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Sholawat Art Event As A Medium For Islamic Boarding School Branding: A Dramaturgical Study At Bidayatul Hidayah Islamic Boarding School, Mojokerto

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze sholawat arts events as a branding medium for Bidayatul Hidayah Islamic Boarding School, Mojokerto, through the perspective of Erving Goffman's dramaturgy. The study employs a qualitative approach using a single-case study design focusing on the organization of Fesban Best Master. Data were collected through in-depth online interviews, non-participant observation of event recordings and digital content, as well as documentation. The data were analyzed using the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña through data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. Data validity was examined through source triangulation, technique triangulation, and member checking. The findings indicate that Fesban Best Master serves as an experience-based branding medium that presents the identity of the Islamic boarding school through the quality and selectivity of participants, professional event management, and digital publication. From a dramaturgical perspective, the front stage is represented through outstanding participants, performance quality, and professionalism in event organization, while the back stage encompasses participant curation, personal approaches, committee coordination, santri cadre development, and the management of relationships with the community. Impression management is directed toward creating the perception that the Islamic boarding school possesses quality, professionalism, and the capacity to develop Islamic arts. Event management also reflects the principles of takhthith, tanzhim, tawjih, and riqabah, accompanied by the values of amanah, responsibility, and ta'awun. This study produces a Value- and Dramaturgy-Based Contextual Model of Islamic Boarding School Event Branding, demonstrating that an authentic image is formed through the alignment of the Islamic

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boarding school's identity, back-stage management, front-stage representation, impression management, and public experience.

Keywords: Islamic boarding school branding; dramaturgy; sholawat arts event; Islamic education management.

INTRODUCTION

Islamic educational institutions, particularly Islamic boarding schools (pondok pesantren), not only perform educational and religious outreach functions but also face the need to maintain public trust amid an increasingly competitive educational environment. Communities now consider institutional identity, reputation, service quality, institutional values, and the experiences offered before choosing an educational institution. This condition has made branding an important aspect of pesantren management. Branding is not merely related to the use of names, logos, slogans, or promotional activities, but rather constitutes a process of building the institution's identity, character, and image in the perception of the public (Baharun et al., 2023) (Anggraeni & Putri, 2022). Therefore, branding needs to be understood as a strategic and continuous process that involves the entirety of the institution's activities in building its image, reputation, and public trust.

Branding in pesantren has characteristics that differ from those of general educational institutions. Pesantren embody religious values, scholarly traditions, santri culture, religious outreach functions, and social relationships with the community that have been established over a long period of time (Asiska & Noviani, 2024). These characteristics mean that pesantren branding is not always carried out through formal promotional activities but may develop through activities rooted in the institution's traditions. Religious activities, Islamic study sessions, commemorations of Islamic holidays, haflah, musabaqah, and sholawat arts provide spaces through which pesantren can introduce their institutional values and characteristics to the public. Thus, pesantren branding should ideally not create a new identity that is detached from the institution's internal life, but rather communicate the values and strengths that genuinely emerge from the pesantren culture.

One medium that can be utilized to build pesantren branding is the organization of religious events. Events are not merely ceremonial activities or routine agendas but can function as spaces for direct communication between the institution and the community. Through events, the public can observe the quality of programs, the creativity of santri, organizational culture,

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management professionalism, and the values developed by the institution (Zayyadi et al., 2025) (Irawan et al., 2025). Such experiences are important because the image of an educational institution is shaped not only by information conveyed through promotional activities, but also by what the public sees, feels, and experiences when interacting with the institution. Religious events can therefore serve as experience-based branding media that bring together the pesantren's internal identity and public perception.

The development of digital technology has further expanded the function of events as a branding medium. Documentation in the form of posters, photographs, videos, activity recordings, and social media publications enables events to remain accessible even after the physical activities have concluded. Platforms such as YouTube and Instagram are used not only as information media but also as spaces for institutional representation that extend the reach of pesantren communication (Kusumaningrum et al., 2025). Audiences can also provide comments, share documentation, or independently produce content based on their experiences. This condition indicates that the formation of the pesantren's image through events does not take place entirely in a one-way manner. The public becomes both the recipient and the disseminator of institutional representations through direct interaction and digital media.

This phenomenon can be observed at Pondok Pesantren Bidayatul Hidayah Mojokerto. The pesantren has a tradition of Islamic arts that has developed through activities such as sholawat, Al-Banjari, Burdah, nasyid, Ishari, haul, and various other religious activities. Among these activities, the Al-Banjari Festival, known as Fesban Best Master, has become one of the most prominent events in introducing the pesantren to the public. The event was redeveloped in 2017 with characteristics that distinguished it from Al-Banjari festivals in general. The organizers placed greater emphasis on the quality and reputation of participants through a selection system and a personal approach to leading Al-Banjari groups. Participant selection, event presentation, stage arrangement, service, and digital publication became part of the representation of quality presented by the pesantren to the public.

However, the event presentation perceived by the public is not formed spontaneously. Behind the organization of Fesban Best Master are processes involving concept development, participant curation, committee formation, division of responsibilities, coordination with external parties, santri cadre development, community relations management, and activity evaluation. These processes indicate that events as a branding medium involve two interrelated domains: the domain visible to the public and the preparatory domain that takes place behind the event. The image of event quality and professionalism is ultimately strongly influenced by the pesantren's

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ability to manage these internal processes.

Previous studies on the branding of Islamic educational institutions have predominantly discussed the use of public figures or celebrity endorsement (Hamdani, 2023), the strengthening of flagship programs and institutional identity (Fazriyati, 2025), and the utilization of social media as a branding medium (Ramadhani, 2022). Meanwhile, dramaturgical studies have been employed to examine individual communication behavior in social situations (Husein, 2022) and the formation of personal branding on social media (Soraya, 2021). These studies provide an important foundation for understanding branding and impression management; however, they have not specifically explained how sholawat arts events are managed as a branding stage for a pesantren. Studies integrating event management, the branding of Islamic educational institutions, and dramaturgy as a perspective for organizational analysis remain relatively limited.

Erving Goffman's dramaturgical approach is relevant for understanding this phenomenon because it views social life as a performance involving actors, stages, performances, and audiences. In an organizational context, the pesantren can be understood as a collective actor that presents a particular identity to the public. The concept of the front stage is used to analyze aspects of the event that can be observed by the public, such as participant quality, event presentation, service, religious symbols, and digital publications. The concept of the back stage is used to understand internal processes, including planning, participant curation, coordination, division of responsibilities, and problem solving. Meanwhile, impression management is used to analyze how these elements are directed toward creating particular impressions of the pesantren (Coles et al., 2022; O'Boyle, 2022; Pernelet & Brennan, 2023).

As a study within the field of Islamic Education Management, event management also needs to be understood through the values and functions of Islamic management. Planning can be understood as takhthith, organizing as tanzhim, implementation and directing as tawjih, and supervision and evaluation as riqabah. These functions are not only directed toward achieving organizational effectiveness but are also carried out based on amanah, responsibility, cooperation or ta'awun, and maslahah. This perspective is important so that pesantren branding is not understood merely as an effort to gain popularity, but rather as the management of institutional communication that remains rooted in the objectives of education, Islamic propagation, and service to the community.

Based on this gap, this study aims to analyze sholawat arts events as a branding medium for Pondok Pesantren Bidayatul Hidayah Mojokerto through a dramaturgical perspective. Specifically, the study examines the management of Fesban Best Master, forms of representation

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on the front stage, management processes on the back stage, and impression management strategies used to build the pesantren's image. This study also explains the relationship between these processes and the principles of Islamic management, while social capital and digital media are positioned as supporting findings. The contribution of this study is formulated through the Value- and Dramaturgy-Based Contextual Model of Pesantren Event Branding, which explains that an authentic image is formed through the alignment of pesantren identity, internal management, public presentation, impression management, and audience experience.

METHODS

This study employed a qualitative approach with a single-case study design at Pondok Pesantren Bidayatul Hidayah Mojokerto. The study focused on the organization of Fesban Best Master as a sholawat arts event that plays a role in building the pesantren's branding. The researcher selected a case study design to gain an in-depth understanding of the event management process, the representation of institutional identity, and the formation of public impressions within the context of pesantren life. The researcher acted as the primary instrument as well as a non-participant observer, while Erving Goffman's dramaturgical perspective guided the analysis of the front stage, back stage, and impression management.

The researcher selected informants purposively based on their involvement, experience, and knowledge of Fesban Best Master. The informants included members of the pesantren leadership family, pesantren administrators, event committee members, multimedia or publication teams, and other parties who understood the development of the event. The researcher collected primary data through in-depth semi-structured interviews conducted via Zoom Meeting or Google Meet. The interviews explored the history of the event, the processes of planning, organizing, implementation, evaluation, participant selection, management of social relationships, and the image that the pesantren sought to build through the event.

The researcher supplemented the interview data through non-participant observation and documentation. The researcher examined video archives, live-streaming recordings, and digital content, focusing on participant quality, stage arrangement, event sequences, committee services, religious symbols, community involvement, and the representation of the pesantren in digital media. The researcher also examined the pesantren profile, event proposals, committee structures, posters, photographs, videos, and social media publications to strengthen and verify information obtained from the informants.

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The researcher analyzed the data using the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña through the stages of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. During the data condensation stage, the researcher selected and categorized the data into themes of event management, front stage, back stage, impression management, and pesantren branding. The researcher then presented the data in narrative descriptions and thematic categorizations to identify relationships among the findings. The researcher ensured data validity through source triangulation, technique triangulation, and member checking by comparing information across informants, cross-checking it against documents and event recordings, and confirming the interpretation of the findings with the relevant informants.

RESULTS

1. Fesban Best Master as a Branding Medium for Pesantren

The findings indicate that Pondok Pesantren Bidayatul Hidayah Mojokerto utilizes Fesban Best Master as a medium for introducing its institutional identity to the public. This event is rooted in the tradition of Islamic arts that has long developed within the pesantren, including sholawat, Al-Banjari, Burdah, nasyid, Ishari, haul, and other religious activities. After a period of inactivity, Fesban Best Master was revitalized in 2017 with a festival concept featuring high-quality and reputable Al-Banjari groups, rather than merely functioning as an open competition oriented toward the number of participants.

Fesban Best Master serves to strengthen the tradition of Islamic arts, build relationships between the pesantren and the community, introduce the institution's identity, and demonstrate the pesantren's capacity to organize large-scale activities. The branding process is formed indirectly through the quality of performances, event presentation, committee services, and social interactions throughout the event. Through this activity, the public recognizes the pesantren not only as an institution for Qur'anic education, classical Islamic text studies, and santri development, but also as an institution capable of developing sholawat arts and managing events in a professional and modern manner.

2. Management of Fesban Best Master

The management of Fesban Best Master begins with determining the character and objectives of the event, emphasizing participant quality, the reputation of Al-Banjari groups, event presentation, and alignment with the pesantren's identity. The committee does not merely open registration but actively selects groups with strong abilities, experience, and popularity through

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personal approaches, direct communication, visits, and technical meetings. This strategy is implemented to maintain standards while establishing the distinctive characteristics of Fesban Best Master compared with other Al-Banjari festivals.

In terms of organization, Pondok Pesantren Bidayatul Hidayah involves the pesantren leadership, administrators, santri, external parties, and the community as needed. From 2017 to 2020, experienced external parties were still involved to support the learning process of managing large-scale events. Subsequently, responsibilities were gradually transferred to internal human resources as part of cadre development. Through committee involvement, santri gain experience in task allocation, coordination, participant services, publication, equipment management, security, catering, and problem solving.

At the implementation stage, the concept of quality is manifested through the selection of outstanding participants, stage arrangement, event sequencing, and services provided to the community. The high level of enthusiasm was evident during the 2025 event, with approximately 6,000 vehicles recorded in the event area, although this figure does not indicate the exact number of spectators. The large crowd also resulted in congestion and discomfort for some members of the surrounding community. Therefore, evaluation focuses not only on the technical aspects of the event but also on social acceptance, familial communication, and the sustainability of the pesantren's relationship with its surrounding environment.

3. Front Stage: Representation of Pesantren Quality and Professionalism

The findings indicate that Fesban Best Master functions as the front stage through which Pondok Pesantren Bidayatul Hidayah presents its identity to the public. This identity is constructed through the selection of high-quality and reputable participants, performances by Al-Banjari groups, stage arrangement, event sequencing, committee services, and the professional presentation of the event. All of these elements contribute to the perception that Fesban Best Master has standards that distinguish it from open festivals in general, while simultaneously demonstrating the pesantren's capacity to manage large-scale public events.

The front stage of Fesban Best Master also extends into the digital sphere through documentation on YouTube and Instagram. The pesantren's YouTube channel is recorded as having approximately 9.61 thousand subscribers, 391 videos, and more than 804 thousand views, while its Instagram account has approximately 15.3 thousand followers. During the early period of the event's implementation, event publications were also disseminated organically by content creators and YouTubers. This indicates that digital media and audience participation play an

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important role in expanding the event's reach and shaping the pesantren's image beyond the physical location of the event.

4. Back Stage: Participant Curation, Cadre Development, and Social Relationship Management

The back stage of Fesban Best Master encompasses all preparatory processes that determine the quality of the event's presentation before the public, including concept development, participant curation, personal communication, technical meetings, committee formation, task allocation, and internal coordination. Participants are selected based on performance quality, experience, and the reputation of Al-Banjari groups. This process indicates that the branding of Fesban Best Master begins prior to the implementation of the event through the selection of elements to be presented to the public. Personal approaches and the utilization of social networks also help the pesantren attract outstanding participants while building trust with Al-Banjari communities from various regions.

The back stage also serves as a space for santri cadre development and the strengthening of the pesantren's organizational capacity. The involvement of external parties during the initial period provided administrators and santri with opportunities to learn event management before responsibility was transferred to the internal team. In addition, the pesantren manages the impact of the event on the surrounding community, particularly traffic congestion and increased activity in the local area, through direct communication, sowan, and a familial approach. These strategies help maintain social acceptance within the community and prevent technical issues from developing into conflicts that could affect the institution's image.

5. Impression Management through Quality Standards and Public Experience

The findings indicate that Pondok Pesantren Bidayatul Hidayah manages impressions to construct an image of the pesantren as a high-quality and professional institution capable of developing Islamic arts. This image is built not only through verbal communication but also through participant selectivity, event presentation, committee services, stage arrangement, event sequencing, coordination, and digital documentation. The invitation system for leading Al-Banjari groups creates the perception that Fesban Best Master maintains high standards, while publications through photographs, videos, live broadcasts, and social media expand the representation of the event. In this process, audiences and content creators also participate in interpreting and disseminating their experiences, so that the image of the event is formed through interactions between the pesantren and the community.

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This impression management is closely related to the pesantren's internal identity because sholawat and Al-Banjari arts had already become part of the institution's religious culture before being developed into a public event. Overall, the study produced four main findings, namely that Fesban Best Master expands the pesantren's identity through a quality-based sholawat arts festival; branding is built through planning, organizing, implementation, and evaluation; the front stage presents outstanding participants, professionalism in event organization, and digital representation, while the back stage supports these elements through curation, coordination, santri cadre development, and social relationship management; and impression management constructs the pesantren's image through alignment among institutional identity, internal processes, public presentation, and community experience.

DISCUSSION

1. Sholawat Arts Events as Experience- and Value-Based Pesantren Branding

The findings indicate that Fesban Best Master has developed from a sholawat arts activity into a branding medium for Pondok Pesantren Bidayatul Hidayah Mojokerto. This event not only brings together Al-Banjari groups but also provides the public with direct experiences through which they can assess the identity, quality, and organizational capacity of the pesantren based on participant quality, event presentation, committee services, the religious atmosphere, and social interactions. These findings support the concept of brand experience, which positions actual interaction as an important element in the formation of organizational image. (Hübner et al., 2026) explains that educational institutions need to consistently design brand experiences because the public evaluates institutions through various points of interaction, while (Hasan, 2023) emphasize that nonprofit organizations can build stakeholder trust and engagement through relevant and meaningful experiences.

The branding of Fesban Best Master is also rooted in the values and traditions that have developed within the internal life of the pesantren, such as sholawat, Al-Banjari, Burdah, nasyid, Ishari, haul, and other religious activities. The pesantren does not create sholawat arts solely for image-building purposes, but rather brings these traditions into the public sphere, thereby generating authentic branding. This finding is consistent with the study by (Nabila et al., 2026), which shows that pesantren can maintain their identity through value-based branding amid the development of digitalization. In Fesban Best Master, the values of Islamic propagation and the sholawat tradition constitute the primary substance, while professional management and the use of technology serve as means to broaden the communication of these values to the public.

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In addition to being experience- and value-based, Fesban Best Master builds differentiation through the quality and selectivity of its participants. The organizers do not regard the number of participants as the primary orientation, but instead select Al-Banjari groups based on their abilities, experience, and reputation. This strategy positions Fesban Best Master as a festival with specific standards while simultaneously establishing an association between the quality of the event and the quality of the organizing institution. Thus, participant selectivity functions as a positioning strategy that clarifies the identity of the event and distinguishes Pondok Pesantren Bidayatul Hidayah from other institutions that organize similar activities.

2. Fesban Best Master as an Institutional Performance

The dramaturgical perspective indicates that Fesban Best Master functions as an institutional performance that presents the identity of Pondok Pesantren Bidayatul Hidayah to the public. The pesantren acts as a collective actor, while the pesantren leaders, administrators, santri, committee members, and publication team serve as a performance team that manages representations of quality, professionalism, religiosity, and organizational capacity. The application of this theory extends Goffman's dramaturgy from individual interaction to the representation of Islamic educational organizations. (Lodge et al., 2026) explain that the dramaturgical perspective can be used to interpret organizational narratives through public performances, documents, online media, and the internal processes that support them. Thus, the image produced through Fesban Best Master is the result of coordination among various actors rather than the action of a single figure.

On the front stage, the pesantren's identity is presented through outstanding participants, performance quality, stage arrangement, event sequencing, committee services, religious symbols, and professional event management. These elements form the setting that helps the audience interpret the pesantren's identity, while the ways in which the committee communicates, serves participants, maintains order, and manages the event constitute the personal front. The quality of the Al-Banjari groups becomes a primary symbol that shapes public expectations and attraction. However, the image of quality depends not only on the reputation of the participants but also on the committee's ability to manage the stage, schedule, services, and public interactions.

The success of the front stage in attracting public attention is reflected in the record of approximately 6,000 vehicles during the 2025 event. Although this figure does not indicate the exact number of audience members, the high level of mobility demonstrates that Fesban Best

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Master has developed into a public gathering space that extends beyond the pesantren's internal activities. However, crowd size cannot be regarded as the sole indicator of branding success because the institution's image is also influenced by the quality of public experience and interpretation. Therefore, the success of the event needs to be assessed through broader indicators, such as service quality, audience satisfaction, social acceptance, and the impressions formed after the event has concluded.

3. Back Stage as the Foundation of Public Presentation Quality

The findings indicate that the quality of the front stage of Fesban Best Master depends on back-stage processes that are systematically planned. These processes include participant curation, personal approaches, committee formation, task allocation, technical meetings, internal coordination, santri cadre development, and community relationship management. Although not all of these activities are visible to the public, they determine the quality of the presentation and experience received by the community. Thus, the back stage serves as a strategic foundation that maintains alignment between the image the pesantren seeks to build and the implementation of the event.

Participant curation demonstrates a direct relationship between internal strategy and external representation. The committee assesses the abilities, experience, and reputation of Al-Banjari groups, then establishes personal communication and conducts direct visits to secure participants who meet the standards of the event. The principle of "seng butuh kudu moro" illustrates that event management does not rely solely on formal procedures but also utilizes social closeness and interpersonal relationships. This approach forms part of impression management because it helps the pesantren present outstanding participants while simultaneously strengthening its network with Islamic arts communities.

The back stage also functions as a space for education and santri cadre development. The involvement of external parties during the early stages of the event enabled santri and administrators to learn event management before responsibilities were transferred to internal human resources. This process strengthens the leadership, communication, coordination, and responsibility capacities of santri. This finding broadens the understanding that the branding of educational institutions does not rely solely on external communication but also on the organization's ability to provide consistent services and experiences. (Özer et al., 2023) demonstrate that the authenticity of an educational institution's brand can strengthen positive attitudes, emotional attachment, and word-of-mouth communication. In Fesban Best Master,

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such authenticity emerges from the committee's commitment to preparing and implementing the event.

4. Event Management from the Perspective of Islamic Education Management

The management of Fesban Best Master demonstrates the application of Islamic education management functions in shaping pesantren branding. Planning, or takhthith, is carried out through the determination of objectives, concepts, participant standards, and the character of the event. Organizing, or tanzhim, is manifested in the formation of committees and the division of responsibilities, while implementation and directing, or tawjih, are reflected in coordination, participant services, and the mobilization of resources. Supervision, or riqabah, is conducted through technical evaluation and the resolution of the event's impacts on the community. The integration of these functions confirms that pesantren branding requires a systematic managerial process.

Planning is directed not only toward ensuring the smooth implementation of the event but also toward the identity that the pesantren seeks to present through participant quality and the propagation of Islamic arts. Meanwhile, organizing provides santri with opportunities to carry out entrusted responsibilities through the division of tasks in event management, equipment, publication, catering, security, and participant relations. Each division contributes to the overall institutional presentation, so that all members share responsibility for maintaining the quality of the event and the reputation of the pesantren.

The implementation of Fesban Best Master also reflects the value of ta'awun through cooperation among the pesantren leaders, administrators, santri, participants, external parties, and the community. However, this familial value needs to be supported by clear procedures and documentation so that the quality of the event does not depend on particular individuals. Evaluation of vehicle congestion and community discomfort indicates that riqabah focuses not only on technical aspects but also on public benefit and social harmony. Thus, the success of the event is assessed based on the quality of its implementation as well as its ability to maintain a balance between the interests of the pesantren and those of the community.

5. Impression Management and the Authenticity of the Pesantren's Image

Impression management in Fesban Best Master is carried out through the selection of outstanding participants, professional event presentation, committee services, and digital publications. These strategies create the perception that Pondok Pesantren Bidayatul Hidayah

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possesses quality, professionalism, and the capacity to develop Islamic arts. This impression management is not merely promotional in nature but is supported by a sholawat tradition that is genuinely embedded within the pesantren environment and by actual internal processes. The alignment between identity, management, and presentation produces authenticity. (Angulo-Ruiz et al., 2022) emphasize that perceived authenticity in educational institutions can encourage positive attitudes and word-of-mouth communication, thereby positioning authenticity as a link between impression management and public trust.

The authenticity of Fesban Best Master branding is evident in the alignment between the pesantren's religious traditions, participant curation and well-planned event management, and the committee's social responsibility toward the community. This alignment prevents a gap between public image and organizational reality. However, a strategy of selectivity may also create an impression of exclusivity and limit opportunities for certain groups. Therefore, the pesantren needs to maintain a balance among quality standards, educational values, Islamic propagation, and social openness through community development, supporting activities, and transparent communication of the rationale behind the curation process.

6. Digital Media as an Extension of the Front Stage

The findings indicate that YouTube and Instagram extend the front stage of Fesban Best Master beyond the spatial and temporal boundaries of the event. Digital documentation enables people who are unable to attend to continue observing the performances, the event atmosphere, and the institutional representation of the pesantren, while also serving as an organizational memory that can be accessed again. This finding reinforces the view of (Toikka & Stein, 2026) that dramaturgy remains relevant for understanding organizational performances in online spaces. However, digital media also blur stage boundaries because audiences, content creators, and YouTubers can produce and disseminate their own representations, meaning that the pesantren does not have full control over its digital image.

Audience participation through comments, content sharing, and recommendations can strengthen awareness of the pesantren organically, but it also carries the risk of distorting the institutional narrative. Therefore, the pesantren needs to develop active, consistent, responsive, and ethical digital communication by considering information accuracy, santri privacy, documentation usage rights, account security, and the alignment of content with institutional values. Publication also needs to be integrated into planning before, during, and after the event so that digital media can maintain message continuity and strengthen pesantren branding.

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7. Synthesis of Findings and Theoretical Implications

Table 1. Synthesis of Fesban Best Master Findings from Branding and Dramaturgical Perspectives

No.	Empirical Findings	Dramaturgical Meaning	Contribution to Branding	Islamic Education Management Values
1	Selective selection of outstanding participants	Arrangement of actors and performance materials on the front stage	Creates differentiation in event quality and prestige	*Takhthith*, thoroughness, and responsibility
2	Professional stage presentation and service	Management of setting and personal front	Produces a positive public experience	*Tawjih*, *amanah*, and service
3	Personal approach to the Al-Banjari community	Back-stage strategy and network management	Strengthens reputation and access to high-quality participants	*Silaturahmi* and *ta'awun*
4	Santri cadre development through committee involvement	Preparation of the performance team on the back stage	Maintains the sustainability of organizational quality	*Tanzhim*, *amanah*, and leadership education
5	Communication with the surrounding community	Management of disruptions to the institutional performance	Maintains legitimacy and social acceptance	*Riqabah*, *maslahah*, and social responsibility
6	Publication through YouTube and Instagram	Extension of the front stage into the digital sphere	Expands reach and strengthens institutional memory	*Syiar*, accuracy, and communication ethics
7	Organic publication by audiences	Audiences act as disseminators of the performance	Generates word-of-mouth communication and builds a collective image	Participation and openness

The table demonstrates that each branding element of Fesban Best Master is related to

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dramaturgical processes and the values of Islamic education management. Branding does not emerge only when the committee publicizes the event, but is formed from the moment the organizers design the concept, select participants, organize the committee, build relationships, and address social impacts. Thus, branding is the result of the entire institutional process.

8. Contextual Model of Pesantren Event Branding Based on Values and Dramaturgy

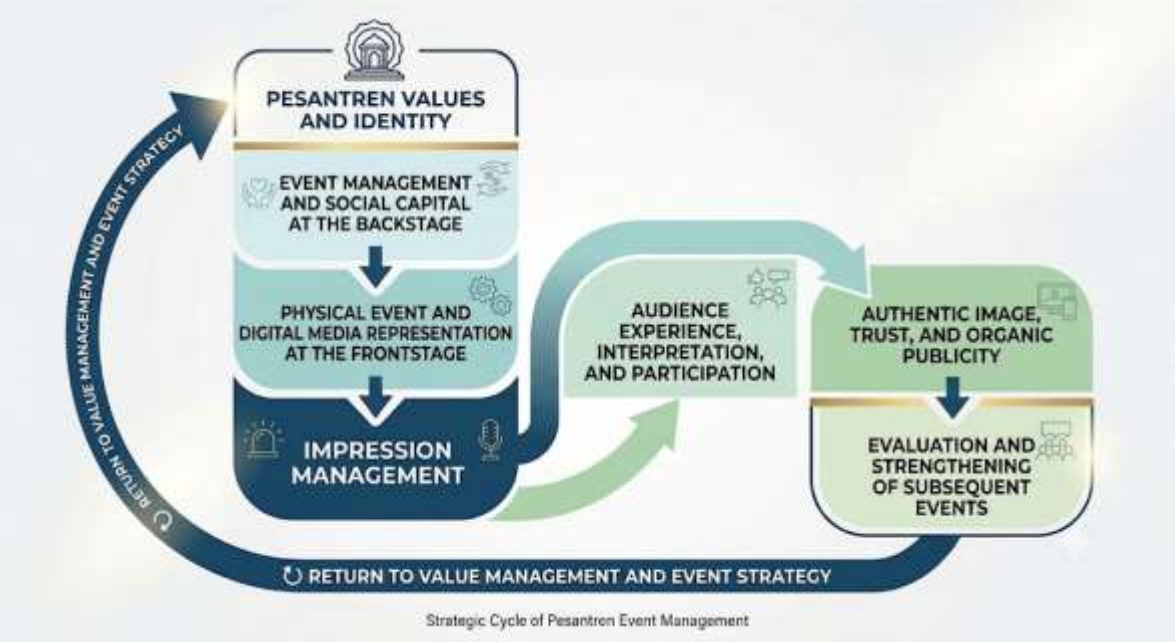


Figure 1. Contextual Model of Pesantren Event Branding Based on Values and Dramaturgy

The Fesban Best Master branding model needs to be presented in the form of a cyclical diagram because community responses influence the evaluation, planning, and implementation of subsequent events. Islamic values should be positioned as the foundation of the entire process so that branding reflects alignment among pesantren values, internal processes, public presentation, and audience interpretation. Theoretically, this model extends the study of educational branding by positioning events as spaces for institutional experience, developing dramaturgy from individual actors toward Islamic educational organizations, and positioning digital media as an extension of the front stage. The model also emphasizes that image authenticity depends on the alignment among pesantren values, the back stage, and front-stage representation.

Practically, pesantren need to manage events as part of their institutional strategy by

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formulating branding objectives that are aligned with Islamic propagation and education, establishing management standards, developing committee cadre regeneration, strengthening community relations, and integrating digital publication from the planning stage. Event success needs to be assessed through the quality of experience, santri competencies, participant responses, community acceptance, digital interaction, and value consistency. Overall, Fesban Best Master builds the branding of Pondok Pesantren Bidayatul Hidayah through the integration of sholawat arts traditions, event management, institutional dramaturgy, social capital, and digital communication. The alignment among the front stage, back stage, impression management, and audience participation results in branding that is authentic, contextual, and sustainable.

CONCLUSION

Through the lens of Erving Goffman's dramaturgy and the functions of Islamic education management, this branding process operates in an integrated manner across three main domains:

1. Back Stage: The quality of public presentation is determined by the depth of internal management. A rigorous participant curation process, a personal approach based on relational culture ("seng butuh kudu moro"), gradual santri cadre development, and community relationship management (riqabah) based on public benefit constitute the main foundations that ensure institutional credibility.
2. Front Stage: Communicates high standards of quality and professionalism through the selective inclusion of outstanding participants, representative stage arrangements, and well-organized service flows. This front stage is expanded exponentially through digital media (YouTube and Instagram) as well as organic publication by audiences (co-creation of brand image).
3. Impression Management: Produces an authentic image because the branding presented is firmly rooted in the Islamic arts traditions that genuinely exist within the internal life of the pesantren, rather than being an artificial form of image construction.

Theoretically, this study produces a Value- and Dramaturgy-Based Contextual Model of Pesantren Event Branding. This model emphasizes that pesantren branding constitutes a continuous dynamic cycle that integrates internal values, managerial governance (takhthith, tanzhim, tawjih, and riqabah), physical and digital performance stages, and public experience. The alignment among these elements ensures that improvements in institutional reputation continue to develop in harmony with the missions of religious outreach, education, and social benefit.

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FUTURE DIRECTIONS

1. Comparative Studies across Pesantren Typologies

Future research may conduct comparative studies among traditional (salaf), modern, and hybrid pesantren, or compare arts events with other types of events, such as entrepreneurship expos, science competitions, or sporting events, to examine variations in impression management strategies and the resulting branding characteristics.

2. Quantitative Measurement of Impact (Brand Equity & Public Trust)

Given that this study employs a qualitative approach, future research is recommended to use quantitative or mixed-methods approaches to empirically measure the influence of event-based brand experience on brand equity, the level of trust among santri parents, or prospective santri's decisions in selecting an educational institution.

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