

External Communication Strategies in Supporting School Reputation within Educational Institutions

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the external communication strategy implemented by Ma'had Aly Alfurqon to support and improve the school's reputation in the community through program planning, organizational formation, program implementation, and activity evaluation. This study uses a qualitative approach with descriptive methods through observation, interviews, and documentation techniques. The results of the study indicate that the external communication strategy is carried out through program planning that is prepared based on the needs of the institution and the development of digital media. The formation of public relations and multimedia organizations is carried out to increase the effectiveness of publications and information dissemination to the community. Program implementation is realized through the use of social media, educational institution outreach to various schools, holding seminars, daurah, general studies, community service, and social and da'wah activities. These programs aim to build a positive image of the institution and improve relations with the community. Program evaluations are conducted periodically to assess the effectiveness of activities and identify various obstacles in their implementation.

Keywords : Public Relations, Communication, Multimedia, Reputation, Strategy

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis strategi komunikasi eksternal yang diterapkan Ma'had Aly Alfurqon dalam menunjang dan meningkatkan reputasi sekolah di tengah masyarakat melalui perencanaan program, pembentukan organisasi, implementasi program, serta evaluasi kegiatan. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan metode deskriptif melalui teknik observasi, wawancara, dan dokumentasi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa strategi komunikasi eksternal dilakukan melalui perencanaan program yang disusun berdasarkan kebutuhan lembaga dan perkembangan media digital. Pembentukan organisasi humas dan multimedia dilakukan untuk meningkatkan efektivitas publikasi dan penyebaran informasi kepada masyarakat. Implementasi program diwujudkan melalui pemanfaatan media sosial, sosialisasi lembaga pendidikan ke berbagai sekolah, penyelenggaraan seminar, dauroh, kajian umum, bakti sosial, serta kegiatan sosial kemasyarakatan dan dakwah. Program-program tersebut

bertujuan membangun citra positif lembaga dan meningkatkan hubungan dengan masyarakat. Evaluasi program dilakukan secara berkala untuk menilai efektivitas kegiatan dan mengidentifikasi berbagai kendala dalam pelaksanaannya.

Kata Kunci: Humas, Komunikasi, Multimedia, Reputasi, Strategi

INTRODUCTION

Educational science plays a pivotal role in shaping society by emphasizing individual and social dimensions, as well as various components that underpin the educational process. At the micro level, education takes place within relatively limited contexts and involves interactions among individuals and small groups, including peer relationships, teacher–student interactions involving individual learners or small groups, and familial relationships among spouses, parents and children, as well as other family members. Such micro-level education is essential for promoting the optimal development of individuals, allowing their inherent potentials to be nurtured and realized in a comprehensive and holistic manner.¹

Communication strategy refers to a deliberately planned, systematic, and continuous process implemented through a tactical approach. This process encompasses an understanding of the target audience, the selection of the most effective media or communication channels, and the development and dissemination of ideas and perspectives through the designated channels. Consequently, communication strategy functions not only as a mechanism for message transmission but also as a means of influencing and sustaining specific patterns of behavior. Therefore, effective and well-structured planning is essential to achieve the desired communication objectives.² The reputation of an educational institution constitutes a crucial element that contributes to the confidence of parents, students, and other stakeholders. Contemporary educational institutions are expected to analyze and respond to the needs of society as their primary stakeholders while continuously encouraging community participation in educational management processes.

Institutions with strong and positive reputations tend to be more successful in attracting prospective students, establishing collaborations with external

¹ Rahmat Hidayat Abdillah, *Buku Ilmu Pendidikan Rahmat Hidayat & Abdillah*, 2019.

² Soraya Ratna Pratiwi, dkk, 'Strategi Komunikasi Dalam Membangun Awareness Wisata Halal Di Kota Bandung', *Jurnal Kajian Komunikasi*, 6.1 (2018), 78 <<https://doi.org/10.24198/jkk.v6i1.12985>>.

partners, and maintaining public loyalty. To achieve such a reputation, an effective external communication strategy is essential. External communication encompasses all forms of interaction and information dissemination conducted by educational institutions toward parties outside the organization, including parents, the broader community, mass media, and governmental agencies. An appropriate communication strategy enables schools to effectively communicate their vision, mission, and flagship programs, thereby fostering positive public perceptions.

Furthermore, educational institutions that successfully establish favorable reputations generally possess clear and well-directed external communication strategies. They utilize a variety of communication channels, both conventional and digital, to disseminate information to the public. These channels may include social media platforms, official school websites, mass media publications, and community engagement activities. Consistent and professional communication practices have been proven to enhance public trust while strengthening the institution's position as a high-quality educational provider.

School reputation also serves as a significant differentiating factor within the increasingly competitive educational landscape. As parents and prospective students are presented with a growing number of educational options, both public and private, they tend to select institutions characterized by positive reputations, conducive learning environments, and proven service quality. A strong reputation not only supports institutional sustainability but also enhances competitiveness at both local and national levels. Consequently, educational institutions must continuously innovate in developing external communication strategies that align with public needs and technological advancements.

However, empirical realities indicate that not all schools are capable of managing external communication effectively. Some institutions remain primarily focused on internal aspects such as teaching and learning processes, curriculum management, and human resource development, while paying insufficient attention to public communication. As a result, the actual quality and achievements of these institutions are not fully recognized by society. This situation may hinder the development of institutional reputation and place such schools at a disadvantage compared to institutions that strategically utilize external communication.

Based on these considerations, this study seeks to examine the external

communication strategies implemented by Ma'had Aly Al-Furqon in its efforts to enhance institutional reputation. The research is motivated by the significance of external communication as a means of fostering positive relationships between educational institutions and society, while simultaneously serving as a mechanism for building a positive image and strengthening public trust.

Through this study, a comprehensive understanding is expected regarding the forms of external communication strategies employed by Ma'had Aly Al-Furqon, including publication media, community engagement approaches, and other communication practices that contribute to institutional reputation enhancement. Additionally, this research aims to identify supporting and inhibiting factors influencing the implementation of external communication strategies, thereby assessing their effectiveness in strengthening institutional reputation amidst increasing competition and rapidly evolving information environments. The findings are expected to contribute both theoretically and practically, particularly in the development of external communication strategies within Islamic educational institutions, while also serving as a reference and evaluative resource for other educational organizations seeking to establish and sustain their reputations.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study adopted a qualitative research approach, which is particularly appropriate for addressing complex research problems. Qualitative inquiry offers significant advantages, as it focuses not only on the outcomes of the investigation but also on the research process itself. As a descriptive approach, qualitative research employs analytical frameworks to address the research questions. Furthermore, its emphasis on understanding processes and uncovering meanings facilitates the generation of rich and comprehensive data while providing opportunities for the emergence of new theoretical insights.³ Data were collected through observation, interviews, and documentation techniques. Sugiyono classifies interviews into three types: structured interviews, semi-structured interviews, and unstructured interviews. In this study, semi-structured and

³ Marinu Waruwu, 'Pendekatan Penelitian Kualitatif: Konsep, Prosedur, Kelebihan Dan Peran Di Bidang Pendidikan', *Afeksi: Jurnal Penelitian Dan Evaluasi Pendidikan*, 5.2 (2024), 198–211 <<https://doi.org/10.59698/afeksi.v5i2.236>>.

unstructured interviews were utilized to obtain preliminary and in-depth information regarding the implementation of external communication strategies in enhancing the reputation of Ma'had Aly Al-Furqon. The research participants served as key informants and consisted of the institution's director, the head of public relations, and the head of the multimedia division. These informants were selected because of their direct involvement in planning, implementing, and evaluating the institution's external communication activities. The study was conducted at Ma'had Aly Al-Furqon, located in Klebakan, RT 01/RW 14, Kawungan, Blondo Village, Mungkid District, Magelang Regency, Central Java, Indonesia (56512).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

In this research, several strategies were found in efforts to build reputation or quality in educational institutions, namely:

External Communication Strategies in Supporting School Reputation at Ma'had Aly Al-Furqon

Some of the steps recorded in determining a strategy to build the reputation of an educational institution include:

1. Establishment of public relations objectives and programs

In the midst of the rapid advancement of information flows and the increasingly competitive landscape among educational institutions, reputation has emerged as a valuable intangible asset that is crucial to the sustainability and long-term development of educational organizations. Consequently, public relations (PR) functions assume a strategic role in shaping, maintaining, and reinforcing a positive institutional image among the public. Furthermore, the effective implementation of communication and public relations strategies contributes to strengthening institutional competitiveness, particularly by attracting prospective students, sustaining support from diverse stakeholders, and fostering public confidence in educational institutions.⁴

⁴ Zuraini, Akmal, Haryati Anggil Risnawati, 'Strategi Manajemen Humas Dalam Membangun Citra Organisasi', *Jrpp*, 6.1 (2023), 4139–42

In public relations management, planning constitutes the initial stage before determining policies, programs, and organizational activities. Planning functions as a blueprint that guides the implementation of institutional programs and activities. Effective planning enables institutions to formulate communication strategies that are aligned with organizational goals and public needs.

Public relations (PR) constitutes a strategic function that plays a vital role in the process of disseminating information and facilitating the reciprocal exchange of ideas between organizations and the wider community. The existence of public relations is an essential aspect in supporting the effectiveness of organizational management, including within educational institutions. In practice, public relations serves as a means of establishing effective, participatory, and sustainable communication with the community in order to foster harmonious relationships and gain support for various policies and programs implemented by the institution. Through intensive and continuous communication, educational institutions can strengthen public trust and enhance community participation in supporting the achievement of institutional goals, vision, and mission more effectively. Therefore, public relations functions not only as a medium for information dissemination but also as a crucial factor in ensuring the successful implementation of institutional programs and in promoting a positive image of educational institutions.⁵

The objectives of public relations serve as important indicators in building and enhancing institutional reputation. The vision of the Public Relations Division of Ma'had Aly Al-Furqon is *“to become a professional, Islamic, communicative, and integrity-based public relations center in developing the image of Ma'had Aly Al-Furqon Magelang as an excellent and trustworthy educational institution within society.”* To achieve this vision, the institution formulates several missions, including: (1) establishing effective and harmonious communication, (2) managing information professionally and accurately, (3) strengthening the institutional image through publication

<<https://jurnal.ustjogja.ac.id/index.php/mmp/article/view/13574>>.

⁵ Idarwati Ningsih, . Arman, and . Harnalia, 'Strategi Manajemen Humas Dalam Meningkatkan Citra Sekolah Di SMPN 1 Tellu Siattinge', *Jurnal Mappesona*, 5.1 (2022), 11–21 <<https://doi.org/10.30863/mappesona.v5i1.2495>>.

activities, and (4) developing partnerships with communities and other institutions.

In preparing public relations programs, Ma'had Aly Al-Furqon adopts a collaborative planning approach involving institutional leaders, the public relations division, the multimedia division, and teaching staff. Through coordination and discussion, the institution formulates communication programs that are aligned with its vision, mission, and strategic objectives. The outcomes of these coordination activities serve as references for determining future public relations programs and activities.

The formulation of public relations programs reflects the implementation of public relations management within educational institutions. Since each institution possesses unique characteristics, visions, missions, and social environments, public relations programs must be designed according to the specific context and needs of the institution rather than being implemented uniformly. Based on the research findings, the public relations programs of Ma'had Aly Al-Furqon include: (1) disseminating information to the community and students' parents through various communication media to foster understanding, trust, and support for institutional programs; (2) conducting outreach activities to communities and schools as a means of institutional promotion; (3) publishing institutional activities through social media platforms; and (4) documenting institutional activities in collaboration with the multimedia division.

2. Organization of the public relations and multimedia division

Organizing is the process of structuring, grouping, and arranging various work activities within an organization in order to achieve predetermined objectives. Through this process, each individual within the organization is assigned clear divisions of tasks, authority, and responsibilities, so that work can be carried out in a directed and coordinated manner. The clarity of this organizational structure serves as an important foundation for ensuring the effectiveness of program implementation within the organization. The existence of human resource management (HRM) within an organization plays a crucial role in optimizing employees' contributions to support the effective and sustainable achievement of organizational goals.

Human resource management encompasses not only the administration of personnel but also various strategic efforts aimed at enhancing employees' competencies, productivity, and performance in order to create added value for the organization.⁶

The significance of human resources can be understood from the fact that all organizational activities fundamentally depend on individuals who plan, manage, and control the resources available to the organization. Consequently, the success of an organization in achieving its vision, mission, and objectives is largely determined by the quality of its human resources. In an increasingly dynamic and competitive environment, organizations are required to possess competent, professional, and adaptable human resources capable of responding to various changes. High-quality human resources constitute a strategic asset that enables organizations to establish competitive advantages and enhance their ability to cope with intense competition. Therefore, organizations that effectively manage and develop their human resources are more likely to sustain their existence, achieve organizational growth, and maintain long-term competitiveness. In this regard, human resource management serves as a key determinant of organizational success in accomplishing both short-term and long-term objectives.

Table 1.1 Organizational Structure of the Public Relations and Multimedia Division of Ma'had Aly Al-Furqon

| | |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Person in Charge: | Martin Mawardi, S.Pd., M.Pd. |
| Head of Public Relations Division: | Bilad Al Islah, B.A |
| Public Relations Member: | Ustadz Khairul, Lc. |
| Multimedia Division: | Muhammad Syarif Hermawan |

The organizing of the public relations and multimedia division at Ma'had Aly Al-Furqon is strengthened through the establishment of a dedicated organizational structure that specifically manages public relations and multimedia in a systematic manner. The formation of this structure is carried out as a strategic step to support the achievement of institutional objectives as well

⁶ Nurul Hidayati Murtafiah and others, 'Konsep Dasar Struktur Organisasi', *Jurnal Penelitian Progresif*, 3.1 (2023), 1–8 <<https://doi.org/10.61992/jpp.v3i1.97>>.

as to facilitate the implementation of various planned programs and activities. Through a clear division of tasks and responsibilities, each member is able to perform their respective functions more effectively and in a well-coordinated manner. The existence of the public relations and multimedia division plays an important role in supporting the institution's communication processes, both internal and external communication.

3. Implementation of public relations and multimedia programs

The implementation of public relations and multimedia programs at Ma'had Aly Al-Furqon is primarily carried out through publication activities. Based on the research findings, various institutional activities are regularly published, including teaching and learning activities, partnership programs, new student admissions, student organization activities, community service programs, institutional outreach initiatives, Ramadan events, Eid al-Adha activities, student achievements, and other institutional programs.

Publication serves as one of the primary strategies employed by the Public Relations and Multimedia Division to enhance the institution's reputation. Within the context of educational communication management, publication functions as a means of disseminating information, shaping positive public perceptions, strengthening public trust, and introducing institutional programs and achievements to wider audience accordance with institutional communication needs and technological developments. These activities are not limited to information dissemination but also aim to establish effective relationships between the institution and its stakeholders. The rapid advancement of information and communication technology has encouraged the institution to adopt digital communication strategies. Consequently, the Public Relations and Multimedia Division utilizes various digital platforms to ensure broader and more efficient dissemination of information. These platforms include Instagram, WhatsApp, Facebook, TikTok, YouTube, and the institution's official website.

a. Instagram

Instagram has become an important digital marketing platform that enhances brand awareness, increases consumer engagement, and influences purchasing behavior. Its interactive features and wide reach help businesses

build stronger audience relationships and improve visibility, making it a strategic tool for brand development and competitiveness in the digital era.⁷ Instagram, developed by Kevin Systrom and Mike Krieger, began as a photo and video sharing application and has evolved into a major social media platform. Its interactive features such as likes, comments, and content sharing support communication and community building, making it widely used for personal interaction as well as marketing and digital branding.⁸

b. WhatsApp

WhatsApp is an instant messaging application that enables real-time communication through internet connectivity, allowing users to exchange messages, documents, images, videos, and voice notes efficiently and at low cost. Its interactive features and ease of use have made it a widely adopted platform for personal, educational, business, and organizational communication in the digital era.⁹

c. Facebook

According to its official statement, more than three billion people worldwide utilize Facebook products as a means of exchanging ideas, offering assistance, and contributing to broader societal benefits. Facebook is guided by several fundamental principles, namely serving people from diverse backgrounds, promoting economic opportunities, empowering individuals by providing them with a voice, ensuring user safety, fostering social connections and communities, and safeguarding users' privacy. These principles reflect the platform's commitment to facilitating communication and creating positive social impact on a global scale.¹⁰

d. Tiktok

Introduced by ByteDance in 2016, TikTok has become one of the most

⁷ Putu Suweca Nata Udayana, 'Dampak Strategi Pemasaran Terhadap Minat Beli Menggunakan Media Sosial Instagram: Tinjauan Literatur', *INSPIRE : Journal of Culinary, Hospitality, Digital & Creative Arts and Event*, 2.1 (2024), 20–30 <<https://doi.org/10.46837/inspire.v2i1.46>>.

⁸ R. Prayogo and R. Febrianita, 'Undip E-Journal System', *Jurnal Sistem Informasi*, 14.1 (2018), 1–10.

⁹ Ilmu Komunikasi and others, 'IA Ratnamulyani 2 , AA Kusumadinata 3 123', 4.2 (2018), 63–70.

¹⁰ Hervina Nathasya, 'No TitleELENH', *Edu Research Indonesian Institute For Corporate Learning And Studies (IICLS)*, 5.1 (2024), 70–80.

popular social media platforms worldwide. Its success is driven by short-form video content combined with creative features such as filters, visual effects, and music, which enhance user engagement and contribute to its growing influence in digital communication..¹¹

e. Youtube

YouTube has developed into a major digital platform alongside advances in internet technology that enable users to create, share, and access content interactively. Its accessibility, diverse features, and broad user base have made it widely popular for communication, education, marketing, and information dissemination. As a result, YouTube plays a significant role in shaping social interaction, knowledge sharing, and the growth of the digital creative economy..¹²

f. Website

A web-based information system serves as a digital platform that integrates data management processes, including input, processing, storage, and dissemination of information, thereby enhancing efficiency, accuracy, and accessibility. The increasing reliance on such systems across various sectors highlights their role in supporting organizational performance and digital transformation. Complementing these efforts, Ma'had Aly Al-Furqon employs Meta Ads as a targeted digital advertising tool to promote its academic programs and institutional activities to broader audiences. This strategy has strengthened public awareness of the institution and contributed to a notable rise in student enrollment, enabling the institution to reach its 2026 admission targets more effectively than in previous years..¹³

The penetration of social media usage in Indonesia has shown a substantial upward trend over recent years. Data illustrating the number of

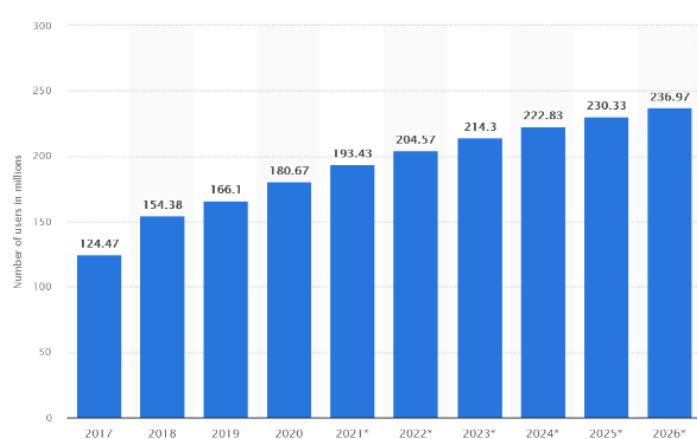
¹¹ Thomas Ari Wicaksono and others, 'The Impact of TikTok Social Media on Users: A Neuropsychological Perspective', *Psikostudia: Jurnal Psikologi*, 13.3 (2024), 455 <<https://doi.org/10.30872/psikostudia.v13i3.15920>>.

¹² Hening Kusumaningrum and others, 'Optimalisasi Media Youtube Sebagai Media Pembelajaran Daring', *SALIHA | Jurnal Pendidikan & Agama Islam*, 2019, 92–114.

¹³ M Nurkhozin, Azhar Basir, and M Aznar Abdillah, 'Sistem Informasi Sekolah Berbasis Web Sebagai Media Promosi Di SMK Muhammadiyah 2 Paguyangan', *Jurnal Teknik Informatika Dan Sistem Informasi (JURTISI)*, 2.2 (2022), 96–106.

social media users in Indonesia between 2017 and 2026 (Nurhayati-Wolff, 2021) are presented in Figure 1.2. It was estimated that Indonesia had approximately 193.43 million social media users in 2021, and this number is projected to increase significantly to 236.97 million by 2026. This trend reflects the rapid expansion of social media adoption and underscores its growing role in communication, information exchange, and various social activities within Indonesian society.¹⁴

Table 1.2. Number of Social Media Users in Indonesia



4. Program work evaluation

Program work evaluation is a systematic process conducted to assess the level of success in implementing a program based on predetermined objectives, planning, and indicators. In the context of educational institutions or organizations, program evaluation plays a crucial role as a form of supervision and control over all implemented activities to ensure they remain aligned with the institution's vision, mission, and targeted goals.

Through evaluation activities, an institution can determine the extent of the effectiveness and efficiency of implemented programs, identify various obstacles or challenges encountered during the implementation process, and discover solutions and improvement measures to enhance program quality in the following period. In addition, program evaluation also serves as a means of reflection and a basis for strategic decision-making, ensuring that each program is not merely administrative in nature but also provides a meaningful positive impact on institutional development and societal needs. With periodic and

¹⁴ Leon A Abdillah, *Peranan Media Sosial Modern*, 2022 <www.bening-mediapublishing.com>.

well-structured evaluation, an institution will more easily maintain performance quality, improve professionalism, and build public trust.

Ma'had Aly Al-Furqon conducts program evaluation activities on a regular basis, at least once a month, and each division is assigned to prepare a report of its work outcomes. In the implementation of each activity, various factors influence the level of success in achieving predetermined goals. These factors may originate from both internal and external aspects that play an important role in determining the effectiveness of program implementation. In general, these factors are categorized into two groups, namely supporting factors and inhibiting factors. Based on the researcher's findings, the inhibiting factors in improving the school's reputation at Ma'had Aly Al-Furqon are as follows:

- a. Limited Human Resources (HR) and Lack of Financial Support
- b. Time Allocation Between Academic Responsibilities and Public Relations and Multimedia Duties
- c. Challenges in Building Effective Communication with the Community

Community Service Programs as a Strategy to Enhance Institutional Reputation

In addition to implementing social media-based branding strategies, conducting institutional outreach to various schools, and introducing the institution to surrounding communities, Ma'had Aly Al-Furqon has developed several strategic programs aimed at strengthening its reputation and enhancing its positive image among the wider public. These efforts are realized through the organization of various academic and community-oriented activities, including *dauroh* (Islamic training programs), seminars, public lectures, and other educational forums that actively involve external participants and stakeholders.

The implementation of these programs involves the participation of lecturers, teachers, and students (*mahasantri*) of Ma'had Aly Al-Furqon. These initiatives are not only intended to promote the institution's existence and educational services but also to establish intellectual, social, and religious relationships between the institution and the broader community. Through such activities, the institution seeks to strengthen public engagement and foster a positive

perception among community members.

Furthermore, Ma'had Aly Al-Furqon demonstrates its commitment to community development through active involvement in various social and humanitarian activities. These programs include social service initiatives, community-based da'wah activities through the *Da'i Ramadhan* program, the implementation of the *Rufidz Kids* program, and collaborative partnerships with organizations and communities that share similar visions and objectives.

These activities constitute an integral part of the institution's strategy to strengthen its reputation and enhance its institutional image in a sustainable manner. Through continuous engagement with society, Ma'had Aly Al-Furqon aims to cultivate public trust, sympathy, and support. As a result, the institution is perceived not merely as a formal educational institution but also as a socially responsible organization that contributes meaningfully to education, Islamic propagation (*da'wah*), and community empowerment.

The implementation of community service and da'wah programs at Ma'had Aly Al-Furqon is grounded in Islamic teachings as prescribed in the Holy Qur'an. These religious principles serve as the foundation for the institution's efforts to promote social responsibility and community engagement.

Allah the Almighty states:

كُنْتُمْ خَيْرَ أُمَّةٍ أُخْرِجَتْ لِلنَّاسِ تَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَنَهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَتُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَلَوْ آمَنَ أَهْلُ الْكِتَابِ لَكَانَ خَيْرًا لَهُمْ مِنْهُمُ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَأَكْثَرُهُمُ الْفَاسِقُونَ

“You are the best nation produced [as an example] for mankind. You enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong and believe in Allah.” (Qur'an, Surah Ali 'Imran, :110)

Allah also states:

وَمَنْ أَحْسَنُ قَوْلًا مِّمَّنْ دَعَا إِلَى اللَّهِ وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا وَقَالَ إِنِّي مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ

“And who is better in speech than one who invites to Allah, does righteousness, and says, ‘Indeed, I am of the Muslims.’” (Qur'an, Surah Fussilat, 41:33)

Furthermore, Allah commands:

وَأْمُرْ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَانْهَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَأَصْبِرْ عَلَىٰ مَا أَصَابَكَ إِنَّ ذَٰلِكَ مِنْ عَزْمِ الْأُمُورِ

“And enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong and be patient over what befalls

you. Indeed, that is of the matters requiring determination.” (Qur'an, Surah Luqman :17)

These Qur'anic teachings provide a philosophical and spiritual foundation for the institution's community engagement programs. Through the implementation of educational, social, and da'wah activities, Ma'had Aly Al- Furqon seeks to fulfill its mission of serving society while simultaneously strengthening its institutional reputation. The active participation of the institution in addressing community needs contributes significantly to the development of a positive institutional image and reinforces public trust in the institution.

The findings indicate that community service programs serve not only as a medium for social contribution but also as an effective external communication strategy. Through direct interaction with community members, the institution is able to establish stronger relationships, enhance public awareness of its educational mission, and foster a favorable reputation among stakeholders. Consequently, community engagement activities become an essential component of the institution's overall strategy for sustaining and enhancing its reputation.

Da'wah refers to the process of communicating and disseminating Islamic teachings aimed at encouraging individuals and communities to understand, internalize, and practice Islamic values in their daily lives. From an Islamic perspective, da'wah is not merely regarded as an activity of religious propagation but also as a process of social transformation oriented toward improving the quality of human life. The values embodied in Islamic da'wah are derived from the Qur'an and the Hadith, which serve as the primary foundations for promoting humanity, morality, and the advancement of civilization.

Substantively, Islamic da'wah seeks to establish a balanced life encompassing both spiritual and social dimensions, thereby guiding human beings toward happiness, prosperity, and well-being in this world and the hereafter. Consequently, da'wah functions not only as a medium for conveying religious messages but also as an instrument for moral development, the reinforcement of humanitarian values, and the cultivation of civilization based on Islamic principles.

In line with the perspective of Ibnu Taimiyah, da'wah is understood as a call to believe in Allah and in the teachings conveyed by His messengers, to affirm the truth of the messages they delivered, and to obey His commands. Therefore, da'wah

encompasses a broad scope that extends beyond matters of faith to include adherence to Islamic law and the cultivation of conduct consistent with Islamic values. In the context of contemporary society, da'wah plays a strategic role in fostering social harmony, strengthening morality, and contributing to the development of a civilization grounded in justice, humanity, and collective welfare.¹⁵

Table 1.3 Documentation of Social Activities of Ma'had Aly Al-Furqon in Collaboration with the Community



The study results indicate that Community Service Programs are essential in strengthening and improving the reputation of higher education institutions. These programs go beyond academic obligations, serving as a way for institutions to demonstrate their social responsibility and engagement with the community. Through activities such as training sessions, educational initiatives, and community support, institutions are able to show their active role in addressing social challenges. This involvement helps build a positive image and enhances public perceptions of the institution's credibility and quality.

Furthermore, the findings suggest that sharing information about these activities through social media and other communication platforms contributes to a stronger institutional image. Increased visibility of such programs leads to greater public awareness and trust. Overall, Community Service Programs can be seen as an effective approach to enhancing institutional reputation, particularly when they are carried out consistently, aligned with community needs, and supported by effective communication strategies.

¹⁵ Asyaari, Waqiatus Zahroh, and Nasiruddin Nasiruddin, 'Pentingnya Media Dakwah Terhadap Kelancaran Dakwah Di Masjid Sumber Laga, Waru, Pamekasan', *Etika: Journal of Islamic Communication and Broadcasting Science*, 1.1 (2022), 13–20 <<https://jurnalsains.id/index.php/etika/article/view/18/19>>.

CONCLUSION

This research concludes that the external communication strategy of Ma'had Aly Al-Furqon, carried out through structured stages of planning, organizing, implementation, and evaluation, and supported by an organized public relations system, has a strong impact on improving institutional reputation and public trust. The strategic use of digital platforms, including Instagram, WhatsApp, Facebook, TikTok, YouTube, the institutional website, and Meta Ads, has broadened the institution's outreach and strengthened its visibility in the digital space. Moreover, community service and da'wah initiatives function as key tools in fostering positive relationships with stakeholders while reinforcing the institution's social responsibility. Continuous engagement with the community has helped the institution build a favorable image and strengthen its overall reputation. Nevertheless, the study also highlights several challenges, such as limited human resources, inadequate financial resources, difficulties in balancing academic and public relations tasks, and communication challenges with diverse community groups. In general, the findings indicate that the combination of strategic communication management, digital media use, and community engagement significantly contributes to enhancing institutional reputation. Therefore, external communication should be considered a strategic asset for Islamic higher education institutions to improve competitiveness, strengthen stakeholder relations, and sustain public trust in the digital era.

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