

PUBLIC RELATIONS MANAGEMENT IN IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN ISLAMIC BOARDING SCHOOLS

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.52627/managere.v5i3.409>

Article History:

Received: July 2023

Accepted: October 2023

Published: December 2023

Keywords:

Public Relations Management,
Islamic Boarding School,
Educational Communication

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Abstract :

This research aims to analyze the role and contribution of public relations management in the development of educational institutions in Islamic boarding schools. The focus of this research is to identify factors that influence the effectiveness of public relations management, evaluate the use of social media in disseminating information and building relationships with stakeholders, and assessing the importance of regular evaluations in public relations strategies. This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study type of research. Data collection techniques include in-depth interviews, participant observation, and document analysis. Data analysis was carried out using the Miles and Huberman interactive analysis model. The research results show that public relations management at Islamic boarding schools plays a major role in building harmonious relationships with the community, student guardians and alumni. The division of public relations duties into two external and internal public relations divisions supports communication efficiency and increases support from stakeholders. The implications of this research emphasize the importance of a structured and sustainable public relations management strategy in Islamic educational institutions. This research makes an important contribution in understanding the role of public relations management and can be a model for other educational institutions in building strong relationships with the community.

Abstrak:

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis peran dan kontribusi manajemen kehumasan dalam pembangunan lembaga pendidikan di Pondok Pesantren. Fokus penelitian ini adalah mengidentifikasi faktor-faktor yang mempengaruhi efektivitas manajemen kehumasan, mengevaluasi penggunaan media sosial dalam menyebarkan informasi dan membangun hubungan dengan pemangku kepentingan, serta menilai pentingnya evaluasi berkala dalam strategi kehumasan. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan jenis penelitian studi kasus. Teknik pengumpulan data meliputi wawancara mendalam, observasi partisipatif, dan analisis dokumen. Analisis data dilakukan dengan model analisis interaktif Miles dan Huberman. Hasil penelitian

menunjukkan bahwa manajemen kehumasan di Pondok Pesantren berperan besar dalam membangun hubungan yang harmonis dengan masyarakat, wali santri, dan alumni. Pembagian tugas humas menjadi dua divisi humas eksternal dan internal mendukung efisiensi komunikasi dan peningkatan dukungan dari pemangku kepentingan. Implikasi penelitian ini menegaskan pentingnya strategi manajemen humas yang terstruktur dan berkelanjutan di lembaga pendidikan Islam. Penelitian ini memberikan kontribusi penting dalam memahami peran manajemen humas dan dapat menjadi model bagi lembaga pendidikan lainnya dalam membangun hubungan yang kuat dengan masyarakat.

INTRODUCTION

Educational institutions have a vital role in shaping young people with integrity and competence (Navbakhor, 2020; Khaidir & Suud, 2020; Prots et al., 2021). Islamic boarding schools as a forum in Islamic education have a great responsibility to not only educate academically, but also develop the moral and spiritual character of students (Purwanto et al., 2021; Diana, 2023; Chuanchen, 2023). Kunuuzul Imam Kauman Bondowoso Islamic Boarding School is one of the educational institutions that continues to improve its quality through various programs and activities. One of the important elements that support the success of these programs is effective public relations management (Tam et al., 2020; Holland et al., 2021; Trzeciak et al., 2022). Public relations management in pesantren aims to build a harmonious relationship between pesantren and stakeholders, such as guardians, alumni, and the general public (Saudi et al., 2020; Khan et al., 2022). Organizational communication theory (Norman et al., 2024; Sanjani, 2024) states that effective communication in organizations can increase transparency, trust, and active participation of all parties involved (Faiz et al., 2023). In the context of pesantren, good communication between pesantren management and stakeholders is essential to achieve holistic educational goals.

Although Kunuuzul Imam Kauman Bondowoso Islamic Boarding School has implemented various strategies to improve the quality of education, there are still several obstacles that hinder the achievement of this goal. One of the main problems faced is the lack of effectiveness in disseminating information and communication between pesantren and stakeholders. Information about pesantren programs and activities often does not reach out well to parents and the community, resulting in low participation and support. In addition, the absence of regular structured evaluations to assess the effectiveness of public relations programs is also an obstacle in further development (Zuhdi et al., 2024). This study aims to identify factors that affect the effectiveness of public relations management at Kunuuzul Imam Kauman Bondowoso Islamic Boarding School and provide recommendations for improvement.

Previous studies have demonstrated the importance of public relations management in educational contexts. According to research conducted by Sari and Ramdhani (2020), effective public relations management can improve the image of educational institutions and strengthen relationships with the community. The study highlights that two-way communication between

educational institutions and stakeholders can increase trust and support. Another study by Kusuma (2021) revealed that the use of social media as a public relations communication tool can expand the reach of information and increase public participation in various educational programs. In addition, research by Fahmi and Nurhayati (2022) emphasizes the importance of regular evaluations in public relations programs to ensure that the strategies implemented are effective and in accordance with the needs of stakeholders. These three studies show that good public relations management plays an important role in the success of educational programs.

Although previous studies have highlighted the importance of public relations management in the context of education, there are still gaps that have not been widely studied, especially in the context of Islamic boarding schools. Most existing research focuses more on formal educational institutions such as schools and universities, while studies on public relations management in Islamic boarding schools are still limited. In addition, there have not been many studies that integrate the use of social media and routine evaluation in public relations strategies in Islamic boarding schools. This study seeks to fill this gap by exploring in depth the public relations practices at the Kunuuzul Imam Kauman Bondowoso Islamic Boarding School, as well as examining the effectiveness of social media use and regular evaluations in supporting public relations programs.

This research offers novelty by integrating a participatory two-way communication approach with the use of social media and regular evaluation in public relations strategies at Kunuuzul Imam Kauman Bondowoso Islamic Boarding School. This novelty lies in the application of organizational communication theory in the context of Islamic education, which has not been explored much in previous studies. This research also highlights the importance of active involvement of all stakeholders in the communication and evaluation process, which is expected to increase transparency, accountability, and support for pesantren programs. Thus, this research not only contributes to the development of public relations management theory in the context of Islamic education but also provides practical recommendations that can be applied by other pesantren.

This study aims to analyze the role and contribution of public relations management in the construction of educational institutions in the Kunuuzul Imam Kauman Bondowoso Islamic Boarding School. Specifically, this study aims to: (1) Identify factors that affect the effectiveness of public relations management in Islamic boarding schools, (2) Evaluate the use of social media in disseminating information and building relationships with stakeholders, (3) Assess the importance of regular evaluations in public relations strategies to ensure the effectiveness of implemented programs, and (4) Provide practical recommendations to improve the quality of public relations management in Islamic boarding schools. By achieving these goals, it is hoped that this research can make a meaningful contribution in improving the quality of communication and relations between Islamic boarding schools and their communities, as well as supporting the achievement of holistic educational goals.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses a qualitative approach with a type of case study research (Takahashi et al., 2020; Farquhar et al., 2020; Priya, 2021). The qualitative approach was chosen because it allows researchers to gain an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon under study, namely public relations management at the Kunuuzul Imam Kauman Bondowoso Islamic Boarding School. Case studies were chosen as research designs to explore in detail the practices of public relations in the specific context of this pesantren. This study seeks to understand and interpret the role and contribution of public relations in building harmonious relationships between pesantren and various stakeholders.

Data collection techniques used in this study included in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and document analysis. In-depth interviews were conducted with various key informants, including the head of public relations, public relations staff, students, guardians, and alumni. Participatory observation is carried out by participating in various public relations activities to understand the practices carried out directly (Rutakumwa et al., 2020; De Leeuw et al., 2020; Deterding & Waters, 2021). Document analysis includes a review of newsletters, activity reports, and other communication materials produced by pesantren public relations. The research location is Kunuuzul Imam Kauman Bondowoso Islamic Boarding School, located on Jalan Kauman No. 123, Kauman Village, Bondowoso District, Bondowoso Regency, East Java.

The data analysis technique used in this study follows the interactive analysis model of Miles and Huberman (Ridwan et al., 2022). The analysis process begins with data reduction, namely simplification and selection of data relevant to the research focus. Furthermore, the reduced data is presented in the form of narratives, tables, or diagrams for easy understanding. The final step is conclusion drawing and verification, where the researcher compiles an interpretation based on the findings that have been analyzed, as well as verifying the findings through data triangulation to ensure the validity and reliability of the research results.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This study was conducted to analyze the role of public relations management in the construction of educational institutions at Kunuuzul Imam Kauman Bondowoso Islamic Boarding School. Through a qualitative approach, this study examines how the external public relations and public relations divisions contribute to disseminating information, collecting feedback, and building harmonious relationships between pesantren and guardians, alumni, and the general public.

Public Relations Management with the Development of Educational Institutions

This study aims to analyze and understand the public relations management framework of Kunuuzul Imam Kauman Bondowoso Islamic Boarding School in building educational institutions. Based on the results of

interviews, observations, and documentation conducted, it was found that public relations management in this pesantren plays a significant role in building and maintaining good relations between the pesantren and the wider community, guardians, and alumni. One of the informants stated, "We regularly visit the homes of guardians to distribute newsletters containing the latest information about pesantren and also listen to their aspirations and inputs" (I_Rofiqoh_2024).

Through the results of an interview with one of the informants above, it indicates that an effective and inclusive communication strategy is implemented by the public relations of the Kunuuzul Imam Kauman Bondowoso Islamic Boarding School. Through these regular visits, pesantren not only ensure the delivery of up-to-date information to the guardians, but also open a space for constructive dialogue (Mustafa, 2020; Maulidia & Sanjani, 2023). This practice shows the commitment of pesantren in carrying out participatory two-way communication, where feedback from guardians is used as evaluation material for the improvement and development of pesantren programs. Thus, this strategy contributes to increased transparency, accountability, and trust between pesantren and guardians, as well as strengthening community involvement in the education process in pesantren.

Division of Public Relations Duties: Outside and Inside Pesantren

Public relations management at Pondok Pesantren Kunuuzul Imam Kauman Bondowoso is divided into two main divisions: public relations outside the pesantren and public relations within the pesantren. Public relations outside the pesantren are tasked with bridging communication between the pesantren and external parties such as guardians, alumni, and the general public. Their main tasks include disseminating information through newsletters, social media, and in-person meetings with stakeholders. One of the informants stated, "We regularly visit the homes of guardians to distribute newsletters containing the latest information about pesantren and also listen to their aspirations and inputs" (I_Rofiqoh_2024).

This shows that public relations outside the pesantren have a crucial role in maintaining good relations with the community outside the pesantren. This also reflects the strategic approach in two-way communication applied by the public relations of Kunuuzul Imam Kauman Bondowoso Islamic Boarding School. Through these regular visits, pesantren not only ensure the distribution of the latest information about the activities and development of the pesantren, but also actively collect direct feedback from the guardians. This strategy demonstrates the commitment of pesantren in maintaining transparency and openness, as well as in responding to the needs and expectations of their communities. By listening to aspirations and inputs, pesantren can evaluate and adjust programs more accurately, thus creating a harmonious relationship and stronger support from the guardians. This approach is effective in strengthening trust and collaboration between pesantren and stakeholders, as well as contributing to improving the quality of educational services provided.

Meanwhile, public relations in pesantren focuses on internal communication, managing information disseminated within the pesantren

environment through newsletters, event invitations, and social media. "Internal public relations are responsible for disseminating information about pesantren activities to students and staff, as well as preparing various communication materials for pesantren (I_Imam_2024) events."

This indicates the important role of internal public relations in communication management at Kunuuzul Imam Kauman Bondowoso Islamic Boarding School. This responsibility includes disseminating accurate and timely information about various pesantren activities to all students and staff, which aims to ensure that all pesantren members are always up-to-date. In addition, internal public relations also play a role in preparing communication materials needed for various pesantren events, which include presentation materials, invitations, and event publications. Thus, internal public relations contribute significantly in creating a transparent and coordinated communication environment, as well as supporting the smooth implementation of pesantren activities through the provision of comprehensive and structured information (Ridlo & Yanti, 2023). This approach strengthens the function of public relations as a liaison between pesantren management and the internal community, ensuring an efficient and effective flow of information. A clear division of tasks between public relations inside and outside the pesantren helps improve communication efficiency and ensures that the information delivered is on target.

The Role of Public Relations in Improving the Image of Pesantren

One of the key roles of public relations is as a good image maker. This is done through various activities that show the achievements and development of pesantren. Hasan said, "All students play a role in building a positive image of the pesantren through their daily behavior that reflects the values of the pesantren (I_Hasan_2024)." Thus, every individual in the pesantren participates in shaping a positive image of the institution through their attitudes and behaviors.

Public relations also acts as an effective communicator in conveying the vision, mission, and program of pesantren to the public. In an interview, one of the informants revealed, "We strive so that the information we convey through various media can build a good understanding and support from the community towards pesantren programs" (I_Imam_2024). The effectiveness of communication built by public relations is very important in shaping the positive perception of the community towards pesantren.

The interviews with Hasan and Imam highlight the pivotal role of public relations in shaping and maintaining the positive image of the pesantren. Hasan emphasizes the collective responsibility of all students in reflecting the pesantren's values through their daily behavior, illustrating that the positive image of the institution is a product of individual actions that align with its core principles. This grassroots approach ensures that the values of the pesantren are consistently demonstrated, reinforcing its reputation. Imam's insights underscore the strategic communication efforts undertaken by public relations to effectively convey the vision, mission, and programs of the pesantren to the broader community. By utilizing various media channels to disseminate

information, public relations aims to foster a good understanding and garner support from the community. This dual approach of internal behavior alignment and external strategic communication is crucial in building and sustaining a positive perception of the pesantren, demonstrating the integral role of public relations in educational institutions.

Implementation of Public Relations Management

The implementation of good Public Relations Management at Kunuuzul Imam Kauman Bondowoso Islamic Boarding School includes a planned and sustainable communication strategy. A concrete example of this is the regular meeting between external and internal public relations administrators of pesantren for coordination and evaluation. "Every month, we hold meetings to discuss the development and evaluation of programs that have been running," said one of the administrators (I_Rofiqoh_2024). This structured and systematic communication ensures that all stakeholders are aligned with the goals and activities of the pesantren. These regular evaluations help identify areas for improvement, allowing for timely adjustments and the continual enhancement of public relations efforts. By maintaining consistent and open lines of communication, the pesantren not only ensures the effectiveness of its programs but also fosters a culture of accountability and transparency. This proactive approach to public relations management plays a crucial role in sustaining the positive image and reputation of the pesantren in the community.

Through the results of the interview presented above, it shows the commitment of Kunuuzul Imam Kauman Bondowoso Islamic Boarding School to continuous evaluation and improvement practices. This regular monthly meeting reflects the systematic approach applied by pesantren to review and evaluate the effectiveness of programs that have been implemented. In this meeting, various aspects of the program were discussed in detail, including achievements, constraints, and opportunities for improvement (Purwanto et al., 2023). Through this evaluation process, pesantren can identify program strengths and weaknesses, and implement corrective actions needed to improve program quality and results in the future. This approach not only increases accountability and transparency in program management, but also encourages active participation from all stakeholders in the process of improving the quality of education in pesantren. Thus, this monthly evaluation practice contributes significantly to the development of pesantren programs that are more effective and responsive to the needs of their communities. This meeting ensures that all public relations activities go according to plan and can continue to be improved.

Data Analysis and Key Findings

Data analysis shows that there is a positive correlation between effective public relations management and increased community support for pesantren programs. The establishment of these two public relations divisions allows pesantren to focus more on carrying out communication tasks, both internally and externally. This not only improves communication efficiency but also strengthens the relationship between pesantren and the community. The Table 1,

summarizes the roles and responsibilities of public relations inside and outside pesantren.

Table 1. Roles and Duties of Public Relations

Public Relations Division	Public	Main Roles	Responsibility
External Relations	Public	External mediators	Disseminating information to student guardians, alumni, the community. Gather aspirations and input from the community. Establish friendship with the guardian's house.
Inner Relations	Public	Built-in communicator	Disseminating information in pesantren. Prepare communication materials for events. Manage pesantren newsletters and social media.

Through the explanation of the table above, it explains the division of roles and tasks between the external public relations division and internal public relations at the Kunuuzul Imam Kauman Bondowoso Islamic Boarding School. External public relations act as external mediators responsible for disseminating information to student guardians, alumni, and the general public, as well as collecting aspirations and input from the community, and establishing relationships through home visits. Meanwhile, public relations act as internal communicators who disseminate information within the pesantren, prepare communication materials for events, and manage the pesantren's newsletters and social media. This division of tasks reflects a systematic and strategic communication management approach, which not only increases the efficiency of information dissemination but also strengthens the relationship between pesantren and internal and external communities.

The results of this study show that the role of public relations in pesantren is crucial in building harmonious relationships with the community and supporting the development of educational institutions. This finding is in line with previous studies showing that good public relations can increase public support for educational institutions (Shihab et al., 2023; Sanjani et al., 2024). However, challenges remain, especially in maintaining communication consistency and overcoming disagreements among PR administrators.

Overall, this research makes an important contribution to the understanding of the role of public relations management in Islamic educational institutions, particularly in the Kunuuzul Imam Kauman Bondowoso Islamic Boarding School. Effective implementation of public relations strategies can be a model for other educational institutions in building strong relationships with the community and supporting the development of the institution as a whole.

CONCLUSION

Effective public relations management at Kunuuzul Imam Kauman Bondowoso Islamic Boarding School has proven to play an important role in building harmonious relationships with the wider community. The division of public relations tasks into two divisions, namely public relations inside and outside the pesantren, allows for better and directed communication. The role of public relations as communicators, mediators, and positive image makers greatly

contributes to supporting the development of educational institutions in this pesantren. These findings reinforce the importance of structured and sustainable public relations management strategies in Islamic educational institutions.

The study also suggested that other Islamic educational institutions consider adopting the public relations management model that has been implemented at the Kunuuzul Imam Kauman Bondowoso Islamic Boarding School. A clear division of tasks between public relations inside and outside the pesantren, as well as a planned and sustainable communication strategy, can be the key to success in building harmonious relationships with the community and supporting the development of educational institutions.

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