

The Role of Public Relations and the Madrasah Committee in Achieving Professional, Accountable, and Transparent Governance

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to explore the Role of Public Relations and the Madrasah Committee toward professional, accountable, and transparent governance at MA Islamiyah Syafiiyah. The research shows that the Public Relations of MA Islamiyah Syafiiyah Paiton carries out four strategic roles: as a channel for operational information (informant), a communication bridge between the madrasah principal and the committee (mediator), a mobilizer of community participation (facilitator), and an institution image builder (promoter). Through the use of digital media and face-to-face forums, Public Relations has succeeded in promoting transparency in institutional financial planning, strengthening public accountability, and reducing external skepticism. The synergistic cooperation between Public Relations and the Madrasah Committee has proven to be the key to successfully implementing a healthy and credible madrasah-based management. However, there are still challenges in the form of limited participation by some parents and the need to enhance the committee's management capacity. With professional management, the committee can boost public trust and support the continuous improvement of the madrasa's quality.

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INTRODUCTION

Islamic education in Indonesia plays a vital role in shaping the character of the nation and educating people's lives.(Andersson, 2024) Madrasahs, as one of the Islamic educational institutions, have undergone a significant transformation from traditional educational institutions to competitive modern institutions. In the era of educational autonomy and decentralization of management, community involvement is the main key to the success of education implementation. Based on

Permendikbud Number 75 of 2016 concerning School Committees, Regulation of the Minister of Religion (PMA) Number 16 of 2020 concerning Madrasah Committees is mandated as a representation of community participation in improving the quality of educational services. When the community becomes an indicator of market satisfaction with our products, the role of public relations and committees is very urgent as a bridge between schools and communities. From the perspective of customers, organizations need to first determine the market segments and customers that are targets for the organization or Business entity. (Baharun, 2017).

The function of public relations itself cannot be separated from public opinion, because one of the functions of public relations is to create public opinion that has good will and participation. The performance of public relations in an organization usually helps in running an organization's program to achieve specific goals set by the management. Additionally, public relations also play an important role in building and providing information both internally and externally. From an external perspective, public relations usually play a role in providing information about the organization's policies, responding to news that could harm the organization, and informing the public about various policies. The public relations strategies developed by a PR person can build trust with the public, not just to get a positive image. But the positive image that has been built needs to be maintained, because it affects the reputation of the organization. Once public trust fades due to a negative reputation, it will be hard for the government to regain that trust. (Abrori, 2018)

MA Islamiyah Syafiiyah is one of the private madrasahs under a pesantren that continuously strives to improve the quality of its education. In managing an effective educational institution, the demand for good governance, which includes professionalism, accountability, and transparency, is non-negotiable. Good governance in a madrasah doesn't only rely on the head of the school and the teachers, but is also highly influenced by the skill of a public relations officer in building synergy with the madrasah committee as a strategic partner to gain a positive image and public trust. At this institution, public trust has been increasing sharply every year, which can be seen from both its quantity and quality.

Maintaining a good relationship with customers (keeping close to the customer) is an obligation and a necessity because educational organizations want customer satisfaction, so it is very important to maintain a good relationship with customers, and this is where the important role of public relations and the role of the madrasah committee are really needed. (Edward Sallis, 2014) We often find that in some institutions, the role of the madrasah committee gets stuck in just ceremonial functions or merely legitimizing fundraising without proper oversight and transparency. Therefore, an in-depth study on how the public relations and the madrasah committee at MA Islamiyah Syafiiyah carry out their functions in creating professional, accountable, and transparent governance is very important to research and document.

METHODS

This study employed a qualitative approach using a case study design to examine the role of public relations and the madrasah committee in promoting professional, accountable, and transparent governance at MA Islamiyah Syafiiyah. A qualitative approach was considered appropriate because the study aimed to explore the experiences, perceptions, practices, and interactions of institutional actors involved in madrasah governance. The case study design enabled an in-depth investigation of how public relations and the madrasah committee contribute to decision-making, communication, stakeholder participation, accountability, and transparency within the institutional context.

Research Setting and Participants

The research was conducted at MA Islamiyah Syafiiyah, which was purposively selected because of its governance practices involving public relations and the madrasah committee. Research participants were selected through purposive sampling based on their knowledge, responsibilities, and direct involvement in institutional governance. The participants included the madrasah principal, public relations coordinator, madrasah committee members, vice principals, teachers, administrative staff, and selected representatives of parents or other relevant stakeholders. The diversity of participants allowed the study to capture different perspectives regarding communication, participation, supervision, accountability, and transparency.

Data Collection Techniques

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, non-participant observations, and document analysis. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to explore the roles and responsibilities of public relations personnel and the madrasah committee, particularly in communicating institutional policies, facilitating stakeholder participation, managing public information, supporting decision-making, and monitoring institutional programs. Non-participant observations were conducted to examine actual governance practices, including meetings, communication activities, committee involvement, stakeholder interactions, and mechanisms for disseminating institutional information. Document analysis was used to examine relevant institutional documents, such as organizational structures, committee work programs, meeting minutes, activity reports, financial accountability documents, public information materials, strategic plans, and other governance-related records.

Research Focus

The research focused on four interconnected dimensions of governance: Professional governance, examining the extent to which public relations and the madrasah committee contribute to systematic, ethical, and competent institutional management. Accountable governance, examining mechanisms for responsibility, reporting, supervision, and evaluation of madrasah programs. Transparent governance, examining the openness of institutional information, communication of policies, financial information, program implementation, and decision-making processes to relevant stakeholders. Stakeholder participation, examining how parents, teachers, the committee, and the broader community participate in planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation. Particular attention was given to the interaction between public relations and the madrasah committee as two complementary governance mechanisms. Public relations was analyzed primarily in terms of communication, information management, relationship building, and stakeholder engagement, while the madrasah committee was examined in terms of participation, representation, consultation, supervision, and institutional support.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, which consists of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. First, interview transcripts, observation records, and documents were condensed through systematic coding and categorization. The coding process focused on emerging themes related to public relations, committee participation, professionalism, accountability, transparency, communication, and stakeholder engagement. Second, the categorized data were displayed in thematic matrices to identify relationships and patterns among the different governance dimensions. Third, conclusions were drawn and continuously verified by comparing information obtained from different participants and data sources. The analysis sought to identify not only the formal roles of public relations and the madrasah committee but also how these roles operate in practice and contribute to institutional governance.

Data Validity and Trustworthiness

The credibility of the findings was established through triangulation of sources and data collection techniques. Source triangulation was conducted by comparing information from the principal, public relations personnel, committee members, teachers, administrative staff, and parents or other stakeholders. Technique triangulation involved comparing interview findings with observations and documentary evidence. The researchers also employed member checking by discussing preliminary findings with selected participants to ensure that the interpretations accurately represented their experiences and institutional practices. An audit trail was maintained throughout the research process to strengthen the dependability and confirmability of the findings.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Public Relations Professionalism in Communication Management

The professionalism of public relations in the madrasah environment is measured by the accuracy of strategies, mastery of communication media, and a deep understanding of applicable regulations. At MA Islamiyah Syafiiyah Paiton, the PR staff work under the guidance of the head of the madrasah to draft the annual communication program blueprint. The managerial duties of the head of the madrasah, mandated by KMA 24 of 2018 as an amendment to KMA 58 of 2017, delegate tactical

authority for image building to the PR division so that all operational information is conveyed accurately and with minimal distortion.

The professional public relations team at MA Islamiyaah Syafiiyah uses a mix of traditional and digital media (like the official website, Instagram, and messaging app-based coordination groups) to share the school's policies. This professionalism is shown by presenting data on students' academic progress, academic calendars, and school rules in real-time, which helps reduce the spread of fake news or negative speculation in the community. From a customer perspective, efforts are made to meet customer needs in every aspect, including price, safety, and timeliness. Therefore, to maintain a good relationship between customers and the organization, communication facilitated by the public relations department is necessary. (Fandy Tjiptono & Anastasia Diana, 2003)

The Role of Public Relations in Promoting Institutional Accountability

Accountability refers to the obligation of the madrasah to be responsible for all performance and resource management to the mandating parties, namely the government and the community. Public accountability will be achieved if there are effective external control instruments. The public relations of MA Islamiyah Syafiiyah Paiton act as the main facilitator who organizes regular plenary meetings between the madrasah management and the Madrasah Committee (Supriyanto, 2019) In that forum, the Public Relations team presented a systematic report on the achievements of operational work programs. By consistently publishing performance reports, the school can show that both operational funding and instructional policies are fully oriented toward achieving student success.

Conceptualization of the Madrasah Committee and Good Governance

The madrasah committee is an independent body that accommodates public participation in order to improve the quality, equity, and efficiency of education management in madrasahs. The effectiveness of a school/madrasah committee is measured by how well the institution can carry out four main roles: (1) an advisory agency in determining and implementing educational policies; (2) a supporting agency, whether financially, intellectually, or in terms of manpower; (3) a controlling agency for transparency and accountability in education management; and (4) a mediator between the government/society and the madrasah. (Mulyasa H. E., 2020) In the context of good governance, the management of educational institutions must meet the principles of professionalism (competence and efficiency), accountability (performance that can be justified), and transparency (openness of information to the public). In this case, synergy between the head and the committee/community with financial planning management is really needed for check and balancing.

Financial Planning and the Managerial Ability of the School Principal

Financial management is an integral part of a principal's role as a manager. In preparing financial plans, principals are expected not to work alone but to involve committees or the community. As managers, principals are responsible for coordinating, planning, and controlling all school resources. In terms of financing, a principal's success depends on their ability to mobilize funds and prepare budgets transparently together with the school committee and stakeholders. Nowadays, principals are pure managers according to PMA number 24 of 2018, which amends PMA number 58 of 2017, freeing them from teaching duties and allowing them to focus on management functions, including financial management. Financial management has three main concepts: Fundraising, which is all activities aimed at getting sources of funds, whether from within the organization or from external sources. Fund usage, which involves activities in using and investing the funds into various forms of assets. Asset management, which includes all activities carried out once the funds have been obtained and invested or allocated into assets; in this case, the funds must be managed effectively and efficiently. (Rusdi, 2019)

Committee as a Fundraising and Accountability Partner

Regarding the relationship between schools and the community (where the committee is the main representative), the importance of collaboration in overcoming government budget limitations. Schools cannot be separated from their surrounding communities. The presence of the school committee plays an important role as a bridge for aspirations as well as a partner in budget planning. The role of the committee is not just as a financial supporter through voluntary contributions, but also

as a control instrument to ensure that school financial allocations are truly focused on improving the quality of learning. (Wahjosumidjo., 2021)

The Principle of Budget Effectiveness and Efficiency

In managing the administration of facilities and finances, it is emphasized that cooperation with the committee in drafting the Madrasah Activity Plan and Budget (RKAM) must be based on actual needs, not the personal desires of the administrators. Budget planning that involves the school committee should be based on the principles of transparency and accountability. Every rupiah planned must be accountable for its effectiveness in supporting the teaching and learning process to keep the school environment conducive. Effective and efficient budget planning should be based on data analysis obtained from education reports and the madrasah's self-evaluation results. Decentralization and educational autonomy launched by the government must be applied properly if education in Indonesia wants to progress, achieve equality, even surpass developed countries, and be accepted by them. (Baharun, 2012)

The Role of the Madrasah Committee at MA Islamiyah Syafiiyah Paiton

In general, the role of the committee in madrasah governance includes: As a Pillar of Accountability and Transparency: In modern Islamic education governance (good governance), madrasahs shouldn't be managed exclusively by internal parties. The madrasah committee acts as an independent body that ensures transparency, especially in managing financial aspects and preparing the Madrasah Work and Budget Plan (RKAM). As a Channel for Stakeholder Aspirations: This book emphasizes the committee's role as a bridge connecting the social needs of the community (parents) with the strategic policies of the school principal. The committee serves as an advisory body to ensure that the school's programs remain in line with Islamic values and public expectations. Resource Mobilization: In practice, the madrasa committee acts as a strategic partner (supporting agency) to rally community involvement, whether through ideas, effort, or joint funding, to help overcome government budget limitations and improve the quality of the madrasah. (Supriyanto, 2019)

Based on the analysis at MA Islamiyah Syafiiyah, the Madrasah Committee shows real contributions in several important aspects: Advisory Function: The committee is actively involved in preparing the Madrasah Work Plan (RKM) and the Madrasah Activity and Budget Plan (RKAM). Their input includes developing the unique pesantren curriculum and improving facilities and supporting infrastructure for learning. Supporting Function: The committee bridges communication between the madrasah, parents, and the surrounding community to gather moral and material support for building classrooms and laboratories. Controlling Function: The committee oversees the implementation of the madrasah work program and the use of the budget to ensure it stays on target and is efficient.

CONCLUSION

The Public Relations (PR) at MA Islamiyah Syafiiyah Paiton plays a crucial role as a catalyst in realizing professional, accountable, and transparent school management. Through well-organized communication management, PR can translate the headmaster's managerial policies (according to PMA No. 58 of 2017) into public information that is clear and credible. In terms of accountability and transparency, the openness of information managed by PR has successfully enabled the Madrasah Committee (in line with PMA No. 16 of 2020) to function optimally as a control partner and legal financial supporter. The tangible impact is increased active community participation and the creation of an Islamic educational institution environment that is free from sociological conflicts, ultimately strengthening the reputation of MA Islamiyah Syafiiyah Paiton as a trusted educational institution. The role of the Madrasah Committee at MA Islamiyah Syafiiyah Paiton is very strategic in realizing school governance. A professional, accountable, and transparent institution. By optimizing its advisory, supporting, controlling, and mediating functions, the committee is able to enhance the synergy between the madrasa, parents, and the community. The application of transparency principles in financial reporting and the professionalism of the management has proven to strengthen public trust and support the overall improvement of education quality at MA Islamiyah Syafiiyah Paiton.

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