

## ENHANCING ISLAMIC EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS' QUALITY TO CAPTURE PUBLIC INTEREST (A MULTI-SITE STUDY AT MTS DARUL HIKMAH AND MTS MAMBA'UL ULUM TULUNGAGUNG)

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**Abstract:** The advancement of modern science has had a considerable impact on Islamic education, necessitating a shift in focus from its traditional role as a moral foundation to one of competition with public education. This research project examines strategies for enhancing the quality of Islamic education and attracting public interest. It employs a multi-site study of two Islamic educational institutions: The two Islamic educational institutions under consideration are MTs Darul Hikmah Tulungagung and MTs Mamba'ul Ulum Tulungagung. A qualitative approach was employed to collect data through in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and documentation. Informants included school heads, deputies, teachers, and student guardians. The findings indicate that both institutions implement total quality management strategies, with a particular focus on enhancing the competence of educators, improving facilities, optimising educational management, refining learning processes, developing graduate competencies, enhancing evaluations, and securing adequate funding. Furthermore, they proactively disseminate information about their institution through social and mass media in order to influence public perception. The aforementioned continuous quality improvement efforts have resulted in a notable increase in the number of student applicants on an annual basis, thereby demonstrating the efficacy of the strategies employed in enhancing the institution's appeal and competitiveness.

**Keywords:** Quality, Public Interest, Islamic Education Institution.

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## Introduction

Education is a system and method that serves to enhance the quality of life in all its aspects, facilitating the acquisition of knowledge and skills that enable individuals to lead more fulfilling lives. Throughout history, virtually no group of people has failed to utilise education as a means of enhancing the quality of their lives, even in communities that have remained relatively underdeveloped. Education represents the most effective and efficient means of transmitting knowledge, culture, and other forms of capital from one generation to the next in a society. As Essen Sucuoğlu observes, education is a means of enhancing the welfare of society through individual development.<sup>1</sup> In this sense, the institution of education plays an important role in the formation of reliable human resources within the community, capable of occupying any field.

Islamic education plays an indispensable role in the Indonesian educational system, facilitating its overall advancement. The initial establishment of Islamic education took the form of schools, madrassas and even boarding schools that were structured in accordance with Islamic educational models. An encouraging development has emerged with considerable implications for the field of education. Firstly, there has been a notable proliferation of educational institutions based on Islamic principles. Islamic education provides a plethora of educational opportunities for the general Muslim population, thereby ensuring access to quality education. The existence of numerous and diverse educational models gives rise to a positive competitive environment, whereby institutions are driven to provide the best possible service to their users. Secondly, institutions of Islamic education are characterised by distinctive features that differentiate them from non-Islamic educational institutions. Such institutions are able to exert influence independently, particularly in the eyes of the general public. Residences offering high-quality Islamic education, both in rural and urban areas, are able to provide a sustainable, high-quality education that is of interest to society. The potential for Islamic education to provide a vital service to a

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<sup>1</sup> Essen Sucuoğlu and Gülümser Erdem, “Effects of Sustainable Strategic Planning Applications in Primary Schools on the Effectiveness of Total Quality Management Practices,” *Sustainability* 13, no. 18 (September 7, 2021): 9998, <https://doi.org/10.3390/su13189998>.

significant proportion of the Indonesian population who adhere to the Islamic faith represents a significant advantage.

At the time, Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia, which have a Muslim majority population, were confronted with two significant challenges. The initial challenge was the preparedness of these institutions to compete with other, more established educational institutions, particularly those based on scientific principles. Secondly, the institution must implement a sustained programme of internal quality improvement, encompassing both human and non-human resources. In order to elevate Islamic educational institutions to the status of branded schools and to attract the attention of key stakeholders, it is essential to ensure the uninterrupted enhancement of educational standards. It is indubitable that the public perception of the value and exclusivity of Islamic educational institutions will be enhanced by these improvements.

In order to gain the interest and attention of a diverse society, it is necessary to implement improvements at the institutional level. These improvements can be broadly categorised as follows: improvements to the curriculum, enhancements to facilities and infrastructure, and improvements to the quality of educators and staff. In order to attract prospective students to Islamic educational institutions, it is necessary to present these institutions to the public as places that are equipped to accommodate and facilitate the teaching process in order to produce a superior generation of students.

It is of the utmost importance that Islamic educational institutions implement effective management practices and adopt innovative and modern approaches to disseminating information about their activities to the wider community. It is these innovative approaches that will capture the public's interest in Islamic educational institutions. The ability to attract public interest and subsequently build achievements and provide adequate educational services demonstrates that Islamic educational institutions are capable of competing positively based on their achievements and academic services.

This study will examine the strategies employed by Islamic educational institutions to garner public interest, with a particular focus on two institutions: The two institutions under consideration are MTs Darul Hikmah Tulungagung and MTs Mamba'ul Ulum Tulungagung. The locations of the two institutions facilitate a

comprehensive examination of their strategies for attracting public interest. The two institutions are located in disparate geographical areas. MTs Darul Hikmah Tulungagung is an Islamic educational institution situated in an urban setting, whereas MTs Mamba'ul Ulum Tulungagung is located in a rural environment. Furthermore, the strategies employed by the two institutions diverge significantly in their efforts to attract public interest.

The concept of linking the quality of institutions with increasing public interest through creative and innovative efforts in Islamic education represents a novel approach among the numerous studies on increasing institutional capacity. The author has conducted an extensive search of both national and international journals. In her 2021 study, Suryawahyuni Latief examined the development of Islamic education with the aim of increasing public interest in Madrasah Aliyah Agama (MAK). However, her research did not identify any strategies or efforts to enhance the quality of this education. The focus of the development was solely on the curriculum.<sup>2</sup> Similarly, Zuhariah and Moh. Ali (2020) investigated the advancement of Islamic education quality through the enhancement of madrasah teachers' competencies. However, Zuhariah's research prioritizes the quality of learning, which represents an insufficient improvement effort for the advancement of quality categories.<sup>3</sup> Amiruddin (2021) conducted research into the role of teachers and students in society with regard to the absorption of interest. However, this research neglected to consider internal quality, with the result that the findings focus on external roles only.<sup>4</sup> There is still a great deal of pioneering research that the authors claim is incomplete. Consequently, this research aims to provide a

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<sup>2</sup> Suryawahyuni Latief et al., "The Development of Islamic Education and Strengthening of National Education System of Indonesia," *International Journal on Advanced Science, Education, and Religion* 4, no. 2 (July 5, 2021): 86–99, <https://doi.org/10.33648/ijoaaser.v4i2.105>.

<sup>3</sup> Zuhariah Zuhariah, Moh. Ali, and Yusra Yusra, "The Role of Islamic Education Teachers Competency in Improving the Quality of Education," *International Journal of Contemporary Islamic Education* 2, no. 1 (August 1, 2020): 108–30, <https://doi.org/10.24239/ijcied.Vol2.Iss1.15>.

<sup>4</sup> Amiruddin Amiruddin, Nurdin Nurdin, and Moh. Ali, "Islamic Education Teacher Communication Strategy in Increasing Students Learning Interest," *International Journal of Contemporary Islamic Education* 3, no. 1 (June 20, 2021): 41–61, <https://doi.org/10.24239/ijcied.Vol3.Iss1.31>.

comprehensive approach to improving quality and interest in attending Islamic educational institutions.

In order to obtain valid and reliable research, this study employs a qualitative approach, collecting data directly from the field. The objective is to examine and delineate the strategies employed by Islamic educational institutions to garner public attention. This study employs a multi-site study design approach, whereby the two Islamic educational institutions with similar characteristics and objects of study are explored in depth.

In this study, the researcher employed a multi-stage data collection process, which entailed the use of a variety of methods and techniques. (1) Engaged observations: the researcher undertook observations of activities that have an impact on efforts to attract public attention to Islamic educational institutions. These activities encompassed religious observances and commemorations of national holidays, in addition to the routine activities that occur within the school environment. The objective was to ascertain the influence of these activities on public interest in MTs Darul Hikmah Tulungagung and MTs Mamba'ul Ulum Tulungagung.

(2) In-depth interviews: A series of interviews were conducted with a number of key informants, including madrasah public relations officers, madrasah quality assurance officers, madrasah heads, several student parents' councils, teachers, staff, and madrasa security officers. Furthermore, data was gathered through the documentation of various activities, including photographic and video evidence, minutes of meetings, and agendas related to the efforts of the two institutions in attracting public interest, both within their own communities and in the broader society. This study employs two forms of data analysis: an in-site data analysis and a cross-site data analysis.

### **An Effort to Build the Quality of Education for Attracting Public Interest in MTs Darul Hikmah Tulungagung and MTs Mamba'ul Ulum Tulungagung**

In light of the accelerated evolution of the global education landscape, it is increasingly evident that the engagement and involvement of the broader community play a pivotal role in the growth and expansion of educational institutions, facilitating the participation of a larger number of students each year. Attracting and

sustaining public interest is a crucial aspect of this process, as evidenced by the experiences of MTs Darul Hikmah Tulungagung and MTs Mamba'ul Ulum Tulungagung. These institutions have demonstrated that public interest in Islamic educational institutions is driven by a combination of factors, including the institution's commitment to continuous quality improvement and the provision of exemplary services.

The success of MTs Darul Hikmah Tulungagung and MTs Mamba'ul Ulum Tulungagung in attracting public interest is evidenced by the increasing number of new student registrants and the introduction of madrasas to the wider community. Some of the concepts identified in the research are analogous to those proposed by Suyanto in Suryadi, namely that schools of interest exhibit the following characteristics: (1) possess a robust academic culture, (2) offer a curriculum aligned with the advancement of science and technology, (3) foster a school community that consistently devises novel approaches to learning, (4) facilitate a balanced growth of both hard and soft knowledge, (5) engage in a learning process that nurtures students' holistic development, (6) cultivate abilities and competencies for effective global communication.<sup>5</sup>

The six aspects described by Suyanto can be observed and documented in the findings of observation and documentation. This includes the discipline and responsibility demonstrated by the madrasa residents in carrying out their respective activities, an interesting learning system, a sense of comfort for students, a balance between knowledge and skills, students' skills, and the ability of madrasa residents to communicate with guests and the wider community. The employees of MTs Darul Hikmah Tulungagung and MTs Mamba'ul Ulum Tulungagung are highly participatory in the progress and efforts to improve the quality of educational institutions. This is evidenced by their capacity to innovate in learning activities, their ability to assume each other's roles and responsibilities, and their willingness to assist one another in their work.

It is evident that the appeal of an educational institution is inextricably linked to the perceptions of its consumers.<sup>6</sup> Individuals

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<sup>5</sup> Suryadi, *Manajemen Mutu Berbasis Sekolah* (Bandung: PT Sarana Panca Karya, 2019), 12–16.

<sup>6</sup> Agung Sutiadi et al., "Meningkatkan Kepemimpinan Efektif dan Manajemen Mutu Pendidikan Dalam Menghadapi Tantangan Global," *Journal of Information System and Management* 02, no. 1 (2023): 7, <https://doi.org/10.4444/jisma.v2i1.234>.

who have confidence and interest in Islamic educational institutions are unlikely to consider other options when it comes to the education of their children. In some cases, these communities may even demonstrate a high level of loyalty and commitment to providing financial and other forms of support to the institutions in question.<sup>7</sup> The findings of the research conducted at MTs Darul Hikmah Tulungagung and MTs Mamba'ul Ulum Tulungagung demonstrate that in order to maintain the attractiveness of an institution and ensure its continued demand from the public, Islamic educational institutions must prioritise the development of a sustainable quality framework that encompasses the entire internal institution.

The internal quality of the institution is the primary focus of both MTs Darul Hikmah Tulungagung and MTs Mamba'ul Ulum Tulungagung, as a means of attracting public interest. Both institutions implement measures to enhance the quality of learning materials and the core competencies to be attained through the content standards. In this instance, the madrasah established a curriculum development team comprising teachers, madrasah heads, experts (lecturers), and committees. Moreover, the team prepares a comprehensive curriculum draft, which includes the vision and mission of the educational institution, the educational calendar, the structure of the curriculum content, the syllabus, and lesson plans that are ready to be implemented in the classroom. The preparation of the educational curriculum constitutes an integral aspect of the madrasah's planning activities.<sup>8</sup> This activity may assume the form of a madrasah work meeting or madrasa group convened prior to the commencement of the new academic year. The final stage of curriculum preparation is the revision and finalisation phase, during which the curriculum team assigns tasks to individual teachers with regard to the development of learning tools at the outset of the academic year. This suggests that MTs Darul Hikmah Tulungagung

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<sup>7</sup> Etie Novia Rizki and Wahyu Kurniawati, "Use of Quizizz Applications and Its Impact on Higher-Level Thinking Skills of Elementary School Teacher Education Students in Elementary Science Learning," *International Journal of Basic Education* 6, no. 2 (2022): 8, <https://doi.org/10.23887/ijee.v6i2.47686>.

<sup>8</sup> Agus Purwanto et al., "Peningkatan Kualitas Produk dengan Pelatihan ISO 9001:2015 Sistem Manajemen Mutu Pada Industri Packaging di Tangerang," *Journal of Community Service and Engagement* 01, no. 02 (2021): 7, <https://doi.org/10.9999/jocosae.v1i02.12>.

and MTs Mamba'ul Ulum Tulungagung exhibit a high degree of discipline in their approach to curriculum preparation.

The data presented at MTs Darul Hikmah Tulungagung indicates that effective learning is characterised by a high level of student engagement.<sup>9</sup> The traditional passive role of the learner, as a mere recipient of material delivered by the teacher, is replaced by a more active role in which the learner is a subject engaged in the processes of thinking, seeking, parsing, inferring, and problem-solving. As Umiarso asserts, the material is selected, compiled, and presented to students by the teacher in a meaningful manner, in accordance with the needs and interests of the learners, and as closely connected with reality and its practical applicability in life. In this context, the learning process necessitates a collaborative approach between the teacher and the learner, whereby the teacher acts as a source of guidance and support, while the learner assumes responsibility for their own learning. Furthermore, the learning environment is identified as a significant factor influencing the quality of graduates produced.<sup>10</sup> A conducive learning atmosphere is a key attraction for the wider community and a priority for ongoing improvement. The learning atmosphere is not a physical component that can be quantified with a precise benchmark. However, a conducive learning atmosphere (as evidenced by research conducted at MTs Mamba'ul Ulum Tulungagung) can be discerned and experienced by all within the madrasa. Nevertheless, the learning process that engenders a sense of comfort and interest in students remains contingent upon the educator (teacher).

The findings at MTs Darul Hikmah Tulungagung indicate that teachers with high levels of discipline are able to complete their tasks effectively, including the planning and implementation of the learning process, the assessment of learning outcomes, the provision of guidance and training, the conduct of research, and the fulfilment of community service obligations. In this context, it is essential that the

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<sup>9</sup> A. Permana, H.H. Purba, and N.D. Rizkiyah, "A Systematic Literature Review of Total Quality Management (TQM) Implementation in the Organization," *International Journal of Production Management and Engineering* 9, no. 1 (January 29, 2021): 25, <https://doi.org/10.4995/ijpme.2021.13765>.

<sup>10</sup> Ana Fitrotun Nisa et al., "Basic Science Module as a Resource for Independent Learning for Elementary Teacher Education Students in the Pandemic Covid-19," *International Journal of Elementary Education* 6, no. 2 (2022): 10, <https://doi.org/10.23887/ijee.v6i2.44444>.



teacher possesses the requisite competencies, encompassing pedagogical, personal, social, and professional capabilities. In discharging their professional obligations, teachers are duty-bound to: (1) Plan learning, implement engaging learning processes, provide a supportive learning environment for students, and assess and evaluate learning outcomes. (2) Enhance and develop academic qualifications and competencies on an ongoing basis in line with the current developments in science, technology, and art. (3) Act objectively and without discrimination based on considerations of gender, religion, ethnicity, race, and certain physical conditions or family background, as well as the socioeconomic status of learners in the learning process.<sup>11</sup>

From this description, a common thread can be drawn with the findings in MTs Mamba'ul Ulum Tulungagung about the importance of improving the quality of madrasah teachers in line with the development of education in the current 4.0 era. Madrasah teachers, as the vanguard of Islamic education, must continue to expand their knowledge base through participation in training and workshops. In the event that this is not feasible, the minimum qualification for a madrasah teacher should be at the master's level.<sup>12</sup> This will foster the perception among the general public that madrasah teachers possess the requisite quality and are capable of keeping pace with contemporary educational advancements.

In order to facilitate the learning process, educators require access to appropriate facilities and infrastructure.<sup>13</sup> Facilities and infrastructure serve as instrumental support tools within the educational process, facilitating its smooth, regular, effective, and efficient functioning. It is essential that adequate facilities and infrastructure meet the minimum requirements set out in the standards for facilities and infrastructure. (1) The minimum criteria for facilities include furniture, educational equipment, educational media, books, and other learning resources, information, and

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<sup>11</sup> Suryadi, *Manajemen Mutu Berbasis Sekolah*, 104.

<sup>12</sup> Izzatun Nimah and Nanik Suntarti, "Manajemen Mutu Pendidikan di Era Revolusi Industri 4.0 dan Society 5.0," *International Journal of Disabilities and Social Inclusion* 01, no. 02 (n.d.): 9, <https://www.ijodasi.org/index.php/ijodasi/article/view/20>.

<sup>13</sup> Retno Mangestuti et al., "The Successful of Student Well-Being Development Through Child-Friendly School Programs," *International Journal of Elementary Education* 6, no. 2 (2022): 10, <https://doi.org/10.23887/ijee.v6i2.46019>.

communication technology. Additionally, each madrasah is required to own other equipment that supports learning. (2) The minimum criteria for infrastructure include land, buildings, spaces, and the installation of power and services. Each madrasah must own these items to ensure the smooth functioning of the institution. For facilities and infrastructure to have a meaningful impact on the educational process, they must be managed effectively.<sup>14</sup> Effective management entails a comprehensive understanding of the management of facilities and infrastructure, which encompasses the following key aspects: The aforementioned aspects can be classified into the following categories: (1) planning, (2) procurement, (3) inventory, (4) storage, (5) structuring, (6) use, (7) maintenance, and (8) elimination. It can be seen, therefore, that the completeness of facilities and infrastructure has a significant impact on the success of learning. Of greater importance is the question of how these facilities and infrastructure can be maintained and made durable. The results of research at MTs Darul Hikmah Tulungagung indicate that it is of great importance to ensure that all members of the madrasah community feel that they have access to existing facilities and infrastructure. This will ensure that these facilities are maintained and that the learning process runs smoothly.

The effective functioning of Islamic educational institutions hinges on the implementation of robust management practices. These are essential for the realisation of the madrasa's vision and mission. The effective management of madrasahs can be achieved through the implementation of strategic planning, the supervision and evaluation of operational activities, and the implementation of work plans.<sup>15</sup> It is imperative that the management of madrasahs demonstrate openness, partnership with the public, accountability, and community participation. The findings of research conducted at MTs Darul Hikmah Tulungagung and MTs Mamba'ul Ulum Tulungagung elucidate the necessity for a clear organisational structure and a close partnership relationship between madrasahs and the community in the management of madrasahs.

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<sup>14</sup> Barnawi, *Manajemen Sarana dan Prasarana Sekolah* (Yogyakarta: Arruz Media, 2018), 14.

<sup>15</sup> Husnul Khotimah and Nandang Hidayat, "Interactive Digital Comic Teaching Materials to Increase Student Engagement and Learning Outcomes," *International Journal of Elementary Education* 6, no. 2 (2022): 14, <https://doi.org/10.23887/ijee.v6i2.46038>.

A further crucial element of the educational process is the availability of sufficient financing for madrasas. The financing of education represents a crucial element in the implementation of educational programmes at the school level.<sup>16</sup> Tuition fees comprise investment costs, operating costs and personal costs. The objective of developing education financing is to ensure the availability of funding sources that align with national education standards. To achieve this, it is essential to implement a comprehensive strategy comprising the following key elements: (1) socialisation of the main sources of education funding, (2) identification of external funding sources, (3) optimisation of potential school resources, (4) preparation of education budgets, (5) establishment of additional business units, and (6) collaboration with the business world/industry.<sup>17</sup> As can be seen from the above description, it is of great importance for Islamic educational institutions to obtain self-financing sources that are not dependent on government funding or student fees. This will ensure that Islamic educational institutions are not perceived as cheap schools but as offering a high-quality education.

In order to ascertain the extent to which all educational objectives have been met, it is necessary to conduct an evaluation. In essence, educational evaluation comprises three key elements: learning evaluation, programme evaluation and evaluation system.<sup>18</sup> It is essential that teachers employ evaluation techniques to ascertain the extent of learning outcomes. Similarly, programme evaluations are necessary to assess the efficacy of implemented programmes, while system evaluations are required to evaluate all aspects of educational institutions. The findings of research conducted at MTs Darul Hikmah Tulungagung and MTs Mamba'ul Ulum Tulungagung indicate that the evaluation method is conducted through the holding of regular meetings and school year meetings. The most crucial aspect

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<sup>16</sup> Manarbek Gulden et al., "Quality Management of Higher Education: Innovation Approach from Perspectives of Institutionalism. An Exploratory Literature Review," ed. Pantea Foroudi, *Cogent Business & Management* 7, no. 1 (January 1, 2020): 1749217, <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311975.2020.1749217>.

<sup>17</sup> Matin, *Manajemen Pembiayaan Pendidikan: Konsep Dan Aplikasinya* (Jakarta: Rajawari Press, 2019), 91.

<sup>18</sup> Puspita Dwi Ananda and Setyo Eko Atmojo, "The Impact of the Discovery Learning Model on Problem-Solving Ability and Scientific Attitude of Elementary School Teacher Education Students," *International Journal of Elementary Education* 6, no. 2 (2022): 9, <https://doi.org/10.23887/ijee.v6i2.47684>.

of the evaluation process is the educational system, which encompasses three key areas of assessment: cognitive abilities, spiritual values and behavioural conduct. Nevertheless, in the present era, a considerable number of educational institutions are constrained by a tendency to assess morality solely in terms of intelligence, with scant consideration accorded to the value of the students themselves. This is despite the fact that Islam has emerged as a religion that perfects human morals. It thus falls upon Islamic educational institutions to implement a system of assessment that encompasses not only the spiritual and moral dimensions of their students, but also their spiritual values.

The overarching objective of an educational institution is to equip its graduates with the capacity to apply logical, critical and innovative thinking skills in decision-making.<sup>19</sup> The findings of research conducted at MTs Darul Hikmah Tulungagung and MTs Mamba'ul Ulum Tulungagung indicate that both madrasas are committed to providing students with a comprehensive education that encompasses knowledge, religious values, and practical skills. It is imperative that Islamic educational institutions prioritise the development of students' practical abilities, given that the majority of students will not solely rely on scientific knowledge in their future careers. The findings at MTs Darul Hikmah Tulungagung and MTs Mamba'ul Ulum Tulungagung have reinforced the perception among the wider community that madrasas also impart technical and vocational skills, thereby alleviating concerns about the nature of the skills acquired from Islamic educational institutions.

### **The Strategies to Attract Public Interest in MTs Darul Hikmah Tulungagung and MTs Mamba'ul Ulum Tulungagung**

It is the prerogative of any Islamic educational institution to seek out and engage with consumers of its educational services. In order to achieve this, madrasas must proactively disseminate information about themselves to the wider community. The research findings at MTs Darul Hikmah Tulungagung and MTs Mamba'ul Ulum Tulungagung indicate that the institution currently employs social media, mass media, and print media as a means of publication. The utilisation of this medium is of significant importance, as it serves

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<sup>19</sup> BAN Sekolah/Madrasah, *Perangkat Akreditasi* (Jakarta: BAN Sekolah/Madrasah, 2009), 11.

as an effective tool for the introduction of madrasas to the public. Additionally, the media can be employed as a conduit for disseminating information regarding the institution's achievements, as a means of public education, and also as a source of entertainment. Furthermore, the publication of madrasas can be conducted directly, for instance through social service activities, religious social activities, and national holidays. The utilisation of both media and direct community engagement will have implications for Islamic educational institutions that are in demand by the public.<sup>20</sup>

In order to gain the attention of the wider community and establish a favourable impression, both MTs Darul Hikmah Tulungagung and MTs Mamba'ul Ulum Tulungagung have taken the initiative to disseminate information about themselves. However, it is also important to ascertain the views of the public with regard to the existence of the madrasa. The subsequent analysis of public opinion is beneficial for acquiring comprehensive information regarding the community's aspirations, which can then be utilised for the planning of programmes for the relationship between the madrasa and the community. The findings at MTs Mamba'ul Ulum Tulungagung indicated that by understanding public opinion, the institution could also ascertain objective data about the benefits and weaknesses of a component of the madrasa in question.

In order to gain recognition and appeal to the wider community, both MTs Darul Hikmah Tulungagung and MTs Mamba'ul Ulum Tulungagung have initiated a process of community engagement. This has entailed not only the publication of information about the madrasas themselves, but also the solicitation of community feedback on the role and function of madrasas in the local context. The views of the community, henceforth referred to as public opinion, are useful for obtaining comprehensive information on the wishes of the community, which can then be used to plan the relationship programme between the madrasah and the community.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Gina A Fontanilla, "New Normal Education in the Mid-Way of Christian and Muslim Community: its Hip and Valley in the Digitalization Challenge," *International Journal of Education and Pedagogy* 4, no. 3 (2022): 11, <https://doi.org/10.21831/ijep.v4i3.19621>.

<sup>21</sup> Mazarul Hasan Mohamad Hanapi and Maizura Komari, "Kesediaan Guru Pendidikan Islam dalam Pelaksanaan Pembelajaran Abad Ke-21," *International Journal*

The findings at MTs Mamba'ul Ulum Tulungagung indicated that by gauging public opinion, the institution could ascertain objective data regarding the benefits and shortcomings of a specific component of the madrasa in question.

Madrasas may derive several benefits from understanding public opinion, including: (1) Madrasas are aware of developments in the wider public sphere pertaining to the implementation of education, which is essential for the planning of madrasa activity programmes. (2) Madrasas are able to devise strategies for engaging with the community on matters pertaining to madrasa programmes, including student behaviour and teacher conduct. (3) Madrasas possess a comprehensive understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of madrasa education. (4) Madrasas can ascertain information regarding population habits, (5) Madrasas can devise curricula that are effective or required by the community, (6) Madrasas can position public opinion in a manner that is proportional and objective, (6) Madrasas can determine issues that must be resolved prior to concluding meetings with parents, or meetings with teacher councils, and so forth.<sup>22</sup>

The findings of the research conducted at MTs Darul Hikmah Tulungagung and MTs Mamba'ul Ulum Tulungagung indicate that Islamic educational institutions must be aware of public opinion regarding their existence. This is crucial for the development of basic guidelines that can inform the implementation of programs in the community. To illustrate, if the public expresses a desire for students at MTs Darul Hikmah Tulungagung to develop particular skills, the institution will organise activities to facilitate this. These may include skills for life provision in areas such as graphic design, computer operation, foreign language proficiency, journalism and so forth.

The results of research conducted at MTs Darul Hikmah Tulungagung and MTs Mamba'ul Ulum Tulungagung indicate that the continued demand for Islamic education can be attributed to the need of these institutions to effectively market their educational

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*of Education and Pedagogy*, 2, no. 2 (2020): 9, <https://myjms.mohe.gov.my/index.php/ijeap/article/view/9167>.

<sup>22</sup> Norma Jusof, "Kemahiran Guru Pendidikan Islam di Sekolah Rendah Terhadap Pelaksanaan Pengajaran Berpusatkan Murid: Satu Analisa," *International Journal of Education and Pedagogy* 2, no. 3 (2020): 26, <https://myjms.mohe.gov.my/index.php/ijeap/article/view/10380>.

offerings. The marketing function of Islamic educational institutions is to attract the public and to foster long-term relationships with both prospective students and graduates.<sup>23</sup> It can be observed that the most interesting educational institutions are those that: (1) have a product that can be considered a commodity, (2) have standards, specifications, and packaging, (3) have clear goals, (4) have networks and media, and (5) have marketing personnel.<sup>24</sup> Based on the aforementioned description, it can be argued that Islamic educational institutions must produce superior products, whose graduates have knowledge and skills that are aligned with the demands of the modern era.

### **The Efforts of MTs Darul Hikmah Tulungagung in Attracting Public Interest and Its Implications for the Existence of the Institution**

The efforts to attract public interest carried out by MTs Darul Hikmah Tulungagung are more inclined to the type of *total quality management*, namely continuous improvement of overall quality. The system of realizing a quality culture to attract the community carried out by MTs Darul Hikmah Tulungagung starts from the internal institutions that are built thoroughly on all sides of the institution. The quality of the institution that is built requires loyalty, innovation, commitment, and continuous hard work for all madrasah residents. This is as stated by Dimitrios Kokaridas that the implementation of total quality management is based on innovation and quality improvement.<sup>25</sup> The findings of the interviews and observations indicate a high level of discipline among all members of the madrasah. Furthermore, the participation rate of madrasah members in every madrasa is notably high, which can foster a sense of familiarity and closeness among the madrasa academic community. Given the high

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<sup>23</sup> Asmawati Suhid et al., "Pendidikan untuk Semua: Amalannya dalam Sistem Pendidikan Islam di Malaysia," *International Journal of Education and Training* 1, no. 2 (2015): 7, <http://www.injet.upm.edu.my/images/journal/issue2>.

<sup>24</sup> Venosha Ravana and Sarala Thulasi Palpanadan, "The Stakeholder Requirements of 21st-Century School Science Education in Malaysia: A Systematic Review," *International Journal of Education and Pedagogy* 4, no. 3 (2022): 9, <https://myjms.mohe.gov.my/index.php/ijeap/article/view/19528>.

<sup>25</sup> Christos Karageorgos et al., "Planning and Implementing Total Quality Management in Education: The Case of Cyprus," *International Journal of Educational Management and Innovation* 2, no. 1 (January 20, 2021): 1, <https://doi.org/10.12928/ijemi.v2i1.2627>.

level of integrity and commitment evident in its operations, it is unsurprising that MTs Darul Hikmah Tulungagung continues to be regarded as a leading Islamic educational institution in the city of Tulungagung, despite the presence of numerous other schools offering similar programmes.

In order to attract public interest, MTs Darul Hikmah Tulungagung employed a multifaceted approach, utilising a range of communication channels, including social media platforms (YouTube, Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter), mass media outlets, electronic media, and print media. This is in accordance with Bilgin's research, which indicates that social media marketing activities are an effective factor in determining the attractiveness of an institution.<sup>26</sup> These channels are employed as a conduit for disseminating information about the existence of institutions to the broader community. Information in the form of the madrasah's vision and mission, as well as its achievements, activities, and the state of the institution, will be conveyed to consumers in order to inform their decision-making process when considering enrollment at the madrasah. The findings at MTs Darul Hikmah Tulungagung indicated that the student population was not limited to the Tulungagung city area, but also included students from Trenggalek regency, Kediri, and a small number of students from outside Java. This suggests that MTs Darul Hikmah Tulungagung has been successful in attracting significant public interest and attention. Conversely, activities that are directly related to the community, such as social services, religious holidays, and commemorations of national holidays, have the potential to influence the attractiveness and attention of the wider community, thereby demonstrating the continued demand for madrasahs and the annual increase in registrants.

### **The Efforts of MTs Mamba'ul Ulum Tulungagung in Attracting Public Interest and Its Implications for the Institution.**

In order to attract public interest, it is first necessary to monitor and evaluate the quality of learning and administrative services provided by the institution in all areas where these services intersect.

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<sup>26</sup> Yusuf Bilgin, "The Effect of Social Media Marketing Activities on Brand Awareness, Brand Image and Brand Loyalty," *Business & Management Studies: An International Journal* 6, no. 1 (April 25, 2018): 128–48, <https://doi.org/10.15295/bmij.v6i1.229>.



MTs Mamba'ul Ulum Tulungagung employs a comprehensive approach to monitoring and evaluation, encompassing the learning process, student achievement, customer satisfaction, collaboration across all madrasah components, and the efforts of educators. This approach aligns with the principles espoused by Hadari Nawawi in Umiarso regarding quality management in educational institutions. These principles include: (1) a customer-centric focus, encompassing both internal and external stakeholders, (2) a deep commitment to quality, (3) a scientific approach to decision-making and problem-solving, (4) a culture of teamwork, (5) a commitment to continuous process improvement, and (6) employee engagement and empowerment.<sup>27</sup>

The relationship between madrasahs and communities is mutually beneficial, as it enables the sustainability and progress of civilisation. Madrasahs will become more autonomous and have greater influence if their role is acknowledged and supported by the wider community.<sup>28</sup> However, the forms of support provided to madrasahs are highly varied. The findings of the study indicated that forms of support in the form of collaboration and partnership are consistently offered by residents of the surrounding community to MTs Mamba'ul Ulum Tulungagung in numerous activities, including commemorations of religious holidays, national holidays, and social services. Rohiat states that the school is organised with the objective of preserving the positive values of the community, with the intention that the school can effectively disseminate the values of the community. This is based on the findings from observations and interviews that the location of MTs Mamba'ul Ulum Tulungagung, situated in an area that requires the impression of cooperation and getting along well, helping each other, also influences the nature of the partnership between the madrasah and the community.

Consequently, three strategies have been employed by MTs Mamba'ul Ulum Tulungagung to garner public interest. The first entails addressing the needs of the phenomenon that affects the community. In their everyday lives, members of the community frequently engage in activities pertaining to tradition and spirituality,

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<sup>27</sup> Matin, *Manajemen Pembiayaan Pendidikan: Konsep dan Aplikasinya*, 169.

<sup>28</sup> Yuli Azmi et al., "Pemberdayaan Kompetensi Pedagogik Berbasis Kemampuan Reflektif untuk Peningkatan Kualitas Interaksi Pembelajaran," *International Journal of Community Service Learning* 4, no. 2 (2020): 14, <https://doi.org/10.23887/ijcs.v4i2.25657>.

including the holding of hauls, slametan, tawassul, and the commemoration of Islamic holidays. In such circumstances, the teachers and devices of MTs Mamba'ul Ulum Tulungagung are actively engaged in providing assistance, thereby serving as a driving force. This fosters a strong emotional bond between the school and the community. This approach is deemed effective, as education plays a pivotal role in addressing societal challenges.<sup>29</sup>

Secondly, the madrasah serves as a conduit for addressing societal issues. In this regard, MTs Mamba'ul Ulum Tulungagung implements a coaching programme, thereby reinforcing the role of schools as contributors to social capital. This is achieved by engaging in community service activities that capitalise on local resources. Students are encouraged to assume the role of agents, investigating challenges and devising solutions. This aligns with Locke's assertion that education plays a participatory role within society.<sup>30</sup>

Thirdly, Mamba'ul Ulum Tulungagung plays an active role in the wider community, engaging with a range of religious and social organisations. A plethora of other organisations can be identified, including the Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) and its autonomous bodies, the PKK, and farmer groups, among others. The organisation facilitates active participation from a diverse range of stakeholders, including teachers, students, alumni, and other educational professionals, who contribute their insights and expertise. This model is referred to as the quality empowerment of egalitarianism, whereby education is not only integrated with social structures but also with social assets such as organisations. In light of these three models, MTs Mamba'ul Ulum Tulungagung has succeeded in capturing the attention of the local community, prompting them to entrust their children to be educated and to receive an education that is rich in knowledge.

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<sup>29</sup> Rizkika Lhena Darwin and Lidya Lidya, "Pendidikan dan Partisipasi Politik dalam Masyarakat Komunitarian di Aceh Singkil," *Al-Ijtima': International Journal of Government and Social Science* 4, no. 2 (April 30, 2019): 179–94, <https://doi.org/10.22373/jai.v4i2.456>.

<sup>30</sup> Nur Eka Kusuma Hindrasti, Azza Nuzullah Putri, and Erda Muhartati, "Peningkatan Kemampuan Guru dalam Menyusun RPP Terintegrasi Adiwiyata Berbasis Isu-isu Kritis Lokal pada Calon Sekolah Adiwiyata di Tanjungpinang," *International Journal of Community Service Learning* 3, no. 3 (July 27, 2019), <https://doi.org/10.23887/ijcsl.v3i3.16271>.

## Conclusion

The strategy employed at MTs Darul Hikmah Tulungagung and MTs Mamba'ul Ulum Tulungagung to garner public interest entails the implementation of a total quality management system. An analysis of the results indicates that the two madrasahs are continuously enhancing the quality of their offerings in all institutional domains. The quality thus established is then internalised by the public, creating a profound and enduring impression of Islamic educational institutions. In order to attract public interest, MTs Darul Hikmah Tulungagung and MTs Mamba'ul Ulum Tulungagung implement a strategy which begins with the internal quality of the institution. This is achieved by providing a comfortable and interesting learning process for students, improving the quality of teacher and staff resources on an ongoing basis, and carefully preparing learning tools. Teachers must engage in continuous programme evaluation, maintain the integrity of facilities and infrastructure as a means of supporting learning, and equip students with not only scientific knowledge but also practical skills and Islamic values. Furthermore, they must establish partnership relationships with agencies outside the madrasah, maintain harmony with the wider community, and reduce tuition fees to students as cheaply as possible while providing high-quality service.

Both MTs Darul Hikmah Tulungagung and MTs Mamba'ul Ulum Tulungagung are engaged in ongoing efforts to enhance the quality of their services, with the objective of garnering the interest and support of their target audience. By engaging in self-publicity, gauging public opinion on the existence of institutions, and marketing institutions to the public, MTs Darul Hikmah Tulungagung and MTs Mamba'ul Ulum Tulungagung have succeeded in establishing an institutional brand for the wider community. The objective of the madrasah publication carried out by MTs Darul Hikmah Tulungagung and MTs Mamba'ul Ulum Tulungagung is to introduce the institution in general to the wider community in a direct manner (meetings with the community and related agencies, through madrasah bazaars, social activities) and indirect ways, or through the use of media such as social media, mass media, electronic media, and print media. Another strategy employed by MTs Darul Hikmah Tulungagung and MTs Mamba'ul Ulum Tulungagung to garner public interest is to ascertain the general public's perception of Islamic educational institutions.

This is a crucial step in understanding the broader community's attitudes towards educational organisation. The subsequent strategy for attracting public interest is marketing, which aims to introduce the institution's service products to the public in order to ensure that MTs Darul Hikmah Tulungagung and MTs Mamba'ul Ulum Tulungagung remain the preferred choice of their customers.

The research conducted at MTs Darul Hikmah Tulungagung and MTs Mamba'ul Ulum Tulungagung demonstrates that efforts to attract public interest are essential in every Islamic educational institution. The impact of public interest in Islamic educational institutions is evidenced by an increase in the number of customers, as indicated by an increase in the number of registrants each year, and an enhanced reputation of the institutions within the community, both domestically and abroad.

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