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Exclusive Dakwah and Effective Branding: A Case Study of Majelis Taklim Zaadul Muslim in Examining Jamaah Loyalty Through the Touchpoint Method

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Abstract: This study examines the phenomenon of the high number of attendees at Majelis Taklim Zaadul Muslim, despite its exclusive and closed-content religious gatherings. This research is important to identify the factors that make this Majelis Taklim highly appealing and to understand how its unique strengths attract specific market segments. The objective of the study is to explain the dissemination of Majelis Taklim Zaadul Muslim's ideas through branding activities. The research employs a qualitative method, utilizing Talcott Parsons' cultural theory to explore participants' in-depth experiences. Alina Wheeler's brand touchpoint theory is used to identify the mediums that connect the attendees. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, participatory observations, and content analysis. The findings reveal that effective brand touchpoints contribute to the increasing number of attendees from diverse backgrounds. The main findings include: 1) The da'wah model of Habib Alwi As-Segaf, which adheres to Asy'ariyah and Maturidiyyah theology, 2) Branding activities that create emotional connections and a strong image, and 3) Positive perceptions of branding among attendees. This study recommends further research using an anthropological approach and can serve as a reference for new Majelis Taklim in implementing branding strategies in their da'wah activities.

Keywords: Majelis Taklim, Branding, Touchpoint, Zaadul Muslim.

INTRODUCTION

Majelis Taklim Zaadul Muslim is an Islamic community with a large number of attendees, consisting of members from various regions and diverse backgrounds. Located in Citayam, Depok, West Java, this majelis has a unique approach to dakwah (Islamic preaching) that has successfully attracted many attendees. Compared to most modern Majelis Taklims that utilize social media for their outreach, this Majelis Taklim appears to be more private and exclusive. Nevertheless, the internal communication effectively draws the interest of attendees, resulting in an annual increase in the number of jamaah (worshippers).

The phenomenon mentioned above sets Majelis Taklim Zaadul Muslim apart from other Majelis Taklim. The branding employed has a significant influence on the interest of attendees in this Majelis Taklim. Consumers can evaluate or experience a brand through their interactions with it and the marketing programs offered by the product over the years

(Masruroh and Zahirah, 2019). Exploring this phenomenon raises the question of how Majelis Taklim Zaadul Muslim applies touchpoints in its branding efforts, making this the core issue of the study. Consequently, the research topic focuses on the organic implementation of branding in Majelis Taklim Zaadul Muslim.

Touchpoints are essential components of a brand, creating opportunities to enhance customer awareness and loyalty (Wheeler, 2017, 3). The activities of Majelis Taklim Zaadul Muslim can be analyzed using the branding touchpoint theory proposed by Alina Wheeler, where every interaction point, such as public relations, word of mouth, videos, social media, advertisements, interior design, signage, publications, vehicles, and uniforms, plays a pivotal role in building attendees' awareness and loyalty. In this context, touchpoints play a crucial role in creating opportunities to boost engagement while reinforcing the identity and trust associated with the Majelis.

Public Relation (PR) or public relations is a strategic effort that utilizes communication knowledge and skills to build positive relationships between an organization and the broader society. In the context of marketing, Marketing Public Relations (MPR) strategies are an effective alternative to enhance customer loyalty, especially through educational activities (Abdillah and Isnaeni 2017). In this context, Majelis Taklim not only promotes its services but also adds value by delivering beneficial religious information.

Public Relations is a strategic effort that leverages knowledge and communication skills to build positive relationships between an organization and the broader community. In the marketing context, Marketing Public Relations (MPR) strategies serve as an effective alternative to enhance customer loyalty, particularly through educational activities (Abdillah and Isnaeni, 2017). At this point, Majelis Taklim not only promotes its offerings but also provides added value by delivering beneficial religious information.

Marketing strategies through Word of Mouth significantly influence customer interest. In other words, the better the Word of Mouth marketing strategy, the higher the customers' interest in becoming members (Nurlatifah and Masykur, 2017). In the case of Majelis Taklim Zaadul Muslim, the Word of Mouth method is evident when long-time attendees share their experiences with new or prospective attendees interested in joining Majelis activities. This creates an effective communication network, attracting more members.

Promotional videos created by the attendees of Majelis Taklim Zaadul Muslim are the result of content creators' initiatives to support the branding of the Majelis. This phenomenon amplifies the promotional impact on the attendees. In general, promotional videos can be defined as a form of marketing content that uses video media to promote products or services to consumers in an effective and engaging manner (Cahyadi and Tangsi, 2023).

Technically, the social media of Majelis Taklim Zaadul Muslim is not officially managed by the Majelis itself. Habib Alwi prohibits his attendees from widely disseminating the content of his sermons, which is one of the reasons why the teachings in this Majelis are perceived as exclusive. Social media is an online tool that enables users to express themselves, interact, collaborate, share, communicate, and form social bonds with other users virtually (Yusuf et al., 2023). Paradoxically, this phenomenon has still made Majelis Taklim Zaadul Muslim widely recognized and highly sought after by its attendees.

Signage is a graphical field that conveys information in a form that shapes the environment. The information delivered consists of graphic communication. Activities in Environmental Graphic Design (EGD) involve the systematic development of cohesive information systems and graphic visual communication systems in a built environment (Calori and Vanden-Eynden, 2015, 4). At Majelis Taklim Zaadul Muslim, the signage implemented serves as an informational medium about the location of the Majelis.

Publication in brand touchpoints refers to a branding system that utilizes various media or touchpoints where Majelis Taklim interacts with its attendees or potential audiences. The purpose of publication is to enhance the brand awareness of the Majelis Taklim, strengthen

its image, and generate greater engagement with the audience. The publication discussed focuses on two media: billboards and banners. Billboards retain their advantage in creating a strong visual impact and can be seen by a wide range of people (Tommy, Mujahid, and Rahmat, 2024).

Etymologically, vehicles can be defined as means of transportation, platforms, tools, or carriers. In the context of Majelis Taklim Zaadul Muslim, vehicles used to support mobility refer to transportation means or tools that facilitate the movement or mobility of the Da'i to the location of religious gatherings. The use of vehicles in this context not only includes physical vehicles such as cars but also the implicit information conveyed through them. An example of Hybrid Advertising is advertising that utilizes vehicles, referred to as "Vehicle Branding," which functions as a stimulus (S. Gunawan, 2020).

Uniform refers to specific clothing or attire worn by a particular group or community. One of the unwritten rules applied by Majelis Taklim Zaadul Muslim to its attendees is the wearing of a peci (cap) or kopiah as a head covering for male attendees, while female attendees are required to wear closed attire that does not reveal their body shape or *aurat* (intimate parts), such as a baju kurung and hijab.

METHOD

This research is a qualitative study aimed at exploring the branding touchpoints of Majelis Taklim Zaadul Muslim based on the theory proposed by Alina Wheeler. In this study, Majelis Taklim Zaadul Muslim, as a community, is also examined through the social AGIL approach (Adaptation, Goal Attainment, Integration, and Latency) by Talcott Parsons. Through this approach, the branding patterns applied by the Majelis Taklim can be studied more deeply, considering its existence as a community that holds social values.

From Talcott Parsons' perspective, the system in society is an interconnected whole, where each component of the social system functions according to its respective role to ensure the system operates properly in order to achieve its goals (I. Gunawan and Bahari, 2024). The data collection methods used include three main techniques: literature study, field study, and interviews. This approach aims to gain a deep understanding of how various touchpoint aspects contribute to the perception and identity of the Majelis Taklim Zaadul Muslim brand itself.

First, a literature study was conducted to collect relevant secondary data from various sources such as books, academic journals, articles, and reports related to branding touchpoint theory. These sources were utilized to understand the foundational concepts proposed by Alina Wheeler and to identify key elements that could be applied to the case of Majelis Taklim Zaadul Muslim. The collected literature also helped establish a theoretical framework to serve as the basis for analysis.

Second, a field study was carried out to directly observe the activities and interactions taking place at Majelis Taklim Zaadul Muslim. This observation involved examining both physical and non-physical elements that are part of the branding touchpoints, such as the atmosphere of the Majelis, the communication media used, and the interactions between Majelis members and the management. The field study provided authentic and relevant primary data to understand how branding touchpoints are manifested in a real-world context.

Finally, in-depth interviews were conducted with the organizers and members of Majelis Taklim Zaadul Muslim to gain internal perspectives on the branding strategies implemented. These interviews were designed to explore respondents' perceptions, experiences, and views regarding the existing branding touchpoints. The results of the interviews were then analyzed to understand how each touchpoint contributes to building the brand identity and its impact on Majelis members and the broader community.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Ideology of Majelis Taklim Zaadul Muslim

The foundational thoughts of Habib Alwi As-Segaf, disseminated through his sermons, are rooted in the books that form the basis of his teachings on tauhid (theology), fiqh (worship practices), and tasawuf (spirituality). These include works by Syaikh Habib Abdurrahman bin Segaf As-Segaf, Syaikh Abdul Qadir Al-Jailani, and Habib Abdullah Al-Haddad, prominent salaf scholars adhering to Asy'ariyah and Maturidiyah theology. Al-Ghazali's philosophy, which aligns with the Asy'ariyah school of thought, asserts that human reason can only comprehend the existence of God, while other aspects of knowledge are revealed to humanity through divine revelation (Muniroh 2018).



Source: (Nuris, 2018)

Figure 1. Photo of Habib Alwi bin Abdurrahman As-Segaf

Touchpoint Elements of Majelis Taklim Zaadul Muslim

In the context of Majelis Taklim Zaadul Muslim, touchpoints refer to every interaction between the Majelis and its attendees that shapes their experiences. These touchpoints are not limited to routine religious activities such as sermons and study sessions but also include various other aspects, such as communication from Habib Alwi As-Segaf as the teacher to the attendees and the activities within this community.

According to Mourad, each brand touchpoint can play a strategic role by signifying trust in the quality of educational services provided (Nursito, 2022). By analyzing various touchpoints in Majelis Taklim Zaadul Muslim, this study aims to uncover the branding strategies employed to foster good relationships between the organization and its attendees and to evaluate the impact on attendees' loyalty.

Public Relation

Ustadz Kholid Az-Zubaidi is a scholar who also studies at Majelis Taklim Zaadul Muslim. He is often appointed by Habib Alwi As-Segaf to lead the preliminary lecture sessions before Habib Alwi delivers the main sermon. Ustadz Kholid Az-Zubaidi is also actively involved in giving lectures around Jakarta. In his book, Wheeler (2017, 107) discusses the touchpoint matrix in the public relations category, emphasizing that buzz and awareness are key aspects supporting the success of public relations efforts. In this context, Ustadz Kholid Az-Zubaidi serves as a public relations representative for Majelis Taklim

Zaadul Muslim. He frequently promotes the importance of attending the Majelis through his lectures, raising awareness about the significance of learning religious knowledge.



Source: (Nuris, 2021)

Figure 2. Ustadz Kholid Az-Zubaidi when completing a study tour.

Word of Mouth (WOM)

Indicators of Word of Mouth include others' experiences, recommendations from others, frequently hearing people talk about the product, and persuasion from others to purchase the product (Rahmadevita, Suharyono, and Kumadji, 2013). The topics discussed among attendees of Majelis Taklim Zaadul Muslim are highly diverse, with most conversations focusing on themes of blessings and spiritual experiences felt by the attendees. This phenomenon of Word of Mouth is testimonial in nature and involves mutual sharing. For instance, one of the attendees shared a story about the dedication of Habib Alwi in his preaching efforts, highlighting his sincerity and commitment.



Source: (Nuris, 2021)

Figure 3. Chatting atmosphere after studying is over

Video

Video is a vital element in multimedia, recognized as the most captivating form and a tool capable of bridging real-world learning experiences (Apriliani, Hasanah, and Anas, 2019). The promotional video method, as part of the branding touchpoints for Majelis Taklim

Zaadul Muslim, utilizes the skills of its attendees who excel in videography and content creation. For example, the content creator Kata Baba, with 1.4 million followers on Instagram, creates parody videos using Betawi dubbing to promote the Majelis' events.

Essentially, promotion is a form of marketing communication. Marketing communication refers to marketing activities aimed at disseminating information, influencing or persuading, and reminding the market to accept and remain loyal to the offered product (Sunarya, Abas, and Jasmine, 2015). Additionally, the Sabyan gambus group has contributed by releasing a new single titled *Zaadul Muslim* in their latest playlist, serving as an auxiliary promotional medium for the Majelis Taklim. This approach not only strengthens the branding of the Majelis but also extends its reach to a broader audience through digital platforms.



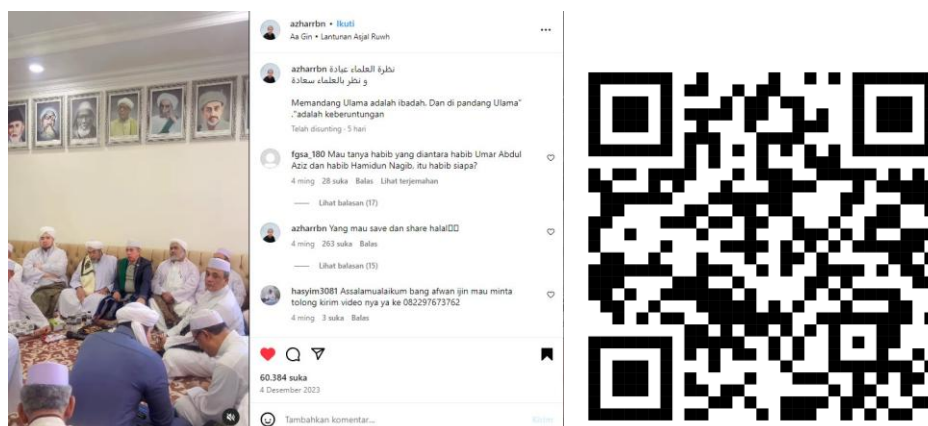
Source: Youtube Sabyan Gambus

Figure 4. *Zaadul Muslim* video clip from the *Nasyid Sabyan Gambus* group

Social Media

The following quote from Matt Dunn, a Social Media Strategist at Cerner, in *Designing Brand Identity* by Wheeler (2017, p. 71), encapsulates the power of social media: "We use social media to build, energize, and empower communities in support of our brand." An intriguing phenomenon with Majelis Taklim *Zaadul Muslim* is its ability to harness branding power through attendee loyalty, despite not officially utilizing social media as a touchpoint in the traditional sense.

While most organizations leverage social media to enhance their brand presence, Majelis Taklim *Zaadul Muslim* has succeeded in showcasing its branding strength through the active involvement of its attendees. These loyal participants voluntarily share quotes from the teachings of Habib Alwi As-Segaf quotes that have been explicitly approved for dissemination on social media, amplifying the Majelis' reach and influence organically.



Source: IG Azharrbn, 2023

Figure 5. Video documentation shared on social media

Publication

Majelis Taklim Zaadul Muslim employs various publication media to disseminate information about its events across the Greater Jakarta area (Jabodetabek). One prominent method is the use of large billboards that display event details, such as dates and locations. An example of this is the biannual religious gathering held in Lubang Buaya, East Jakarta. In addition to billboards, banners or pennants (umbul-umbul) serve dual purposes: as a means of publication and as directional guides for attendees, particularly in areas with narrow access roads. Through these strategies, Majelis Taklim Zaadul Muslim effectively reaches its audience and facilitates easier access for attendees to participate in their events.

Key Elements for Creating an Effective Billboard To craft an effective billboard, the following elements are essential (Melinda, 2017): 1) The billboard must be easily noticeable. 2) It should be placed in an exclusive location. 3) Avoid crowding with other billboards nearby. 4) Ensure visibility during the day and sufficient lighting at night. 5) Present a message that is concise, impactful, and clever. 6) Use high-quality printing technology to ensure clear readability of text and images. To analyze the effectiveness of publication media for Majelis Taklim Zaadul Muslim, all related aspects will be dissected systematically using the matrix below.



Source: Twitter @nasehatbaba

Figure 6. Event Billboard Design

Table 1. The analysis matrix at the touchpoint is Publication

No	Effectiveness Points of Billboards	Analytical Results
1	Easily Noticeable	With a billboard size estimated at 4x5 meters and a relatively short message, the billboard for this event is easy to see.

2	Located in Exclusive Areas	The placement of this billboard cannot be considered exclusive, as it is located in a small area that serves as an intersection on the main road. Additionally, the supporting structure is made of bamboo, which can be disassembled and reassembled.
3	Avoid Crowding with Other Billboards	In this regard, the Majelis Taklim Zaadul Muslim billboard meets the criteria well, as there are no other billboards around it, making it the main focal point.
4	Clear Visibility During the Day and Proper Lighting at Night	Although the background color is dark, the visuals, including text and images, are presented with enough contrast to be clearly visible during the day. However, at night, the lighting comes only from the streetlights, which are somewhat dim, raising doubts about its visibility at night.
5	Concise, Impactful, and Clever Messaging.	The key messages on the Majelis Taklim Zaadul Muslim billboard are: 1. Event theme, 2. Time and location, 3. Main tagline. Overall, the billboard is concise and impactful, with the clever impression being represented by the main tagline.
6	High-Quality Printing Technology for Clear Visuals	Based on observations, the Majelis Taklim Zaadul Muslim billboard can remain up until the event takes place, indicating that the high-quality print format and the banner material used are of good quality.

Source: Research data

Vehicles

In the book *Designing Brand Identity* (Wheeler 2017, 186), three processes for creating vehicles are explained: plan, design, and determine. For the vehicles used by Majelis Taklim Zaadul Muslim, the planning stage involves researching the type of communication intended to be conveyed through this media by attending the study sessions. Eventually, it was decided to apply the Majelis Taklim Zaadul Muslim logo on the side and rear of the vehicle, with the tagline's text enlarged.

In the design stage, a simple approach was used, with black as the primary color to match the vehicle's white base. The design was created with the intention of not detracting from the vehicle's luxurious value. At this stage, the selection of the license plate number was also made to communicate the existence of other Majelis Taklim under the guidance of Habib Alwi As-Segaf. The plate number "B 2005 BW" is interpreted by some of the jamaah as "Bos BW" or "Pemimpin Birul Walidain," referring to another Majelis Taklim managed by Habib Alwi As-Segaf, in addition to Majelis Taklim Zaadul Muslim.

The final stage of implementation involves the use of media for branding the Majelis Taklim. The fabrication method employed includes cutting stickers to be applied on each door, and special screen printing for the imitation leather texture on the back cover of the spare tire. Additionally, there are no special materials used for the license plate, which also serves as a medium for communication.



Source: Thesa 2018

Figure 7. Habib Alwi As-Segaf's vehicle

Uniform

In her book (Wheeler 2017, 188), it is stated that the best uniforms inspire pride, and the way people dress influences individual behavior and the feelings of the group. The uniform, as an identity for the congregation, can have a significant impact on their pride and participation in the study sessions. This creates a strong bond among the congregation members, who feel part of a solid community. On the other hand, the simple uniform requirement makes it easier for the congregation to actively participate in the study sessions.



Source: Instagram sofyanesaramadhan

Figure 8. The use of peci and kopyah by male congregants

Majelis Taklim Zaadul Muslim's Social system

The AGIL approach developed by Talcott Parsons can serve as a relevant framework for analysis in the branding strategy of Majelis Taklim Zaadul Muslim. This AGIL approach includes four basic functions essential for the sustainability of a social system: Adaptation, Goal Attainment, Integration, and Latency. By understanding these functions, we can see

how Majelis Taklim Zaadul Muslim not only maintains its existence but also builds a strong brand within the community.

Adaptation

In a society, culture is deeply ingrained in individuals and cannot be separated from each of them. Culture adapts with humans because it has a goal, which is the "existence of culture" (Tazkiyah 2022). The process in which Majelis Taklim Zaadul Muslim adjusts to social changes and the needs of its community in the context of branding is the ability of the majelis to respond to trends and the needs of its jamaah. To reach a broader audience, particularly the younger generation, Majelis Taklim Zaadul Muslim strengthens its brand by adapting its methods of spreading knowledge, utilizing inspirational and educational content through the social media of its jamaah.

Goal Attainment

Goal is a system that must be able to set a goal, and this goal must be achieved as planned (Prasetya, Nurdin, and Gunawan 2021). The ability of Majelis Taklim to achieve its goals, such as conveying Islamic knowledge based on Asy'ariyah and Maturidiyah aqidah to the minds of its jamaah, becomes a crucial point in the application of their community branding. This goal can serve as the core value communicated through various activities, so that Majelis Taklim Zaadul Muslim is recognized as a community with a strong social value system they implement.

Integration

The integration of Majelis Taklim Zaadul Muslim refers to how it builds social cohesion among its members and the surrounding community. In terms of branding, this pattern emphasizes values of togetherness, mutual respect, and cooperation, which are hallmarks of Majelis Taklim. Integration points to the need to ensure that sufficient emotional bonds are formed, resulting in solidarity and a willingness to work together, which are developed and maintained (Astuti 2014).

By creating an inclusive and unifying environment, the branding of Majelis Taklim becomes stronger, also forming a solid community that is attractive to everyone who wants to learn and worship together.

Latency

Latency in relation to the AGIL theory refers to a system's need to equip, maintain, and improve both individual and cultural patterns that create and support motivation (Furqon 2020). Latency refers to the efforts of Majelis Taklim Zaadul Muslim to preserve the values, traditions, and teachings that form the foundation of its operational principles, particularly the core teachings of Asyariyah and Maturidiyah.

In community branding, Latency plays a role in emphasizing that Majelis Taklim Zaadul Muslim remains steadfast in its core principles. This can be seen from their consistent activities that prioritize moderate, adaptive Islam, while emphasizing love for the homeland. This consistency strengthens their image and brand as a majelis with distinct and profound characteristics.

CONCLUSION

The conclusion of the branding study of Majelis Taklim Zaadul Muslim using Alina Wheeler's touchpoint method, which includes public relations, word of mouth, video, social media, publication, vehicles, and uniform, shows that a branding strategy centered on these

touchpoints can strengthen the organization's identity and improve its relationship with the community. Through the AGIL approach by Talcott Parsons, the research reveals that each touchpoint plays a specific role in supporting the organization's sustainability and adaptation, goal attainment, member integration, and the preservation of its values. For example, social media and public relations function in adapting to the dynamic social environment, while word of mouth and publications help achieve organizational goals by spreading a positive image.

This research contributes to the development of knowledge by demonstrating how the concept of branding touchpoints can be applied to community-based religious organizations. The application of the AGIL model in analyzing branding effectiveness also provides significant contributions to the field of graphic design and multimedia in managing complex organizational systems. In conclusion, branding that focuses on touchpoints not only enhances public recognition but also builds organizational unity through a maintained identity, making it relevant to be applied in various types of organizations.

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