

Intersectoral Synergy Strategy to Improve the Image of Educational Institutions

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Abstract: This study aims to analyze the intersectoral synergy strategies implemented by Madrasah Aliyah Negeri (MAN) Bondowoso in enhancing its institutional image. The image of an educational institution is not only shaped by academic achievements but also by its ability to build participatory and sustainable collaboration across multiple sectors. This research employs a qualitative descriptive approach, using in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and documentation studies involving the principal, teachers, students, and external partners such as government agencies, private sectors, and local media. The findings reveal three main strategies in developing intersectoral synergy: (1) External communication strategy, which emphasizes open, accommodative, and participatory relationships with stakeholders; (2) Program collaboration strategy, implemented through joint activities such as digital literacy training, environmental awareness programs, and student entrepreneurship initiatives; and (3) Media publication strategy, which utilizes social media, the official school website, and local news outlets to strengthen the institution's brand image. These strategies have proven effective in building public trust, social legitimacy, and internal pride among the members of the madrasah community. The study concludes that intersectoral synergy is not merely a tool for improving educational quality but also a strategic instrument for constructing a positive, modern, and inclusive institutional image of Islamic educational institutions.

Keywords: Intersectoral Synergy, Communication Strategy, Institutional Image, Collaboration

A. Introduction

In the era of increasingly intense educational competition, the image of an educational institution has become one of the key factors determining public trust (Mohamed Hashim et al., 2022). The image of an institution is not solely shaped by its academic quality, but also by its ability to build constructive relationships and synergies with external stakeholders such as local government, the community, business sectors, media, and social institutions (Leal Filho et al., 2019). Madrasah Aliyah Negeri (MAN) Bondowoso, as one of the state Islamic educational institutions in the region, holds a strategic role in developing a generation that is both competent and characterized by strong moral values. However, the challenges faced are not limited to internal aspects such as the quality of learning, but also involve how the institution can present a positive and credible image in the eyes of the public (Lewicka, 2022).

The image of an educational institution often serves as the main consideration for society in choosing a school for their children (Alam & Mohanty, 2023). Institutions with a positive image are more likely to gain trust and support from various stakeholders, including parents, government bodies, and external partners (Corazza et al., 2024). In this context, MAN Bondowoso needs to develop an intersectoral synergy strategy as a collaborative approach to strengthen its presence and reputation within the community. Intersectoral synergy is defined as an effort to build cross-sectoral cooperation between the internal components of the madrasah and external institutions such as government agencies, private sectors, community organizations, and the mass media to achieve a shared goal—namely, the improvement of educational quality and institutional image (Shohel, 2022).

Field realities indicate that many educational institutions still operate in isolation without meaningful involvement from external partners (Akour & Alenezi, 2022). As a result, various potentials and opportunities that could be optimized are often hindered by a lack of coordination and communication across sectors. In today's information era, the public no longer evaluates educational institutions solely based on academic achievements, but also on how actively they contribute to social development, build partnerships, and act as agents of change within their environment (Chaudhry et al., 2023). Therefore, an intersectoral synergy strategy is not merely an additional option but a fundamental requirement for educational institutions that aim to sustain and grow in the long term (Marino, 2025).

For MAN Bondowoso, enhancing the institutional image can be achieved through various forms of strategic collaboration. Examples include partnerships with local governments in character education programs, cooperation with business sectors in student entrepreneurship activities, and engagement with local media to publicize the madrasah's achievements and programs (Nuzula et al., 2024). Such activities not only expand the network of institutional partnerships but also build public perceptions of MAN Bondowoso as an open, adaptive, and forward-oriented institution. Furthermore, the involvement of the surrounding community in educational and social activities also reinforces the social legitimacy of the madrasah at the local level (Buanaputra et al., 2022).

The primary motivation of this study is to identify appropriate strategies for developing cross-sectoral synergy to sustainably enhance the image of MAN Bondowoso. This research is significant because a positive institutional image cannot be achieved solely through promotion or symbolic representation but must be built through genuine, consistent, and impactful collaboration processes. By understanding and implementing intersectoral synergy strategies, MAN Bondowoso is expected to become a model madrasah that excels not only in academic performance but also in its contribution to society and its ability to establish strategic partnerships across multiple sectors.

The same research was conducted by (Hidayat, 2024). This study shows that synergy between public administration and education is crucial to improving the quality of education. Ideal synergy involves effective coordination between the central and local governments, as well as the involvement of the private sector and the community. Strategies to improve the quality of education through inter-institutional cooperation include collaboration between educational institutions and the government, networking

between schools, teacher training, provision of access to technology, joint research, and implementation of supervision.

The same research was conducted (Djafri & Al-Amin, 2025), The research indicates that intersectoral synergy not only contributes to improving infrastructure and enhancing the quality of teaching staff but also introduces more interactive and contextual learning methods. Such partnership programs are capable of creating an inclusive and adaptive learning environment that responds to local needs while facilitating equitable access to education in remote areas.

Conceptually, both previous studies emphasize the importance of inter-institutional cooperation in improving educational quality. However, these studies focus primarily on the structural dimension, viewing synergy as a coordinative mechanism to enhance educational policies and resources. In contrast, the present study elevates the concept of intersectoral synergy to a reputational and communicative strategy, in which collaboration functions not merely administratively but also as a tool to build public trust, social legitimacy, and a positive institutional image. Thus, this study expands the meaning of synergy from a coordinative relationship into a symbolic and communicative relationship that produces long-term influence on public perception.

In terms of context, this study introduces a micro-level approach through the case of MAN Bondowoso. This approach is significant because it demonstrates how national synergy policies, which are generally macro in nature, can be concretely implemented at the level of local educational institutions while incorporating Islamic values and local wisdom unique to Bondowoso. Therefore, this research not only confirms previous theoretical frameworks but also adapts and contextualizes them into a more specific and applicable setting.

Methodologically, this study offers an innovative approach to educational public relations management based on intersectoral synergy. It combines qualitative descriptive analysis with a strategic communication perspective. Through in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and media documentation, the research empirically explores how the institutional image is constructed through cross-sector collaboration practices. This methodological approach is rarely applied in studies of educational synergy, which typically focus on macro-level policy frameworks.

Moreover, this study provides both theoretical and practical contributions to the development of educational management in madrasahs. Theoretically, it enriches academic discussions on the relationship between intersectoral collaboration and the image of Islamic educational institutions. Practically, the findings offer actionable insights for MAN Bondowoso-particularly in developing a structured communication framework, strengthening digital public relations capacity, and institutionalizing sustainable partnership programs as integral components of its image-building strategy.

B. Methods

This study employs a qualitative descriptive approach aimed at gaining an in-This study employs a qualitative descriptive approach aimed at gaining an in-depth understanding of the strategies and processes of intersectoral synergy implemented by MAN Bondowoso in

its efforts to enhance the institutional image of the school. This approach was chosen because it allows a contextual description of the dynamics among actors, patterns of cooperation, and forms of cross-sector collaboration established between the madrasah, government agencies, communities, and other external partners. The research was conducted at Madrasah Aliyah Negeri (MAN) Bondowoso, with participants including the principal, vice principal for public relations, teachers, students, and external partners such as community leaders, local government officials, and media representatives. Informants were selected using purposive sampling, based on their direct involvement and understanding of the research topic.

Data were collected through in-depth interviews, participant observation, and document study. The interviews were conducted to obtain detailed information regarding the strategies, benefits, and challenges of cross-sector collaboration. The observations were carried out by directly examining various collaborative activities between the madrasah and external stakeholders, while the document study involved gathering supporting data such as reports, media publications, and cooperation documents. The collected data were analyzed using the Miles and Huberman interactive model, which consists of three stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. The analysis process was conducted continuously throughout the research period to ensure a comprehensive and valid understanding of the studied phenomena.

To ensure the validity and reliability of the findings, this study applied a triangulation strategy encompassing sources, techniques, and time. Source triangulation was performed by comparing information from different groups of participants-school leaders, teachers, students, and external partners to cross-check consistency in perspectives. Technique triangulation was achieved by examining the same phenomena through multiple methods (interviews, observations, and document analysis) to strengthen data credibility. Meanwhile, time triangulation involved conducting data collection at different periods to verify the stability and reliability of responses over time. Additionally, member checking was used to confirm the accuracy of the researcher's interpretations with the participants' viewpoints.

The research procedure consisted of four stages: preparation, data collection, data analysis, and report writing. Through this methodological framework, the study is expected to produce a comprehensive understanding of intersectoral synergy strategies at MAN Bondowoso and provide practical recommendations for strengthening the image of Islamic educational institutions at the regional level.

C. Results and Discussion

The results of the study show that Madrasah Aliyah Negeri (MAN) Bondowoso has developed various forms of intersectoral synergy as part of its strategy to enhance the institutional image of the school. This synergy is understood as a cross-sectoral collaboration involving local government, the business sector, the community, the media, and other educational institutions. The main objective of this collaboration is to build public trust in the madrasah while expanding its influence as a modern, open, and adaptive Islamic educational institution responsive to the dynamics of contemporary society (Romlah et al., 2025).

The principal of MAN Bondowoso emphasized that this synergy strategy is not merely a formal cooperation but a core element of partnership-based public relations management, in which each external partner serves as a strategic collaborator in strengthening the madrasah's existence and reputation within the community. Therefore, collaboration yields not only practical benefits such as facility support and resource sharing but also symbolic impacts that enhance the institution's public credibility and reinforce its Islamic identity.

In line with Institutional Image Theory, the findings illustrate that MAN Bondowoso's positive image emerges from the consistency between its internal Islamic values and the external perceptions of society. The madrasah's commitment to honesty (*sidq*), social responsibility (*mas'uliyah*), and service to the community (*khidmah*) becomes the moral foundation of its partnerships, transforming collaboration into a reflection of Islamic ethics in action. From the perspective of strategic alliance management, MAN Bondowoso's partnerships represent a deliberate alignment between moral-spiritual values and organizational strategy—where cooperation with external sectors is not only managerial but also value-driven, rooted in principles of *ukhuwah* (brotherhood), *ta'awun* (mutual support), and *amanah* (trustworthiness) (Marjani et al., 2025).

Concrete forms of intersectoral synergy at MAN Bondowoso include collaboration with the Bondowoso District Government in digital literacy and character education programs, partnership with the Health Department in adolescent health initiatives, cooperation with the Environmental Agency in environmental awareness campaigns, and engagement with local media such as Radio Suara Bondowoso and Radar Jember for the publication of institutional activities. Furthermore, the madrasah has established partnerships with the business community for student entrepreneurship and vocational development, as well as active community involvement in various social and religious programs. These initiatives embody the integration of modern management strategies with Islamic ethical principles, ensuring that institutional synergy remains both professional and spiritually grounded.

Findings from observation and documentation reveal that these forms of synergy have been implemented effectively due to a shared awareness among the madrasah and its partners that collaboration is a strategic necessity in the era of open and participatory education. The involvement of multiple sectors has made madrasah activities more visible and appreciated by the wider community. This demonstrates that MAN Bondowoso has successfully implemented the principle of collaborative participation in its institutional management practices.

Based on these findings, a specific implementation suggestion is proposed: MAN Bondowoso could formalize its cross-sector partnerships by establishing a "Madrasah Synergy and Partnership Forum (MSPF)"—a structured platform that brings together government agencies, community leaders, educational partners, and media representatives for periodic coordination, program evaluation, and innovation sharing. Such a forum would institutionalize existing collaborations, ensure sustainability, and serve as a replicable model for other Islamic educational institutions seeking to build their reputation through strategic intersectoral engagement.

Intersectoral Synergy Strategy in Improving Institutional Image

The main strategies implemented by MAN Bondowoso in building its image through intersectoral synergy can be grouped into three main approaches, namely external communication strategies, program collaboration strategies, and media publication strategies, as specifically shown in the table below:

Table 1. MAN Bondowoso's Intersectoral Synergy Strategy

No	Strategy Type	Main Description	Example	Impact on Institution Image
1	External Communication	Building open and cooperative relations with stakeholders through regular coordination.	Meetings with government offices; partnership forums with the community.	Builds trust and strengthens external relations.
2	Program Collaboration	Joint programs between the madrasah and partners in education, social, or business fields.	Environmental care projects; digital literacy training; entrepreneurship events.	Shows the madrasah as active and innovative; expands partnerships.
3	Media Publication	Using media to share activities, achievements, and partnerships.	Posts on social media; news on local radio and newspapers.	Improves public image and increases visibility.

The first strategy, external communication, is carried out through the establishment of open, accommodative, and communicative relationships with various stakeholders. The principal and the public relations team of the madrasah routinely coordinate with relevant institutions to communicate agendas, achievements, and potential areas of collaboration (Ramadhan & Sadat, 2024). The communication approach adopted is participatory communication, which emphasizes dialogue, equality, and mutual benefit. This strategy makes external partners feel respected and encourages their active involvement in the madrasah's activities (Ahmad, 2024).

The second strategy, program collaboration, is realized through the joint design and implementation of activities between the madrasah and its partners. Examples include the "Madrasah Cares for the Environment" program in collaboration with the Environmental Agency, the "Digital Literacy for Student Leaders" training program with the Department of Communication and Informatics, and the "Entrepreneurship Day" program with local micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs). Through these programs, the madrasah not only gains resource support but also strengthens its image as an active, innovative, and socially responsive institution addressing community issues.

The third strategy, media publication, involves the utilization of local media, social media, and the official madrasah website as channels for information dissemination. The public relations team actively publishes the institution's activities, student achievements, and external collaborations through official platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, and the madrasah's news portal. This strategy has proven effective in building a positive brand image, as the public can easily access credible and engaging information about MAN Bondowoso's activities.

Interviews with the vice principal for public relations indicate that digital publication plays a crucial role in strengthening public perception. However, the madrasah still faces challenges in terms of human resources, particularly in professional media management.

Therefore, the institution plans to involve alumni with backgrounds in communication and information technology to strengthen its digital public relations team in the near future.

The intersectoral synergy implemented by MAN Bondowoso has produced positive impacts on improving the institution's image both internally and externally. Internally, it has increased the enthusiasm and sense of pride among the madrasah community. Teachers and students feel that their institution is increasingly recognized and appreciated by society, fostering a sense of belonging and motivation to continue achieving excellence.

Externally, the positive image of the madrasah is reflected in the growing public trust toward MAN Bondowoso. Interviews with the school committee and community leaders reveal that many parents now consider MAN Bondowoso their top choice due to its strong reputation, discipline, and active involvement in social activities. Enrollment data over the past three years show a significant increase in new student admissions, serving as tangible evidence of this growing public trust.

In addition, the madrasah's relationship with the mass media has further strengthened its institutional presence. News coverage of its activities frequently appears in local media and receives positive public responses. Thus, intersectoral synergy not only broadens the scope of partnerships but also enhances the social legitimacy of the madrasah in the eyes of the community.

From the perspective of educational public relations management theory, MAN Bondowoso's approach reflects the principles of two-way symmetrical communication, in which interactions between the madrasah and the external public are reciprocal, empathetic, and oriented toward mutual benefit. This approach contrasts with the one-way communication model focused solely on promotion, as intersectoral synergy emphasizes the madrasah's active role in listening to community aspirations and aligning its programs with existing social needs.

Theoretical Analysis: Intersectoral Synergy as an Educational Image Strategy

Theoretically, the findings of this study reinforce the view that the image of an educational institution is not solely shaped by academic achievements but also by the institution's capacity to build inclusive and collaborative social relationships (Basic et al., 2021). According to Institutional Image Theory, a positive institutional image is formed when the organization demonstrates consistency between its internal values and the public's external perceptions (Manzoor et al., 2021). In this context, intersectoral synergy functions as an integrative mechanism that connects the institution's vision with societal expectations (Lee et al., 2023).

The approach adopted by MAN Bondowoso aligns with the concept of community-based education management, in which educational institutions serve as an integral part of the social community. Through collaboration with multiple sectors, the madrasah functions not only as a provider of formal education but also as an agent of social transformation actively contributing to community development (Aziz & Huda, 2024). This principle resonates with the national slogan of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, "Madrasah Hebat

Bermartabat” (“Great and Dignified Madrasah”), which envisions madrasahs as centers of learning that are excellent, inclusive, and characterized by strong moral values.

From a strategic management perspective, the intersectoral synergy strategy can also be understood as a form of strategic alliance within the educational context (Marín-González et al., 2022). By building alliances with external stakeholders, MAN Bondowoso has succeeded in creating a mutually beneficial collaborative network, thereby enhancing the institution’s competitiveness. In the long term, this strategy strengthens the madrasah’s position as a credible and adaptive educational institution capable of responding to the dynamics of social change (Wiggins et al., 2021).

The findings of this study also hold several practical implications. First, for other educational institutions, the intersectoral synergy model implemented by MAN Bondowoso can serve as a best-practice example in developing a positive institutional image. Well-planned and effectively publicized collaborative activities can enhance institutional visibility and strengthen public trust (Alshawaf, 2025). Second, for local governments and the Ministry of Religious Affairs, these findings highlight the importance of policy support that promotes inter-agency partnerships in the education sector.

In addition, this study offers significant academic implications by enriching the theoretical discourse on the relationship between cross-sector collaboration and the construction of institutional image in Islamic education. Within the context of madrasah education, the findings demonstrate that the success of an institution in building a positive image is determined not only by internal factors such as academic achievement but also by its external capacity to build social networks and public reputation (Chen et al., 2022).

D. Conclusions

This study concludes that the intersectoral synergy strategy serves as an effective and sustainable approach for building and strengthening the institutional image of MAN Bondowoso. Through cross-sector collaboration involving the government, business community, media, and society, the madrasah has successfully positioned itself as an active, adaptive, and socially engaged Islamic educational institution that contributes meaningfully to its surrounding community and regional development.

Three key strategies form the foundation of this success. First, the external communication strategy, which fosters mutual trust and long-term collaboration through open, participatory relationships between the madrasah and its stakeholders. Second, the program collaboration strategy, implemented through joint initiatives such as digital literacy training, environmental awareness campaigns, and student entrepreneurship projects—demonstrating the madrasah’s commitment to innovation, relevance, and community responsiveness. Third, the media publication strategy, which leverages social and local media platforms to effectively disseminate information, promote transparency, and construct a credible and positive public image.

Overall, the success of MAN Bondowoso’s intersectoral synergy strategy has generated a dual impact: externally, it has enhanced public trust, institutional credibility, and social legitimacy; internally, it has cultivated pride, motivation, and a shared sense of belonging among the madrasah community. Ultimately, this study reaffirms that a positive

institutional image is not the result of promotion alone, but the cumulative outcome of consistent, transparent, and value-driven intersectoral synergy that unites communication, collaboration, and credibility into a coherent and enduring framework for institutional excellence.

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