

Public Relations Strategy in Creating the Image of Islamic Boarding School

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Abstract— Pesantren (Islamic boarding school) is the basis of Islamic education in Indonesia. Islamic boarding school is also the first and oldest Islamic educational institution in Indonesia, which continues to develop according to the times. In addition, an Islamic boarding school is an educational institution with its characteristics compared to other educational institutions. In this case, an Islamic boarding school is inseparable from the role of the public. Thus, public relations in an organizational institution has a crucial role, especially in education. To achieve the goals of Islamic educational institutions effectively and efficiently, a remarkably close relationship between educational institutions and the public is needed to meet the public needs and to build the image of the Islamic boarding school. The research method used was descriptive qualitative research, with six respondents. The data were then analyzed, and their validity was checked using triangulation techniques at Islamic boarding schools in Bantul Regency. The study results revealed that 1) public relations played a vital role in improving the image of Islamic boarding schools in Bantul Regency; 2) The public relations strategy in improving the image of Islamic boarding schools in Bantul Regency was through several factors, including strong support from the guardians of students and foundations, the commitment of Islamic boarding school in carrying out programs to be trusted by the public, and cooperating with educational unit institutions outside.

Keywords— *component; formatting; style; styling; insert (key words)*

INTRODUCTION

Education in Indonesia. Islamic boarding schools consist of various kinds; according to [1], Islamic boarding schools are divided into three groups: *salaf*, *khalaf*, and combination. At this time, the education system in Islamic boarding schools is more structured by

combining Islamic boarding schoKhalafd formal education curriculums [2].

Islamic boarding schools are also the first and oldest Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia [3]–[5], which continue to develop according to the times. In addition, Islamic boarding schools are educational institutions with characteristics different from other educational institutions. In this case, Islamic boarding schools are inseparable from the public role [6]. According to Abd A'la, the beginning of Islamic boarding schools were established to make social changes for the surrounding public [6]. As an Islamic educational institution, Islamic boarding schools have an essential role in supporting the Indonesian people [7]. Islamic boarding schools, as an institution fostering and improving the social and religious public, must also provide good services, so they need to have a good strategy with the public in meeting their needs [8]. Establishing relationships with the public can be done by holding public activities to crpeoplearmony between the institution and the existence of Islamic boarding schools; public relations in an organizational institution has a leading role, especially in education. To achieve the goals of Islamic educational institutions effectively and efficiently, a very close relationship between educational institutions and the public is needed to meet public needs [9]. Islamic and general education has not developed appropriately without public relations [5]. Public relations is also a liaison between institutions and the broadeyet to bbroadestidinprovideseso institutions, as information providers must have suitable characteristics to gain public trust [10].

In carrying out good relations with the public, the leader of an institution must also understand the public attitudes and character so that the two-way communication built can realize the institution's goals. Public relations, in this case, is one step to building the image of an educational institution [11]. Public relations

aims to create a positive image of educational institutions since imakingnefit the surrounding public [12]. According to Kusumastuti, the purpose of public relations is the existence of mutual understanding between institutions and the public and maintaining mutual trust and cooperation with the public [12]. Therefore, the researchers explore information related to public relations in improving the image of Islamic boarding schools in Bantul Regency, Special Region of Yogyakarta Province.

LITERATURE REVIEW

A. *Public Relations*

Public relations in education is vital since it is a two-way communication process between educational and outside public institutions. It has been systematically planned to foster the values of public interest and public support for educational institutions [12].

According to Ralph Currier and Allan C. Filley, the function of public relations is divided into three: 1) public relations acts as a communicator in every communication carried out in the institution; 2) it is a way to create positive relationships with internal and external parties of the institution; 3) it is to create a positive image of an institution so that the purpose of the creation of public relations is realized [12] [13].

If it is associated with educational institutions, public relations has six functions, including 1) providing more understanding to the public about the implementation of programs in schools, 2) realizing public expectations for educational institutions in line with educational goals, 3) establishing cooperative relationships with the public to get assistance from the public for the advancement of the institution, 4) creating a sense of responsibility for school residents in maintaining the quality of education, 5) strengthening the improvement of the quality of life and public livelihoods, and 6) creating public enthusiasm in establishing relationships with educational institutions [14].

B. *Image of Islamic Boarding School*

Islamic boarding school is a building or dormitory where students live, used for teaching and learning activities. On the other side, argued that marketing management in education has a function to form a positive image of the institution to attract public interest outside [15]. Building the image of an educational institution, both formal and non-formal education, is supported by a strategy, where the strategy will impact the institution's idea. According to Ubaedullah, the

image of Islamic boarding schools can be seen from the various elements or elements within them. Dhofier also mentioned five elements: boarding schools, mosques, students, teaching classical books, and kyai [16].

In addition, a good image of an institution is when the institution can (1) create public understanding, an understanding of the public or society, (2) have public confidence, with public trust in the institution, (3) have public support, i.e., support from the public to the institution, and (4) owning a public corporation, with the cooperation of the public towards the institution [17].

In an educational institution, public relations play a role in the marketing process and building the image of an excellent institution to create public trust in educational institutions [13]. The image of an educational institution can be built through 1) institutional products, such as the quality of output pro academic institution, 2) social ideansibility for maintaining behavior in public affairs, 3) having office space and information space to serve the needs of the public, and 4) communication, i.e., this communication can be built through sincerity with publishing related to institution programs [13].

METHODOLOGY

Researchers used a qualitative descriptive approach. According to [18], descriptive studies determine and report what is in fact. Descriptive research is scientific research that describes events, phenomena, or facts systematically related to a particular area or population. The purpose of qualitative descriptive research is a comprehensive summary, it can be said that the design of this research is from certain events experienced by certain individuals or groups of individuals [19].

This study took data from one school principal and five junior high school teachers in Cimahi. Data collection techniques used in this study were observation and interviews. to analyze the data the researcher conducted: data reduction; data display; conclusions drawing and verification.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

A. *Based Public Relations Strategy*

Based on the research results, Islamic boarding schools in Bantul Regency had implemented public relations to develop Islamic boarding schools. Public relations had an essential role in Islamic boarding

schools in all their processes to promote and develop Islamic boarding schools. Developments in Islamic boarding schools could also be seen from various aspects, which could be from the increase in the number of *santri* (students), indicating the public trust in the institution. One public confidence, especially among parents or guardians of students, is that the program offered was according to the general needs. At this time, people are increasingly aware of religious education, so Islamic boarding schools today must be able to provide a curriculum combining religious education or boarding schools with general education.

An advanced Islamic boarding school indeed cannot be separated from the public, where an Islamic boarding school and the public have a remarkably close relationship. Regarding geography, this boarding school location is usually in the middle of the village and, of course, in public. Specifically, Islamic boarding schools in Bantul Regency had many activities related to the public. One of the Islamic boarding schools in Bantul Regency had a community service program in which male and female students were sent to do community service in villages for one to two months. In this community service, students were assigned to become *imams* and preachers, teach TPA, or do other activities with a social nature. This program undoubtedly aims to introduce students to the importance of living in public and nothing else but to introduce Islamic boarding schools to the public. These activities could create a positive relationship between the Islamic boarding school and the surrounding public.

This Islamic boarding school, which had good relations with the public, demonstrates that public relations at the Islamic boarding school had become well. Good public relations could improve the image of a positive Islamic boarding school. The existence of public relations in Islamic boarding schools in Bantul Regency could further provide benefits: 1) it provided more understanding to the public about the program implementation in Islamic boarding schools so that each program implementation got support from the public so that the program ran smoothly. 2) It could realize the public expectations towards the Islamic boarding school, such as by providing program activities in accordance with public needs. Examples of activities in line with public expectations are using foreign languages in daily communication to equip students with foreign languages for further study. 3) It was to establish a cooperative relationship with the public so that every Islamic boarding school activity implementation received assistance from the public to make activities at the Islamic boarding school a success, and cooperation was carried out not only with the surrounding public but also

with outside institutions. Finally, 4) it created public enthusiasm in establishing relationships with educational institutions to realize the goals of Islamic boarding schools so they could develop.

B. Image of Islamic Boarding School

Based on the study results, Islamic boarding schools in Bantul Regency had a good image among the public. The image of the Islamic boarding schools was formed through several factors: 1) the Islamic boarding school had tremendous support from the public around the Islamic boarding schools and the parents of the *santri*; 2) Every Islamic boarding school in Bantul had strong support from the foundation, and the foundation also played a crucial role; 3) Islamic boarding schools had an outstanding commitment to be maintained so that the existence of Islamic boarding schools in the public view remained good.

Moreover, all Islamic boarding schools had excellent programs. This flagship program is a form of uniqueness owned by each Islamic boarding school to attract public interest. The programs offered by Islamic boarding schools are also, of course, adapted to the public needs today. The Bantul Islamic boarding schools' programs include *tahfidz*, language, *tamyiz*, and other programs. Parents are highly interested in the *tahfidz* program, where parents want their children to memorize the Qur'an. Next up is the *tamyiz* program. *Tamyiz* means the method of translating the Qur'an. One Islamic boarding school in Bantul implemented this program using a different method.

Another program implemented in Islamic boarding schools was the foreign language program, namely Arabic and English. Usually, Islamic boarding schools with this language program have the motto "*Al-Lughotu Taajun Ma'had*," which means language is the crown of Islamic boarding schools. In their daily communication, Arabic and English languages were used. This program aims to train and equip them to be proficient in Arabic and English.

Besides the three programs already mentioned, Islamic boarding schools offered many other programs to the public. In this case, Islamic boarding schools also continuously attempted to maintain their commitments so that the surrounding public trusted them. It aligns with the expression of [20] that a positive image in an institution has two things that become public trust in the institution: 1) having the ability to meet the public needs and desires, and 2) being able to give trust to the public with a strong commitment already executed. The commitment, in this case, is that the institutional

programs provided to the public must continue to be carried out to make the public trust the institution.

In conducting their programs, Islamic boarding schools also collaborated with the public and other educational institutions. It is also in accordance with the expression that the image of the institution can be formed through four things: 1) creating public understanding, namely providing the public; 2) creating public trust, i.e., the existence of public trust in institutions; 3) creating public support, namely the existence of support from the public for the institution; 4) creating public cooperation, i.e., the cooperation from the public to the institution [5]

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

From the above findings, it can be concluded that 1) public relations played a significant role in improving the image of Islamic boarding schools in Bantul Regency; 2) the public relations strategy in improving the image of Islamic boarding schools in Bantul Regency was through several factors, including strong support from the guardians of students and the foundation, the commitment of the Islamic boarding schools in carrying out the program to be trusted by the community and establishing cooperation with educational unit institutions outside

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