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Research Article

Islamic Public Relations in Issue Management and Media Relations

Muhammad Hatta[1*], Marhamah[2] and Hazan Sazali[3]

[1] Politeknik Negeri Lhokseumawe, Aceh, Indonesia, 24351
[2] Universitas Islam Negeri Sultanah Nahrasiyah Lhokseumawe, Aceh, Indonesia, 24351
[3] Universitas Islam Negeri Sumatera Utara, Sumatera Utara, Indonesia, 20235
*Corresponding Author: hatta.pnl@gmail.com | Phoner: +6281360501739

ABSTRACT

This article examines the Islamic Public Relations (PR) approach in issue management and media relations in Islamic institutions in Indonesia. The Islamic approach in public relations emphasizes the values of honesty, openness, responsibility, and manners in communication. In the context of a society that is experiencing information polarization and increasing distrust of religious institutions and the media, the role of Islamic PR is important to build credibility and maintain the image of the institution. Through a qualitative-descriptive approach based on literature studies and case studies on several Islamic organizations and Islamic boarding schools, this article explains how Islamic values are applied in issue management and establishing healthy and strategic relationships with the mass media. The results of the analysis show that the Islamic PR approach is able to build a calming, honest, and solutive narrative in the midst of a crisis of public issues. It is necessary to strengthen media literacy and Islamic PR training based on maqāṣid al-syarī'ah so that Islamic institutions are able to appear as communication actors who are trusted by the public.

Keywords: Islamic Public Relations; Issue Management; Media Relations; Islamic Communication; Public Relations Ethics

1. INTRODUCTION

The development of information and communication technology in the last two decades has fundamentally changed the face of social interaction and public communication patterns. The sophistication of digital media, especially social media, has made communication take place in real-time and across borders. In this context, religious institutions, including Islamic community organizations, Islamic boarding schools, large mosques, and Islamic philanthropic institutions, are required to adapt to remain relevant and trusted by the public (Alamsyah & Rahma, 2021). The challenges faced by Islamic institutions today are not only related to the delivery of messages, but also how they manage public perception in the midst of information flows full of hoaxes, negative framing, and disinformation. This situation demands a communication approach that is not only technically sophisticated, but also based on moral and spiritual values. This is the basis for the importance of the Islamic *Public Relations* approach, which is a public relations model based on Islamic values such as *ṣidq* (honesty), *amanah* (responsibility), *tablīgh* (transparency), and *fathanah* (wisdom) (Nasution, 2022).

Islamic PR is present as a synthesis between modern communication strategies and Islamic ethical principles. This approach not only aims to build a positive image, but also conveys Islamic values in an elegant and dignified way. Communication delivered based on the principles of honesty and responsibility will strengthen the institution's position as a moral actor in an increasingly critical society (Yusra & Hikmah, 2021). Unfortunately, many Islamic institutions still respond to communication issues in a reactive and non-strategic manner. When faced with crises or sensitive issues, some of them choose to remain silent, close themselves off from the media, or even be emotionally defensive. In fact, from a strategic PR perspective, the management of issues and media relations is the main element in maintaining the credibility of the institution (Rohman & Sari, 2020). Professional issue management not only saves reputation, but also becomes an effective means of public education. With the Islamic PR strategy, institutions can show a proactive, open, and solutive attitude in responding to challenges, while still maintaining da'wah values. Communication becomes a subtle and touching space of da'wah, not just an institutional defense tool (Salam & Harahap, 2021).

Recent studies show that institutions that integrate spiritual values in public communication are better able to build long-term trust and community loyalty. Communication based on sincere intentions and Islamic ethics has been proven to be more touching to the hearts of the audience and create strong emotional connections (Yusra & Hikmah, 2021). Therefore, the Islamic PR approach needs to be continuously developed, especially in the aspects of human resource training, communication policy formulation, and value-based crisis management. This approach is not only ideologically relevant for Islamic institutions, but also strategic in responding to the increasingly complex and competitive communication challenges of the 21st century (Nasution, 2022).

The Islamic PR approach is a relevant offer in answering this need. In addition to maintaining the reputation of the institution, this approach is able to be a means of da'wah through polite, ethical, and solutional communication. The power of Islamic values can touch communication spaces that have been often ignored by conventional PR approaches that are technocratic.

Previous studies have shown that institutions that integrate spiritual values into their public communication are better able to build long-term trust (Syihabuddin, 2020; Hasibuan, 2018). Therefore, this study will further examine how Islamic PR practices are applied in real life in the management of media issues and relations. This research aims to explore and explain the concept of Islamic *Public Relations* in the context of managing issues and media relations:

1. Describe the concept of Islamic *Public Relations* conceptually.
2. Analyze the role and strategy of Islamic PR in handling public issues.
3. Explain how Islamic PR establishes strategic relationships with mass media in the digital era.

1.1 Islamic Public Relations

Islamic Public Relations is a public relations approach that integrates Islamic values into public communication practices. In contrast to conventional PR approaches that tend to be technocratic and purely image-oriented, Islamic PR lays its ethical foundation on spiritual values such as honesty *(ṣidq),* responsibility *(amanah),* wisdom *(fathanah),* and transparency *(tablīgh).* The main goal is not only to build reputation, but also to establish a harmonious and beneficial relationship between the institution and the public (Rahmatika, 2022). In practice, Islamic PR rejects any form of misleading information manipulation or propaganda. Instead, this approach prioritizes educational clarification and polite message delivery. Communication is not only seen as a tool of persuasion, but also as a medium of da'wah and the spread of good values. According to Siregar and Wulandari (2021), Islamic PR plays a role as the moral guardian of institutions tasked with conveying the truth wisely and proportionately. The uniqueness of Islamic PR lies in the work paradigm based on sincere values. Every communication activity is seen as part of worship and social responsibility. This creates an emotional depth in the relationship between the institution and the community, as the public feels authenticity and integrity in the message conveyed. Nurhadi (2023) asserts that Islamic PR has the power to build long-term trust because it focuses not only on *"what is said"*, but also *"how and why it is said"*.

In addition, Islamic PR also encourages the creation of fair and empathetic communication. In the context of conflict or crisis, this approach teaches deliberative resolution, mutual understanding, and staying away from blame. Fairness and patience are important values in maintaining healthy public relations. Communication should not be a tool of oppressive power, but should be a bridge that connects the interests of institutions and societal expectations (Fauziah & Hamid, 2021). Islamic PR also offers a framework that is not only spiritually relevant, but also effective in the context of modern strategic communication. He answered the need for more ethical, humane, and sustainable public relations practices. In a digital era full of ethical and moral challenges, Islamic PR is an alternative solution to build an image of a trusted, visionary, and blessed Islamic institution (Maulana & Iskandar, 2022).

1.2 Issue Management

Issue *management* is a systematic process in identifying, monitoring, and responding to strategic issues that have the potential to affect the sustainability and reputation of an institution. In the context of Islamic institutions, the issues that arise not only have an impact on the institutional image, but can also affect public trust in the teachings of Islam itself. Therefore, issue management is not just a technical matter, but an integral part of value-based strategic public relations management (Lestari & Prabowo, 2021). In the framework *of Islamic Public Relations*, issue management must begin with the principle of *tabayyun*, which is clarification of information before taking a stance or disseminating it. This is in accordance with Allah's command in QS. Al-Hujurat verse 6, which teaches to examine the news before believing and acting. This approach is relevant in the midst of the rapid flow of digital information that is full of hoaxes and disinformation. Clarification is the main bulwark in preventing confusion of information that can trigger conflicts or reputational crises (Munir & Hasanah, 2022).

The stages of *issue management* in an Islamic perspective involve several important processes: recognizing issues early, comprehensively understanding their impacts, and developing communication strategies that are solutive and educational. In practice, this requires social sensitivity, information disclosure, and commitment to information justice. Islamic institutions must have a PR team that is not only technically competent, but also has high moral integrity (Fadillah & Sari, 2023). Responses to issues must also be done in an ethical and non-reactive manner. Emotional reactions or closing oneself off from the media will actually make things worse. On the contrary, open dialogue and transparent communication are more effective in mitigating issues while building public trust. A communication strategy based on moral character can strengthen the position of the institution as a solution, not just a defensive entity. This is the role of Islamic PR as a guardian and spokesperson for Islamic values in the public space (Azhari, 2021). The management of issues in Islamic PR is not only oriented to save the image, but also to the preservation of values and da'wah. Every issue that arises can be an opportunity to educate the public, affirm institutional attitudes, and strengthen friendship with stakeholders. If managed correctly, issues can even transform into a momentum for strengthening a more sustainable and dignified reputation (Rahim & Fatimah, 2022).

1.3 Media Relations

Media *relations* is an important aspect of *Public Relations practice*, which functions as a bridge between institutions and the public through the strategic role of mass media. In the framework of Islamic PR, relations with the media are not only to form favorable public opinion, but also as a vehicle for da'wah and the dissemination of Islamic values. The media is positioned not as a propaganda tool, but as a communication partner that must maintain the ethics of interaction, as the principle of amar ma'ruf nahi munkar in Islam (Fikri & Nurhayati, 2022).

Islamic PR approaches to the media emphasize the importance of honesty *(ṣidq),* transparency *(tablīgh),* and responsibility *(amanah)* in the delivery of information. In building relationships with the media, Islamic institutions are expected not to hide facts or *over-framing* . Fair, open, and solutive communication is the main foundation. This is important so that the institution does not lose public trust and maintains the reputation of da'wah that is rahmatan lil 'alamin (Kurniawan & Afifah, 2021). In addition, *Islamic media relations* also avoids a confrontational approach to journalists or critical media. On the other hand, Islamic institutions are encouraged to build productive dialogue, provide competent resource persons, and provide polite clarifications in case of misunderstandings. This concept is in accordance with the morals of the Prophet PBUH who exemplifies persuasive and wise communication in the face of criticism (Azizah & Nugroho, 2020).

In practice, building a good relationship with the media can start by making informative and credible press releases, establishing personal communication with journalists, and inviting the media to the institution's activities. Islamic PR must also have an understanding of journalistic ethics so that communication with the media does not contradict Islamic values and the media code of ethics itself. This synergy will create a constructive public narrative and strengthen the institution's image in a sustainable manner (Syafei, 2023). To make the media a partner of da'wah, Islamic PR is not only oriented to publication, but also uses the media to voice the values of truth, justice, and humanity. This approach creates relationships that are not transactional, but transformative. When media relations are built on the foundation of spirituality and professionalism, Islamic institutions will be better prepared to face communication challenges in the dynamic and disruptive digital era (Rahmawati & Fauzan, 2022).

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive method, aiming to describe in depth the dynamics of religious propaganda content on social media as a new challenge in Islamic broadcasting in Indonesia. The search was carried out on contemporary communication phenomena through interdisciplinary literature (library research), covering the fields of Islamic Public Relations, communication theory, and digital media studies.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Islamic Values in Issue Management

In the era of information disruption, issue management is crucial for Islamic institutions to be able to maintain their credibility and reputation. When dealing with controversial issues, the Islamic approach emphasizes the importance of prudence, especially in delivering responses to the public. One of the main principles offered by Islam in dealing with unclear information is *tabayyun*, verification or clarification. The Qur'an commands Muslims to search for the truth of information before taking a stand, as in QS. Al-Hujurat: 6, *"If a wicked person comes to you with news, then examine it carefully"* (Quraish Shihab, 2021). *Tabayyun* became an ethical and strategic guide in Islamic *Public Relations*, especially

when crises occurred. In PR practice, tabayyun encourages institutions not to be reactive to public or media pressure, but to compile statements based on facts and careful considerations. This is also acknowledged by research by Fikri and Nurhayati (2022) who stated that *tabayyun* functions as a *"moral filter"* in public relations decision-making, especially when it comes to institutional reputation and information accuracy.

The next values is *tathayyur,* which in the context of Islamic PR is interpreted as an attitude of avoiding speculation and spreading bad news that is not necessarily true. This principle comes from the habit of the Prophet PBUH who does not advocate pessimism or fault-finding in precarious situations (Kurniawan & Afifah, 2021). In managing issues, this value encourages the PR of Islamic institutions not to easily disseminate information that has not been verified, especially if it can trigger unrest in the community.

In addition, *tawazun* or balance is an important value in conveying information to the public. Islamic PR is expected to be able to maintain a fair and proportionate narrative, not covering up the facts but also not magnifying the problem emotionally. According to Rahmawati and Fauzan (2022), *the tawazun approach* creates more constructive public communication, especially when institutions are faced with accusations or negative news. This attitude allows for the development of a dialogue that is solutive rather than confrontational. These values also reflect the communication morals taught by the Prophet Muhammad PBUH, who in facing issues and slander, he preferred a gentle but firm argumentative approach. In this context, communication is not only about conveying a message, but also building trust while still holding spiritual principles. In this way, Islamic PR not only mitigates crises, but also instills media ethics education to the wider community (Azizah & Nugroho, 2020). The integration of Islamic values such as *tabayyun, tathayyur,* and *tawazun* in the management of issues is proof that Islam has a strong moral foundation in dealing with communication crises. Islamic institutions that apply these principles will not only gain spiritual legitimacy, but also gain long-term trust from the public. The management of Islamic issues proves that wise and polite public communication can be a means of da'wah as well as strengthening the institutional image.

3.2 Islamic Public Relations Strategies in Managing Media

The Islamic *Public Relations* strategy in building relationships with the media emphasizes the importance of friendship based on Islamic communication beliefs and ethics. In this context, the media is not only seen as an information channel, but also as a partner of da'wah. Therefore, Islamic institutions must prepare spokespersons who not only have professional communication skills, but also reflect Islamic morals, are polite, honest, and are able to respond wisely in a crisis atmosphere. As explained by Hasanah and Lubis (2022), the credibility of spokespeople who are able to speak straightforward but softly is the key to building a harmonious relationship with the mass media.

In addition, the content delivered to the media must also be relevant to the needs of the people and arranged in a humane manner. Da'wah messages that are packaged in language that is moderate, inclusive, and upholds universal values such as justice, compassion, and brotherhood will be more easily accepted by the public. A study by Mawaddah and Irawan (2021) shows that the media tends to be more willing to publish content from Islamic institutions if the narrative is not exclusive or confrontational, but is solutive and educational. This is a form of Islamic PR strategy that makes da'wah content a bridge for social dialogue. In addition, the existence of a professional media kit is also an important element. Media kits in the form of institutional profiles, *press releases,* official quotes, activity photos, and other supporting data need to be prepared properly to make it easier for the media to convey information accurately. According to Suryadi (2020), the completeness and neatness of the media kit not only strengthens the professional image of the institution, but also shows seriousness in building good relationships with press personnel. This is part of Islam's mandate in conveying information clearly and not misleadingly.

The implementation of Islamic PR strategies in *media relations* is not only a matter of imagery, but part of the moral responsibility in preaching in the modern public space. The success of media relations based on Islamic values lies in the consistency of the institution's attitude in practicing honesty, prudence, and commitment to the common good. Therefore, this strategy requires not only technical skills, but also moral examples from PR actors of Islamic institutions.

3.3 Obstacles and Challenges of Islamic Public Relations

One of the main challenges faced by Islamic institutions in implementing the strategy Public Relations (PR) Islam is a limitation of professional and competent human resources (HR) in the field of public relations. Many Islamic institutions still rely on volunteers or internal administrators without a communication background, so public relations activities tend to be reactive and less strategic. Research by Fadillah and Sari (2021) emphasizes that the lack of PR human resources who have an understanding of Islam as well as technical communication competencies is a significant obstacle in building a positive image of Islamic institutions.

In addition, low media literacy among administrators is also an obstacle that cannot be ignored. Many administrators of Islamic institutions do not understand how the media works, how to respond to journalists, and how to convey correct information in a format that the media prefers. This leads to unpreparedness when institutions face the public spotlight or image crisis. As noted by Maulidiyah (2022), a lack of understanding of the media ecosystem risks giving rise to emotional, immeasurable responses, and actually muddy the situation.

Another challenge that is increasingly complex in the digital era is the rampant disinformation and negative framing of Islamic institutions. Information that is misleading, deliberately twisted, or given a negative context is often widespread on social media and even the mainstream media. In this situation, the Islamic PR approach must be able to clarify quickly, politely, and data-based. A study by Yusra and Pratama (2023) shows that institutions that have a digital issue monitoring system and respond with an Islamic value approach tend to be more successful in maintaining their public reputation. Facing these various obstacles, it is necessary to strengthen the capacity of Islamic PR human resources through training, collaboration with communication professionals, and media literacy for institutional administrators. On the other hand, a systematic and strategic approach must be built so that Islamic PR does not only become an additional function, but becomes an integral part of institutional management. With the support of digital technology and a commitment to Islamic values, Islamic PR challenges can be transformed into effective da'wah opportunities and build public trust in a sustainable manner.

4. CONCLUSION

Islamic Public Relations is a public relations approach that does not just rely on modern communication techniques, but combines it with noble values in Islam such as honesty, justice, and tabayyun. In an era of very fast and often inaccurate information, the Islamic PR approach is present as a strategic solution to maintain the credibility and reputation of Islamic institutions in the eyes of the public. Through the management of value-based issues, media relations that are da'wah, and an emphasis on public education, Islamic PR is able to play an important role in building trust and clarifying information. Thus, Islamic PR is not only an instrument of communication, but also an extension of da'wah that is polite, solutive, and responsive to the dynamics of the times.

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