



## Planning and Public Relations Strategies at Islamic Elementary School as Efforts to Improve Educational Quality

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### ABSTRACT

This research aims to describe the planning and public relations strategies at MI Nurul Huda Sawangan. This research uses a descriptive qualitative approach and the type of research is field research. The data collection techniques used in this thesis are observation methods, in-depth interviews, and documentation studies. The collected data were then analyzed using interactive analysis techniques, which include data collection, data condensation, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. Furthermore, the data were analyzed using source triangulation and technique triangulation techniques. The results of this research are: 1) Public relations planning in involving community participation is: there are two types, namely routine work program planning (inviting parents, halalbihalal, commemorating Islamic holidays, and facilitating graduation ceremonies) and incidental work program planning (receiving visits, and communication with community leaders); 2) The implementation of public relations in involving community participation consists of various activities, all activities are carried out by involving internal and external communities.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Management is an integral component that cannot be separated from the overall educational process (Iloh, 2021; Nurjali, 2024). Without management, it is impossible for educational goals to be realized optimally, effectively, and efficiently. At this time, the field of public relations plays a very important role in the progress of schools, meaning that madrasahs that do not utilize this role will be left behind because they do not master the acquisition and dissemination of information.

It is within this framework that the awareness to empower the community and the school's surrounding environment grows. This is expected to achieve the objectives of the madrasah's relationship with the community, namely the increased performance of the madrasah and the productive, effective, and efficient implementation of the educational process in the madrasah, so as to produce productive and quality graduates (Afriani & Timan, 2024; Hidayat, 2021). Madrasahs that are able to make contact with the community will foster an atmosphere of mutual acquaintance between the two. Even though at the beginning an educational institution does not have many facilities, little funds, and so on, the management's ability to establish good relationships with the community such as philanthropists, influential people, people who love education, then the institution will last long and even continue to advance.

Education has a very large role in the progress and development of society (Hysa & Jakupaj, 2024; Murray, 2023). Whether a society progresses and develops or not is closely related to the education that exists in that society. Education will lead society towards progress and development in a civilized life. Education is not only limited to certain spaces and scopes. However, the scope of education actually includes the community environment itself. Thus, education for a society is the responsibility of the society itself (Vanderstraeten, 2021; Yuliani & Hartanto, 2016). In fact, society itself is seen as a laboratory where students learn to investigate and participate in community efforts that contain community elements.

Public relations is very important in educational management because public relations has a fundamental function, namely to attract public attention, thereby increasing community relations and interest in a particular educational institution, which ultimately increases income for the educational institution to achieve the set goals (Afriani & Timan, 2024; Shibghatallaah Mujaahid Al Islaam & Husnan, 2023; Zlatanović-Marković et al., 2022). Public relations as a two-way communication mediator between the madrasah and the community, namely the madrasah conveys information openly about the atmosphere or condition of its school and the community must provide responses, criticisms, input, and contribute ideas to support the progress of the institution.

The existence of educational institutions within a society will have a positive influence on the condition of that society (Mense et al., 2018; Prasad & Gupta, 2020). The educational goals can be achieved maximally in a programmed and organized manner. One of which is through school educational institutions (Brinia et al., 2022). School educational institutions are

institutions where education is held in a specific place, organized, directed, programmed, systematic, and has an extension within a certain period of time, namely from the level of basic education to higher education, and is carried out based on certain formal rules that have been established by the institution itself.

MI Nurul Huda Sawangan is one of the educational institutions under the auspices of the Central Java Provincial Ministry of Religious Affairs. MI Nurul Huda Sawangan has a mission to prepare graduates from an early age who are able to internalize Islamic values in social life, prepare graduates who are able to apply scientific knowledge, improve student achievement from an early age, and enhance students' ability to have a broad perspective. To achieve this mission, it requires effective cooperation built by MI Nurul Huda Sawangan with the community, which will ultimately increase community participation in education at the Madrasah.

The public relations of MI Nurul Huda Sawangan also plays a role in the success of kindergarten, both academic and non-academic. The efforts made in this public relations field are of course carried out in cooperation with various parties, one of which is by using strategic communication which is its duty. With this communication, the activities carried out can be carried out optimally and the goals achieved run effectively and efficiently. This situation will encourage an increase in the quality of education in the madrasah (Brinia et al., 2022; Musheke & Phiri, 2021).

Based on the initial observation by the researcher, the implementation of the public relations program is to realize work programs by involving various components, both internal and external components, which are formed into a team and individuals. One of the programs that involves community participation is the implementation of Islamic holiday commemoration events. The implementation of this event involves parents, community leaders, and religious leaders.

In this case, students are also involved in publicizing the products of practical work, especially to the surrounding community. This is done so that the community knows the programs that exist in the institution, thereby generating good enthusiasm and having a clear picture of MI Nurul Huda Sawangan, with the hope that the community becomes interested in sending their children to school while contributing ideas that can build the progress of the madrasah. Public relations at MI Nurul Huda Sawangan is running quite well. MI Nurul Huda Sawangan has gained quite good trust from the community. One proof is that the number of students who register every year exceeds the targeted number. Seeing this reality is inseparable from the hard work of public relations managers in fostering and establishing communication with various parties who are stakeholders of the institution.

Referring to the several descriptions above, the application of effective public relations management in MI becomes increasingly important considering the paradigm shift in the world of education that places the community not only as recipients of educational services, but also as active partners in the educational process. The concept of Three Educational Centers involving schools, families, and communities further emphasizes the importance of

synergy between MI and the surrounding community. Without active community involvement, efforts to improve the quality of education at MI will not achieve optimal results (Ayomsari & Azizah, 2024; Musbaing, 2020).

This research aims to analyze the implementation of public relations management in MI as an effort to improve the quality of education. The research focus is directed at the applied public relations management strategies, supporting and inhibiting factors, and their impact on the quality of education. Through this research, it is hoped that an effective public relations management model for MI can be formulated in the context of sustainable education quality improvement.

The results of this research are expected to provide significant contributions to the development of Islamic education management science, especially in the field of public relations management. Practically, the research results can be a reference for MI managers in developing effective public relations management strategies to improve the quality of education in their respective institutions.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Public Relations or more commonly called Public Relations (PR) is a strategic effort carried out by individuals, organizations, or communities to build, manage, and maintain good relationships with the public or wider. The main goal of public relations is to create a positive image, increase trust, and realize effective communication between the organization and its audiences, both internal (such as employees) and external (such as customers, media, government, or the general public).

## **METHODOLOGY**

The research approach used in this study is a qualitative approach. The type of research used is field research, which is a study of the reality of people's social life directly. Field research can also be considered as a broad approach in qualitative research or as a method for collecting qualitative data (Creswell, 2014). The important idea is that researchers go to the field <sup>2</sup> to observe a phenomenon and a natural situation. This research was conducted at MI Nurul Huda Sawangan, Kuwarasan, Kebumen. In the research studied by the researcher, it is about public relations management in involving community participation at MI Nurul Huda Sawangan. The researcher chose the research location at MI Nurul Huda Sawangan because MI Nurul Huda Sawangan is an educational institution that is able to establish harmonious relationships with the community and MI Nurul Huda Sawangan is an educational institution that is in demand by parents to send their children to school. The subjects in this study were the school principal, teachers, parents, and school committee. The data collection techniques used in this thesis are observation methods, in-depth interviews, and documentation studies. The collected data were then analyzed using interactive analysis techniques, which include data collection, data condensation, data presentation, and drawing conclusions (Miles et al., 2014). Source triangulation and technique triangulation techniques were used to determine the validity of the data.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### *Public Relations Planning at MI Nurul Huda Sawangan*

Planning is a rational and systematic activity process in establishing decisions, activities, or steps that are carried out in the future in order to achieve goals effectively and efficiently. Indeed, it cannot be denied that a madrasah can be said to be successful if the madrasah can continue to develop in accordance with the times and continue to gain trust from the wider community. Therefore, the vision and mission of MI Nurul Huda Sawangan are always directed at the development of the madrasah towards a better direction in accordance with future developments. The success of an institution cannot be achieved without the support of the community where the institution is located. This result is relevant to previous research that through structured planning, better goals can be achieved (Carvalho et al., 2022; Redding & Searby, 2020).

MI Nurul Huda Sawangan always holds annual meetings to develop joint programs, where these meetings are attended by the school principal, vice principal, teachers, staff, and all parties involved in the meeting. So, from this it can be seen that MI Nurul Huda Sawangan, in planning madrasah programs, is not done unilaterally by those responsible, but is developed together, which they usually call joint program development meetings, whether it concerns infrastructure programs, curriculum, student affairs, or public relations. However, when they intend to implement a program, they hold daily meetings to further solidify the program to be implemented.

In order to establish harmonious relationships and maintain trust from the community, planning is needed so that public relations activities become directed. This result is relevant to previous research that a good relationship between stakeholders can create a good relationship (Brinia et al., 2022; Musheke & Phiri, 2021). Public relations planning involves all parties related to the activity programs to be carried out, such as teachers and the school committee. To find out the process of public relations management, especially in the public relations planning process, the researcher presents data from interviews with class teachers who stated:

*"In planning public relations work programs, we first determine who will be involved in the program implementation or who will be the public relations practitioners. Furthermore, these public relations practitioners analyze the environment. In the preparation of this program, the tools and techniques to be used to implement the program are also determined. This section involves several parties, including the school principal, school committee, and teachers."*

Public relations management at MI Nurul Huda Sawangan is one of several components within the madrasah that, together with other management, work together to achieve the set goals. This aspiration is broadly summarized in the Madrasah's vision and mission, which in more detail, are elaborated through various activities carried out by the madrasah. As mentioned previously, public relations in this madrasah is one of several sections that are under the madrasah

principal in carrying out their duties to implement leadership at the MI. This public relations is handled by the madrasah principal who is also assisted by the information management system management section, the filing section, and the public relations section.

The concept of strategic management recognizes the existence of strategy levels. Between one level and another, there is a relationship, and the lower levels implement the strategies carried out at the higher levels. These levels are known as school-level strategies, functional strategies, and operational strategies. Madrasah strategies relate to the overall goals and scope of activities as expected by school stakeholders. Madrasah strategies basically establish general strategies, in the form of vision, mission, and goals. The next level of strategy is functional strategy, which is an effort to realize madrasah strategies based on the functions that exist in the school.

In this functional strategy, each function formulates its own strategy to implement the madrasah strategy in realizing the school's vision, mission, and goals. The final level is the operational strategy, which translates the strategy into action. Based on this, public relations at MI Nurul Huda Sawangan implements the functional strategy carried out by the vice principal for public relations affairs to achieve the madrasah-level strategy stated in the madrasah's vision, mission, and goals. Furthermore, this functional public relations strategy develops and implements functions related to the public relations program itself.

In implementing this functional strategy, the vice principal for public relations affairs is also assisted by his members. This strategy is what is called the operational strategy. In this operational strategy, the vice principal for public relations affairs sets short-term goals to be achieved to support the long-term goals of the school. In this operational strategy, the vice principal for public relations affairs of MI Nurul Huda Sawangan is assisted by his members, each of whom has different tasks. As confirmed by the teacher who stated:

*"In this public relations section, I serve as the head of the madrasah, with several teachers who are part of this public relations team. There are three sections: the public relations section, which handles communication with relevant parties for our activities, the information management system management section, and another section for filing. However, not all activities related to public relations are done by us alone. If there are other activities, we are certainly assisted by other teachers or staff who are competent in the activities we are about to carry out."*

By involving several elements above, it is hoped that the public relations program will run effectively and efficiently. The vice principal for student affairs is expected to convey what things are needed, especially during the new student admission period, starting from the formation of the new student admission committee to the stage where new students truly become part of MI Nurul Huda Sawangan. Teachers who are assigned to prepare the tools or materials needed in the implementation of the public relations program. The operator prepares to help compile the program implementation schedule, which aims to avoid the implementation of the public relations program coinciding with the

implementation of semester exams or graduation exams. Teachers are involved in order to be appointed as public relations practitioners and are expected to provide input on the plans to be jointly determined. This statement is confirmed by the head of the madrasah who stated:

*“The preparation of public relations work programs is done at the beginning of the new academic year. Teachers who are assigned as public relations do not compile it themselves but involve several other parties, such as class teachers, operators, and teachers. The preparation of public relations programs is divided into two, the preparation of routine work programs and the preparation of incidental work programs. In the preparation of these two work programs, it is determined who will be made public relations practitioners.”*

In planning the public relations program that is carried out every beginning of the new academic year at MI Nurul Huda Sawangan, especially in determining the implementation of the program, the head of the madrasah appoints several teachers to help realize the work program, both routine work programs and incidental work programs. This is also reinforced by the head of the madrasah who stated that:

*“Every time we are about to enter a new academic year, we always hold joint meetings, especially for planning public relations programs. In its implementation, we involve teachers. Routine programs, for example, include new student admissions, commemoration of Islamic holidays, and so on. While incidental programs include coordination and communication with the district education office, coordination and communication with the surrounding community.”*

In determining public relations implementers, MI Nurul Huda Sawangan not only involves the vice principal for public relations and teachers, but also involves students, especially in the implementation of Islamic holiday celebration events, as explained by the head of the madrasah that:

*“There are routine programs that are always carried out continuously. These programs apply a combination of teachers, students, and the community. In the Islamic holiday celebration programs/events, the madrasah forms a committee, where the chairman and members are students of our madrasah. During the event preparation meetings, students are accompanied by some teachers. The implementation of this program also involves several community leaders and several religious leaders.”*

Thus, public relations in an organization is part of the management activities of that organization. Where the objectives, functions, tasks, and implementation strategies refer to the larger part of the organization or institution itself. This is in accordance with the statement of the 2nd grade teacher of MI Nurul Huda Sawangan as mentioned previously:

*“Public relations is actually one of several components within the madrasah that, together with other components, such as the curriculum department and infrastructure, work together to carry out their respective tasks so that the madrasah's goals can be achieved. So, public relations achieves these goals by completing its tasks, while other departments do the same.”*

At certain times, especially when about to carry out public relations events, the madrasah receives support from the madrasah committee as one of the external parties representing parents to provide input and constructive ideas for the smooth running of events at MI Nurul Huda Sawangan. As has been revealed by the madrasah committee:

*“When there are parents or community members who wish to convey suggestions or advice, we as the madrasah committee communicate with the school. After several suggestions or advice have been collected, we convey them to the public relations department, the aim being that the programs to be implemented are in accordance with the wishes of the parents or the community.”*

From the interviews conducted by the researcher with several informants above, it can be seen that the planning of public relations work programs at MI Nurul Huda Sawangan is carried out every time a new academic year is about to begin. In planning the program, it is determined who is appointed as public relations practitioners or implementers. Public relations program planning at MI Nurul Huda Sawangan has two types, namely the planning of routine work programs and incidental programs.

The planning of routine work programs at MI Nurul Huda Sawangan is planning that is carried out to compile and prepare activities that are carried out continuously and chronologically, such as inviting parents, halalbihalal, commemorating Islamic holidays, and facilitating graduation ceremonies.

As for the planning of incidental work programs at MI Nurul Huda Sawangan, it is the planning of work programs that are carried out in a certain period. This work program, in principle, helps the implementation of work programs that have been planned and only functions to increase wider reach. The forms of this incidental work program include: Home visits, receiving visits, and coordination-communication with the surrounding community.

From several interview results, observation results, and documentation data above, it is clear that public relations program planning at MI Nurul Huda Sawangan has two types of work program planning, namely routine work program planning and incidental work program planning. And in compiling public relations program planning, teachers who are assigned as public relations do not carry it out themselves but involve several departments, such as the school principal, vice principal for student affairs, vice principal for infrastructure, vice principal for curriculum, and teachers.

The core of public relations activities itself is essentially communication. Both communication with parties within an organization and outside the organization. This communication is reciprocal, in other words, providing

responses to information or activities provided by public relations itself. This relationship aims to encourage the achievement of the goals of an institution or organization. In public relations itself, there are two aspects that must exist, namely, first, the target of public relations is the internal public and the external public. This means that in conveying information, whether addressed to the internal public or the external public, there must be reciprocity (feedback). Public relations at MI Nurul Huda Sawangan is also a communication bridge between the madrasah and its public. So that the activities arranged by the madrasah can be carried out optimally. This communication is carried out not only between school members, but also between the madrasah and its community. So it is hoped that the community can provide feedback on the activities carried out.

Furthermore, public relations is essentially a form of communication. Communication itself is a contact relationship between and among humans, both individuals and groups. When communication is viewed from a broader meaning, it is not only interpreted as an exchange of news and roles but as the activities of individuals and groups regarding the exchange of data, facts, and ideas. Its functions in every social system are information, socialization, motivation, debate and discussion, education, promoting culture, entertainment, and integration.

Various public relations activities carried out at MI Nurul Huda Sawangan also function to provide information, for example, in the activity of conveying the madrasah's activity agenda to students, teachers, and staff. These activities can also mean socialization. In other activities, including cooperation with various parties, for example, with the community health center regarding health education, it will encourage students to have a healthy lifestyle.

### ***Strategy for Implementing Public Relations at MI Nurul Huda Sawangan***

In its implementation to develop the institution and increase community participation, MI Nurul Huda Sawangan provides greater access to the community to find out information on programs and achievements that have been achieved by the school. To realize this, one of the ways is that the madrasah, through the vice principal for public relations, invites parents to the madrasah to collect their children's report cards, hold Islamic holiday commemorations, and communicate with pesantren administrators and the surrounding community.

The communication carried out by the madrasah with the community aims to form a positive image of the madrasah in the eyes of the community so that the community is willing to participate and cooperate with the madrasah to improve the quality of education. After the community understands the educational programs carried out by the school, it is hoped that the community will provide feedback to the madrasah in the form of criticisms, suggestions, ideas, and their needs in the field of education. As stated by the head of the madrasah, saying:

*“To create good relationships with the community, the madrasah holds activities that involve the community, such as when new students are accepted into the madrasah and the distribution of report cards for grade*

*promotion, parents are invited to the school. New parents are deliberately invited to the madrasah to be given some information about student discipline rules, inviting religious leaders when commemorating Islamic holidays and coordinating and communicating with community leaders around the madrasah."*

The implementation of public relations at MI Nurul Huda Sawangan does not stand alone in its structure, situation, and certain conditions. However, with all madrasah members, especially teachers, who must always establish good relationships with the community. Therefore, first, how is the role of educators or teachers in establishing good communication with the community. Educators or teachers are one of the cornerstones in the running of the learning process and who are full guides both from life behavior that becomes a figure for students and the community. Therefore, the implementation carried out by teachers in establishing communication with the community must be carried out well in its response and in certain cases teachers conduct silaturahmi with the community together (home visit). This is confirmed by the parents of the madrasah students:

*"To realize harmonious relationships with the community, especially the external community, all teachers must always communicate well and help implement programs related to the community, such as becoming a committee for inviting parents, Islamic holidays, and coordination activities with several teachers and the community in the MI Nurul Huda Sawangan area. All madrasah members must be friendly to every parent or community member who comes to the madrasah. When there are parents or community members who come to the madrasah who need help, teachers and staff must always be responsive so that parents or community members who come to the madrasah truly feel respected and appreciated, so that harmonious relationships are automatically realized"*

From the several descriptions above, it is clear that to convey information to the community, especially parents of madrasah students, they are invited to the madrasah, which is carried out at the beginning of the new academic year. This is done for the implementation of mutually beneficial relationships, both the madrasah and the community.

When holding an event, especially a religious event, MI Nurul Huda Sawangan also invites several religious leaders and several community leaders around MI Nurul Huda Sawangan, this is done so that the school's relationship with the surrounding community becomes more harmonious and creates a positive image of the institution towards the surrounding community, so that the positive enthusiasm of the community towards the MI Nurul Huda Sawangan institution increases. This is explained by a parent who said:

*"The MI Nurul Huda Sawangan institution, every time it holds a religious event, not only students and teachers participate, but also several religious leaders and community leaders. I and several other religious leaders and community leaders are invited to the event, I am also included in the order of events, usually in the recitation of holy*

*verses of the Qur'an, sometimes I am also given a prayer section and so on."*

Therefore, MI Nurul Huda Sawangan also takes advantage of moments to promote the madrasah at certain events. As explained by one of the teachers, saying:

*"When there are certain events attended by the community, both graduation ceremonies and Islamic holiday celebrations, we involve students to promote the madrasah with the abilities possessed by each student to promote the works possessed by each student, we do this so that the community knows the madrasah."*

This event also provides stalls that are used to promote the madrasah. This has consequences for the institution to be able to attract attention and attract the sympathy of the external community. In addition, all school members in receiving guests or community members who come to school provide very good service, evidenced by school members communicating well and accompanying guests or community members to the place or room they want to go, this is done to increase community interest and participation in the institution.

One of the routine public relations programs at MI Nurul Huda Sawangan is the implementation of graduation ceremonies, in this case the public relations department facilitates several things needed in the event, such as making invitations for parents, renting equipment such as tents, chairs, stage sound systems and so on. As stated by a class teacher at MI Nurul Huda Sawangan:

*"For the implementation of the akhirusannah event, we and several other teachers contact the equipment rental for the event, starting from tents, chairs, stages and other necessities. Because our school does not yet have an auditorium that can be used to accommodate many people. In addition, we make invitations for parents, especially parents whose sons and daughters are to be akhirusannah."*

This is done to make the event a success, because the graduation ceremony is a sacred event, so it needs really thorough preparation, starting from the equipment to the graduation ceremony process. Implementation or movement in this case is to stimulate members of the organization to carry out their tasks with enthusiasm and good will. Public relations management in educational institutions moves the leader's ability to persuade people to achieve the goals that have been set with enthusiasm.



Figure 1. Coordination with various stakeholders

The implementation of public relations carried out by MI Nurul Huda Sawangan in involving community participation in the program implementation process consists of various activities, including:

- a. Inviting parents to hold deliberations, the madrasah introduces several programs to parents, so parents are expected to provide constructive criticisms and suggestions for the smooth running of the program and when taking report cards for grade promotion, parents are invited back to the madrasah to inform them of their children's learning achievement results for one year.
- b. On the first day of school after the Eid al-Fitr holiday, the extended family of MI Nurul Huda Sawangan uses it to carry out halal bihalal activities.
- c. Carrying out Islamic holiday commemoration such as the Maulid of Prophet Muhammad SAW and Isra' Mi'raj of Prophet Muhammad SAW events.
- d. Facilitating the akhirusannah event, in this case the public relations department facilitates several things needed in the event, such as making invitations for parents, renting equipment such as tents, chairs, stage sound systems and others.
- e. The implementation of home visits at MI Nurul Huda Sawangan is carried out when there are students who have been absent for a long time without explanation. After getting feedback from the students' parents, the school uses it as a reference to improve the quality of the institution.
- f. Conducting coordination and communication with the community around MI Nurul Huda Sawangan directly by the school, this is done to maintain the positive image of the institution in the eyes of the community, so that the community feels they have a stake in the existence of MI Nurul Huda Sawangan..

The results of this research prove the importance of collaboration between schools, families, and communities in improving the quality of education. This result is relevant to previous research that the existence of the tri-center of education has a positive impact on the quality of education (Chasanah et al., 2023; Damwah, 2025; Guo & Woulfin, 2016).

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This research resulted in the finding that the planning of public relations in involving community participation at MI Nurul Huda Sawangan has two types, namely: a) routine work program planning, including: inviting parents, halalbihalal, commemorating Islamic holidays, facilitating graduation ceremonies, and incidental work program planning, including: coordination and communication with community leaders. b) The implementation of public relations in involving community participation at MI Nurul Huda Sawangan consists of various activities, including: Inviting parents, holding halalbihalal events, commemorating Islamic holidays, facilitating graduation ceremonies, coordinating and communicating with the community around MI Nurul Huda Sawangan. The recommendation in this research is the need for an evaluation of the public relations that has been running so that it can further analyze the effectiveness of the programs that have been implemented.

## FURTHER STUDY

Further research can be focused on a comprehensive evaluation of the effectiveness of public relations programs in increasing community participation in the madrasah environment. In addition, it is important to examine the long-term impact of public relations activities on the image and public trust in MI Nurul Huda Sawangan. Comparative studies with other madrasahs can also be conducted to identify the most effective and innovative public relations strategies in building collaboration between schools and the community. Further research can also explore the role of social media and communication technology as more modern and wider-reaching public relations support tools.

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