

Optimizing Press Agency for Strategic Visibility in Educational Based on Pesantren

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to explore how optimizing press agency based on Islamic boarding school values can improve the visibility of pesantren, audience engagement, and reputation through an integrated strategic approach. This study uses a qualitative approach of the case study type. The subjects of the study consisted of caregivers, heads of Islamic boarding schools, Islamic boarding school administrators, guardians of students, public relations, and students. Data collection techniques used observation, interviews, and documentation. Data analysis techniques used data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. The results of this study indicate that optimizing press agency in pesantren can improve the visibility of institutions by utilizing modern technology, as long as the messages conveyed are in accordance with the character of the audience and still reflect the values of the Islamic boarding school. Effective use of technology can strengthen the image of Islamic boarding schools, but it is important to maintain a balance between modernity and tradition so that their Islamic identity is not disturbed. In conclusion, a communication strategy that combines Islamic boarding school values with technology can strengthen the visibility of institutions and build better relationships with stakeholders, without sacrificing the identity and basic principles of Islamic boarding schools.

INTRODUCTION

Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) have long been a cornerstone of educational and moral development in many Muslim communities. In recent years, however (Victoria et al., 2024). these institutions face the challenge of adapting to the rapid advancements in technology while maintaining their traditional values (Susanto et al. 2023; Zulkarnain, 2023). The shift toward integrating modern communication strategies, such as press agency and digital media, alongside their established

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educational principles (Zamroni et al., 2023; Anggadwita, 2021), has become increasingly essential for enhancing visibility and fostering positive relationships with the broader community (Rustandi & Kusnawan, 2023). Despite the high adaptability of pesantren to social and technological changes, there is a need for a more structured approach to communication that balances the use of modern tools with the timeless values of honesty, integrity, an

d ethical conduct (Hudori et al., 2024; Abidin, 2020). This blend of traditional values with contemporary strategies not only improves the image of Islamic boarding schools but also strengthens their role in shaping the future of Islamic education (Rahmansyah, 2023; Kejora, 2021). As pesantren work to maintain their relevance and impact, effective communication becomes a key factor in ensuring their continued success and influence in the modern world (Tsauro, 2022).

This research covers Islamic boarding schools. As research conducted by (Rahmansyah, 2023; Basri et al., 2024; Priyanto et al., 2023) shows that Islamic boarding schools have high adaptability to social and technological changes (Mardiah Astuti et al., 2023). However, there has been little discussion about how Islamic boarding schools maintain their traditional values while integrating modern elements into education and management (Hastasari, 2022). Optimizing technology-based marketing needs to be accompanied by an understanding of the audience so that the message remains relevant and effective, because strategies that only focus on technology without considering audience characteristics tend to be less effective (Wahid et al., 2021; Judson, 2006.) The novelty of this study compared to previous studies lies in its focus on integrating modern technology-based press agency strategies with traditional Islamic boarding school values to create strategic visibility of pesantren (Fitriah, 2021; Halim, 2018). Previous studies generally discuss the adaptability of Islamic boarding schools to social and technological changes in general without (I. Munawwaroh & Adeoye, 2024; Chotimah, 2014) specifically highlighting how this communication strategy can be optimized to improve the competitiveness and image of the institution (Husnan, 2023).

The purpose of this study is to examine the implementation of press agency strategies in increasing the visibility of Islamic boarding schools, focusing on the aspects of planning, implementation, and evaluation. This research aims to identify various communication strategies that are effective in building a positive image and increasing public awareness of pesantren. In addition, this study also aims to explore how combining traditional pesantren values with modern communication techniques can have a significant impact on the competitiveness and reputation of pesantren in the community. Leveraging modern communication techniques like digital media is essential for reaching a wider audience. Using social media, websites, and online forums allows pesantrens to share success stories, educational content, and community

engagement initiatives effectively. This increases public awareness and attracts more supporters. With a deeper understanding of the application of press agency strategies based on pesantren values, this research is expected to provide valuable insights in designing communication strategies that are more efficient and relevant to the needs and characteristics of today's pesantren. Evaluation is not only focused on academic achievement, but also engaging aspects such as character development, environmental awareness, and social participation.

The implementation of press agency strategies that integrate traditional pesantren values with modern communication techniques can significantly increase the visibility and positive image of pesantren in the eyes of the public. By incorporating traditional pesantren values such as integrity, honesty, and ethics into their communication strategies, pesantren can create a narrative that resonates with both their existing community and potential new audiences. This integration ensures that while they adopt modern techniques, they do not lose sight of their core values, which is crucial for maintaining trust and credibility. By utilizing digital media and other modern communication tools, pesantren can strengthen relationships with the community, increase public awareness, and create a better reputation without compromising the educational and moral principles that have long been taught in pesantren. In addition, an approach that integrates the values of integrity, honesty, and ethics in communication will be more effective in attracting audience attention, increasing the competitiveness of the pesantren, and strengthening its position in the broader educational context. Thus, this study hypothesizes that a successful communication strategy that combines technology and pesantren values will support the sustainable achievement of pesantren's educational and social goals.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study method to understand how the implementation of press agency strategies can optimize the visibility of pesantren (Hidayati et al., 2022). A case study is a study that explores a depth case and collects complete information using various data collection procedures based on a predetermined time. This case can be in the form of an event, activity, process, or program (Prihatsanti et al., 2018). The research location is Pondok Pesantren Nurul Jadid Paiton Probolinggo, which has implemented various communication strategies. Data collection techniques include in-depth interviews, participant observation, and document analysis. The subject of this study focuses on the application of press agency strategies to increase the strategic visibility of Islamic boarding schools in the context of modern education. Islamic boarding schools, as traditional Islamic pesantren, have deep moral and educational values, but are faced with the challenge of adapting to technological developments and social change (Khaeroni, 2021). This study involved 12 participants consisting of caregivers,

heads of Islamic boarding schools, Islamic boarding school administrators, guardians of students, public relations, and students (Masqon, 2011). The following is a table showing the educational background and gender of each participant.

Table 1. Research Informants

Participant	Gender		Educational background				Informant code
	Male	Female	SMA	S1	S2	S3	
Islamic Boarding School Caretaker	1	-	-	1	-	-	MB
Head of Islamic Boarding School	1	2	-	2	1	-	MA, DK, MH
Deputy Head of Public Relations	2	2	4	-	-	-	NH, SN, RY, FRH
Islamic Boarding School Administrators	1	-	-	1	-	-	DFP
Student	2	1	3	-	-	-	ADF, SR, DV
Amount	7	5	7	4	1		-
Total	12 Participants						

Data analysis in this study used the interactive model from (Miles et al., (2014) which consists of 4 steps, namely data collection, data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing/verification. Data validity was ensured through a process of data triangulation and review, which ensured consistency with the research findings. To ensure the accuracy of the data collected, source triangulation was conducted by cross-referencing information from theories and previous research related to various areas of education and learning systems in pesantren.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Institutional Image Improved

Improving the image of the institution in optimizing press agents for strategic visibility of Islamic boarding school-based education is very important in introducing the values of Islamic boarding school education to the wider public. Moreover, the development of information technology in Indonesia shows a significant trend, confirming the need for educational institutions to utilize digital marketing actively (Mutawally, 2023). Given the intense competition in digital marketing, especially in the education sector, pesantren must adopt digital branding strategies by utilizing various

social media platforms to reach and communicate with the broader community (Z. Munawwaroh et al., 2024). As an educational institution with strong traditional roots, Islamic boarding schools often face challenges in utilizing technology and media to build an image that is relevant to the times (Hidayatun, 2017). Therefore, an effective communication strategy through press agents, such as social media and digital platforms, can play an important role in introducing Islamic boarding schools as adaptive and quality pesantren, without sacrificing their traditional values (Raihani, 2012). Concrete evidence can be found in the efforts of the Nurul Jadid Probolinggo Islamic boarding school, which has succeeded in optimizing the use of social media to build a positive image (Ramadhani, 2023). This Islamic boarding school actively develops digital communication channels that include Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube to introduce various educational programs, social activities, and the achievements of its students (Sorensen, 2023). By using the right press agency, this Islamic boarding school has been able to significantly increase its visibility among the public, especially among parents and prospective students. Through the distribution of relevant content, which illustrates the balance between tradition and innovation, this Islamic boarding school has succeeded in attracting attention and building public trust.

Table 2. Interview results

No	Informant	Statement
1	Islamic Boarding School Caretaker	"The use of social media in our Islamic boarding school is very helpful in introducing educational programs and student activities."
2	Head of Islamic boarding school	"We always ensure that the content distributed on social media continues to prioritize the traditional values of Islamic boarding schools."
3	Student	"It is important for us to maintain a balance between technological innovation and traditional principles in pesantren communication."
4	Head of Public Relations	"Press agents help Islamic boarding schools increase visibility by disseminating relevant information, especially in the context of the social activities we undertake."

From the interview results in the form of the table 2, it can be concluded that Optimizing press agents plays an important role in improving the image of Islamic boarding school-based pesantren by introducing advantages such as a holistic educational approach and strengthening Islamic values (Munawwaroh, (2024). The use of social media and digital platforms allows Islamic boarding schools to reach a wider audience, strengthen visibility, and build better relationships with stakeholders (Buanaputra et al., 2022 ; Samha, (2024). This not only improves the reputation of Islamic boarding schools as institutions that are adaptive to the development of the times, but also maintains a balance between modernity and tradition(Subaidi et al., 2023). With transparency and integrity, optimizing press agents can strengthen the

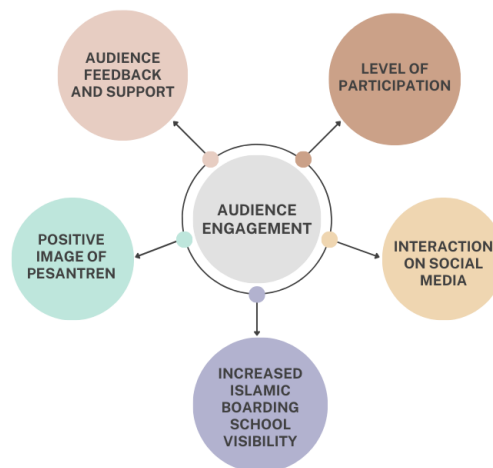
position of Islamic boarding schools in the world of education, while maintaining their identity.

Optimizing Audience Engagement

Optimizing audience engagement in press agentry strategy is crucial to create strategic visibility of Islamic boarding school-based education. Audience engagement includes a deep understanding of audience characteristics, be it students, parents, community, or other stakeholders. In the context of Islamic boarding schools, the audience involved is not only as a recipient of information, but also as an active participant who can provide feedback, support the dissemination of information, and strengthen the image of the Islamic boarding school through ongoing interaction. This can be proven from the results of interviews with several informants involved in the Islamic boarding school communication process. The caretaker of the Islamic boarding school said, "I use social media to invite students and parents to be directly involved in Islamic boarding school activities, such as sharing experiences or supporting social programs. This makes students feel closer to the Islamic boarding school." Meanwhile, the administrator of the Islamic boarding school added, "Audience involvement, especially students, in disseminating information through social media is very helpful in strengthening the image of the Islamic boarding school and expanding the reach of information."

From the informant's statement, it shows that optimizing press agents in Islamic boarding schools does not only involve disseminating information, but also creating space for the audience to actively participate in building a positive image of the Islamic boarding school. This approach facilitates more effective communication and strengthens the relationship between the Islamic boarding school and its audience, while ensuring that the messages delivered are in accordance with the needs and expectations of various stakeholder groups.

Figure 1. Success of optimizing audience engagement in press agentry strategy



Based on the results of observations and some evidence in the form of images above, the indicators used to measure the success of optimizing audience involvement in the press agency strategy show satisfactory results (Munawwaroh et al., (2022)). The level of audience participation, both students, parents, and the community, was recorded as significant with many audiences actively involved in sharing experiences and supporting Islamic boarding school programs through social media (Bauer et al., 2023). Interaction on digital platforms is also high, reflected in comments, likes, and shares which show the closeness of the audience to the Islamic boarding school (Marciano et al., (2024)). The increase in the visibility of the Islamic boarding school can be seen from the increasing number of followers and the increasingly wide reach of content. The positive image of the Islamic boarding school is increasingly formed with audience responses that appreciate the balance between tradition and innovation, as well as support for Islamic boarding school programs that are increasing (Muslimin, (2023)). All of these indicators show that the press agency strategy has succeeded in increasing audience involvement, strengthening the positive image, and significantly increasing the visibility of the Islamic boarding school.

Conformity of Values and Techniques

The alignment between the values of the pesantren and communication techniques is essential to ensure that the message delivered remains authentic and effective. The Islamic values, traditions, and moral teachings that form the basis of the pesantren must be reflected in every technique used, especially in the use of social media and press agents. By combining modern communication techniques, such as the use of digital media and press agents, with these values, the pesantren can introduce itself to a wider audience without losing its identity. This ensures that the visibility of the pesantren is not only increased in terms of audience reach, but also in strengthening the image of the pesantren as an educational institution that is consistent with Islamic principles and adapts to the demands of the times.

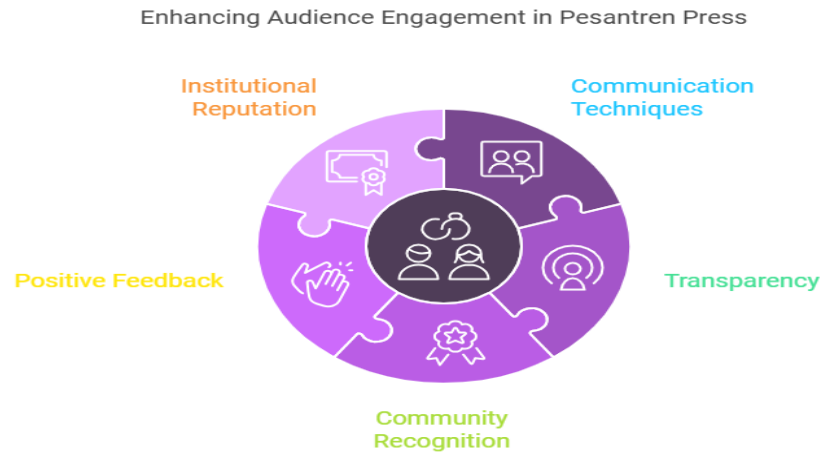
Table 3. Interview Result Data

Informant	Interview Questions	Informant Response	Coding
Head of Islamic Boarding School	How do Islamic boarding schools ensure that the values taught are in accordance with the press agency techniques used?	“I always make sure that every message we convey reflects the values of the Islamic boarding school, such as honesty, integrity, and independence.”	Value Congruence, Message Integrity, Value Support Techniques

Communication Staff	How do press agency techniques support the educational values of Islamic boarding schools?	"I use techniques such as storytelling and personal narratives to emphasize the moral and spiritual values we teach."	Storytelling Techniques, Personal Narratives, Moral and Spiritual Values
Islamic Boarding School Administrators	How important is the fit between the values of the pesantren and the communication techniques used in the press agency strategy?	"This conformity is very important. If the techniques used are not in line with the values of the pesantren, it can damage our image and reduce public trust."	Conformity of Values and Techniques, Community Trust, Image of Islamic Boarding Schools
Student	Do you feel that Islamic boarding school communication techniques are in accordance with the values taught to students?	"Yes, I feel that the communication techniques used are very much in line with the values taught."	Parental Assessment, Transparency, Honesty, Value Congruence and Techniques

Based on the results of observations and interviews, it can be concluded that the optimization of audience engagement in the strategy of the pesantren press agency has shown a significant increase, thanks to the suitability between the communication techniques used and the values of the pesantren (Juhaidi, (2024)). The implementation of communication techniques that prioritize values such as honesty and caring, in accordance with the principles of the pesantren, has increased audience engagement (Chung & Li, (2020)). Documents related to communication strategies, such as activity reports and public feedback, are published regularly both in physical and digital forms, supporting transparency and audience engagement (Buerkle et al., (2023)). The increase in the visibility and image of the pesantren is reflected in the recognition and support of the community, which is getting stronger thanks to the implementation of communication techniques based on the values of the pesantren. The high level of audience engagement supported by positive feedback shows that the audience feels more connected and cared for (Hasanah et al., (2024)). Overall, the integration of pesantren values in the strategy of the press agency not only increases the visibility of the institution, but also strengthens the reputation of the pesantren, resulting in a positive image that is increasingly widely known in the public.

Figure 2. Engagement In Pesantren



Positive Reputation and Success

Positive reputation and success in optimizing press agents for visibility of Islamic boarding school-based education depend on the ability of Islamic boarding schools to convey educational values through appropriate communication techniques. The use of social media and digital platforms to publish Islamic boarding school activities results in increased recognition and support from the community, as evidenced by positive feedback and increased audience participation (Ibrahim, 2023). This study can be proven by the use of social media and digital platforms to disseminate information that is relevant and in accordance with Islamic boarding school values, resulting in increased recognition and support from the community. For example, Islamic boarding schools that routinely publish social activities, seminars, and educational programs on digital platforms receive positive feedback in the form of comments and increased participation from the audience. From this, it shows that Islamic boarding schools have succeeded in strengthening their image by combining modern communication techniques with Islamic principles, which ultimately builds a positive reputation and strengthens the position of Islamic boarding schools in the world of education.

Based on the observation results, it can be concluded that the reputation and positive success of Islamic boarding schools in optimizing press agency have increased significantly through the application of the principles of honesty, transparency, and community involvement. Concrete evidence from the observation results shows that Islamic boarding schools consistently apply communication techniques that emphasize honesty in activity reports and openness in interactions with the public, involving various parties such as students, parents, and alumni. Documents related to

communication strategies are well documented and published regularly, both in physical and digital forms. In addition, observations of increasing support from the community and the media show that communication strategies based on Islamic boarding school values have succeeded in improving the image of Islamic boarding schools as a whole.

Figure 3. Positive reputation and success



Based on the image above which is the result of measuring the indicators of reputation and positive success, it can be concluded that the optimization of press agents significantly increases the visibility and reputation of Islamic boarding schools (Wahyudi, (2023)). The level of public recognition of Islamic boarding schools is increasing, as evidenced by the positive feedback received through social media and digital platforms, as well as the increasing participation of the audience in Islamic boarding school activities (Bunjak et al., (2022)). The positive image of Islamic boarding schools remains consistent, both in the media and public perception, which ultimately strengthens the attractiveness of Islamic boarding schools, reflected in the increasing interest of the community to join (Raja, Rosni, (2022)). All of these indicators show that an effective press agent strategy not only increases the recognition of Islamic boarding schools, but also strengthens the position of Islamic boarding schools as pesantren that are respected and influential in society.

CONCLUSIONS

The conclusion of this study shows that optimizing press agency has a significant impact on the strategic visibility of Islamic boarding school-based education. The main objective of this study is to explore how the application of press

agency-based communication techniques can improve the image of Islamic boarding schools, strengthen audience engagement, and create greater visibility in the community. The findings show that the application of communication techniques that are in line with Islamic boarding school values, such as honesty, integrity, and social concern, has succeeded in increasing public recognition of Islamic boarding schools, strengthening relationships with audiences and stakeholders, and forming a consistent positive image. The use of social media and digital platforms that are in accordance with Islamic boarding school principles has also proven effective in reaching a wider and deeper audience, so that the visibility of Islamic boarding schools can increase significantly. The active involvement of the audience in various activities promoted by Islamic boarding schools shows a high level of success in this strategy.

The implication of this study is the importance of Islamic boarding schools to integrate modern communication strategies with traditional values that are the foundation of Islamic boarding school education. Although Islamic boarding schools adopt more modern communication techniques, maintaining the authenticity of messages and educational principles based on Islamic morals and ethics is very important. The contribution of this study provides new insights into how Islamic boarding schools can utilize press agents and digital media-based communication techniques to introduce themselves more widely to the public, strengthen their reputation, and support the achievement of educational goals. This study also contributes to the development of communication strategies in Islamic boarding schools, which can be used as a reference to improve the visibility and impact of Islamic boarding schools in the world of education, as well as strengthen their position as relevant pesantren amidst rapid technological developments and social change.

The limitation of this study lies in the limited scope of a particular pesantren, so the resulting findings may not be fully generalizable to all pesantren in various regions. This study also only focused on the implementation of press agency strategies and did not discuss in depth other aspects such as the curriculum or pesantren management. In addition, this study did not differentiate the influence of communication strategies based on gender, age, or socio-economic variations of the audience, which may affect the effectiveness of communication. The method used was also limited to a qualitative approach, so the findings may not fully describe the impact of pesantren communication strategies on the entire population or in a broader context.

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