

The Strategies of Brand Image Building at Private Institution of Islamic Education in Purwokerto

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to analyse the strategy implemented by private institution of Islamic education in building brand image. It is very crucial for the educational institution to build the brand image in order to survive within the competitive struggle. Moreover, Chen explains that brand image is considered as a myth of the school by some parents (Chen 2016). Thus, there are still a few of Islamic education which are aware of it. So, they have difficulty competing with other educational institutions having significant capital, a good brand image, and been accepted by the wider public. The method used were interview, observation, and documentation while to analyze the data the researcher used data collection, data reduction, presentation of data, and conclusions (Straus 1987). The result showed that madrasa conducted developing brand awareness by highlighting the distinctiveness and excellence possessed by the institution. Furthermore, the institution makes brand recognition by providing education and socialization to the community by arranging creative competition events for prospective students, seminars, social services, educational exhibitions, involving schools in local and national events, and publication of school achievements in print and electronic media, creating social media platforms such as, Facebook, IG, blogs, TikTok, etc. The other effort in building a brand association was by forming a strong and distinctive character which differ from other educational institutions. This study can be continued by the next reseachers to deepen their study with the same theme, either using qualitative or quantitative approach.

Keywords: Brand Image, Islamic Private School, Strategy.

INTRODUCTION

Islamic educational institutions began to obtain interests when the Indonesian government enacted Law No. 23 Year 2003 on the National Education System. The law elaborates that Islamic educational institutions are recognized as formal educational institutions corresponding to educational institutions in the Ministry of National Education. This policy provides challenges so that Islamic education can improve equity, quality, relevance of education, and better educational management. In addition, Islamic education is expected to implement the principle of universal insight, democracy (Ubaedillah 2014) systemic integration, culture and empowerment, model of excellent conduct (*uswah hasanah*), and uphold human rights (Nurjaman 2013).

Based on the law, the existence of educational institutions has legally received the same position as other educational institutions. However, it does not mean that the problem of Islamic educational institutions has been resolved; in fact, the Islamic educational institutions are required to play an active role in demonstrating their existence as an educational institution based on democratic Islamic values (Irawan 2019). According to that demand, many Islamic educational institutions have not met the expectations of the community. As a sequence, public assessment of madrasa as Islamic educational institutions tend to decline and are considered to have low quality (Fauzi 2016). Therefore, madrasas are considered as secondary schools of choice after not being admitted to public schools.

Based on careful observation, the main problem of Islamic educational institutions is related to management factors. The governance affects the low quality of Indonesian Islamic educational institutions (Suryadi 2009). The main factors causing the low quality of Islamic Indonesian education include: 1) the implementation of education emphasizes inconsistent results; 2) the education implementation is centrally managed – not holistically; and 3) the community participation in educational implementation is very limited (Usman 1997) (Rohiat 2010), 4) the Islamic educational institutions do not develop effective approach to the wider community, 5) most of Muslims prefer other schools because of the merit and quality, 6) some community do not fully recognize the madrasas as modern education (Indrioko 2105).

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Improving the quality of Islamic educational institutions requires active involvement of all elements in madrasa as well as the wider community as the consumers of education (Maujud 2017). Without community participation, Islamic educational institutions will be separately managed and difficult to develop. The existence of community participation is a characteristic of the form of educational services program (Pidarta 2004).

Those quality improvement efforts will establish a positive image in Islamic educational institutions. A high quality educational institution has the following characteristics: 1) it has a strong culture of discipline, 2) it has a relevant curriculum to modern science and technology, 3) it has a community that always creates creative techniques of learning, 4) the orientation is on balanced between knowledge and soft skill, and, 5) it concerns on holistic development of student potency (Suryadi 2009). The construction of public opinion can be developed based on mutual trust, and mutual needs between schools and community. Nasution explains that the public opinion will greatly promote the educational institutions because the public's criticism, suggestions, ideas, thoughts become valuable input for the institution (Nasution 2006).

Initially, the term of brand image was used in the industrial world and mostly related to an industrial product. Afterwards, due to the current of globalization, a brand image is interpreted as the representation or illustration of identity or the form of individuals, objects or organizations / institutions (Sutojo 2010). Another point of view elaborated by Sandra Oliver that brand image is presumption; a presumption that arises in consumers when remembering a particular product (Oliver 2006). That mindset can occur in the form of specific thoughts or impressions associated with a brand or product. The form of a person's mind is then conceptualized based on precise classifications based on the capacity, memory, and particular uniqueness of the product. So, that type of assumption can be in the form of attributes, benefits and attitudes. While what is meant by building a brand image is how to form a perspective on educational institutions both externally and internally through measurable activities and steps (Mahfuzhah 2018).

In the field of education, a brand image is a form of impression depicted by consumers consisting of the community, parents of students and those who benefit from services in education. Thus, the attributes of services intended in education are the services provided by the school in the form of teaching and learning processes. Meanwhile, product attributes are the results of educational institution services to students. Therefore, there is an impression of the product constructed by a good or bad image label. Derived from the good image, it will create public understanding, public confidence, public support, and public cooperation (Bonar 1993).

A brand image is the results of school culture coming from the values that serve as guidelines and benchmarks in

educational institutions. These values have been used as rules; and afterwards, the values are implemented consistently in order to create public opinion about the existence of qualified institutions. The rules that function as the guidelines for example: to prioritize on services, to strive to provide the best performance, to give comprehensive attention to the overall things even to the particular things, to minimize the distance to the community, and to perform sympathetic action.

Therefore, it is very crucial for the educational institution to build the brand image in order to survive within the competitive struggle. It is a must to improve their brand image by using modern marketing managerial concepts. Schools are expected to be able to make changes in terms of promotion management. It can be achieved by developing productive relationships with the surrounding community to develop their quality in order to build existence within the competition for educational institutions (Tam 2007). However, the facts show that most educational institutions do not understand that concept well. So, they have difficulty competing with other educational institutions that gain significant capital, have a good brand image, and have been accepted by the wider community.

One of the Islamic educational institutions in Banjarnegara has succeeded to build a significant brand image; it is Madrasah Tsanawiyah Andalusia Boarding School (MTABS) in Banjarnegara. In a relatively short time, less than 10 years, the institution experienced a very rapid development. The development is represented both in terms of the number of students and the accessibility of facilities such as adequate infrastructure as a support for the learning process. At this point, it is very important to investigate the management system, facilities and image branding implemented by the school. In addition, by living the vision of becoming a civilized, accountable and clean Islamic educational institution; supported by the slogan "so clean so clear" in the surrounding environment and financial management elevate the school not only known in Banyumas, but also in Jakarta, Kalimantan, Sumatera and Sulawesi. Based on the explanation above, the writer conducted research to analyze the strategies managed by that Islamic institution to build a brand image in the community.

Research on the brand image of the school management is not new, it was previously investigated by (Chen 2016), (Sindhu 2021), (Agus R 2019), (Wulandari 2019), dan (Murti 2019). According to the research, they conclude that image branding has a very important role to improve the recognition of the institutions in the community. In fact, that aspect is very influential to develop the parents' and students' decision to choose the school to attain the learning process. Moreover, Chen explains that brand image is considered as a myth of the school by some parents. Therefore, this research is in line with the conclusion provided by the previous researchers. This

study also aims to explore the role of brand image to maintain the existence of private Islamic educational institutions within the increasingly challenging school competition.

Theoretical Review

The Meaning of Brand Image

Historically, the term “brand” originated from the frequent activities of cattle ranchers in America by providing a tag to their cattle to facilitate ownership identification before being sold to the market (Riezebos 2003), (Sadat 2009), and (Servier 2000). In the subsequent development, the “brand” is interpreted as an indicator of value offered to customers, an asset that creates value for customers by strengthening their satisfaction and loyalty, and as a measuring tool for the quality of value offered (Kartajaya 2007). In the end, the “brand” means a sign about the source of the product to protect consumers and manufacturers from competitors who try to formulate identical products (Susanto 2004).

According to that elaboration, it can be concluded that “brand” is a symbol used as a marker or distinguishing identity owned by institutions as a form of their existence (Išoraitė 2018). In the context of educational institutions, brand is usually manifested by the symbol and name of an educational organization that aims as an identification. This brand is unique and specialized that distinguishes it from other products designed to fulfil similar needs (Tjijptono 2005).

Meanwhile, the image is not only constructed by operational activities as a main base on services, but it is also formed based on impressions and experiences gained by someone towards something, so that the mental attitude of consumers can be well developed (Assael 2002) and (Alfisyahr 2018). If the consumer has a positive image of a particular brand, then he/she will likely buy the product because a good brand is also used as the basis to construct a positive institutional image (Kotler 2002).

In relation to the brand, image is defined as the formation of a drawing or picture in the human mind so that it can recognize the visualized object. If the brand is a symbol, then the image is a picture of the symbol. Based on this explanation, it can be concluded that the brand image of educational institutions is a picture of symbols used by educational institutions with different forms from one institution to another. And, the brand image is usually formed from the continuous outpouring of ideas and innovations carried out by educational institutions to the public (Mundiri 2016).

Furthermore, Kotler defines the brand image as a set of beliefs, ideas and impressions that people have towards an object. Meanwhile, a person’s attitude and actions towards an object are strongly influenced by the object. This means that a person’s beliefs, ideas and impressions have a great influence on attitudes and behavior as well as possible responses (Kotler, B2B Brand Management 2006).

Someone who possesses a high level of trust in educational institutions will certainly register and entrust the educational institution to be a place to educate their children. In fact, they also can influence others to entrust their children’s education to the institution. Developing and maintaining loyalty as behavior and attitude that create form word of mouth marketing can only happen if the institution maintains the value of a good product image attached to the customer’s mind. Soebagio in Admodiwiryo explains that there are two benefits if an educational institution displays a positive brand image: first, consumers will develop a high attitude of trust; second, it can attract more relatives to the students’ family members (Admodiwiryo 2000).

Ruslan says that the brand image is a set of beliefs, ideas, thoughts, and impressions of society towards a particular object (Ruslan 2017). According to Moore, the brand image is a public feeling, impression, or conception of an object, institution or organization (Moore 2005) and (Jefkins 2003). Therefore, the school’s brand image can be categorized as a picture or condition of an educational institution which can give a strong impression on the community towards the school; therefore, the school cannot regulate the public’s perception of the image. So, building a brand image is not easy because the communication and information carried out by the educational institutions does not directly change the person’s behavior. At this point, the institution is expected to influence a person’s perspective on a particular environment or object. As a sequence, the schools will gain both positive and negative brand images in the community (Juhji 2020).

Due to the existence of intangible educational services (Secundo 2010), the consumers usually observe the particular indications to assess the quality of the educational service. They will notice the quality of teachers’, administrators’, and employees’ performance, infrastructure, educational equipment, symbols used by schools, and tuition fee to pay for the school. Thus, the components of educational institutions must continue to update their competence. The main objective of updating process is to improve the quality of education in a sustainable, continuous, and integrated manner. The efforts to improve the quality of education is conducted not in one whole process but they are carried out based on the quality improvement in each component of education (Arbangki 2016).

Brand Image in Educational Marketing

Creating a positive brand image in educational institutions is not easy. For the managers of educational institutions, they are required to know and understand the things that can form a brand image in the educational institutions. Besides that, they have to construct a positive brand image of educational institutions and understand the term of synergistic application of marketing mix (Gajic 2012). The marketing mix in the context of education is a very important element because it

can be combined to produce a marketing strategy in order to win the competition. It can also be as promotional tool consisting of various elements of a marketing program to be examined, so that the implementation of marketing strategies and positioning can be conducted successfully.

There are four important components to construct the brand image of the institution such as perception, cognition, motivation, and attitude (Soemirat 2003). Perception means a person's ability to organize and interpret stimulus patterns in the environment (Atkinson 1991). By utilizing the ability to perceive the process, it continues to develop the image by providing information to individuals to bring up a belief. So, from these beliefs then arises a pro and con attitude about the product, it is the formation of a positive or negative image (Ardianto 2010).

There are seven factors which shape the brand image as the following:

1. Quality; it relates to the quality of goods and services products offered by the institution,
2. Trustworthy or reliability; it relates to opinions or agreements developed by the community about a product or service,
3. Usefulness or benefits; it relates to the function of a product or service.
4. Service; it relates to the duty of the institution in serving consumers,
5. Risk; it relates to the magnitude of the consequences or losses that may be experienced by consumers.
6. Price; it relates to the amount of costs to study,
7. The brand image owned by the brand itself; for example in the form of views, agreements, and information related to a particular brand (Schiffman 2007).

Meanwhile, the brand image has three supporting variables, they are:

1. Corporate image; it is a set of associations that consumers perceive to the institution that makes a product or service. In this study, the brand image of the company includes: popularity, credibility, as well as the company's network,
2. User image; it is a set of associations that the consumers perceive to the users who use a good or service; it includes the user himself, lifestyle /personality, and social status,
3. Product image; it is a set of associations that consumers perceive towards a product (Aaker 1993).

There is almost no difference between the development process of brand image in goods/services and educational products. However, in the context of a marketing strategy, there is a quite significant difference between them. A service is, according to Kotler, any action or performance offered by one party to the other that is essentially intangible and it does not result in a transfer of ownership (Kotler, Marketing

Management International Edition 2003). Furthermore, services have the following characteristics: a) intangible, b) inseparability, c) variability, d) perishability, e) unstorage and unconsumed, f) consumers are the internal parts of the service production process, g) everything related to consumers has a contribution and role, h) liaison employees are part of the service production process, and i) Service quality cannot be improved during the production process because service production occurs in real time (Machali 2015).

METHOD

This study implemented a qualitative research by applying an exploratory descriptive approach. So, this research was designed by the approach of case study by focusing on the strategies of brand image in Islamic Institution. And, the site of this research is Madrasah Tsanawiyah Andalusi Boarding School (MTABS) in Banjarnegara. This site was selected because the performance of the school in marketing service products succeeded in reaching the wider community's attention (based on the preliminary research). It is shown that 9% of the 300 students come from outside Central Java (even outside of Java), South Kalimantan, West Kalimantan, and Lampung.

The informants of this research consisted of the madrasa principal, the head of the foundation, the principal, the vice principal of public relations, and the students' parents/ caretakers. Purposive sampling technique was used to state the informants. The data collection used in this research were indepth interview, ingroup observation and documentation. To assure the data collected had validity and reliability, the triangulation data of source were used. And, the data analysis techniques used are 1) data collection, 2) data reduction, 3) presentation of data, and 4) conclusions (Straus 1987).

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Based on the data, the strategic steps conducted by Madrasah Tsanawiyah Andalusia Boarding School (MTABS) Banjarnegara to build branding image include three stages, as follows:

Brand Awareness Building

Brand Awareness is the ability of a potential buyer to recognize or recall that a brand is part of a particular product category (Simamora 2001). Meanwhile, the brand awareness development is a reflection of the being unaware of the brand), brand recognition, brand recall, and the brand becomes the first choice or top of mind (Świtafa 2018), (B Latif 2104).

According to Sunaryo, the Head of MTABS Banjarnegara Foundation, the strategic steps were carried out in order to build a brand image. The strategic steps were conducted by improving the competence of graduates so that they

can compete with the surrounding schools. Obtaining the achievement in a top 10 ranking on the National Examination out of 55 secondary schools in Banjarnegara is clear evidence toward the accomplishment of the strategic steps.

In addition to the academic aspect, the promotion process of institutions was carried out by holding various activities, such as: events and competitions for the elementary students' creativity, seminars on teachers' competence, inhouse training, bazaars, presenting national figures, publication of school achievement in print and electronic media, developing institutional web, the use of social media platforms as communication media such as: facebook, instagram, blog, youtube, etc. All of those activities aim to manage community expectations towards the progress of the students and to provide information in terms of the evident results on teaching and learning activities, so that the community has a strong trust in the school.

Furthermore, Soenarya explained that the school has memorizing Qoran (*Tahfidz al-Quran*) program as the school's excellence and character compared to the other schools. In the *tahfidz* program, the students are expected to memorize at least 15 chapters (*juz*). In addition, mastering Islamic traditional/classic books, soft skills, extracurricular activities, and entrepreneurship are the other distinguishing excellence of the school. The promotion strategy is accomplished until the community can recognize and be familiar with credibility of that Islamic educational institutions, so it will be the first choice for study, not being the second option after public schools. Based on this activity, the institution will have a strong and unique character so that it can give a positive impression to the community.

To improve the quality of graduates, the strategies conducted by MTABS Banjarnegara provide solutions to the stages of being unaware of the brand image within the community about the advantages of Islamic educational institutions. After overcoming the stage of being unaware of a brand, the following step is the brand recognition. It is the stage on how schools must have a strong character which distinguishes them from other educational institutions.

In this case, brand association is something that appears and relates to the consumer's recognition of a brand. When a brand and other concepts come to mind together, they are neurologically connected and they can be judged at the same time. The brand association reflects the brand image of a particular impression in relation to habits, lifestyle, benefits, attributes, products, geography, price, and competitors (Durianto 2004).

Brand association conducted by MTABS Banjarnegara is certainly different from the industrial field that perceives a strong character in the form of products. In educational institution point of view, a strong character refers to the total quality management applied appropriately in order to help

managers in implementing education and graduates who can meet or even exceed the expectations of their stakeholders.

Building of Institutional Perceived Quality

Perceived quality is the customer's perception of the overall quality or excellence of a product or service related to the customers' expectation (Malik 2012). Meanwhile, according to Schiffman and Kanuk, perceived quality is the impression of quality as the consumer's assessment toward the quality of goods or services based on information as the association of the product (L. & Schiffman 2008); (Zeithaml 1990). Perception of quality has an important role in building a brand image for an educational institution. Many contexts of the quality perception of an educational institution can be an important reason for stakeholders to determine which school to choose.

In this context, there are two major steps conducted by MTABS Banjarnegara to build the branding image, they are:

Building of Perceived Quality Product

Perceived quality of product is a perception of quality based on the physical markings or characteristics of a product. Thus, the perception of product quality can be in the form of the use of physical characteristics to assess the quality of a product. Quality assessment by stakeholders is sometimes based on extrinsic characteristics that are closely attached and even difficult to separate; on the other words, it has become the trademarks of a product (Gavin 1987). There are five dimensions of quality product, as follows.

Performance

Performance is a core product characteristic that includes, brand, measurable attributes and aspects of individual performance. The performance of the products is usually based on the subjective preferences of business customers that are essentially universal. It relates to the functional aspects of a good or service and as the main characteristic for the customers to consider when deciding to buy the goods.

According to the Head of Madrasa, Anton, to ensure the performance of the school community, the school assigns the duties and functions to the employee based on their competencies. Job descriptions and detailed Standard Operating Procedures are also systematically structured to ensure that the organization can run well. When accomplishing the duty, all employees are required to work based on sincerity, honesty, transparency and accountability. That strategy is achieved in order to develop the trust and positive image of the community. What Anton stated is in accordance with the opinion of Robbin (Robbins 2016).

Regarding learning management, MTABS applies the best process strategy to all teachers. The teachers are required to prioritize professionalism in the teaching-learning process and

they are not allowed to bring their religious understanding into the teaching-learning process. They must respect the differences in religious perception, and be guided by the majority religious teaching, *ahl sunnah wa al-jama'ah*. This strategy is implemented to ensure that the school has an inclusive, moderate and multicultural attitude.

Serviceability

The second strategy to build MTABS Banjarnegara image is to provide the greatest service to customers. The school uses the jargon: “so clean so clear”. The philosophy of “so clean” is interpreted as a clean and breezy institution in the arrangement of buildings and environments as well as clean and tidy in the appearance of all school members. Meanwhile, the term “so clear” is aimed an institution that always upholds the principle of transparency and accountability in financial management.

According to Nur Baeti Setiawan, Head of Administrative Affairs, he explained that the financial management is derived from School Operational Assistance, educational contributions, community donations and the product sales from foundations. Those overall sources of financial management are used transparently. Periodic reports on the use of the finance can be accessed by institutional stakeholders. The funds are used to support the development of institutions, educational management and activities. To ensure the right and appropriate use of money, the institution establishes a supervisory board or an Internal Audit Unit which serves as a consultant, supervisor and assessor.

Reliability

Reliability is related to the possibility of a product experiencing a state of disfunction at a particular time. The state of a product indicates the level of quality in which it is very meaningful for consumers in choosing a product. In terms of education, the reliability is related to institutional accreditation, Quality Management Standards, students' behavior, students' achievement, quality of graduates, and school's flagship activities.

In this regard, MTABS Banjarnegara has been trying to improve the institution's recognition by applying for accreditation and has obtained A in Accreditation Certification or superior accreditation rating since 5 years ago. This accreditation rating reflects a guarantee that the institution has reliable and professional management. It is also an indicator that graduates from this institution have high competitiveness. According to school documentation, almost every year, there are some students who pass the enrollment process and are accepted at MAN Insan Cendikia Tangerang. That madrasa is known as a school that has a very high level of competition in the admission process. This achievement is something that we are most proud of, said the head of the madrasa, Anton.

The school obtained the accreditation ratings due to the implementation of a good school quality assurance system. Quality assurance is a technique to determine that the school has implemented the educational process appropriately. By applying this technique, if there are deviations during the educational process, it can be detected easily. The technique also emphasizes continuous and institutionalized monitoring; in which it becomes a subsystem of schools. Quality assurance can also provide and generate information about feedback for schools and provide assurance for students' parents that the school always provides the best service for the students. By implementing the quality, the school can obtain feedback on the success of the school from the community, students' parents, staff and teachers, as well as the industrial world. It means that the school can gain a guarantee of trust from stakeholders around the school and outside the school (Yunus 2007).

Conformance

It is not easy to adjust the service products to the community demands. Madrasas need to try to create acceptable programs to the community or meet stakeholders' expectations. So, within the management, it takes creativity and brilliant ideas to attract and captivate people. In relation to the case, Madrasas have a responsibility to provide some things (competences) needed by the community and users (Mulyasa 2017). One of the efforts conducted by this school (MTABS) is by implementing the program of memorizing (*Tahfidz*) Al-Quran, every students requires to memorize it at least 15 chapters (*juz*) and also to master classical book studies. This program aims to equip the students with knowledge and piety or spiritual quotient and also to meet the public demand.

While, this madrasa has, in the field of information and technology, extracurricular program, like robotics, graphic design, and creating blog. But, the most popular program offered to the students is robotic because it can stimulate the students and encourage them to think creatively. Therefore, during the robotics activity, the students are not only trained to have ideas and concepts in robotics, but they are also required to be able to think divergently and to develop thinking skills and creativity (Nashori 2002). So far, the madrasa principal elaborated that the extracurricular activities at MTABS Banjarnegara performed weekly aimed to equip the students on the science and technology competencies or intelligence quotient. This is an evident effort that the school provides provisions with balanced competencies between religious spiritual and scientific cognitive abilities. Thus, it is expected that madrasa graduates have, in turn, faith, piety and master the basic and qualified science of knowledge and technology (Nata 2001).

The distinguishing element of this institution is the implementation of the vision and mission in MTABS

Banjarnegara, they were: the realization of Muslim generation based on Qur'anic thoughts, superior in achievement and language. Furthermore, this vision is explained to be a more operational indicator, namely: a) the realization of adequate learning by following the development of natural science and technology so that the students can think critically, creatively, competitively and innovatively, b) the students can be qualified in academic and non-academic performance, c) the students can master Arabic and English in intermediate level for written and spoken language.

Aesthetics

Aesthetics is the most subjective measurement dimension. Beauty is a philosophical matter to find the general characteristics existing in all objects or the essential qualities of the notion of beauty based on the point of view of the unity, balance, harmony, symmetry, and the contrast of lines, colors, shapes, tones, and words (Yulianita 2004). There are also some researchers who argue that beauty is a collection of harmonious relationships in an object, and between the object and the observer.

According to madrasa principal, choosing Andalusian label as the school name was inspired by the name of the kingdom in Spain as the birthplace of great scientists such as Averroes, Avicenna, Ibn Khaldun, etc. It also includes the naming of each class in the school taken from the inspirational classical Islamic cities such as Granada, Cordoba, and Alhambra. To support the impression of excellence and aesthetics toward the Islamic heritage, the school building was designed to imitate the prototype of the Spanish Islamic building. It is enhanced by the design of a cool and leafy garden arrangement. Furthermore, according to Soenarya, there are two reasons, at least, for the use of labeling the term "Andalusia". First, it is expected that this institution will produce graduates who are able to inherit knowledge from those classical Islamic figures. The second, the foundation intends to change the image that madrasas are perceived as the educational institutions for lower economic class, poor quality, limited on religious teaching only, focusing on the afterlife, shelters for the children of the poor, old-fashioned systems, and the graduates cannot continue to public schools or favorite public universities (Qomar 2002).

Building of Perceived Quality Services

Perceived quality of service is a quality perception based on the characteristics of services offered or provided by an institution, both profit and non-profit institutions. The quality of products in profit institutions is tangible while the quality of service in educational services is intangible and perishable (Hidayat 2016). The quality of Islamic educational institutions is certainly different from profit institutions. In profit institutions, perceived quality can be measured based on

five criteria consisting of safety, functional, image, nutrition, and sensory (Greibitus 2007). Meanwhile, in nonprofit educational institutions, there are some factors related to quality. They include teachers' competence, curriculum or teaching materials (cognitive, affective, and psychomotor competence), methodology, school facilities, administrative support, infrastructure and other resources as well as the establishment of a conducive atmosphere, school management, academic atmosphere, discipline, and character (Gilano 2021).

In this context, MTABS Banjarnegara has handled the institution in modern management. The leadership model prioritizes the system rather than the figure. Therefore, whoever becomes the principal, the policies implemented are always sustainable. The application of this kind of leadership pattern can affect the positive perception of the community so that it can build the public's trust. Finally, the reputation and brand image of madrasa can be elevated. The brand image becomes a measure of good and bad of the organization internally and externally. This trust is a very important factor for the institution, because it becomes one of the aspects that gets attention and becomes the basic reference of management and organizational behaviour (Lewicki 2003), (Bunker 1996).

In order to ensure the accountability of an institution's performance on the division of tasks, MTABS implements the system "the right man in the right place" in managing human resources. It means that the management assigns the people according to their competence and expertise. Then, in the promotion system, the school applied local assessments in the form of the institution's evaluations, loyalty, achievement, commitment, and peer assessment conducted openly, and democratically. Meanwhile, to keep school members always embracing high motivation in achieving their goals, the institution has the jargon *man jadda wajada* (Arabic) which means whoever strives shall succeed. This jargon is always declared by all school members anytime and anywhere.

The chairman of the MTABS Banjarnegara foundation formed three divisions; they are the madrasa division, the boarding school division, the activities and public relations division. This divisions are aimed to make the management of the institution more effective. Each division is mandated to be creative in developing their respective fields as long as it is in accordance with the vision and mission of MTABS Banjarnegara. Of course, the development must be consulted with the board, especially those related to funding.

In the context of stakeholder services, MTABS establishes and implements standardized and measurable rules. The services must be in line with the customers' expectations, which include punctuality, minimizing errors, a sympathetic attitude, being friendly, respecting guests, and the ability to foster the customers' trust. All teachers and employees are required to dedicate sincere attention, whether it is individual or personal thought given to the customers by trying to

understand the consumers' needs. By providing that excellent service, it is expected that the brand image of institutions in the community can be more positive.

As an educational institution, MTABS Banjarnegara has understanding and knowledge to the customers, recognizes the customers' needs specifically, and has a comfortable operating time for customers. In addition, the institution has the responsiveness to help and provide fast and appropriate service to the customers with clear information. They really understand that by leaving the consumers to wait without a clear reason leads to a negative perception of the service quality.

In constructing the branding image, the success of an educational institution is also determined by the right marketing strategy. Especially in educational marketing, John R. Silber as quoted by Alma stated that the ethics of marketing in the world of education is to offer the quality of intellectual services and form a comprehensive character (Alma 2009). That happens because education is more complex than profit oriented institution, it is conducted in a responsibility.

According to the Madrasa principal, the strategic steps for marketing educational services implemented by MTABS Banjarnegara consist of five steps. The first step is done by identifying the market to determine market conditions and expectations; it includes educational attributes becoming the interest of educational consumers. In this case, madrasas have social capital to participate in educating the nation and succeeding national compulsory learning programs. The second step is continued by identifying market share by grouping service users into clusters according to economic level (low, middle and high income) and academic achievement.

The third step is to offer a superior program that does not exist in other educational institutions, so that the program has its own characteristics. The effective method taken by MTABS Banjarnegara is the "high product low cost" strategy. It means that the institution aims to equip students with competitive competencies with affordable school financing. The fourth step is marketing communication to the community. In this case, the public relations division has a very strategic role. Although madrasas are scientific institutions, the forms of promotional strategy are not always in a scientific format (Khasanah 2016). Scientific communication is conducted by organizing some competition programs in the fields of study, seminars, studies, family gatherings, and publication of achievements by independent media such as news in mass media both printed and electronic. Meanwhile, promotion in more entertainment strategies is taken by creating digital platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, Tiktok, Facebook, blogs, etc. Then, the fifth step is to provide excellent service to the users. This strategy is adopted to minimize the gap that often occurs between the perception of service quality and users' expectations.

CONCLUSION

MTABS's efforts in building the brand image are conducted by developing brand awareness by highlighting the distinctiveness and excellence possessed by the institution. Furthermore, the institution makes brand recognition by providing education and socialization to the community by arranging creative competition events for prospective students, seminars, social services, educational exhibitions, involving schools in local and national events, and publication of school achievements in print and electronic media, creating social media platforms such as, Facebook, IG, blogs, TikTok, etc. The next stage is to build a brand association by building a strong character that distinguishes from other educational institutions. This strategy is carried out by implementing the *tahfidz* al-Quran program in which the students are expected to memorize at least 15 chapters and master the basic intermediate level of classical books.

Another brand image development strategy accomplished by MTABS Banjarnegara is to optimize the product and service quality. As an educational institution, building the perception of those services is very important. That step begins by recognizing the perception-forming factors such as cognition, interpretation of objects, signs and persons from the point of the users' experience. Therefore, the perceived quality of both service and product quality is determined by building stimuli that depart from two main factors; they are past experience and personal factors.

Finally, the author emphasizes that an Islamic educational institution must be handled with good management and introduced to the wider community in innovative and modern strategies. Because, the brand image of Islamic educational institutions cannot be separated from the comprehensive involvement, in the form of support and expectations from the community.

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