

Research Article

# The Role of Public Relations in Marketing Educational Services at Madrasah Aliyah *Tahfidz Al-Qur'an Al Islami* Pesanggaran Banyuwangi

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## ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the role of public relations in marketing educational services at MA *Tahfidz Al-Qur'an Al Islami* to maintain the institution's existence and enhance its competitiveness amid educational competition. The research employs a qualitative approach with a case study design to provide in-depth information on the communication strategies implemented by public relations in building the school's image, disseminating information, and establishing communication with stakeholders. Data collection methods include interviews with the school principal, public relations officers, teachers, and parents, participatory observations of school activities, and documentation of promotional materials such as brochures, posters, social media, and activity archives. The data analysis follows an interactive model involving data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. The findings reveal that the public relations team at MA *Tahfidz Al-Qur'an Al Islami* plays three strategic roles in marketing educational services: managing the school's image through consistent publication of activities and achievements, disseminating important information in a timely and engaging manner across various media, and acting as a communication bridge with stakeholders to build sustainable support. These three roles have proven effective in increasing public trust, maintaining parental loyalty, and boosting the number of new student enrollments each year.

**Keywords:** Public Relations; Service Marketing; Education; Marketing Educational; Madrasah Aliyah

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Marketing of educational services is very important in the world of education (Prihatin & Ahmad, 2020). Marketing of educational services is an activity carried out by educational institutions to provide information, attract interest, and increase public trust in the quality of education offered (Wijaya, 2022). Marketing of educational services at MA *Tahfidz Al-Quran Al Islami*, requires an effective strategy to attract the attention of parents and the surrounding community. One of the main keys in education marketing is the role of Public Relations (Amar et al., 2024). Public Relations is a communication activity carried out to create mutual understanding between organizations and the community, so that harmonious relationships can be established (Habib et al., 2021). Public Relations is responsible for building good communication between schools and the community (Wirabhakti, 2023). Public Relations has an important task in conveying information about the advantages and services provided by schools to the public (Ma'sum, 2020). In this case, Public Relations at MA *Tahfidz Alquran Al Islami* plays a big role in introducing excellent programs, activities, and facilities that can attract parents to enroll their children in the school.

At MA *Tahfidz Alquran Al Islami Pesanggaran*, Public Relations is not just about spreading information through social media or brochures. Public Relations also organizes various activities that can increase public trust in the quality of education provided. Public Relations is also active in managing school social media, such as Instagram and Facebook, to display interesting activities carried out by students, such as competition achievements, extracurricular programs, school teaching, and activities carried out at school. Public Relations also plays a role in establishing relationships with alumni, as well as visiting parents' homes to provide an understanding of the school's vision and mission (Rahmat, 2021).

Based on observations in the field, MA *Tahfidz Alquran Al Islami Pesanggaran* has experienced an increase in the number of new registrants every year, most of which come from promotions carried out by the school and public relations, in the 2022-2023 academic year it managed to get 35 students, in 2023-2024 it managed to get 39 students while in 2024-2025 it got 43 students, this shows the success of marketing carried out by MA *Tahfidz Al-Quran Al Islami Pesanggaran*. Marketing activities through social media and direct promotion that involve direct activities with the community have been

proven to be able to increase parental trust (Aini et al., 2024). In fact, many parents stated that they felt more confident in choosing MA Tahfidz Al-Quran Al Islami because the information they received was well structured and in accordance with the facts in the field.

Based on the description above, it can be concluded that the role of Public Relations in the marketing of educational services at MA Tahfidz Alquran Al Islami Pesanggaran is very vital. Public relations not only functions as a link between schools and the community, but also as the main driver in building a positive image of the school. Through effective communication, both directly and through digital media, Public Relations is able to introduce the school's advantages and provide a deeper understanding to the community. This contributes greatly to the increase in the number of students and strengthens the position of MA Tahfidz Alquran Al Islami as a trustworthy educational institution in the region.

Previous research that discussed the role of Public Relations (Public Relations) in marketing educational services, a study conducted by (N. V. Sari, 2021) examined the role of Public Relations in building a positive image of schools through effective communication strategies. This research shows that Public Relations has an important role in introducing schools to the public through various media, be it print media, social media, or direct activities such as open houses and seminars. Public Relations is expected to be able to change public perception by conveying accurate and evocative information about the quality of education offered, including excellent facilities and programs in schools. The study also highlights how public relations can leverage social media to increase school visibility, which is now one of the most effective ways to attract the attention of prospective parents.

Furthermore, research conducted by (Aini et al., 2024) reveals that Public Relations has a significant contribution to increasing public participation in education. Through marketing activities carried out by Public Relations, such as the promotion of school activities or collaboration with external parties, the public becomes more familiar with and believes in the quality of education in an institution. The study also highlights the importance of a personalized approach in building relationships with students' parents, which can increase parents' loyalty and trust in the school. In addition, research by (Uluwiyah, 2022) on the marketing of educational services at the elementary school level shows that public relations activities that directly involve the community can improve the school's image and have a positive impact on the number of new registrants. This research underlines that Public Relations who work with dedication in conveying the vision, mission, and excellence of the school can build trust and attract more students.

Overall, the research emphasizes the importance of the role of public relations in the marketing of educational services, particularly in introducing the excellence of schools and building close relationships with the community. Public relations that is active and creative in managing communication can have a significant impact on the image of the school and the decision of parents in choosing education for their children. The novelty of this research lies in the role of Public Relations of MA Tahfidz Al Quran Al Islami in utilizing social media and school websites as the main channel to build and maintain the school's image. This research highlights the rapid and effective use of digital platforms in image management and information dissemination, which is highly relevant to modern communication trends in educational institutions. This approach shows how the use of technology can strengthen relationships with the public and affect public perception of school quality. Furthermore, the novelty of this research also lies in the efforts of Public Relations that prioritize a direct and personal approach in building relationships with stakeholders. This approach not only strengthens internal communication, but also creates an ongoing support network through active engagement with alumni, guardians, and other related parties. This effort demonstrates the importance of more personalized and sustained communication to create a positive image of the school, which has not been widely discussed in previous research in the field of education.

The purpose of this study is to analyze the role of Public Relations in improving the image of schools that have an impact on the marketing of educational services at MA Tahfidz Alquran Al Islami, as well as how the role of public relations as a communication liaison with stakeholders, especially parents of prospective students, to register their children. And also provides a clear picture of how the role of public relations as a disseminator of information, in promoting excellence and quality of education offered by schools. This is important because education marketing in this digital era not only relies on traditional information, such as brochures or flyers, but also utilizes technology that can reach a wider audience more efficiently and effectively (Hawanur & Nurlaeli, 2024).

## 2. RESEARCH METHOD

This research uses a qualitative approach, namely This research aims to describe, describe, or explain an object, event, or event that occurs in real life at the time of the research (I. N. Sari et al., 2022). with the type of case study research, which aims to understand in depth the role of Public Relations in the marketing of educational services at MA Tahfidz Al-Quran

Al Islami. The qualitative approach was chosen because this study focuses on collecting descriptive data that can provide in-depth insights into communication and marketing strategies implemented by Public Relations in the context of education at the elementary school level (Pahleviannur et al., 2022). The case study was chosen as the method because this study will explore specifically and in detail the application of marketing strategies carried out by Public Relations (Daymon & Holloway, 2007). The data collection in this study was through three main methods: in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and documentation. Interviews were conducted with school principals, public relations officers, teachers, as well as some parents of students to explore their views on the marketing strategies used by public relations. Documentation is also an important source of data in qualitative research (Ratnaningtyas et al., 2023). By collecting various promotional materials used by Public Relations, such as brochures, posters, social media, and documentation of school activities. The collected data is then analyzed by interactive analysis of the model, where the researcher will conduct data collection, data reduction, data presentation and conclusion drawing (Febriani et al., 2023). Through this analysis, researchers can draw conclusions about the role of Public Relations in marketing educational services, as well as identify strategies and best practices that can be applied by other schools in marketing education. Thus, this research method is expected to provide an overview of the role of Public Relations in improving the quality of marketing educational services in MA Tahfidz Al-Quran Al Islami.

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### 1) The Role of Public Relations as a School Image Manager

In an effort to maintain the sustainability and trust of the public in educational institutions, managing the image of the institution is very important. The problem that often arises in MA Tahfidz Al Quran Al Islami is how to maintain a positive school image, is widely known, and is trusted by the community in the midst of competition from other educational institutions. Without good image management, the public may not be aware of the achievements, superior programs, and positive activities carried out by the school, thus having an impact on the decline in the interest of prospective students. Based on the findings of this research, the Public Relations of MA Tahfidz Al Quran Al Islami takes an important role in building and maintaining the reputation of the institution by actively publicizing various academic activities, student achievements, and the excellence of the tahfidz program which is the main identity of the school. Publication is carried out through various communication channels, ranging from social media such as Instagram and Facebook, the school's official website, to collaborating with external media for wider news. In an interview conducted with the Head of Public Relations of MA Tahfidz Al Quran Al Islami, Mr. Ahmad Zamzuli S.Sos, he explained the importance of maintaining the school's image by showing positive activities in the school environment.

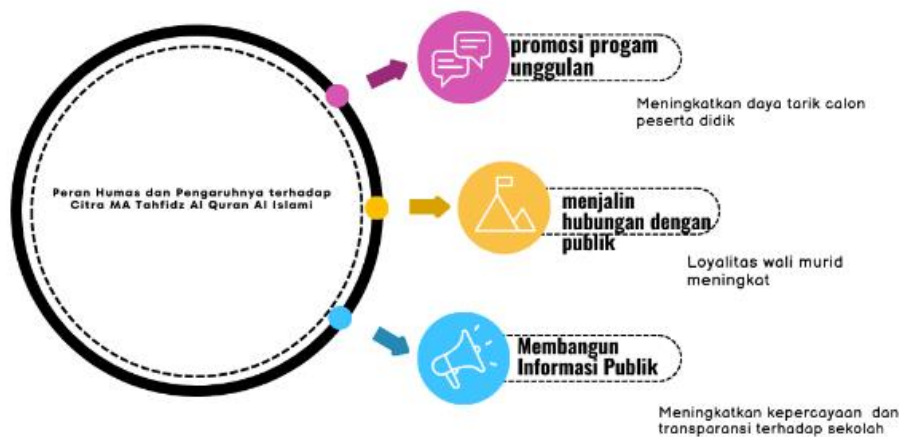
*"We always strive so that every activity, especially those related to tahfidz achievements and programs, can be published quickly and interestingly. This is important so that the public knows that our school is active, quality, and has a clear excellent program".*

The results of the interview with Mrs. Umi Hanik S.Pd also showed that they had a special strategy in maintaining the school's image. Every activity that takes place, both small and large-scale, is documented in the form of photos and videos, then disseminated through the school's social media. They also regularly update information on the official website so that the public can easily get the latest updates on school activities. In addition, cooperation with local media continues to be carried out to help publicize students' achievements so that they are more widely known. With this consistent image management, MA Tahfidz Al Quran Al Islami has succeeded in increasing public trust and maintaining the interest in new student registration from year to year.

Based on the findings of these findings, it can be interpreted that the role of Public Relations in managing the image at MA Tahfidz Al Quran Al Islami is a strategic factor in maintaining public trust and increasing the attractiveness of institutions in the midst of educational competition. Publication activities that are carried out regularly, ranging from documentation of academic activities, the delivery of student achievements, to the promotion of the tahfidz program, have proven to be able to provide a positive picture to the public about the quality of the school. By utilizing social media, official websites, and cooperation with external media, Public Relations has succeeded in making school information more accessible and creating the impression that an institution that is active, superior, and worthy of being an educational choice.

This finding is in line with the opinion (Bairizki, 2021) which states that "Public Relations is the spearhead in creating a positive image of the institution through the delivery of planned, structured, and interesting information, so that it can influence public opinion at large." This shows that the success of MA Tahfidz Al Quran Al Islami in maintaining the image

of the institution is not only the result of ordinary promotional activities, but part of a Public Relations strategy that understands the importance of public communication to build reputation. Moreover, a positive school image will have a direct impact on increasing public trust, loyalty of students' guardians, and increasing the number of applicants every year (Setyawan, 2020). Thus, the practice applied by the Public Relations of MA Tahfidz Al Quran Al Islami has been relevant to the theory of strategic communication in the world of education which emphasizes the importance of image management as part of the success of the institution.



**Figure 1.** The Role of Public Relations and the Influence of Image on Image

## 2) The Role of Public Relations as a Disseminator of Information

In the process of marketing educational services at MA Tahfidz Al-Quran Al Islami, the dissemination of academic and non-academic information is one of the challenges that must be managed seriously by the Public Relations team. Competition between educational institutions in the surrounding area requires an effective communication strategy so that the public, especially prospective students and parents, obtain clear and interesting information related to the school's excellence. The problem that often arises is the delay in delivering information about new student admissions (PPDB), scholarship programs, and school activities, so that it has an impact on the lack of public understanding of the opportunities offered by schools. Based on the results of this study, it was found that the Public Relations of MA Tahfidz Alquran Al Islami plays an important role as an information distribution center that not only disseminates news in a timely manner, but also packages these messages attractively through various communication media, both online and offline. In an interview with the Head of Public Relations of MA Tahfidz Alquran Al Islami, Mr. Ahmad Zamzuli, S.Sos, he explained the efforts made to ensure that important information reaches the public.

*"We always try to convey information about the admission of new students through social media, pamphlets, and cooperation with community leaders so that information can be received directly by parents. If the information does not arrive quickly, many prospective students end up choosing another school," he said.*

In addition, the results of an interview with Mr. Sukirno, S.Pd as the head of the PPDB team in 2024 show that they routinely evaluate the effectiveness of information dissemination by paying attention to the community's response. They also pay attention to visual and language aspects so that the delivery of information feels more friendly and interesting. In addition, Public Relations is active in every school activity, documenting, and sharing important moments through the school's official social media. With this step, Public Relations not only functions as a conveyor of information, but also as the face of the school that is able to attract public attention, thus supporting the increase in the number of registrants every year.

The findings show that the role of Public Relations as a disseminator of information in MA Tahfidz Al-Quran Al Islami is very crucial in supporting the effectiveness of marketing educational services. In the midst of increasingly fierce competition for educational institutions, delays or lack of information delivery can have a negative impact on the interest

of prospective students. By optimizing various communication channels, such as social media, pamphlets, and collaborating with community leaders, Public Relations not only ensures that information arrives on time, but is also packaged in an attractive and easy-to-understand way. The interpretation of these findings shows that information distribution is not just an administrative activity, but part of a planned marketing communication strategy, aimed at building relationships, and influencing people's decisions in choosing schools. This is in accordance with the opinion of Cutlip, Center, and Broom in (Susilowati et al., 2022), that "Information dissemination activities in public relations aim to create public understanding through a two-way flow of information, so that there is an effective communication process between institutions and the public." In this context, the Public Relations of the Supreme Court of Tahfidz Al-Quran Al Islami succeeded in carrying out this role by continuing to evaluate the effectiveness of message delivery and paying attention to the community's response. Furthermore, the opinion (Sofyan, 2021) also supports this finding, where he explains that "The success of educational institution promotion depends heavily on the speed, clarity, and attractiveness of the message conveyed to the target audience." With this targeted communication strategy, Public Relations is able to improve the school's image and maintain the stability of the number of registrants from year to year.



Figure 2. New Student Admission Brochure

### 3) The Role of Public Relations as a Liaison for Communication with Stakeholders

In an effort to strengthen its position as an educational institution trusted by the public, MA Tahfidz Alquran Al Islami realizes the importance of the role of Public Relations as a bridge of communication with various stakeholders. The problem that often arises in the marketing of educational services is not only about the lack of promotion, but also the weak relationship between schools and parties that can support the existence and development of the school, such as alumni, parents, Junior High Schools (SMP) and Madrasah Tsanawiyah (MTS), to the sub-district government. Without well-established communication, public trust in school quality can decrease and have an impact on reducing interest in new student registration. From the findings of this study, it is proven that the Public Relations of MA Tahfidz Al-Quran Al Islami is active as a liaison between schools and stakeholders through joint activities, routine information delivery, and cooperation in various social and educational programs. This collaboration indirectly strengthens the school's marketing, but also builds a positive image in the community. In an interview with the Head of MA Tahfidz Alquran Al Islami, Mr. Ahmad Jafarudin, S.E, he said that relationships with stakeholders are the top priority in the school's communication strategy.

*"We routinely communicate with alumni, parents, and schools with junior high school (SMP) and Madrasah Tsanawiyah (MTS) levels. In fact, for social activities or big school events, we also always collaborate with the sub-district government. In this way, the community becomes more confident that our school is really active and caring," he said.*

In addition, the results of the interview with the Head of Public Relations, Mr. Ahmad Zamzuli, S.Sos, show that they take a personal approach to alumni to help promote schools in their respective environments. They are also actively visiting schools in the Banyuwangi area as an effort to introduce MA Tahfidz Alquran Al Islami to parents of prospective students. Meanwhile, the relationship with the student's guardian is maintained through a responsive communication group, so that any information from the school can be received immediately. By building harmonious communication with stakeholders, Public Relations has succeeded in creating a strong support ecosystem, which has a direct impact on increasing trust and the number of new students every year.

These findings show that the role of Public Relations as a liaison for communication with stakeholders in MA Tahfidz Al-Quran Al Islami is an important key in creating public trust and strengthening the marketing of educational institutions. The success of the school in maintaining good relations with alumni, parents, Junior High School (SMP) and Madrasah Tsanawiyah (MTS) in the vicinity, to the sub-district government not only builds a positive image, but also creates a sustainable support ecosystem for the development of the school. The interpretation of these findings confirms that the marketing of educational services does not only depend on direct promotion to prospective students, but also on the extent to which the institution is able to establish harmonious communication with influential strategic parties. Good relationships with stakeholders can create recommendations, support activities, and the dissemination of positive information that strengthens the attractiveness of schools (Riyanto & Kharisma, 2024). This finding is in accordance with (Winarto et al., 2023) which explains that "Public relations in educational institutions must be able to foster mutually beneficial relationships with all related parties, because the image of the institution is formed not only from internal activities, but also from the perceptions and experiences of stakeholders." In addition, (Prastowo, 2020) also emphasized that "Public Relations is a mediator between institutions and the public, whose main task is to build two-way communication to create understanding, trust, and support." This is in line with the Public Relations strategy of MA Tahfidz Alquran Al Islami which routinely conducts a personal approach, direct visits, and collaboration activities with stakeholders as a way to maintain public trust and increase registration interest every year. With planned and maintained communication, Public Relations has succeeded in creating a support network that is the main strength in school marketing.

**Table 1.** The Role of Public Relations as a Communication Link

No	Stakeholder	Forms of Communication/Strategy	Impact on School Image and Marketing
1	Alumni	Gathering, involvement in events	Positive recommendations, word-of-mouth promotion
2	Guardian of Pupils	Regular communication, discussion, service	High loyalty, full support for the program
3	Junior High School	Direct visit	Potential for new students
4	Community	Publication of information, social activities	Strengthening a positive image and public trust

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings and discussions, it can be concluded that the role of Public Relations at MA Tahfidz Al Quran Al Islami is a strategic factor in supporting the success of marketing educational services through its three main roles. First, Public Relations plays a role in improving the image of the school by managing information effectively and planned so that it is able to form a positive public perception of the quality of the institution. Through creative public communication strategies and optimal use of media, the school's image can be maintained and attract more interest to prospective students. Public Relations performs an important function as a disseminator of information, ensuring that all programs, activities, and school excellence are conveyed clearly, quickly, and attractively to the public. This role is not only oriented to the spread of messages, but also part of a marketing communication strategy that directly affects people's decisions in choosing a school. Public relations functions as a communication link between schools and stakeholders, such as alumni, parents, other educational institutions, and the local government. This harmonious and collaborative relationship with various strategic parties creates a strong support ecosystem, which has an impact on increasing public trust and stability in the number of registrants. Overall, the practice of Public Relations of MA Tahfidz Al Quran Al Islami has succeeded in applying strategic communication principles that are relevant to public relations theory in the world of education. Through strengthening the

image, effective dissemination of information, and communication with stakeholders, Public Relations is the main key in maintaining the existence and competitiveness of institutions in the midst of fierce competition in education.

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