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The Use Of Media Literacy To Increase Parents' Interest In Choosing The Hidayatullah Mataram Islamic Boarding School

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Abstract

*This study was motivated by the importance of information availability for parents in selecting Islamic educational institutions. The research question focuses on how *Hidayatullah* Magazine is utilized as a literacy medium to attract parents at the Hidayatullah Islamic Boarding School in Mataram, as well as the supporting and inhibiting factors involved. This study aims to describe and analyze the use of the magazine while identifying the dynamics of its determining factors. This descriptive qualitative field study collected data through semi-structured interviews with ten parents of students and school administrators, non-participant observation, and documentation. Data were analyzed interactively using the Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña model with data triangulation. The analytical framework combined Marshall McLuhan's media characteristics theory, UNESCO's Media and Information Literacy (MIL) framework, and the constructivist paradigm. The results indicate that Hidayatullah Magazine functions effectively as a source of preliminary information regarding the curriculum, student activities, and Islamic insights through a combination of text and visual documentation that fosters interpersonal communication. Factors supporting its utilization include flexible access options (free and paid), content diversity, and creative visual layout. Meanwhile, inhibiting factors include low levels of deep reading engagement, disparities in readers' information needs, and uneven print circulation. This study concludes that Hidayatullah Magazine plays a strategic role in shaping parents' positive*

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perceptions and initial interest , although it functions as a complementary factor rather than the sole determinant in the decision to choose a pesantren.

Keywords: Media Literacy, Hidayatullah Magazine, Parental Interest, Islamic Boarding Schools, Islamic Educational Communication.

INTRODUCTION

Islamic education plays a strategic role in shaping a generation that not only possesses knowledge and skills but also exhibits noble character and is capable of applying Islamic values in daily life. In this context, Islamic boarding schools stand out as Islamic educational institutions with distinctive characteristics, achieved through the integration of religious instruction, moral guidance, and the cultivation of proper behavior in the students' daily lives. An educational system that combines learning activities with boarding school life enables the educational process to take place continuously, both through formal instruction and daily social interactions (D. P. Lestari et al., 2024; Nurhakim et al., 2025) . The existence of Islamic boarding schools is therefore a key consideration for parents who desire a more intensive approach to their children's religious education and character development.

Amid the evolution of modern society, parents' decisions regarding the choice of educational institutions for their children are inevitably influenced by various social, moral, and educational considerations. Advances in information technology, changes in adolescent social patterns, and easy access to a wide range of digital content have prompted some parents to seek educational environments deemed capable of providing more targeted guidance and supervision. In this context, Islamic boarding schools are viewed as an educational alternative that integrates academic knowledge, religious understanding, and character development a combination that appeals to parents seeking a more structured and supervised education for their children (Hidayat et al., 2025). Nevertheless, the decision to choose a pesantren is determined not only by parents' educational needs and concerns but also by the information they obtain regarding the quality, programs, environment, and credibility of the educational institution (Devi et al., 2025). Thus, the provision of adequate information plays a crucial role in the parents' decision-making process.

One of the tools that can be used to meet these information needs is the media. The media not only serves to convey messages to the public but also plays a role in shaping

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understanding, perceptions, and evaluations of an institution (G. & V., 2025). In the context of education, the media can be used to introduce learning programs, student activities, achievements, institutional values, and various pieces of information that prospective students and parents consider (Rachmawati et al., 2025). The use of media, therefore, should not be understood merely as a promotional activity but also as a process of providing information that enables the public to recognize and evaluate the characteristics of an educational institution. Information that is presented clearly, relevantly, and reliably has the potential to spark public interest and strengthen trust in the institution in question.

In relation to these functions, print magazines have the potential to serve as a medium for literacy that presents information in a structured manner and can be revisited as needed by readers. Unlike oral communication, which is limited to a specific time, magazines allow readers to access a variety of information including articles, activity reports, institutional profiles, and educational messages all within a single medium. In the context of Islamic education, magazines can also integrate the functions of information, education, da'wah, and institutional identity building. By presenting relevant content, magazines have the potential to help parents gain insight into the educational orientation, student activities, and values fostered by the Islamic boarding school (Maspul, 2024; Razali et al., 2023). However, the existence of the magazine as an information source does not automatically guarantee an increase in parental interest. Its impact must be understood in terms of the content of the information, the relevance of the messages, the level of reader trust, and its connection to parents' needs and considerations when deciding on their children's education (K. S. Lestari et al., 2025).

This context can be examined through the use of Suara Hidayatullah magazine by the Hidayatullah Islamic Boarding School in Mataram. This magazine is a medium that publishes Islamic information and messages and is linked to da'wah activities and the development of the Muslim community. Within the framework of educational communication, the existence of this magazine can be understood as a means of introducing values, programs, and activities related to Islamic education. Based on the researcher's initial observations, some parents of students first learned about the Hidayatullah Islamic Boarding School in Mataram through Suara Hidayatullah magazine. Information regarding educational programs, student activities, achievements, , and Islamic values presented through this medium provides an initial picture of the institution's characteristics. These preliminary findings suggest a possible connection between the use of the magazine as an information source and the growing interest of parents

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in the Islamic boarding school. However, how the information in the magazine is understood, evaluated, and taken into consideration by parents still requires further study.

A number of previous studies have examined parents' motivations for choosing Islamic boarding schools as well as the use of media in da'wah activities. The study Aksa & Sari (2024) , as cited in the literature review of this study, examines parents' motivations related to their desire to provide religious education and moral guidance to their children. The study Pratiwi (2023) highlights parents' concerns about the negative influences of technology and promiscuous social interactions as factors in choosing an Islamic boarding school. Meanwhile, the study Ahmad (2023) examines parents' views on Islamic boarding schools as institutions deemed capable of providing a good education for their children. From a media perspective, Fadil (2024) examines the role of Hidayatullah Magazine in da'wah activities, particularly in its functions as a communicator, motivator, and facilitator for the development of the Islamic community. In general, these studies provide a foundation for understanding parents' motivations for choosing Islamic boarding schools and the role of the media in disseminating information and Islamic messages.

Nevertheless, studies on parents' motivations for choosing Islamic boarding schools and studies on the role of da'wah media have not fully explained how magazines are utilized as a medium for literacy related to parents' interests in selecting specific educational institutions. Based on the previous studies reviewed, further research is needed that specifically examines the relationship between the characteristics of the information in the magazine, parents' understanding of that information, and their considerations in choosing the Hidayatullah Mataram Islamic Boarding School. This study positions Suara Hidayatullah Magazine not only as a medium for disseminating da'wah messages but also as a source of literacy that has the potential to help parents recognize the profiles and characteristics of educational institutions. This focus is important because the decision to choose an educational institution is an issue related to information needs, perceptions of institutional quality, and parents' considerations regarding their children's education.

Based on the above description, this study aims to analyze the use of Suara Hidayatullah Magazine as a literacy medium in increasing parents' interest in choosing the Hidayatullah Mataram Islamic Boarding School. This study is designed to examine the information presented in the magazine, how parents obtain and understand that information, and its relationship to their interest and considerations in selecting an Islamic boarding school. The results of this study

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are expected to enrich the discussion on media literacy in the context of Islamic education while providing practical insights for educational institution administrators in developing communication strategies that are informative, educational, and tailored to parents' needs.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative approach using descriptive field research. This approach was chosen to gain an in-depth understanding of how literacy media are utilized to increase parents' interest in choosing the Hidayatullah Mataram Islamic Boarding School. Research data were collected through interviews, observations, and documentation to describe the use of magazines as a medium for conveying information about education and boarding school activities. Data sources included primary data obtained from parents or guardians of students as well as boarding school administrators, and secondary data in the form of documents and written sources relevant to the research focus (Creswell & Creswell, 2009; Sugiyono, 2012)

Data collection was conducted through semi-structured interviews, non-participant observation, and documentation. Informants were selected purposefully based on their relevance and knowledge regarding the use of media literacy at the Hidayatullah Islamic Boarding School in Mataram. The collected data were analyzed using the "interactive analysis model , which includes data condensation, data presentation, and the drawing and verification of conclusions. To enhance data validity, this study employed source and technique triangulation by comparing information obtained from interviews, observations, and documentation. Through these stages, the study aimed to identify the ways in which magazines are utilized as a literacy medium, their contribution to parents' interest in selecting a boarding school, as well as the supporting and inhibiting factors in their use (Moleong, 1989) .

DISCUSSION

The Use of Hidayatullah Magazine as an Educational Information Medium

The research results show that Hidayatullah Magazine is used as a medium to introduce the Hidayatullah Mataram Islamic Boarding School to parents. The information presented covers the boarding school's activities, educational programs, institutional developments, and various Islamic topics. This content provides readers with the opportunity to learn about the boarding school through reading materials that can be accessed again as needed. Thus, the function of the

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magazine in this study is not limited to delivering news but also relates to providing introductory information about Islamic educational institutions.

The diversity of content was one of the characteristics that caught the informants' attention. Based on the interviews presented in this thesis, informant AS expressed interest in information regarding the existence and development of Hidayatullah, including its network of institutions in various regions. Meanwhile, informant MH noted that the magazine features creative presentation and includes Islamic news in addition to information about pesantren activities. These observations indicate that readers' interest may stem from a combination of institutional information and broader religious content, rather than solely from promotional news about the pesantren.

Information about the educational programs and students' activities can help parents form an initial picture of educational life at the pesantren. Through this information, parents can learn about the types of activities conducted and the values the pesantren aims to instill in its students. However, the picture gained from magazines remains preliminary knowledge derived from written and visual information. To gain a more comprehensive understanding of the institution, parents may still need other sources, such as direct communication with the pesantren, visits, or the experiences of families who have connections with the institution (Nisa, 2024) .

These findings align with the discussion in Fadil (2024) regarding the role of Hidayatullah magazine as a medium for da'wah. The magazine can serve as a means of conveying Islamic information and messages to readers beyond face-to-face communication. In the context of this study, this da'wah function overlaps with the function of literacy because religious information is conveyed through reading materials that parents can study. Thus, the magazine can fulfill the function of Islamic communication while also helping to introduce the activities and characteristics of educational institutions to the public.

How Parents Obtain and Use the Magazine

The results of the study show that parents obtain Hidayatullah Magazine through two mechanisms: receiving it for free and purchasing it. Of the ten informants interviewed, seven AS, SA, NT, BS, KN, MI, and RZ received the magazine for free, while the other three AB, MH, and YM purchased it. These findings indicate that parents' access to the magazine occurs through diverse distribution mechanisms. The differences in how the magazine is obtained provide insight into

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media distribution channels but are not sufficient to explain the differences in the levels of utilization by each parent.

Figure 1. Cover of Suara Hidayatullah Magazine



In addition to direct ownership, the information contained in the magazine also has the potential to spread through communication among parents. Based on the results of observations, information regarding the pesantren's programs and activities can be relayed by parents who have read it to other parents. This pattern shows that the dissemination of information does not only occur through print media but can also continue through social interaction. In this process, parents act as information intermediaries, linking the content of the media to their social environment. However, the information received through communication among parents is not always identical to the information in the magazine, as it can be influenced by each individual's understanding, memory, and manner of conveying the information.

The research findings also show that owning a magazine does not always lead to reading and utilizing all the available information. Some parents read and pay attention to the magazine's content, while others tend to keep it without reading it in depth. This difference indicates that access to media and engagement in reading are two distinct concepts. Owning a magazine provides parents with the opportunity to obtain information, but understanding the content requires the reader's active engagement in the process of reading and interpreting the

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information. Thus, the mere presence of a magazine as a source of information does not in itself indicate that all readers have made optimal use of that information.

These findings can be analyzed through the media and information literacy framework developed by UNESCO, which identifies access to, understanding of, and use of information as key aspects of individuals' interactions with the media. Within this framework, receiving or possessing media is one stage in the utilization of information, whereas the ability to understand and use information relates to the reader's engagement with the content presented (Grizzle et al., 2013; Wilson et al., 2011). From this perspective, the utilization of Hidayatullah Magazine should be viewed not only in terms of the magazine's distribution or ownership but also in terms of the extent to which parents read, understand, and use the information within it as a basis for decision-making. Therefore, the role of the magazine as a literacy medium in the context of choosing an Islamic boarding school must be examined by considering parents' reading experiences and their interpretation of the information, rather than solely based on the receipt of the magazine.

The Role of Magazines in Shaping Parents' Knowledge and Interest

Research findings indicate that information regarding educational programs, student activities, the development of the Islamic boarding school, and Islamic news can serve as factors parents consider when learning about the Hidayatullah Mataram Islamic Boarding School. When this information is deemed relevant, the magazine has the potential to help parents gain initial knowledge about the institution. This knowledge can then lead to increased attention and interest, especially if the content presented aligns with parents' needs in seeking an education for their children.

The relationship between the magazine and parents' interest can be understood as a gradual process. This process begins when parents obtain a magazine or hear information sourced from a magazine, then pay attention to content they deem relevant, understand the information presented, and use it as one of the factors to consider regarding Islamic boarding schools. However, these stages do not always unfold in the same way for every parent. The level of reading engagement, information needs, and access to other sources can result in different experiences.

Articles accompanied by photographs and documentation of activities also play an important role in conveying information. Field findings indicate that informants responded

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positively to the inclusion of photographs and depictions of pesantren activities in the magazine. These visual elements help readers form a more concrete picture of the activities being reported, while the text provides context and meaning. The combination of the two is one of the characteristics of print media that can support readers' understanding of the information presented.

Figure 2. Interview with a student's parent



These findings can be discussed through the perspective, which emphasizes that the characteristics of the medium are important in the communication process. In this study, magazines provide a form of information delivery that combines text, images, and columns. Readers can read the material at different times and return to sections they consider important. These characteristics provide a reading experience that differs from oral communication, which takes place at a specific moment in time. However, the characteristics of the medium do not in and of themselves guarantee that all readers will understand the message in the same way, as understanding remains tied to each reader's attention, experience, and needs.

Therefore, the role of magazines in increasing parental interest must be interpreted in a balanced manner. The research findings support the view that magazines can help introduce educational institutions and provide relevant information to parents. However, these findings do not prove that magazines are the sole factor influencing parents' decision to choose a pesantren. Educational choices can still be influenced by considerations regarding religious education, character development, the environment, family expectations, as well as information obtained through direct interaction and other sources (Ahmad, 2023; Aksa & Sari, 2024; Pratiwi, 2023).

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Factors Supporting the Use of Hidayatullah Magazine

Based on interviews with ten parents of students, the researcher identified three key factors supporting the use of Hidayatullah Magazine: ease of access to the magazine, diversity of content, and creative presentation of information. These three factors are interrelated in the communication process. Ease of access allows parents to obtain reading material; the diversity of content provides information that meets readers' needs; and an engaging presentation helps readers focus on the magazine's content. These factors support the magazine's potential as a means of introducing Islamic boarding schools to parents.

The first factor is the ease of obtaining the magazine. The finding that seven informants received the magazine for free and three informants purchased it indicates that there is more than one way to obtain this publication. Receiving the magazine allows some parents to access information without incurring a purchase cost, while purchasing serves as another avenue for those who wish to obtain the magazine. From a literacy perspective, the ease of accessing reading materials is a prerequisite that opens opportunities for readers to become familiar with the information contained within them (Grizzle et al., 2013).

The second factor is the diversity of content. Information about pesantren activities and educational programs coexists with broader Islamic news. This diversity provides readers with the opportunity to find material that aligns with their interests. Interview results show that some informants were interested in information about Hidayatullah's developments, while others also paid attention to the Islamic news featured in the magazine. This indicates that diverse content can broaden readers' reasons for accessing and reading the publication.

The third factor is the creativity of the presentation. The use of photos, text, and documentation of activities adds variety to the delivery of information. Visual presentation can help readers recognize the activities being discussed, while the text provides the necessary explanations to understand the information more fully. Findings regarding informants' responses to photos and pesantren activities indicate that the way information is presented is one aspect that readers pay attention to. Thus, the quality of presentation is related to the magazine's ability to attract attention and convey information in a way that is easier to understand.

Overall, these supporting factors indicate that magazine usage depends on the interplay between access, content, and presentation. Magazines that are easily obtained but do not contain the information readers need may be underutilized, just as relevant content may struggle to benefit parents who lack access to the publication. Therefore, these three factors must be

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understood as complementary elements in conveying information about Islamic boarding schools.

Factors Hindering the Use of Hidayatullah Magazine

In addition to supporting factors, researchers found that the use of magazines faces barriers in the form of differences in reading habits, varying information needs, and uneven distribution. These barriers affect the extent to which parents engage with the available information. This means that even though the magazines have been published and some parents have received them, the process of utilizing the information may not necessarily be optimal for all recipients.

The first obstacle relates to reading habits. Some parents who receive the magazines do not always read the entire publication; some keep them as part of a collection or as decorations. This situation indicates that the availability of reading material does not automatically lead to reading engagement. Parents who rarely read the magazines may not obtain all the information about the activities, programs, and guidance offered by the pesantren that is actually available in these publications. This finding aligns with discussions regarding the importance of reading habits and engagement in the utilization of reading materials (Nurhidayah, 2025; Purwandari et al., 2020)

Low engagement with reading magazines cannot be directly interpreted as low parental concern for their children's education. Parents may still actively seek information through conversations with boarding school officials, discussions with family members or other parents, and visits to educational institutions (Sitompul et al., 2025) . Thus, the barriers identified are more accurately understood as limitations in the use of magazines as one of several information channels, rather than as evidence that parents do not care about their children's education.

The second obstacle relates to differences in information needs. Not all parents read the magazine for the same purpose. Some may be more interested in information about Islamic boarding school programs, while others pay more attention to general Islamic news. These differences can influence which sections are read and how well information about educational institutions is understood. Therefore, while the diversity of content serves as a supporting factor, it must be accompanied by a clear presentation of information about Islamic boarding school programs and activities to ensure that the needs of readers who are considering their children's education are met. The study (Imanti et al., 2024) also shows that parents' perceptions and

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motivations regarding Islamic boarding school education are strongly rooted in their desire to harmonize their children's formal and spiritual education.

The third obstacle is that distribution has not yet reached the entire community. Parents who do not receive or purchase the magazine have more limited opportunities to obtain information about Islamic boarding schools through this publication. Communication among parents can help spread information to those who do not yet have the magazine, but this channel does not guarantee that everyone will receive the information with the same scope and level of understanding. These findings show that distribution reach is a crucial factor in determining who can access the media and what information they are likely to obtain.

Thus, the barriers to magazine use lie not only in the availability of the medium but also in the relationship between access, reading habits, information needs, and the distribution of publications. Optimization efforts must take this entire process into account. The provision of magazines must be accompanied by content tailored to readers' needs and distribution that reaches more parents, without neglecting other information sources they also use when making educational choices.

Summary of the Discussion: Magazines as One Consideration in Choosing an Islamic Boarding School

Overall, the use of Hidayatullah Magazine can be understood as a process that begins with access to the publication, followed by attention to and understanding of the information, and then has the potential to contribute to parents' knowledge and interest in Islamic boarding schools. The magazine's content provides an overview of educational programs, student activities, institutional developments, and Islamic information. However, this process does not occur uniformly, as it is influenced by reading habits, interest in specific content, and the ease of obtaining the publication.

Within the framework of media and information literacy, these findings indicate that access is a prerequisite but not the sole factor determining the benefits of information. New information has the potential to foster understanding only when readers pay attention to it, comprehend its content, and apply it as needed. Therefore, the success of magazine utilization cannot be assessed solely by the availability of the publication or the number of people who receive it. It is also important to consider how readers interact with the information and to what extent the content presented meets their needs (Grizzle et al., 2013; Wilson et al., 2011).

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Research findings also reveal a connection between print media and interpersonal communication. Magazines can serve as a source of information read directly by parents, but the information they contain can also be relayed through conversations among parents. This broadens the potential for information to spread beyond the publication's direct audience. However, the relaying of information through others does not always guarantee the completeness of the content received; therefore, magazines continue to serve as a reference source that the public can read directly.

The implication of these findings is that pesantren administrators need to continue using magazines as a medium for educational communication, while also paying attention to the quality of information, presentation, and distribution reach. Information regarding educational programs, student activities, achievements, character development, and the boarding school environment can be conveyed clearly and engagingly so that it is easier for parents to understand (Faza & Arifiana, 2024). On the other hand, magazine administrators can maintain the diversity of Islamic news that attracts readers. This direction aligns with the recommendations in the thesis regarding the development of content quality and the expansion of the magazine's distribution.

Ultimately, Hidayatullah Magazine can be seen as a source of information and communication that helps parents learn about the Hidayatullah Islamic Boarding School in Mataram. Its contribution lies in providing information that can build preliminary knowledge and serve as one of the factors parents consider. However, the choice of an educational institution remains a decision that involves various aspects; therefore, the role of the magazine needs to be viewed proportionally and not regarded as the sole factor determining a family's decision (Ahmad, 2023; Aksa & Sari, 2024; Pratiwi, 2023)

CONCLUSION

Based on field findings and theoretical analysis, this study concludes that the use of Hidayatullah Magazine serves significantly as a medium for literacy and an educational communication tool that presents representations of the curriculum, institutional figures, and the moral guidance of students at the Hidayatullah Islamic Boarding School in Mataram. The synergy between textual narratives and visual documentation in this print medium is able to create a first impression while also shaping parents' understanding of the reality of life at the boarding school. This process of interpreting information does not only take place individually

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but also transforms into discourse material in word-of-mouth communication among students' guardians.

The effectiveness of these magazines is driven by the flexibility in obtaining publications, the variety of contextually relevant religious content, and visual layouts that adapt to readers' interests. On the other hand, the role of this medium faces limitations in the form of low levels of deep reading engagement, the diversity of information preferences among families, and the physical circulation of the magazine, which has not yet reached all segments of society equally. The practical and theoretical implications of this study confirm that Hidayatullah Magazine plays a strategic role as an initial stimulus for fostering institutional interest; however, it functions as a complementary supporting factor that continues to interact with families' internal spiritual motivations and face-to-face empirical verification in the final decision-making process regarding the selection of an educational institution.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Building on the findings and limitations of this study, a research agenda for future studies can be developed to expand the discourse on Islamic educational communication through several strategic directions. First, in line with the dynamics of digital transformation, future research could examine the convergence of print media into digital formats (e-magazines and official institutional social media accounts) to compare their communicative effectiveness in reaching prospective parents of students across generations. Second, further research is recommended to employ a quantitative or mixed-methods approach based on large-scale survey instruments to statistically measure the correlation between media literacy levels and the probability of a decision to enroll a student. Third, a comparative study of " " across Islamic boarding schools with different typological characteristics (such as strictly Salafi institutions and independent modern boarding schools) needs to be explored to map variations in public communication patterns across the institutions' diverse cultural characteristics. Finally, a more detailed analysis of audience reception needs to be conducted, taking into account demographic segmentation and the socioeconomic backgrounds of parents, so that the dynamics of how religious and institutional information is interpreted can be understood more comprehensively.

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