

Reimagining Islamic Education Marketing: The Power of Social Media in the Digital Era

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the optimization of social media as a marketing instrument for Islamic education in the digital era and to identify effective strategies for improving institutional image, information reach, and public interest in Islamic education services. The research applies a qualitative case study approach using observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation as data collection techniques, with data analyzed through reduction, display, and conclusion drawing. The findings indicate that social media plays a strategic role in expanding promotional reach, strengthening institutional brand image, increasing public engagement, and supporting new student admissions. Platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, and YouTube are used to disseminate academic information, religious activities, student achievements, and institutional flagship programs. The effectiveness of digital marketing is influenced by content quality, publication consistency, and the managerial ability to utilize social media features. This study implies that strengthening human resource capacity in digital marketing and developing an integrated digital communication strategy are essential to enhance competitiveness and sustainability of Islamic educational institutions in rapidly evolving information technology era.

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INTRODUCTION

The rapid development of information technology has transformed communication patterns in society, including in the education sector. Digital platforms have become the main channel for accessing information, building perception, and influencing decision-making processes related to educational services (Adzimah, 2024; Fitriani, 2025; Kunta, 2025). This shift is important because educational institutions now compete not only in academic quality but also in digital visibility and communication effectiveness. Social media provides an accessible, low-cost, and wide-reaching medium for institutional promotion (Dewi, 2025b; Mohlas, 2025; Najiburohman, 2025). Theoretically, digital marketing strengthens institutional branding through engagement and content distribution strategies. Empirical evidence shows that institutions with active digital communication tend to gain higher public attention and trust compared to those that do not utilize digital platforms effectively. Therefore, optimizing digital media in education marketing becomes essential to ensure institutional relevance, competitiveness, and sustainability in the digital society.

Despite the increasing reliance on digital platforms, many Islamic educational institutions face challenges in adopting social media as an effective marketing tool (Albustomi, 2025; Ni'am, 2025; Rahman, 2025). The main problem lies in the gap between technological availability and managerial capability in utilizing digital media strategically. Although institutions generally have social media accounts, their usage often remains limited to formal documentation rather than structured marketing communication (Holidi, 2025; Khofsah, 2025; Kusumawati, 2025). This condition reflects low digital literacy among managers, limited human resource capacity, and the absence of systematic content planning. As a result, institutions fail to build strong engagement with their target audience, leading to weak visibility and reduced competitiveness in the education

market. From a theoretical perspective, digital marketing requires consistency, segmentation, and interactive communication, but these elements are not yet fully implemented in practice, creating a significant implementation gap.

In practice, the use of social media in Islamic educational institutions is increasingly widespread, including in madrasas, Islamic boarding schools, and integrated Islamic schools. However, the function of these platforms is still largely administrative and documentary rather than strategic. Many institutional accounts are not updated regularly, have inconsistent content quality, and do not reflect strong branding messages. Interaction with audiences is also relatively low, indicating weak engagement management. Meanwhile, public behavior has shifted significantly toward digital information consumption, where platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, YouTube, and WhatsApp dominate communication channels (Dewi, 2025a; Syafih, 2025). In some cases, institutions that manage social media professionally show improved public trust and increased student enrollment, indicating that digital communication quality directly influences institutional performance (Dores and Lubis 2025; Azizah and Ifendi 2026).

Previous studies have widely discussed the role of digital marketing in education. Research indicates that social media contributes significantly to strengthening institutional branding and expanding promotional reach to wider audiences (Fadere et al., 2024; Hussen & Onia, 2024; Khair, 2025; Maulidy, 2025). Digital platforms such as Instagram and Facebook have been proven to improve communication effectiveness between institutions, students, and parents (Agus et al., 2025; Oyeniran et al., 2024; Parker, 2024). Other studies also show that creative and interactive content enhances audience loyalty and strengthens institutional image. In addition, research on Islamic education marketing highlights that digital technology improves institutional competitiveness in increasingly competitive educational environments. However, most studies remain general and focus on effectiveness rather than optimization processes.

Existing research rarely explains how social media is systematically optimized within Islamic education management contexts. Many studies are limited to specific platforms and do not integrate digital marketing strategies with Islamic educational values and institutional management systems. There is also limited discussion on the role of human resources, content strategy, and technology integration in building sustainable digital communication systems. This gap indicates the need for a more comprehensive approach that connects digital marketing theory with Islamic education management practice. Therefore, this study positions social media not only as a promotional tool but as an integrated communication system that supports institutional development. The novelty of this research lies in integrating modern digital marketing concepts with Islamic education management principles to build a structured optimization model that strengthens institutional image, public trust, and competitiveness in the digital era.

This research addresses key questions regarding how social media can be optimized effectively as a marketing instrument in Islamic education, what factors influence its success, and what strategies are most appropriate for improving institutional image and competitiveness. The central argument is that social media optimization depends on the integration of content quality, human resource competence, strategic planning, and utilization of platform features. Without these elements, digital communication will remain ineffective and fragmented. Social media functions not only as a promotional medium but also as a platform for branding, communication, and relationship building between institutions and society (Dores and Lubis 2025). Therefore, structured and sustainable digital management is essential to ensure that Islamic educational institutions remain relevant and competitive in the rapidly evolving digital landscape.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach with a case study design to examine the optimization of social media as a marketing instrument for Islamic education in the digital era at MTs At-Taufiqiyah Bluto Sumenep (Fahmi, 2024; Okoko et al., 2023). The qualitative case study design is selected because it enables an in-depth exploration of real-life phenomena within their

natural context, particularly related to strategies, practices, and experiences of educational actors in managing social media for institutional promotion and communication. This approach is appropriate for understanding complex social processes that cannot be quantified, especially the interaction between digital marketing practices, institutional culture, and educational values in a madrasah setting.

The research is conducted at MTs At-Taufiqiyah Bluto Sumenep, located in Sumenep Regency, East Java, Indonesia. This location is chosen because the institution has actively utilized social media as a medium for publishing educational activities, promoting institutional programs, and strengthening communication with the public. In addition, the madrasah represents an Islamic educational institution that is adapting to digital transformation in education marketing. The accessibility of the site also allows intensive field observation and in-depth data collection. Therefore, this setting provides a relevant and empirical context for analyzing the implementation of social media-based marketing strategies in Islamic education at the junior secondary level.

Data in this study are collected through multiple techniques to ensure depth and triangulation of information. These include document analysis, direct observation, in-depth interviews, and supplementary open questionnaires (Muthmainna & Siroj, 2025; Salmona & Kaczynski, 2024). Document analysis is conducted on institutional records, social media content archives, activity reports, and relevant academic literature. Observations focus on social media management practices, content characteristics, posting frequency, and audience engagement patterns. In-depth interviews are carried out with key informants such as the head of the madrasah, public relations staff, teachers, social media administrators, students, and parents to explore experiences, strategies, challenges, and perceptions related to digital marketing practices.

Data analysis follows an interactive model consisting of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. Data condensation involves selecting, simplifying, and organizing relevant information according to research focus. Data display is conducted by presenting structured information in the form of narratives, tables, and visual matrices to identify patterns and relationships. The final stage involves verifying findings and drawing conclusions through iterative interpretation and triangulation across data sources. This analytical process ensures that the results accurately reflect empirical conditions and provide a comprehensive understanding of social media optimization in Islamic education marketing at MTs At-Taufiqiyah Bluto Sumenep.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

The Concept of Islamic Education Marketing in the Digital Era.

The concept of marketing Islamic education in the digital era found at MTs At-Taufiqiyah Bluto is interpreted as a series of efforts made by institutions to introduce Islamic identity, superior programs, achievements, and values to the public through digital media, especially social media. In practice, education marketing is not only understood as a promotional activity to acquire new students, but also as a means of building a positive image, increasing public trust, and strengthening the relationship between madrasahs and stakeholders. The use of social media is carried out through the publication of learning activities, religious activities, student achievements, information on new student admissions, and various other institutional activities. Thus, the concept of Islamic education marketing applied at MTs At-Taufiqiyah Bluto shows the integration between the modern marketing function with the mission of da'wah and strengthening Islamic values that are characteristic of Islamic educational institutions.

Based on the results of an interview with the Head of MTs At-Taufiqiyah Bluto, information was obtained that social media is used as a means to introduce madrasah programs to the wider community. The informant explained that people today have more access to information through digital platforms so madrasahs need to adjust their communication strategies to technological developments. Meanwhile, the madrasah social media manager said that the

publication of student activities, academic and non-academic achievements, and religious activities is the most frequently uploaded content because it is considered to be able to attract public attention and increase parents' trust in the madrasah. Based on these data, the researcher interprets that the marketing of Islamic education at MTs At-Taufiqiyah Bluto is not only oriented to the promotion of the institution, but also functions as a public communication medium that aims to build social legitimacy and strengthen the institutional image through the dissemination of positive and educational information.

The results of observations show that MTs At-Taufiqiyah Bluto has utilized several social media platforms as a medium for publication and communication. In the various uploads observed, there is content about learning activities, the implementation of joint worship, academic competitions, extracurricular activities, and information on the admission of new students. In addition, it was found that there is a use of visual design that is quite attractive and communication language that is easy to understand by the public. Upload activities are carried out periodically even though they have not fully followed a structured publication schedule. The interaction between social media users and the madrasah is also seen through comment columns, direct messages, and redissemination of information by the community. Based on the results of these observations, the researcher interprets that social media has become an important instrument in building the visibility of madrasahs in the digital space, although there are still opportunities to improve the quality of content management and more systematic communication strategies.

Based on the results of interviews and observations, it can be stated that the marketing concept of Islamic education at MTs At-Taufiqiyah Bluto is oriented towards the dissemination of institutional information that integrates aspects of promotion, communication, and strengthening Islamic values. Social media is not only used to attract the interest of prospective students, but is also used to show the quality of educational services, build relationships with the community, and strengthen the identity of madrasahs as Islamic educational institutions that are adaptive to the times. In other words, the marketing of Islamic education in madrasahs is understood as a process of building public trust through the presentation of relevant, transparent, and educational value.

The data patterns that emerged show that there is a close relationship between the use of social media, the publication of madrasah activities, and the increase in the existence of institutions in the community. All data points to the tendency that social media is used as the main means to display the excellence of madrasahs while strengthening the positive image of Islamic educational institutions. Another pattern that can be seen is the dominance of content related to religious activities, student achievements, and superior programs as a form of representation of institutional identity. These findings show that the concept of marketing Islamic education at MTs At-Taufiqiyah Bluto is built through an approach that combines digital communication strategies with strengthening Islamic values so that it is able to create public trust and interest in the institution.

Social Media as a Means of Marketing Islamic Education.

Social media as a means of marketing Islamic education at MTs At-Taufiqiyah Bluto Sumenep is interpreted as the use of digital platforms to introduce the identity of the madrasah, disseminate institutional information, build a positive image, and establish communication with the community at large. In practice, social media is used to publish various learning activities, flagship programs, student achievements, religious activities, and information on new student admissions. Based on the results of an interview with the Deputy Head of the Madrasah for Public Relations, information was obtained that social media has become the main means of conveying information to the public because it is considered faster, more accessible, and able to reach a wider audience than conventional media. The informant also explained that publications that are carried out regularly have a positive impact on increasing public attention to madrasahs. Meanwhile, the madrasah social media manager revealed that uploads featuring student achievements, religious activities, and learning activities received a fairly good response from the community. Based on

this data, the researcher interprets that social media has functioned not only as a promotional medium, but also as a strategic communication instrument that helps madrasahs build public trust and strengthen their existence in the midst of increasingly competitive competition from educational institutions.

Table 1. Analysis of Social Media Use in Islamic Education Marketing

Aspects	Findings	Meaning
Utilization of Social Media	MTs At-Taufiqiyah uses social media for publication and communication.	Social media is an important means in increasing the existence of madrasahs.
Published Content	Learning activities, religious, achievement, extracurricular, and PPDB.	Showing the quality of services and Islamic identity of the madrasah.
Interaction with the Community	It happens through comments, direct messages, and information sharing.	Help build relationships and trust in the community.
Marketing Strategy	Combining promotion, communication, and Islamic values.	Strengthening a positive image and attracting the interest of prospective students.
Pattern of Findings	Social media is used to display the excellence and activities of the madrasah.	Increase the visibility, trust, and attractiveness of the institution.

Based on the table 1 above, it can be explained that MTs At-Taufiqiyah Bluto has used social media as the main means to disseminate information and communicate with the public. The published content includes learning activities, religion, student achievements, extracurricular activities, and information on new student admissions. Through this content, madrasahs can show the quality of education and their Islamic identity. Apart from being an information medium, social media is also a means of interaction between madrasahs and the community through comments, direct messages, and the redissemination of information. This helps build closer relationships and increases public trust in madrasahs. In general, the marketing strategy applied combines digital communication with Islamic values. The consistent use of social media is able to increase the visibility of the madrasah, strengthen the positive image of the institution, and attract the interest of prospective students and parents to choose MTs At-Taufiqiyah Bluto.

Social Media Optimization Strategy in Islamic Education Marketing.

The social media optimization strategy in the marketing of Islamic education at MTs At-Taufiqiyah Bluto is interpreted as a systematic effort by madrasahs to maximize the function of social media as a means of promotion, communication, and strengthening the image of the institution in the digital era. Operationally, the strategy is realized through planning and publishing content that displays various madrasah activities, such as learning activities, religious programs, student achievements, extracurricular activities, and information on new student admissions. Social media is used not only to disseminate information, but also to introduce the identity of madrasah to the wider community. Thus, the optimization of social media at MTs At-Taufiqiyah Bluto is directed to increase the visibility of the institution, strengthen public trust, and build closer relationships between madrasahs and stakeholders.

Based on the results of an interview with the Head of MTs At-Taufiqiyah Bluto, information was obtained that the main strategy implemented was to publish madrasah activities regularly and continuously so that the community could find out the development and various achievements achieved by students. The informant explained that every important activity is always documented and published through social media as a form of transparency as well as institutional promotion. Meanwhile, the madrasah social media manager said that another strategy carried out was to compile content that was interesting, informative, and in accordance with the characteristics of social media users, such as the use of photos, short videos, graphic design, and narratives that were easy to understand. According to the informant, content related to student achievements, religious activities, and madrasah flagship programs tends to receive a higher response from the

public. Based on this data, the researcher interpreted that the success of social media optimization is not only determined by the frequency of uploads, but also by the ability of madrasas to present content that is relevant, interesting, and able to build emotional closeness with the community.

The results of the observation show that MTs At-Taufiqiyah Bluto's social media account is actively used to publicize various institutional activities by utilizing attractive photos, videos, and visual designs. The researcher found that there was an upload pattern dominated by the content of student achievements, religious activities, madrasah flagship programs, and information on new student admissions. In addition, there is quite good interaction between the madrasah and the community through comments, likes, and redistribution of published content. Based on the results of observations and interviews, it can be emphasized that the social media optimization strategy at MTs At-Taufiqiyah Bluto is carried out through the consistency of publications, the management of interesting content, and the use of visual media to increase the attractiveness of information. The data pattern shows that the more intensive and quality the content published, the higher the public's attention and response to madrasas. Thus, social media has become a strategic instrument in the marketing of Islamic education that contributes to improving the image, public trust, and competitiveness of MTs At-Taufiqiyah Bluto in the digital era.

Discussion

The results of the study show that the social media optimization strategy in the marketing of Islamic education at MTs At-Taufiqiyah Bluto is carried out through consistent publication of activities, management of informative and interesting content, and the use of visual media to strengthen the image of the institution. These findings are in line with digital marketing theory which states that the success of marketing through social media is greatly influenced by the quality of content, frequency of publication, and level of interaction with audiences. According to the concept of digital marketing, social media not only functions as a means of promotion, but also as a communication medium that is able to build long-term relationships with users (Rahmadan & Shudiq, 2024; Suhermanto, 2024). The results of this study show compatibility with various previous studies that concluded that educational institutions that actively utilize social media tend to have higher levels of public exposure and trust. However, this study finds that in the context of Islamic education, digital marketing strategies are not only oriented towards increasing the number of students, but also directed at strengthening Islamic values and institutional identity as a distinctive feature that distinguishes it from other educational institutions.

The research findings also show that the content that receives the most responses from the community is content that displays students' achievements, religious activities, and madrasah flagship programs. These results support previous research that explains that people are more interested in content that has informative, inspiring, and relevant value to their needs. However, there is a difference with some of the results of previous research that emphasize the aspect of promoting formal education services. In this study, it was found that the element of religiosity and the representation of Islamic values are quite dominant factors in shaping public interest in Islamic educational institutions. The implications of these findings show that Islamic education marketing strategies will be more effective if they are able to integrate academic, religious, and social elements into digital content that is published sustainably through social media.

From the perspective of function, social media optimization provides various benefits for Islamic educational institutions, such as increasing the visibility of the institution, expanding the reach of information, increasing public trust, and forming a positive image of madrasas (Afifah, 2025; Hasanah et al., 2024; Maisuroh & Jamil, 2024). Social media allows information about madrasah programs and activities to be accessed quickly and widely without being limited by space and time. However, this study also found that there are dysfunctional aspects, namely the potential for uncontrolled information, the risk of digital communication errors, and excessive dependence on social media as a means of promotion. If not managed professionally, social media can cause negative perceptions that have an impact on the reputation of the institution. Therefore, good

social media governance, continuous content monitoring, and improved human resource competence are needed so that the benefits of social media can be maximized and the risks that may arise can be minimized.

From the cause-and-effect aspect, the success of the social media optimization strategy is influenced by several interrelated structural factors (Adeoye et al., 2025; Alfaridli et al., 2024; Munawwaroh, 2024). The results of the study show that the competence of social media managers, the support of institutional leaders, the availability of technology, and the quality of content are the main factors that determine the effectiveness of digital marketing. The higher the manager's ability to create interesting content and in accordance with the needs of the audience, the greater the opportunity for madrasahs to get attention and positive responses from the public. On the other hand, limited human resources, lack of understanding of digital marketing, and low publication intensity are factors that can hinder social media optimization. A strong support structure within an organization is an important foundation that allows digital marketing strategies to run effectively and sustainably. These findings indicate a close correlation between institutional capacity and the success of the implementation of social media-based education marketing.

Overall, the results of the study show that social media optimization has become an important strategy in the marketing of Islamic education in the digital era. These findings reinforce the view that social media is no longer just an additional communication tool, but has developed into a strategic instrument in building the branding, reputation, and competitiveness of educational institutions. The theoretical implication of this study is the need to develop the concept of Islamic education marketing that is more adaptive to the development of digital technology without abandoning Islamic values as the main identity of the institution. Meanwhile, the practical implications show that Islamic educational institutions need to build a social media management system that is professional, planned, and oriented to the needs of the community. With the right strategy, social media can function as an effective means to increase public trust, expand the reach of promotion, and strengthen the existence of Islamic educational institutions in the midst of increasingly competitive educational competition in the digital era.

CONCLUSION

This study shows that social media optimization plays a strategic role in strengthening Islamic education marketing through improved institutional image, wider information reach, and increased public trust. The main insight highlights that effectiveness depends on content quality, publication consistency, managerial competence, and integration of Islamic values, positioning digital transformation as an opportunity to reinforce institutional identity. Scientifically, this research contributes by framing social media as an integrated instrument of promotion, branding, communication, and value reinforcement in Islamic education management. However, the study is limited to a single institution, limited informants, and a qualitative approach that does not measure quantitative impact. Future research should expand samples, diversify respondents, and apply mixed methods for broader generalization.

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