



Strategy to Build a Brand Image of Madrasah Aliyah Al-Amiriyyah Blokagung Banyuwangi

Miratu Khasanah

¹ Universitas KH Mukhtar Syafaat Blokagung, Banyuwangi, Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

Purpose of the study: This research aims to analyze the strategies implemented in building brand image and the benefits it brings to madrasahs.

Methodology: The research method used is qualitative with a case study approach. Data collection was carried out through interviews, observations, and documentation, with research subjects including the head of the madrasah, WKS Humas, education personnel, as well as parents and OSIS. Data analysis techniques include data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions, with data validity checking through source and technique triangulation.

Main Findings: This study discusses strategies in building brand image at Madrasah Aliyah (MA) Al-Amiriyyah. Blokagung, Banyuwangi Regency. Educational institutions often face challenges in building their public image. The results of the study showed that the negative image of MA Al-Amiriyyah was caused by an unprofessional publication system. To overcome this, the management of the madrasah implemented various strategies, including excellent programs, to rebuild the image of a quality school. This strategy gradually formed a more positive and attractive school brand for the community.

Novelty/Originality of this study: This study presents an update in the study of marketing communication strategies of religious-based educational institutions with a focus on brand image formation at the Madrasah Aliyah level.

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Related Authors:

1. INTRODUCTION

At this time, competition in educational institutions is getting tighter, this makes managers in educational institutions stronger to continue to compete in improving good and quality education. Quality education is the ability of an educational institution to utilize all existing potential to improve learning abilities [1], [2]. Quality education is also a need and hope of society that should be responded to positively by educational institutions [3]

Strategic management is the right way to help educational institutions achieve their goals in order to be able to compete [4]-[6]. Every educational institution is faced with a lot of competition in maintaining the existence and image of its institution by improving and increasing its quality in various forms, ranging from services, facilities, superior programs to learning facilities and infrastructure, and to carry out this, the right strategy is needed [7], [8].

This is in accordance with Islamic teachings where strategy is a tool for making decisions, because without a strategy (method), organizational management cannot run according to what we want [9]. As explained in the word of Allah SWT, Surah Nuh verses 8-9:

(٩) *لَهُمْ وَأَسْرَرْتُمْ لَهُمْ إسرًا رَّا* God willing (8) God willing

Meaning: "Then indeed I have commanded them (to believe) openly, then I (called) them openly and in secret." (QS. Nuh: 8-9)

The meaning of the contents of the paragraph above if associated with management strategy, namely where the method is a tool for making decisions without a strategy (method) then a management or organization cannot run according to what we want. In Islam, strategy is very important so that the goal can be achieved, strategy is very important so that the goal can be achieved.

Thus, in implementing this strategy, each individual stakeholder must have discipline, commitment, and hard work, these characteristics will influence activities to carry out their goals in developing educational institutions [10]. One form of strategy to increase competitiveness is to build a brand image [1] [11] [12].

The term Brand Image is no longer foreign in the business world, especially in facing threats and taking advantage of opportunities amidst the competition in the business world. In the era of globalization, it is not only the business world that faces high competition. We need to realize that the world of education also continues to develop excellence and continues to compete amidst the rapid competition in the world of education, for that it is not impossible if strategic management needs to be applied in the world of education.

MA Al-Amiriyyah Blokagung is an educational unit with MA level located in Blokagung, Karangdoro Village, Tegalsari District, Banyumas Regency, East Java. In carrying out its activities, MA Al-Amiriyyah Blokagung is under the auspices of the Ministry of Religion. MA Al-Amiriyyah Blokagung is a leading school that is in demand by many students. MA Al-Amiriyyah Blokagung is the largest private madrasah in Banyumas Regency. In addition to adequate school facilities, this school is also a school that has Islamic characteristics that stand majestically in Blokagung Village.

MA Al-Amiriyyah Blokagung has a very clear curriculum direction in accordance with the topography of society and the development of information technology flows because the curriculum is compiled based on government instructions which are then combined with regional potential with the hope that students can obtain knowledge at a national level and have skills that are in accordance with regional desires.

Madrasah Aliyah Al-Amiriyyah is one of the leading private schools in the Darussalam Blokagung Islamic Boarding School Foundation. With an A accreditation predicate, it is not surprising that the quality of education there is good. Seeing the large population (students) and the many achievements that MA Al-Amiriyyah has obtained at the district, provincial, and national levels. One of the achievements that was successfully achieved at the national level was the Second Place Winner of the Musabaqoh Syarhil Al-Quran Competition (MSQ) held at Brawijaya University, Malang. Although MA Al-Amiriyyah is a private school located in an Islamic boarding school environment, this institution has a fairly good existence in society. This is the result of the brand image that has been formed and attached to the minds of the community.

Factors that form the good brand image of MA Al-Amiriyyah in the community include: First; the consistency of the school with the excellent programs offered such as the excellent tahfidz program, the excellent science program and various extracurricular activities, the atmosphere of the institution's environment that has a good culture, and the physical form of the institution with adequate facilities is a special attraction for the community. **Second;** the consistency of the school in trying to improve the institution's achievements, both from its students and its educational staff.

Public trust in institutions, as well as public views of institutions, are the main objectives in marketing strategies to build brand image in society, so that with the brand image that has been formed in society, it will have an impact on the selling value of institutions that are increasingly in demand.

1.1 Problem Statement

This study aims to determine how strategic management is implemented at MA Al-Amiriyyah Blokagung and also to determine what factors influence the formation of the brand image of MA Al-Amiriyyah Blokagung in the community.

1.2 Literature review and related research

Quality education is a concept that refers to the ability of educational institutions to optimize existing potential to improve the quality of learning and student development [13]. [14] states that quality education can be achieved by utilizing all resources owned by educational institutions, both in terms of facilities, teaching staff, curriculum, and information technology. In the context of increasingly tight educational competition, the application of strategic management becomes important [15] [16].

Strategy is an important tool in making decisions that determine the direction and success of educational institution management [17], [18]. shows that in Islamic teachings, strategy is also considered an important instrument in managing all organizational actions so that goals can be achieved. This concept is very relevant in the context of education, where educational institutions need to have a clear direction and structured strategy in order to compete and survive in the increasingly competitive education industry. A good strategic approach requires all parties involved to have commitment, discipline, and hard work.

In the context of the business world, brand image is known as an important factor that influences public perception of a product or company [19], [20]. However, [21] argues that the same applies to educational institutions. A strong brand image can provide a significant competitive advantage for an educational institution,

especially in attracting prospective students and gaining support from the community [21] [22]. Brand image in educational institutions, such as that at MA Al-Amiriyyah Blokagung, is influenced by various factors, such as consistency in the quality of education, adequate facilities, and superior programs that are relevant to the needs of students and the community. Therefore, building a positive brand image is an important strategy in increasing the competitiveness of educational institutions, as discussed by [23].

MA Al-Amiriyyah Blokagung is a successful example of the implementation of effective management strategies to strengthen the competitiveness of educational institutions amidst tight competition. Based on the achievements that have been achieved, such as Second Place in the Musabaqoh Syarhil Al-Quran Competition (MSQ), MA Al-Amiriyyah shows how good quality education, relevant curriculum, and a supportive atmosphere can contribute to the formation of a positive image in the eyes of the public. The factors that form the brand image of this institution include superior programs, quality of teaching, good facilities, and the institution's commitment to improving achievement. This indicates the importance of consistency in implementing strategies to maintain and improve the reputation of educational institutions.

In the midst of globalization and rapid technological developments, educational institutions must not only improve academic quality but also pay attention to their image in the eyes of the public [24], [25]. A positive brand image can influence the decisions of prospective students and parents in choosing an educational institution [26] [27] [28]. This concept is also supported by various studies stating that brand image has a significant impact on public perception and ultimately on increasing the number of applicants or new students at educational institutions. In the context of MA Al-Amiriyyah Blokagung, factors such as excellent programs, a conducive environment, and adequate facilities contribute to the formation of this positive image.

2 RESEARCH METHODS

The type of research used in writing this scientific paper is by using a descriptive analytical qualitative research method or often called a naturalistic research method, namely a method used to research the condition of natural objects or things as they are [9], [29], [30]. The subjects in this study were selected purposively, namely those who were considered to have relevant information regarding the focus of the research.

The subjects of the study include the Principal of MA Al-Amiriyyah Madrasah, Vice Principal for Public Relations (WKS Humas), Students, (Optional: education staff and parents as additional triangulation). The main instrument in this study is the researcher himself as a key instrument (human instrument), who plays a role in designing, implementing, interpreting, and drawing conclusions from the research process. To support data validity, auxiliary instruments are also used in the form of: Semi-structured interview guides, Observation sheets, Documentation formats.

The steps in implementing the research include the pre-research stage: Initial observation to the location, determining the focus of the research, and compiling instruments [31]-[32]. Data Collection Stage: In-depth interviews with the head of the madrasah, WKS Humas, and students. Participatory observation of madrasah activities, especially in the implementation of superior programs and school promotion activities. Documentation study of activity archives, brochures, madrasah social media, and other internal documents.

Data Processing and Analysis Stage Conducted during and after data collection. Reporting Stage: Compiling the findings in the form of a scientific report. Data analysis is carried out interactively using the Miles and Huberman model, which consists of: Data reduction, Data presentation, Conclusion drawing. To maintain the validity of the data, source and technique triangulation techniques are used, by comparing the results of interviews, observations, and documentation crosswise.

3 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Strategy for Building Brand Image at Madrasah Aliyah Al-Amiriyyah Blokagung

Every educational institution certainly needs a strategy used to manage all institutional activities to continue to develop, where the strategy must be adjusted to the situation and conditions of the community so that the strategy can run according to the goals that have been set [34]. Strategy is a systematic program plan that supports educational institutions in achieving their vision, mission, and goals that have been set [35]. Madrasah Aliyah Al-Amiriyyah Blokagung is a private school that has been accredited A, with that this educational institution has implemented several strategies to build a *brand image*, where this strategy is adjusted to the situation and conditions of the community so that the strategy that has been built can run according to the goals that have been adjusted by the educational institution.

In implementing the strategy, the Principal of Madrasah Aliyah Al-Amiriyyah Blokagung entrusted all matters of strategy implementation to the Vice Principal for Public Relations. This is done because Public Relations is a strategic component in educational institutions whose position is as a liaison between the institution and the public or society so that the goals of the institution and the demands and expectations of the

community can be achieved with the output produced. This will facilitate the implementation of *marketing strategies* in building the school's brand image.

Strategy is a fundamental step to achieve the final goal [6] [4] (Chen et al., 2022) . Every institution or institution, whether profit or non-profit, must have an ultimate goal [37] [38] . In achieving goals, institutions or institutions certainly mobilize all their abilities and resources and map their strengths by paying attention to existing weaknesses [39] [40] . So one form of public relations strategy in promoting the MA Al-Amiriyyah Blokagung educational institution will hold a MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) cooperation agreement with several other agencies, this begins with the process of planning program activities at MA Al-Amiriyyah. This was conveyed by Mr. Ahmad Fauzan as the principal as follows:

"The strategy carried out by educational institutions in building a brand image begins with achieving the school's goals first by achieving the vision and mission that have been set by the educational institution. After that, in building this brand image, Public Relations has an important task, Public Relations also approaches or communicates with the community, for example by conducting socialization and promotion and uploading positive activities from students. So one form of public relations strategy in promoting educational institutions is by creating and supporting activities carried out for the publication process of educational institutions. In this case, public relations functions to market or promote educational institutions. Public relations also carries out promotions every day such as promotions on social media, promotions are always carried out continuously to win the hearts of customers. "

The above is in accordance with what was conveyed by Mr. Imron as Public Relations of WKS Ma Al-Amiriyyah regarding the MOU (Memorandum of Understanding)

"One form of public relations strategy in promoting the educational institution of MA Al-Amiriyyah Blokagung will be to carry out a cooperation agreement of MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) with several other institutions such as with Iaida (Darussalam Islamic Institute) the management of the Darussalam Islamic Boarding School Blokagung, Bawaslu Banyumas Regency and BPS Banyumas Regency, this begins with the process of planning the program activities at MA Al-Amiriyyah.



Figure 1: MOU with Banyuwangi Bawaslu in the field
Election Monitoring Education and Student Leadership Training
Source: <http://maablokagung.sch.id/>

The promotion carried out is by making the social media platform needed to always *update* the activities carried out by MA AlAmiriyyah students, as well as on YouTube, Instagram, Facebook, TikTok and so on. For example, the Syafaatul Quran dormitory, which is facilitated electronically which is used to always *update* the activities carried out every day. As for the results of the interview conducted with the Head of Public Relations of Al-Amiriyyah Madrasah Aliyah, Mr. Ahmad Imron, the following is an excerpt from the interview:

"Brand image can provide benefits for educational institutions, just as this MoU is also part of the promotion because it shows that we have cooperation with several agencies so that our institution can be seen as a superior institution. For now, because it is time for social media, we are intensifying activities by uploading them on the madrasah's social media. Both Ig, FB, YouTube and TikTok, the second is by collaborating with all alumni, both senior and junior, to jointly promote our beloved Madrasah"



Figure 2: Social Media Overview
Al Amiriyyah Islamic High School

The advantage of intensifying activities uploaded on madrasah social media is that it is more effective and easier. In addition, another advantage obtained is the recognition of the Al-Amiriyyah Darussalam Blokagung Institution in the eyes of the community or the general public. The statement above is the same as that conveyed by the vice head of curriculum, Mrs. Rita Sugiarti. S.Pd, here is an excerpt from the interview:

"Building a brand image in educational institutions and updating every activity carried out by students, for example always making stories on social media about various activities carried out by students, such as uploading daily activities carried out by students of the Syafaatul Qur'an dormitory (Superior Tahfidz Dormitory) and also the Superior MIA Assaidiyyah Dormitory (Superior Science Dormitory), all of which can increase the attention of the wider community about the excellence of educational institutions. "

In addition to the above, Mrs. Rita also added several things that educational institutions do to build a good school image.

"In addition to uploading daily activities carried out by students of the Syafaatul Qur'an Dormitory (Excellent Tahfidz Dormitory) and also the Assaidiyyah MIA (Excellent Science Dormitory) students, our school also does several things in order to boost our school's brand image, for example we hold several seminars and competitions such as OSSAMA"



Figure 3: OSSAMA Ma Al-Amiriyyah

In the process of building a brand image at Madrasah Aliyah Al-Amiriyyah, this becomes the basis and guideline that becomes the goal. A good goal must be in accordance with the school's vision and mission. The stages carried out in building a brand image at Madrasah Aliyah Al-Amiriyyah which refer to the theory of Brand Image Building Strategy are as follows:

- a. Define the vision and targets for educational marketing.
- b. Determine the desired school quality targets.
- c. Monitor the implementation of targeted systems and programs in educational institutions.
- d. Doing promotions every day such as promotions on social media, promotions are always carried out continuously in order to win the hearts of customers.
- e. Providing a sense of security and comfort for all parties involved in the educational environment.
- f. Serving the needs of students and teachers in carrying out educational activities.

According to the principal, Mr. Ahmad Fauzan, strategies must be implemented in educational institutions, because strategies must be carried out gradually so that the results will be in accordance with expectations, in this case the principal always monitors the implementation of the system and programs that are run to achieve the targets desired by the educational institution. The brand image of an educational institution must be able to be developed and formed so that the institution has a positive image and can become a superior institution that is able to compete with other institutions.

In preparing the program plan for the formation and development of the brand image of the Al-Amiriyyah Madrasah Aliyah school, Public Relations took steps by analyzing the school's brand image that had been formed and attached to the community. The implementation of marketing strategies carried out by public relations in building the school's brand image was by utilizing the media in promoting and providing information to the community both through print media and social media. Then there was a superior program intended for students who wanted to memorize the Qur'an. Public Relations also held socialization to partner schools in terms of promotion, then partner schools were given a notification letter that new student admissions had begun. The last was the role of alumni who were still helping the Al-Amiriyyah Madrasah Aliyah in realizing a superior school. The strategy carried out by the Deputy for Public Relations in an effort to make the Public Relations program a success was to invite all school residents to take part in implementing the public relations program, considering that the components of the Public Relations program involved many lines in the school, so Public Relations could not work alone in an effort to achieve the success of the program. Without the support and assistance of all school residents, it is difficult to achieve the success of the public relations work program. In addition, Mr. Ahmad Imron also asked for suggestions and input from various parties for the progress of the ongoing public relations program. Based on the results of observations and in-depth interviews, Madrasah Aliyah Al-Amiriyyah Blokagung has implemented a structured and targeted communication and promotion strategy, the following are the results of the analysis of the institution's strategy data in building a brand image:

Table 1. Results of observations and in-depth interviews, Madrasah Aliyah Al-Amiriyyah Blokagung

Strategy Components	Form Implementation
Strategic Program Planning	MOU with Banyuwangi Election Supervisory Agency, IAIDA, Banyuwangi BPS
Marketing and Promotion via Social Media	Promotion active on YouTube, TikTok, Instagram, Facebook, WhatsApp Story, etc.
Brand Strengthening Through Activity	OSSAMA, Seminar, Training Leadership, Excellent Dormitory Activities
Internal and External Collaboration	Involve alumni, students, teachers and schools partner in promotion
Monitoring and Evaluation of Strategy	Head school monitor implementation of public relations periodic

3.2 Benefits of Brand Image in Ma Al-Amiriyyah Educational Institution

The implementation of marketing strategies in building a positive brand image at Madrasah Aliyah Al-Amiriyyah is carried out as an effort so that the school continues to exist even though it has private status but is not inferior to other public schools. By implementing this strategy, it is hoped that the institution will have many enthusiasts, then the reach of the institution will be wide because of the program in building a brand image. The brand image that has been formed will have an impact on the institution, namely increasing public interest, from the results of data obtained by researchers that there has been a significant increase in the number of students. It can be seen that the increase in the number of students is due to the marketing strategy implemented. This is in accordance with what was conveyed by Mr. Ahmad Fauzan as the principal as follows:

"Brand image has various benefits, one of which is that it can be a differentiator from competitors, a good and positive brand image is certainly a characteristic of the product being sold, it can also be used to increase the price of the product, yes, like the strategy carried out by public relations or educational institutions to get a brand,

having a superior religious program where the superior tahfidzul Qur'an is also a school based on Islamic boarding schools, well that means ours is good, so there will be many enthusiasts like that"

From the results of Mr. Ahmad Fauzan's presentation, it is clear that the brand image that has been formed will form public trust. Thus, the school will remain in demand and continue to be trusted by the public as a school that is able to produce a superior quality young generation. Mr. Ahmad Imron added that the implications of implementing a marketing strategy in an effort to build a school brand image are as follows:

"The impact of the brand image that is formed is the public's interest in Madrasah Aliyah Al-Amiriyyah, they will say Madrasah Aliyah Al-Amiriyyah is good, Madrasah Aliyah Al-Amiriyyah is big. Madrasah Aliyah Al-Amiriyyah will be a reference for the community. Although Madrasah Aliyah Al-Amiriyyah is not the main choice, at least Madrasah Aliyah Al-Amiriyyah will remain the next choice for the community."

Schools that want to advance and develop need a strategy to achieve it. By implementing a marketing strategy in an effort to build a positive brand image at Madrasah Aliyah Al-Amiriyyah, it can have an impact on the progress of the school, because the community is an important component in growing the school, without the community the school will not grow big. It is indeed not easy to build and develop a brand image, because the brand image is formed by the community. Schools can only try to assess the school as superior and qualified, which is proven by a good school curriculum.

From the data obtained through interviews and observations, it can be interpreted that the marketing strategy implemented by MA Al-Amiriyyah is not only promotional in nature, but has been integrated into the core identity of the institution, namely through Islamic values, the superior tahfidzul Qur'an program, and the pesantren approach. Brand image is formed No only by internal claims, but by beliefs and perceptions public. Marketing strategy become effective Because contextualized with need social society (for example, the importance of religious education, quality education, and closeness emotional with Islamic boarding school). Improvement amount student No solely consequence trend, but results from the strategy that builds superiority competitive institution. This matter show that marketing strategy in effective education is based on values and experiences real, not just visuals or slogans.

Table 2. Results of previous research

Study	Key Findings	Compliance
Indriani (2020)	Consistent promotional strategy increase public awareness to school private	✓ Consistent: MA Al- Amiriyyah utilizing social media and flagship programs in a way sustainable
The Last Supper (2021)	School brand image formed strong moment There is support mark religious	✓ Relevant: MA Al- Amiriyyah emphasize Islamic boarding school and tahfidz as differentiator main
The Last Supper (2019)	Strong brand image make school reference although No choice main	✓ In harmony: MA Al- Amiriyyah still become reference Because image spiritual and academic excellence

The combined analysis strengthens that local value-based marketing strategies and spirituality provide significant competitive advantages for private schools. This study presents several novelties, namely; Combining marketing strategies conventional (cooperation) institutional, offline promotion) with modern digital strategies (social media, content activity santri), Shows that brand image can formed although institution No choice main, during there is public trust and value highlighted advantages in a way Consistent and also Provide understanding that the public relations strategy in education No only question communication, but also strategic positioning in public local.

4 CONCLUSION

Based on research data through observations and interviews in the field, the author can conclude several things as follows:

Strategy is very important for the sustainability of an organization, therefore to achieve goals and objectives effectively and efficiently, an organization must have the right strategy in dealing with everything that becomes a problem and obstacle that comes. An educational institution or school is an organization engaged in the service sector that requires a strategy in order to achieve organizational goals, namely how to achieve customer satisfaction. Schools are institutions with neatly organized organizations and all their activities are planned deliberately.

Benefits of *Brand Image* in Educational Institutions

Brands have benefits for institutions and society, for institutions brands have an important role, brand benefits for institutions that is:

The benefits that arise from the formation of a school brand image are an increase in the number of students who register or the institution is able to maintain the number of its students each year.

As a result of the brand image that has been formed, the reach of the institution has also become wider. This is due to the form of increased trust in Madrasah Aliyah Al-Amiriyyah, if many have proven the truth of the quality of the institution, it will attract the interest of other consumers to choose the institution. A smart society is a society that chooses quality educational institutions. Madrasah Aliyah Al-Amiriyyah is famous for its private Islamic boarding school, in addition to having many excellent programs, it is also a school that prioritizes Islamic values that are inserted in every learning activity. Thus, consumers will make Madrasah Aliyah Al-Amiriyyah one of the sources of reference in choosing the right school for their children.

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