
PUBLIC RELATIONS STRATEGY IN MARKETING HAJJ SERVICES AT PT. NUR HARAMAINE MULIA KRAKASAN PROBOLINGGO

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Abstract :

This study aims to examine the influence of Arab culture on the pilgrimage (Hajj) and Umrah experiences of Indonesian pilgrims from spiritual, social, and behavioral perspectives. Hajj and Umrah, as major forms of worship in Islam, require not only physical and financial readiness but also the ability to adapt to the local culture, which has its own distinctive characteristics. The research uses a descriptive qualitative approach, with data collected through in-depth interviews, observations, and document analysis involving pilgrims who have performed Hajj or Umrah in the past five years. The findings indicate that Arab culture significantly affects pilgrims' experiences, particularly in aspects of food, dress norms, language, and social interactions. The Arab dietary pattern, rich in spices and meat, the discipline in prayer times, and the assertive communication style pose both challenges and valuable lessons for pilgrims. Moreover, technological advancements in Saudi Arabia enrich the worship experience through modern and efficient service systems. Overall, adaptation to Arab culture enables pilgrims to gain a deeper spiritual understanding of Hajj and Umrah, strengthen Islamic brotherhood (ukhuwah Islamiyah), and foster awareness of tolerance and unity within the diversity of the Muslim community.

Keywords : *Arab culture, Hajj, Umrah, pilgrims' experiences, cultural adaptation, spiritual values, socio-religious*

Abstrak :

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji pengaruh budaya Arab terhadap pengalaman jamaah haji dan umrah, khususnya jamaah asal Indonesia, dari perspektif spiritual, sosial, dan perilaku. Ibadah Haji dan Umrah sebagai ibadah utama dalam Islam tidak hanya menuntut kesiapan fisik dan finansial, tetapi juga kemampuan beradaptasi terhadap budaya setempat yang memiliki karakteristik tersendiri. Pendekatan penelitian yang digunakan adalah kualitatif deskriptif, dengan pengumpulan data melalui wawancara mendalam, observasi, dan studi dokumentasi terhadap jamaah yang telah menunaikan ibadah dalam lima tahun terakhir. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa budaya Arab memiliki pengaruh signifikan terhadap pengalaman jamaah, baik dalam aspek makanan, norma berpakaian, bahasa, maupun interaksi sosial. Pola konsumsi masyarakat Arab yang kaya rempah, disiplin dalam waktu shalat, serta gaya komunikasi yang tegas memberikan tantangan sekaligus pembelajaran bagi jamaah. Selain itu, kemajuan teknologi di Arab Saudi turut memperkaya pengalaman ibadah melalui sistem pelayanan yang modern dan efisien. Secara keseluruhan, adaptasi terhadap budaya Arab membantu jamaah memahami makna spiritual haji dan umrah secara lebih mendalam, memperkuat nilai ukhuwah Islamiyah, serta menumbuhkan kesadaran akan pentingnya toleransi dan kebersamaan dalam keberagaman umat Islam.

Kata Kunci : *Budaya Arab, Ibadah Haji, Ibadah Umrah, Pengalaman Jamaah, Adaptasi Budaya, Nilai Spiritual, Sosial Keagamaan*

INTRODUCTION

The pilgrimage literally means to deliberately visit or make a pilgrimage to Mecca, while in terms of terminology it is defined as a visit to the House of God with the intention of worshipping Allah SWT in accordance with the provisions of Islamic law (Rifa'i et al., 2021). The Hajj pilgrimage is divided into three types, namely ifrad Hajj, qiran Hajj, and tamattu Hajj. Ifrad Hajj is the performance of Hajj followed by Umrah, qiran Hajj is the

performance of Hajj and Umrah simultaneously, while tamattu Hajj is the performance of Umrah first, followed by Hajj. The Hajj pilgrimage in Indonesia is carried out through three channels, namely the regular Hajj managed by the government, the special Hajj or Hajj Plus organized by the private sector, and the Furoda Hajj, which uses invitation visas directly from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia outside the official quota of the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia (Mubarok & Fuhaidah, 2017; Ritonga & Ida Nadirah, 2022). The Hajj pilgrimage is obligatory for Muslims who are able and only once in a lifetime, as stated in QS. Ali Imran verse 97 (Hadi, 2019).

The number of Indonesian Hajj pilgrims has shown an increasing trend from year to year. In 2019, the number of Indonesian Hajj pilgrims reached 229,613 people, consisting of regular and special Hajj pilgrims (Farahdina et al., 2021). Meanwhile, in 2020, the quota for Indonesian Hajj pilgrims reached around 221,000 people, divided into regular Hajj and special Hajj quotas (Armansyah et al., 2021). The high level of public enthusiasm for the Hajj pilgrimage has led to rapid growth in Hajj and Umrah travel agencies, resulting in increasingly fierce competition between companies. On the other hand, the rampant cases of fraud by irresponsible Hajj and Umrah travel agencies have caused public unrest and encouraged prospective pilgrims to be more selective in choosing a trusted travel agency.

This situation requires Hajj and Umrah travel service companies to implement effective marketing strategies that are oriented towards building public trust. Marketing is a social and managerial process that involves the creation, offering, and exchange of products or services that are useful for meeting consumer needs and desires (Musyawarah & Idayanti, 2022). Stanton defines marketing as all business activities that include planning, pricing, promotion, and distribution of goods and services to satisfy consumer needs (Winarto, 2011). In the context of Hajj services, marketing is not only oriented towards sales, but also towards building a long-term image, reputation, and trust.

Public relations plays a strategic role in building positive perceptions and public trust in the company. Through planned and continuous communication, public relations serves as a link between the company and the public in conveying information, shaping image, and maintaining harmonious relationships (Fitri, 2019). Marketing public relations is a relevant approach in the Hajj and Umrah service industry because it is able to integrate marketing activities with efforts to build goodwill and credibility for the company in the eyes of the public.

PT. Nur Haramain Mulia is one of the Hajj travel agencies that consistently sends special Hajj pilgrims every year, as well as playing a role in regular Hajj departures through KBIHU Nurul Haramain. The high level of public trust in this company demonstrates the success of its communication strategy and the role of public relations in building a positive image. Previous research conducted by Yermen (2019) shows that public relations has a significant contribution in attracting prospective pilgrims through effective communication strategies, even though this role is often carried out by managers or customer service.

Based on this description, it can be concluded that public relations strategies have a very important position in Hajj service marketing, especially in building public trust and loyalty. Therefore, this study focuses on an in-depth examination of the public relations strategies implemented by PT. Nur Haramain Mulia Kraksaan.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study is a descriptive study with a qualitative approach that aims to provide a systematic and in-depth description of the conditions, situations, and social phenomena that are the focus of the study. A qualitative approach was chosen to reveal empirical reality comprehensively through an understanding of the characteristics, nature, patterns, and dynamics that arise in the field. In this study, the researcher acts as the main instrument directly involved in the data collection process, supported by auxiliary instruments such as interview guidelines, observation guidelines, and documentation. Data collection techniques were carried out through participatory observation, in-depth interviews, documentation, and literature studies to obtain relevant and credible data. The collected data was then systematically analyzed by presenting, grouping, and interpreting the data in accordance with the research questions and objectives, and then compiled in the form of a scientific report. This research was conducted at PT. Nur Haramain Mulia, located at Jl. Ir. H. Juanda No. 371, Patokan, Kraksaan District, Probolinggo Regency, East Java 67282.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Public Relations Strategies in Marketing Hajj Services

Public relations plays a strategic role as a liaison between companies and the public, fostering mutually beneficial relationships, supporting management functions, and shaping the image of organizations (Ruslan, 2005; Anggraini & Setyanto, 2019). Research findings indicate that the public relations strategy implemented by PT. Nur Haramain Mulia Kraksaan is not only in line with this theory but also evolves contextually in response to the dynamics of Hajj service marketing in the digital and competitive era.

One of the main strategies implemented is the use of social media as a means of disseminating information about special hajj (haji plus). PT. Nur Haramain Mulia actively uploads digital brochures through various social media platforms such as WhatsApp, Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, and the company's official website. The distribution of these brochures is not only aimed at the general public, but also specifically shared with groups of previous Umrah and Hajj pilgrims. This strategy has proven to be effective because it is able to reach a wide range of prospective pilgrims, facilitate two-way interaction, and accelerate information updates without having to incur printing costs. This practice is an empirical finding that is not explicitly explained in Ruslan's theory, so it can be categorized as the development of a digital-based public relations strategy.

In addition, PT. Nur Haramain Mulia's public relations emphasizes the importance of building and maintaining good relationships with partners or travel agents. These relationships are carried out through regular, responsive, and continuous communication. Partners are positioned as an extension of the company in reaching potential pilgrims, so that harmonious relationships are symbiotic and mutually beneficial. These good relationships not only increase partner loyalty, but also expand the marketing network and accelerate the resolution of various issues that arise in the field. This strategy is in line with the role of public relations in fostering relationships and supporting company management as stated by Ruslan.

The next strategy is the implementation of a mosque safari program in various regions. This program is carried out after Friday prayers with the aim of educating the

public about Hajj Plus, particularly regarding costs, procedures, and the advantages of PT. Nur Haramain Mulia's services. This activity has proven to be effective because it directly targets people who have the potential to become prospective pilgrims, while also strengthening the company's presence and existence in the religious community. The mosque safari is a means of direct communication that is able to build emotional closeness and public trust.

PT. Nur Haramain Mulia's public relations department is also active in establishing relationships with religious and community leaders. These leaders have a major influence in shaping public opinion and trust. Through intensive communication, participation in religious activities, and responsive service, the company has gained moral support and social legitimacy. This role is relevant to the concept of backup management in Ruslan's theory, although in practice, public relations also collaborates closely with the marketing department to optimize the influence of religious leaders in promoting Hajj services.

In addition, PT. Nur Haramain Mulia regularly holds Hajj alumni gatherings every year. This activity not only serves as a gathering, but also as a form of post-departure service that strengthens pilgrim loyalty. The alumni gathering becomes a medium for indirect promotion through word-of-mouth recommendations to the families and relatives of alumni. Although not explicitly mentioned in Ruslan's theory, this strategy is relevant to the role of public relations as a communicator and builder of long-term relationships with the public.

A specific strategy implemented by the public relations department of PT. Nur Haramain Mulia is the application of ethical communication values through the five S principles (smile, greet, say hello, be polite, and be courteous). This approach is combined with empathy, patience, and understanding of each individual's character. This strategy aims to build a positive image of the company as a trustworthy, friendly, and professional Hajj travel agency. This practice is in line with the role of public relations in shaping corporate image as stated by Ruslan.

Building Cooperation between Public Relations, Partners, and Community Leaders

The results of the study show that good cooperation between public relations, partners, and community leaders is an important factor in increasing the number of pilgrims at PT. Nur Haramain Mulia. Partners who feel valued and well facilitated show high loyalty to the company. Facilities such as brochures, banners, communication support, as well as annual appreciation and awards are tangible forms of the company's attention to its partners. This strategy encourages partners to be more active in promoting Hajj services and attracting new pilgrims.

The number of partners, which has reached around 250 people, demonstrates the effectiveness of the relationship strategy developed by public relations. Regular communication, openness to feedback, and quick responses to partner needs strengthen trust and long-term cooperation. On the other hand, the good relationships established by company leaders with religious leaders also strengthen the image and social legitimacy of PT. Nur Haramain Mulia in the eyes of the community.

Thus, it can be concluded that PT. Nur Haramain Mulia's public relations strategy in marketing Hajj services is not only oriented towards promotion, but also towards building trust, long-term relationships, and a positive company image. The integration of digital

communication, personal relationships, partnerships, and religious and cultural approaches is a major strength in facing increasingly fierce competition in the Hajj services business.

CONCLUSION

Based on the above discussion, it can be concluded that PT. Nur Haramain Mulia's public relations strategy in marketing Hajj services is carried out in an integrated manner through the use of social media as a means of disseminating information about Hajj Plus, maintaining intensive communication with partners and previous pilgrims, and strengthening relationships through gatherings with community and religious leaders. This strategy is reinforced by alumni gatherings that serve to maintain the trust and loyalty of pilgrims, as well as the application of the five S's of communication ethics (greetings, smiles, greetings, politeness, and courtesy) as an effort to build a positive image for the company. In addition, good cooperation between public relations, partners, and leaders has proven to play an important role in increasing the number of pilgrims, marked by the involvement of around 250 active partners who are continuously facilitated and become an extension of the company in reaching out to the community. Thus, the success of PT. Nur Haramain Mulia's Hajj service marketing is not only determined by promotion, but also by the strength of relationships, trust, and continuous communication with all stakeholders.

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