



Revitalizing the Madrasah Brand: A Strategic Roadmap for Enhancing Quality and Fortifying Image

Muhammad Fathul Amin^{1*}, Najiburrahman², Ahmad Muzakki Hakim³

¹Universitas Nurul Jadid Paiton Probolinggo, Indonesia

²Islamic University of Madinah, Saudi Arabia

Email : fathulamin783@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

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*Corresponding Author

This study aims to investigate efforts to improve brand image in Madrasah Diniyah Nurul Jadid through perceived quality by considering improving the quality of education, transparency and accountability, facilities and infrastructure, quality of teachers and staff, and student achievement. This research method is qualitative research with a case study approach, which involves in-depth interviews with various related parties in Madrasah Diniyah Nurul Jadid. The results showed that Madrasah Diniyah Nurul Jadid has made various efforts in improving its brand image through perceived quality. Improving the quality of education, carried out by improving the curriculum and presenting qualified, experienced, and highly dedicated teachers in the learning process. Transparency and accountability, in all aspects of Madrasah life. Facilities and infrastructure, in Madrasah Diniyah Nurul Jadid have also been well considered. Quality teachers and staff, Teachers and staff at Madrasah diniyah Nurul Jadid have played an active role in creating a positive learning environment. Student achievement, students of Madrasah diniyah Nurul Jadid managed to achieve achievements in various fields. Continuous efforts in improving these aspects have formed a positive image of Madrasah Diniyah Nurul Jadid as an educational institution that is superior, dignified, and committed to producing quality next generations.

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INTRODUCTION

Challenges for educational institutions can be characterized by increasing institutional competition and the large number of educational institutions offering services. The large number of institutions under the auspices of the Nurul Jadid Islamic Boarding School causes the high competitiveness of each institution. Education continues to improve in these institutions so that students are interested and needed.

Nurul Jadid Islamic Boarding School was founded by the late K.H. Zaini Mun'im in 1950. The location is in Karanganyar Village, Paiton District, Probolinggo, East Java. Before the Islamic boarding school was established, Karanganyar village was known as Tanjung. Not only that but the flowers that

grew on the tree were called Tanjung flowers after the local people considered the Tanjung tree to have advantages and privileges. Not surprisingly, the name of the tree was immortalized as the name of the village, after which K.H. Zaini Mun'im founded an Islamic boarding school. Over time, K.H. Zaini changed the village's name to Karangayar Village, now the Nurul Jadid Islamic Boarding School, which has an area of 12 ha. Geographically, the Nurul Jadid Islamic Boarding School is located in Paiton. It is 33 km to the east of Probolinggo city, and it is located at the eastern end of Probolinggo city.

The Nurul Jadid Islamic Boarding School is one of the Islamic boarding schools that is viewed from the number of students and the completeness of the institution, including a large Islamic Boarding School. Like other Islamic Boarding Schools, the role it plays is as an institution for education, da'wah, and struggle, as well as an agent for social change in society, especially for the people in the villages around the Islamic Boarding School.

The first Nurul Jadid Islamic Boarding School (1950–1976) was led and managed by K.H. Zaini Mun'im, with assistance from several senior administrators. The leadership of the Islamic Boarding School was continued successively by K.H. Muhammad Hasyim Zaini (1976–1984), Drs. K.H. Abd. Wahid Zaini S.H. (1984–2000), and the last one is K.H. Muh. Zuhri Zaini, B.A., the fifth son of the founder from 2000 to date.

In the first period of leadership of K.H. Muh. Zuhri Zaini Nurul Jadid Islamic Boarding School carried out managerial reorientation and development patterns for implementing education and patterns for coaching students. In the managerial field, changes have been made to the leadership and management structure towards more structurally functional management, improving administration by implementing a computerized data centre. The development of educational provision is oriented towards an integrated and integral education pattern between Islamic boarding school education and general education. Meanwhile, the form of guidance for Islamic boarding school students is directed at developing a specific form of guidance based on Islamic boarding school curriculum standards, which are adapted to the level of ability and education of the Islamic boarding school students.

In order to be attractive to students, an institution must build a good brand image to influence prospective students to choose that institution. A good branding image reflects the superior quality of the institution, good academic programs, quality educators, and supporting facilities and infrastructure (Barnawi, 2022; Arrivabene et al., 2019; Yasmin et al., 2021).

Regarding the brand image, Nurul Jadid Madrasah Diniyah is still less than optimal in several aspects, such as the performance of educators in Human Resources (HR), inadequate infrastructure, as well as the declining achievements of students and Madrasah Diniyah, so it cannot be said that Madrasah Diniyah Nurul Jadid it has a good brand image. Students and parents choose Madrasah

Diniyah Nurul Jadid, which has a good image. Choosing the right Madrasah as a place to study at an Islamic boarding school is very important. This contributes to the success of students while pursuing education. If the Madrasah Diniyah Nurul Jadid they live in is good at educating its students, the results the students will get will also be good. In choosing a Madrasah, of course, parents and students look at the branding image of the Madrasah. Zakaria et al. (2023) say that if the quality of an educational Madrasah is not good, then it will not be chosen as a place to study. To make their children better, parents will look at the branding image of the Madrasah.

Realizing the existence of competition, declining achievement, and inadequate infrastructure at Madrasah Diniyah Nurul Jadid, education providers must change their paradigm by managing the management of Madrasah well. Brand image is one of the efforts of educational institutions to win the competition between institutions and increase the professionalism and quality of management of an educational institution so that it can compete with competitors. To improve the quality or increase the brand image of Madrasah, Madrasah Diniyah Nurul Jadid, as the education provider at the institution, uses strategies such as perceived quality. Perceived quality here is about how this institution meets the needs of prospective students and parents, stating that perceived quality is closely related to consumer purchase intentions. In the educational context, it is the student's interest in studying at the Madrasah. Fauzia & Sosianika (2021) and Sisnuhadi & Sirait (2021), from their research, stated that perceived quality has a positive impact on improving brand image. Creating a good brand image for products or services will influence evaluations from prospective students and parents, one of which can be seen in perceived quality to improve Madrasah Diniyah's branding image.

Septian (2022) said that it is vital to inform the broader community about the achievements that have been achieved by the school so that it can change the mindset of the student's parents that the school is one of the superior and favourite private schools, which in the end will result in more people parents of students who are willing to enrol their children in the school. DwiYama, (2019). In his research, he stated that improving quality on the component side of educational institutions or processes refers to continuous improvement built based on work that will produce a series of outputs, aiming to improve education quality sustainably. In their research, Manurung Siagian (2021) also stated that increasing quality will affect output. Quality development aims to make the quality of education increase in a sustainable and integrated manner based on every element of education (Väliverronen et al., 2022); (Pedro et al., 2019); (Schildkamp, 2019). Educational institutions should realize that they are service producers who must build brands so that their products sell on the market and are purchased by consumers.

Based on several studies above, novelty or newness in this research shows that researchers have discussed brand image and efforts to improve it. However, only a few discuss the perspectives of educational staff regarding the importance of brand image and the efforts they make to improve it. To fill this space, researchers conducted this research focused on the perceptions of the educational staff at Madrasah Diniyah regarding the importance of brand image and the efforts they made to improve brand image through perceived quality at the institution.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses a qualitative approach with a field study conducted at Madrasah Diniyah Nurul Jadid (Schmiedel et al., 2020). Four teaching staff at Madrasah Diniyah Nurul Jadid were participants in this research. Observations and interviews were carried out to collect data through individual semi-structured interviews using the participant's national language to avoid misunderstandings and to broaden understanding of the phenomenon investigated in this research, including the importance of brand image and the efforts they make to improve the brand image of the Madrasah Diniyah Nurul Jadid. All participant transcripts were re-read in detail to gain a global understanding of the interview results.

The data collection technique uses interviews, namely collecting views and information from Madrasah Diniyah Nurul Jadid staff, efforts made and perceptions about perceived quality and brand image. Moreover, direct observations of activities at Madrasah Diniyah Nurul Jadid are related to perceived quality.

The data analysis in this research is Content Analysis, namely analyzing the results of interviews and observations to identify patterns related to efforts and their impact on perceived quality and brand image. According to Mayring (2019), content analysis is a research technique to produce objective and systematic descriptions of the content contained in communication media. Content analysis is also interpreted as a systematic technique for analyzing the meaning of messages and how to express messages.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Education Quality Improvement

Education is essential in developing a country because it has a crucial role in forming the quality of the next generation. In Indonesia, apart from education in public schools, there are also Islamic Education Institutions such as Madrasahs, which have a big responsibility in shaping the character of their students as well as strengthening the brand image of the Madrasah (Elhajjar & Yacoub, 2022; Rifa & Manshur, 2023). In the era of global competition and the rapid development of information technology, efforts to improve the quality of education in Madrasahs

have become very relevant to improving brand image and facing various challenges in the future (Ummah, 2023).

Misbahul Munir, the school principal, said, "One of the main keys to improving the quality of education in Madrasas is recruiting quality teaching staff (int_MM/09/08/23). Competent, experienced and highly dedicated teachers will be able to provide good and in-depth teaching to students." Madrasas need to pay special attention to developing the professionalism of teachers through training and self-development programs. With quality teaching staff, Madrasas can improve the quality of the learning process, which has a positive impact on increasing student academic achievement (Basyah, 2017).

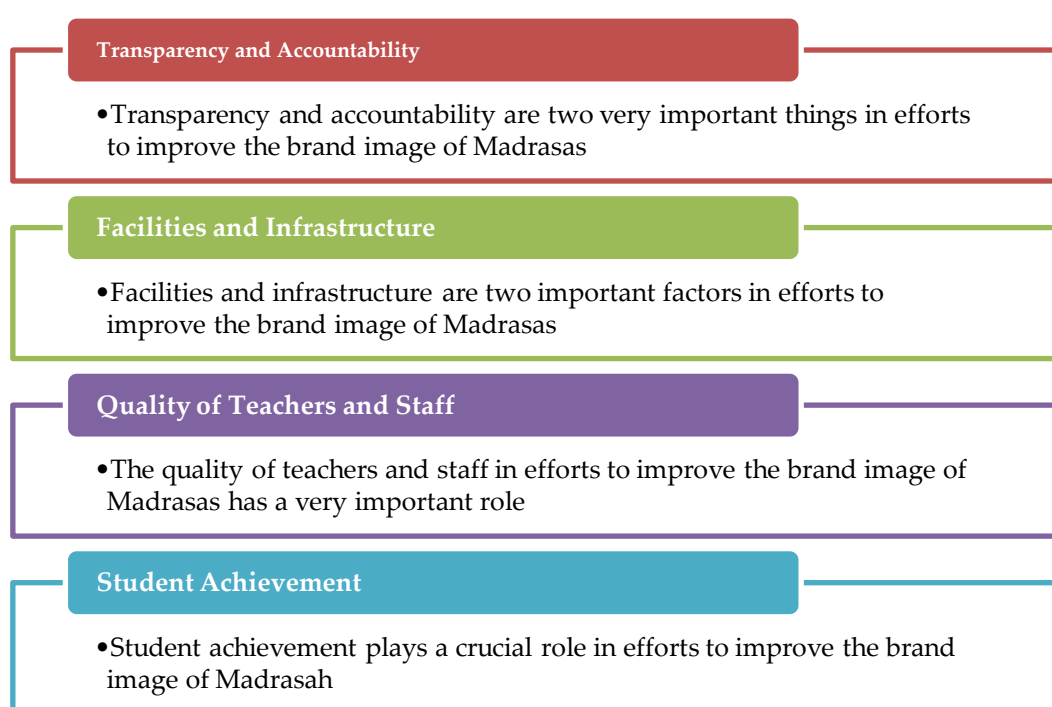


Figure 1. Increasing Brand Image at Madrasah Diniyah Nurul Jadid

This aligns with what Mawardi, head of the curriculum, said, "Madrasahs must also implement a relevant and comprehensive curriculum. Curriculum development based on student needs and current developments will help increase the attractiveness of Madrasahs for prospective students and parents." A curriculum that includes religious aspects and an in-depth study of the Yellow Book will provide excellence for Madrasahs in preparing students to become individuals with broad knowledge and character. Islamic (int_MW/09/08/23).

It is also vital for Madrasahs to provide a conducive and comfortable learning atmosphere for students. Adequate educational facilities, a clean environment and a harmonious atmosphere, will positively impact student learning motivation. Madrasahs must also provide supporting facilities and

infrastructure, such as adequate laboratories and libraries, so students can develop their potential well.

Madrasas must also be able to utilize information technology in the educational process. Integrating technology into learning will give students a more exciting and interactive learning experience. Social media and Madrasah websites can also be a means of introducing Madrasahs to the broader community and disseminating information about the achievements that have been achieved by students and teachers (Gazali & Pransisca, 2021).

Another aspect that should be addressed is developing and strengthening student character. Madrasahs should pay special attention to moral and character education so that students excel academically and have noble personalities. Strengthening character will shape students into individuals who are responsible, ethical, and have a sense of empathy towards others (Indra, 2020).

To improve its brand image, Madrasas can also take advantage of the superior achievements that students in various fields have achieved. Brilliant academic or religious achievements can attract prospective students and the general public. Madrasas can also participate in competitions and academic events to increase their visibility and positive image (Auliya et al., 2022).

By taking strategic steps to improve education quality, Madrasahs can strengthen its brand image and position in the eyes of society (Herawati & Supriyoko, 2023). The higher the quality of the Madrasah, the more prospective students will be interested in joining, and the more significant the contribution of the Madrasah is in producing a young generation who is intelligent, virtuous, and adheres to religious values. Thus, improving the quality of education in Madrasas is not only the responsibility of the educational institution itself but also an investment in the nation's future (Rusmini et al., 2023).

Transparency and Accountability

Transparency and accountability are two crucial things in efforts to improve the brand image of Madrasas. In the current era of information and technology, society is increasingly aware of the importance of transparency and accountability in every aspect of life, including education. As an Islamic education institution, Madrasas must demonstrate openness and accountability in all their activities to build public trust and improve their positive image.

This aligns with what Mawardi said, "transparency means that Madrasahs must be open and honest in providing information to all related parties, such as parents, the community and the authorities." Information that must be transparent covers various aspects, starting from the student admission process, curriculum and learning methods, teacher qualifications, and management of funds and other resources (int_MW/09/08/23). Madrasas must provide clear and

easily accessible reports regarding students' academic and non-academic performance and achievements that the Madrasah has achieved in various fields. In this way, the community will feel confident and believe that the Madrasah is committed to providing quality and dignified education.

Misbahul Munir said, "Madrasah Diniyah Nurul Jadid also opens up space for active participation from all its stakeholders. We often hold discussion forums or regular meetings with teachers to listen to input, suggestions and constructive criticism." Involving stakeholders in the decision-making process will provide a sense of ownership and trust that the interests of students and the community are Madrasah's main priority (int_MM/09/08/23).

Madrasahs must also be willing to face external evaluations and audits, whether from the government, independent institutions or accreditation organizations. This external evaluation will help ensure that the Madrasah operates by established standards and motivate it to improve education quality (Hananto & Murtafiah, 2022).

Madrasahs must also implement a good management and monitoring system to increase accountability. Using information technology in managing school administration can facilitate data collection and analysis so that the evaluation and improvement process can be carried out effectively (Husna & Thoyyib, 2021). Apart from that, Madrasahs must also ensure that any resources provided by external parties, such as aid funds or donations, are used appropriately and transparently (Muspawi & Lukita, 2023).

By implementing transparency and accountability in all aspects of Madrasah life, the brand image of the Madrasah will increase. The public will see Madrasahs as a trustworthy educational institution that has integrity and is committed to providing quality education. This public trust will be an essential asset in attracting the interest of prospective students and parents to choose Madrasah as their desired place of study (Mainuddin, 2023).

Apart from that, transparency and accountability will also help Madrasahs adapt to various changes and challenges in the future. In the era of globalization and increasingly fierce competition, Madrasahs must compete with other educational institutions to provide the best service. With transparent and accountable educational quality, Madrasahs will become more competitive and relevant (Study, 2022).

Facilities and Infrastructure

Facilities and infrastructure are two crucial factors in efforts to improve the brand image of madrasahs. The quality of educational facilities and good infrastructure conditions will positively impact the image of the Madrasah in the eyes of the community, parents, and prospective students. In this era of global

competition and rapid technological development, madrasas must provide a modern, comfortable, and international-standard learning environment to maintain the attractiveness and reputation of the educational institution (Hung & Yen, 2022).

One of the main aspects of efforts to improve the brand image is adequate physical facilities. Muhammad Ridwan, head of facilities and infrastructure, said, "Madrasah Diniyah Nurul Jadid also provides adequate classroom facilities, complete with modern learning equipment and media." Classrooms that are clean, comfortable, and equipped with multimedia facilities will create a conducive learning atmosphere and facilitate the teaching process and learning (int_MR/10/08/23).

Library facilities are also an essential element in improving the Madrasah brand image. A complete library with reference books, religious literature, and other reading materials will enrich students' knowledge and increase their interest in reading (Subbarayalu, 2022). Madrasas must also provide adequate sports facilities, such as sports fields and multi-purpose halls, so students can develop their talents and interests in sports and the arts.

Good infrastructure is also crucial to creating a conducive learning environment. Madrasahs must ensure that the facilities and infrastructure supporting teaching and learning activities, such as electricity, clean water, sanitation, and internet networks, are maintained continuously. A Madrasah environment that is safe, orderly, and environmentally friendly will give a positive impression to students and parents and reflect Madrasah's commitment to providing quality education (Gulamiddinova, 2022).

The use of information and communication technology is also an essential aspect of improving the Madrasah brand image. Madrasas can utilize technology to optimize the learning process, such as online learning management systems and e-learning platforms. Mawardi stated, "The use of social media and Madrasah websites is used as a means to introduce Madrasahs to the wider community, disseminate information about student achievements and Madrasah activities, and communicate with student's parents effectively" (int_MW/10/08/23).

Apart from physical and technological aspects, qualified teaching staff must also support facilities and infrastructure. Madrasas must invest in developing teacher professionalism through various training programs and workshops. Qualified and dedicated teachers can provide good teaching and guide students toward achieving their best potential. Support and welfare for teachers are also necessary because teachers who feel appreciated will be more motivated to provide the best for the Madrasah and students (Kamaliah, 2023).

Madrasahs can hold various activities and events involving the entire community to improve their brand image. Activities such as art performances, competitions, seminars, or social activities will open up opportunities for students to show their talents and abilities and increase closeness between the Madrasah, students, and parents. This will form a positive image of the Madrasah as an active, diverse, and achievement-oriented institution (Desriandi & Suhaili, 2021).

In facing future challenges, madrasahs must continue to innovate and adapt to current developments. Carrying out continuous updates and improvements to facilities and infrastructure is a long-term investment to improve the quality of education and the image of the Madrasah. With adequate facilities and infrastructure, Madrasahs will be increasingly sought after by prospective students and parents and will be able to become a superior and highly competitive educational institution (Marliani, 2023).

Quality of Teachers and Staff

Mawardi said, "The quality of teachers and staff in efforts to improve the brand image of madrasahs has a critical role." Teachers and staff are the main elements in the educational process, and their quality will influence the image of Madrasahs in the eyes of the community, parents of students, and prospective students. In the era of global competition and demands for improving the quality of education, madrasahs must provide competent, professional, and highly dedicated teaching staff to achieve the goal of superior education (int_MW/10/08/23).

Misbahul Munir said, "Efforts to improve teacher quality can be made through various training and professional development programs." Madrasahs must provide opportunities for teachers to participate in training, seminars, and workshops relevant to their field. This training will help teachers follow the latest developments in education, update teaching methods, and improve their pedagogical abilities. Apart from that, madrasahs can also encourage teachers to continue to develop themselves through further studies and learning experiences abroad (int_MM/11/08/23).

Apart from the quality of teachers, the quality of non-academic staff also significantly influences the Madrasah brand image. Administrative staff, cleaners, and other staff are essential in supporting the smooth running of madrasah activities. Good service from non-academic staff will reflect the Madrasah's commitment to providing a comfortable and professional learning environment. The relationship between teachers, staff, and students also dramatically influences Madrasah's brand image (Mundiri et al., 2023). Madrasahs must create a harmonious and supportive work environment so that

all staff feel motivated and have a sense of belonging to the madrasah. This positive work environment will create a good atmosphere in the learning process and develop student character.

To improve brand image, madrasahs must also implement a performance appraisal system for teachers and staff. Objective and measurable performance assessments will provide helpful feedback for teachers and staff in identifying their strengths and weaknesses (Iskandar et al., 2019). With a transparent and fair assessment system, teachers and staff will feel recognized and appreciated for their performance.

Recognition of teachers' and staff's outstanding achievements and contributions is also vital to increasing their motivation and morale. Madrasahs can provide awards, incentives, or promotional opportunities for teachers and staff who achieve extraordinary achievements. This award will be a form of appreciation from the Madrasah for their strenuous efforts and dedication to improving the quality of education (Solana & Mustika, 2023).

Effective communication between madrasahs, teachers, staff, and parents must also be considered to improve the brand image (Karsono & Purwanto, 2021). Madrasahs must be open to conveying information regarding the various educational activities and programs implemented. Teachers and staff must communicate effectively with parents regarding their children's academic and non-academic development. This good communication will create a sense of trust and satisfaction from all Madrasah stakeholders (Sugeha et al., 2023).

The quality of teachers and staff plays a crucial role in improving madrasahs' brand image (Baharun et al., 2021). Madrasahs must invest in the professional development of teachers and staff, reward their achievements, create a positive work environment, and implement a transparent performance appraisal system. In this way, the madrasah will become an educational institution that is superior, trusted, and sought after by the community and will be a source of pride for all its stakeholders (Wasik & Islam, 2023).

Student Achievement

Student achievement plays a crucial role in efforts to improve the brand image of Madrasahs. The achievements achieved by students reflect the quality of education provided by the Madrasah and are also clear evidence that the Madrasah can produce a quality next generation. Sports: Student achievements cover various fields, such as academic achievement, sports, arts, religion, etc. Mawardi said, "Every achievement achieved by students will have a positive impact on the image of the Madrasah in the eyes of the community, parents of students, and prospective students."

Academic achievement is one of the leading indicators of improving Madrasah's brand image. Madrasahs must be able to produce students who excel in national exams, school exams, and various academic competitions. When Madrasah students achieve the best ranking in various tests and exams, it will prove that Madrasah has an effective curriculum and learning methods. Brilliant academic achievements will increase the trust of the community and parents of students in Madrasahs so that Madrasahs will be increasingly sought after as a place for quality education.

Achievements in the field of reading the yellow book also play an essential role in improving the brand image of the Madrasah. Madrasahs must be able to develop and support talented students in various book-reading competition fields. When Madrasah students achieve achievements in sports championships at local, regional, and national levels, this will increase the positive image of Madrasah as an institution that cares about developing students' talents and achievements. Misbahul Munir said, "The brilliant achievements of the pole bat competition can also reflect students' discipline and dedication in developing their potential outside the classroom." This is also supported by additional Madrasah learning, which can hone the book-reading skills of Diniyah Nurul Jadid Madrasah students.

Achievements in the arts can also be an attraction for madrasahs. Madrasahs must provide opportunities for students to develop their artistic talents, such as dance, music, fine arts, and literature. When Madrasah students achieve achievements in various art performances or art competitions, this will give the impression that Madrasah pays attention to developing students' artistic talents. Proud artistic achievements will enrich students' learning experiences and reflect the creativity and cultural diversity at the Madrasah.

Achievement in the religious field is also essential to improving the Madrasah brand image. Madrasahs, as an Islamic educational institution, must be able to produce students who excel in religious fields such as Al-Quran recitations, hadith, and fiqh. When Madrasah students achieve achievements in religious competitions, this will reflect the quality of religious education provided by the Madrasah. Proud religious achievements will shape the image of the Madrasah as an educational institution that is based on religious values and committed to students' religious development.

Student achievement can also be a means of promoting Madrasah. Madrasahs can utilize social media, Madrasah websites, and various events or activities to publicize student achievements. When people see the brilliant achievements of Madrasah students, they will be increasingly interested in choosing Madrasah as a place of education for their children. Student achievements that continue to be well promoted will form a positive image of the

Madrasah as an educational institution that excels and is committed to improving the quality of education (Fitriyanti, 2023).

In order to improve their brand image through student achievement, madrasahs must provide maximum support and guidance to students. Madrasahs must create a conducive learning environment and provide facilities and infrastructure that support the development of students' talents. Madrasah teachers and staff must also support students in participating in various activities and competitions and provide motivation and moral support to achieve higher achievements (Saidu, 2023).

Student achievement plays a vital role in efforts to improve the brand image of the Madrasah. Students' academic, sports, artistic, and religious achievements will reflect the quality of education and dedication of the Madrasah in developing students into a superior generation (Latifah, 2023). Madrasahs must provide maximum support and guidance to students to achieve brilliant achievements, as well as publicize these achievements effectively to increase the positive image of the Madrasah in the eyes of the community. With superior student achievements, madrasahs will be increasingly recognized and sought after as quality and dignified educational institutions. (Fadillah et al., 2022)

CONCLUSION

Efforts to improve the brand image of Madrasahs through perceived quality by considering improving the quality of education, transparency and accountability, facilities and infrastructure, quality of teachers and staff, and student achievement are practical steps to build a positive image of Madrasahs as superior, dignified, and committed educational institutions. Produce a quality next generation. By focusing on these aspects, madrasahs can become increasingly known, recognized, and sought after as the leading choice in providing quality education for the community and prospective students.

By focusing on the abovementioned aspects, Madrasah has improved its brand image as a quality, qualified, and committed educational institution. With this positive image, Madrasahs will be increasingly known, recognized, and sought after as the leading choice for the community and prospective students in search of superior and dignified education. Through continuous efforts and strong commitment, madrasahs can continue to develop and become educational institutions that are increasingly respected and relied upon to produce the next generation of high-quality and competitive institutions.

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