prospective student data collection, not a paid registration, according to the madrasah's technical instructions. This is based on the school's special policy considering the rules of the Ministry of Religion regarding PPDB. Prospective students who are registered are entitled to re-register according to the quota set by the school, with the possibility of adjustments based on the final interests of the guardians.

Promotion is carried out routinely every Wednesday and Saturday through social media and digital platforms, covering information on PPDB, school profiles, excellent programs, and student achievements. The Head of Madrasah and the Public Relations team encourage all teachers and staff to actively disseminate information via personal accounts such as WhatsApp and Instagram during the implementation of PPDB Indent.

MI Muhammadiyah Special Program Kartasura develops innovative marketing strategies through the PPDB Indent program with organizing various special events. Roadshow to Kindergarten with a reach of 15 schools inserting the school name in easy-to-remember songs successfully reached the market segment *middle-upper class*. Mini parenting programs that present Islamic-based childcare materials and trial classes in the form of school tours and direct interaction with teachers play an important role in building a positive image of the school. The social media of the Parents Association (IOM) is also used as an effective means of promotion. Historically, the PPDB Indent program at MI Muhammadiyah Special Program Kartasura was initially of a unofficially, namely for 3 days per year, then developed into a solution during the pandemic to ease the economic burden on parents. Post-pandemic, schools limit registration period in response to the issue of "*steal a start*" even though there is no explicit prohibition from the Ministry of Religion or the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology related to data collection of prospective students before the official PPDB period (Ministry of Religion 2025).

The monitoring results show fluctuations in the number of applicants with a significant decrease from 89 students (2023/2024) to 51 students (2024/2025). The

analysis indicates that the reduction in the physical promotion budget such as banners has a significant impact even though the school already has brand awareness. The registration pattern follows a trend where the first semester (July-December) shows higher numbers than the second semester (January-June), making it an important indicator for evaluating new student admission strategies.

These findings suggest that the success of the PPDB Indent program requires a diverse and sustainable marketing approach. Schools need to combine various promotional methods, both digital and conventional, while remaining sensitive to developments in educational trends and community needs. Regular evaluation of the effectiveness of each promotional channel is key, along with the ability to adapt quickly to changes in regulations and the preferences of prospective parents.

Discussion

Marketing Innovation of PPDB Indent Program at MI Muhammadiyah Special Program Kartasura

PPDB Indent is a breakthrough in marketing educational services designed to increase the attractiveness of institutions while strengthening their competitive position amidst competition in the educational market. At MI Muhammadiyah Special Program Kartasura, this innovation is implemented through five main strategies: (1) preparation of a clear Master Plan and Accountability Report as operational guidelines (in accordance with the principles of *strategic planning* in education (Davies and Ellison 2003)), (2) offering profitable financing programs for prospective students, (3) developing *branding* multiple intelligence-based flagship programs, (4) building strategic cooperation with kindergarten/early childhood education institutions, and (5) optimizing creative promotions through social media with content based on the latest trends (Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick 2022). This combination of strategies has not only succeeded in increasing public interest in institutions, but also created a unique differentiation in the elementary education ecosystem in the Kartasura area and its surroundings (Bachnik and Nowacki 2024). This is in line with the findings of Ridwan et al. regarding educational marketing service strategies (Nurkarim and Muin 2023).

Innovation in marketing educational services through the PPDB program *Indent* at MI Muhammadiyah Special Program Kartasura reflects a strategic approach to attract prospective students and parents. First, Marketing innovation management in the education sector requires a clear master plan as a strategic foundation. Kotler & Keller (2016) emphasize that the master plan functions as an integrated framework that integrates market analysis, resource allocation, and evaluation mechanisms. Without careful planning, innovation implementation tends to produce suboptimal output, as expressed by Trott (2018).

Second, *Reward* financing as part of a marketing strategy also has a significant impact in attracting prospective students. Discount programs for siblings or incentives for parents who register early can be a separate attraction. Financial incentives according to Gneezy et al. can motivate individuals to take certain actions. MI Muhammadiyah Special Program Kartasura implemented a tuition discount system for siblings and the implementation of lighter construction costs to encourage the registration of more new students (Gneezy, Meier, and Rey-biel 2011).

Third, the determination *branding* strong branding is the main foundation in this strategy. Clear and consistent branding helps build the school's identity in the

community. Effective branding can increase brand awareness and differentiate the institution from competitors (Philip Kotler 2016). MI Muhammadiyah Special Program Kartasura utilizes its reputation as an educational institution under the auspices of Muhammadiyah, as well as a vision and mission that are relevant to current educational needs, such as creative class programs and inclusion for children with special needs. This not only attracts the attention of the community but also builds parental trust in the quality of education offered.

Fourth, making partnerships and collaborations with other schools is also a very influential strategy in expanding the marketing network. According to Hitt et al., strategic cooperation can increase the competitiveness of an organization by utilizing resources available from other parties (Hitt, Ireland, and Hoskisson 2013). In this case, MI Muhammadiyah Special Program Kartasura has established partnerships with various educational institutions such as kindergartens and PAUDs to mutually support the promotion of the PPDB Indent program. This collaboration not only expands the marketing reach but also improves the school's reputation in the eyes of prospective students and parents, thus creating a synergy that is beneficial to both parties.

Fifth, the use of social media and digital platforms is an important strategy in educational marketing. In today's digital era, social media functions as an effective communication channel to disseminate information about school activities, student achievements, and excellent programs. This is because social media can increase interaction between educational institutions and the community (Kaplan and Haenlein 2010). MI Muhammadiyah Special Program Kartasura actively uses platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp to share educational and interesting content, making it easier for parents to access the information needed for their child's registration decision.

The PPDB Indent program at MI Muhammadiyah Special Program Kartasura proves that an integrated marketing strategy can significantly increase public interest. Collaboration between stakeholders plays an important role in creating a quality and responsive educational environment, so that it not only boosts the number of applicants but also strengthens the school's reputation as a leading institution. For future development, in-depth research on the effectiveness of each strategy in the local context will be very useful.

The combination of service marketing and education management is the foundation of PPDB Indent innovation. Service marketing focuses on building image and public appeal, while education management ensures the operational process runs efficiently. This integration allows for the creation of a competitive PPDB system while being oriented towards improving the quality of education as a whole.

This innovation relies on synergy between marketing and management aspects with three main focuses: (1) team coordination to align strategies, (2) utilization of data and feedback for service improvement, and (3) creation of positive experiences for prospective students and parents. This integrated approach ensures the achievement of PPDB Indent goals, both in terms of the quantity of students and the quality of educational services.

The importance of the PPDB program *Indent* conducted by MI Muhammadiyah Special Program Kartasura is based on the distribution of private and public schools as many as 55 schools. Meanwhile, the number of Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI) in Sukoharjo Regency, Central Java in 2025 is 86 schools. Of this number, 6 schools are public MI and

80 schools are private MI (Central Statistics Agency 2025). MI Muhammadiyah PK Kartasura is one of the madrasahs with a stagnant number of students above 500 students. This proves that there is systematic work in obtaining new students through the PPDB program, both through the system *Indent* and waves.

In the Solo Raya region, namely Solo City, Sukoharjo, Karanganyar, Sragen, Boyolali, Klaten, and Wonogiri, a survey was conducted by the Satu Karya Karsa Foundation (YSKK) to measure the level of public satisfaction with private education services reaching 82.9%, while for public schools, the satisfaction rate was at 75.9%. This is as reported in Solopos, on May 3, 2018 (Ryantje 2018). So it is important for schools to take steps to implement more innovative PPDB

Despite the findings and discussions that have been expressed, certain limitations of this study must be considered. Although MI Muhammadiyah Special Program Kartasura is one of the schools that implements the PPDB *Indent* program, it cannot be denied that there are other private schools that are also the first choice of schools for the community that implement this program. Then the criteria for schools to register their children through the PPDB *Indent* Program and which private schools implement PPDB *Indent*. Further research is recommended to take a broad locus carried out by other top schools. Further research is expected to reveal the community's perception of their participation in this program.

Implementation of the PPDB *Indent* Program at MI Muhammadiyah Special Program Kartasura

The PPDB *Indent* program at MI Muhammadiyah Special Program Kartasura is a strategic innovation developed in response to post-pandemic challenges, especially in dealing with the economic instability of the community (Lu 2023; Damianus Bram 2023). As expressed by Hafsari et al. (2024) and Tunggowijaya et al. (2024), this program has different characteristics from the formal PPDB system based on zoning or online because it offers a longer registration period as a form of initial data collection, allowing for more mature planning by both schools and prospective students.

The implementation of this program integrates a multidimensional approach as recommended in the educational marketing literature (Nurasiah 2024; Yandra 2024). On the one hand, schools utilize social media and digital platforms intensively, while on the other hand they organize special events such as roadshows, mini parenting, and trial classes which have proven effective in building engagement with the community (Piazzi, Francesca 2016). However, as found in the research of Pawitan et al. (2022), optimization of human resources, especially in the involvement of new teachers as promotional assets, still needs to be improved.

The main challenges faced include tight competition with new private schools in the Kartasura area, negative perceptions from some communities, and a decrease in the number of applicants from 89 to 51 students within one year (internal school data, 2024). This condition is in accordance with the findings of Putu Martini (2022) regarding the factors influencing the implementation of education policies, where the socio-economic environment and the characteristics of the parties directly responsible for running the PPDB *Indent* program in schools also determine the success of the program. To overcome these challenges, the school is refining its strategy by optimizing print media, strengthening communication with partner kindergartens, and improving the quality of supporting facilities.

The findings of this program implementation underline several important lessons as explained in the educational innovation management framework (Christina et al. 2023; Adha 2024). First, the success of the PPDB program requires an integrated approach between marketing innovation and operational management. Second, the ability to adapt to the dynamics of the external environment is a determining factor. Third, strengthening the internal capacity of institutions through optimization of human resources and supporting facilities also determines the competitiveness of schools amidst increasingly fierce competition.

D. CONCLUSION

Private and public schools are required to continue to innovate in the New Student Admissions (PPDB) program in order to follow the dynamics of the development of educational service marketing. This study examines marketing innovation through the PPDB Indent Program at MI Muhammadiyah Special Program Kartasura, which includes strategies such as strong branding, utilization of social media, partnerships with educational institutions, special events, testimonials, and financial incentives. The results show that this program is effective in increasing the number of registrants, reaching 90% of the quota in 2025/2026, although it had decreased in the previous year due to less than optimal promotion and teacher involvement. The main challenges are competition with new private schools and the need to increase the effectiveness of promotion.

The conclusion of this study confirms that the integration of measurable educational service marketing and management innovations can improve the competitiveness of institutions. Therefore, it is necessary to strengthen promotional strategies, actively involve teachers, and conduct continuous evaluation to ensure the sustainability of the program. These findings can be a reference for madrasahs and similar schools in developing more effective PPDB strategies in the future.

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