

Digital Public Relations Strategy in Building Public Trust in Madrasah in the Era of Information Disruption

Syivani Illus Shoha✉, Raden Bambang Sumarsono, Aan Fardani Ubaidillah
Universitas Negeri Malang, Indonesia

Abstract

The massive development of information technology has ushered in an era of information disruption, presenting complex challenges for Islamic educational institutions in managing their institutional image and maintaining public trust. This study aims to analyze digital communication-based Public Relations (PR) strategies in building public trust (digital trust) in madrasahs, encompassing participatory planning processes, the implementation of integrated programs, as well as evaluation and mitigation of obstacles. The research approach used is qualitative with a multi-site case study design. Data collection was conducted through in-depth interviews, field observations, and documentation at two sites. Data analysis was conducted interactively, encompassing data condensation, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. The results of the study indicate that both madrasahs successfully carried out a fundamental reconstruction of the public relations role, shifting from traditional technical-administrative functions to becoming a managerial strategic instrument. Trust within the digital community was fostered through a combination of adaptive strategies, including the participatory and inclusive formulation of communication directions, the internalization of humanistic values through a structural-cultural approach, the synchronization of social media content based on learning realities and local religious culture, and the implementation of a continuous quality improvement (CQI) based on local wisdom and the use of AI. The success of digital PR strategies in Islamic educational institutions depends heavily on the originality of the organizational culture, where a strong communication identity serves as a solid foundation for reputation in countering misinformation in this era of disruption.

Keywords: Digital Public Relations, Digital Communication, Public Trust, Madrasah Management

Article History:

Received: February 2026; Revised: April 2026; Accepted: May 2026

✉Correspondence Author: syivani.illus.25013282@students.um.ac.id

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.61987/edsojou.v4i1.2354>

How to Cite:

Shoha, S. I., Sumarsono, R. B., & Ubaidillah, A. F. (2026). Digital Public Relations Strategy in Building Public Trust in Madrasah in the Era of Information Disruption. *Education and Sociedad Journal*, 4(1), 179-190.

INTRODUCTION

The rapid advancement of digital technology has fundamentally transformed the communication landscape across all sectors, including education. The proliferation of digital platforms, social media, and artificial intelligence has accelerated the dissemination of information while simultaneously creating an era of information disruption characterized by misinformation, information overload, and declining public confidence in digital content (Huda, 2025; Nuzula et al., 2024; Sudarmanto et al., 2025). In this environment, educational institutions are no longer evaluated solely based on academic quality but also on their ability to communicate transparently, responsively, and credibly with stakeholders. Consequently, digital communication has become a strategic organizational function that directly influences

institutional reputation and public trust.

Within this context, Public Relations (PR) has evolved from a predominantly technical and administrative function into a strategic management role that supports organizational sustainability (Saharani & Diana, 2024; Maulidia & Fahmi, 2023; Setiawan, 2025). Contemporary educational public relations extends beyond disseminating institutional information; it encompasses relationship management, stakeholder engagement, reputation building, and crisis communication through integrated digital platforms. Websites, social media, online communities, and AI-assisted communication tools provide educational institutions with opportunities to establish continuous interaction with students, parents, alumni, government agencies, and the broader community (Perez et al., 2023; Kumar & Nanda, 2024; Sivakumar et al., 2023). Effective digital public relations therefore plays a crucial role in fostering digital trust, which refers to stakeholders' confidence in the authenticity, transparency, and reliability of institutional communication.

For Islamic educational institutions such as madrasahs, the importance of digital public relations is even greater because these institutions are expected to maintain educational excellence while preserving religious values and social legitimacy (Rahmadi & Hamdan, 2023; Maemonah et al., 2023). Public trust represents a strategic asset that determines institutional competitiveness, student enrollment, community participation, and long-term sustainability. Digital public relations enables madrasahs to communicate educational achievements, promote institutional values, strengthen stakeholder engagement, and respond rapidly to misinformation circulating through digital media (Rohmiati, 2025). Therefore, successful public relations management requires the integration of technological innovation, organizational culture, and Islamic ethical principles in order to establish authentic and trustworthy communication.

Despite the growing importance of digital communication, many madrasahs continue to encounter significant challenges in implementing strategic public relations. In practice, PR activities frequently remain limited to administrative documentation, event publication, and accreditation support rather than functioning as an integrated management system for relationship building and reputation management. Furthermore, limited digital competencies among educators and PR personnel, fragmented communication planning, insufficient utilization of digital analytics, and weak two-way interaction with stakeholders often reduce the effectiveness of institutional communication. These limitations hinder the development of sustainable public trust, particularly within the increasingly dynamic and competitive digital information environment.

Educational public relations contributes positively to institutional image, stakeholder satisfaction, organizational communication, and educational marketing. Other studies have emphasized the growing significance of digital media in enhancing institutional visibility and stakeholder engagement. However, the existing literature has primarily examined digital public relations from the perspectives of communication technology, social media utilization, or promotional effectiveness. Relatively little attention has been given to understanding digital public relations as a strategic managerial mechanism for developing public trust through the integration of organizational culture, participatory governance, continuous quality improvement, and Islamic values within madrasah settings. Moreover, empirical evidence employing multisite qualitative approaches remains limited, particularly in the context of Islamic secondary education.

This study addresses these gaps by conceptualizing digital public relations as a strategic management function that extends beyond digital promotion and information dissemination. The study argues that sustainable digital trust is developed through the interaction of participatory communication planning, organizational culture, value-based leadership, integrated digital content management, stakeholder engagement, and continuous

quality improvement supported by emerging technologies, including artificial intelligence. By adopting a multisite qualitative case study at MTs Ahmad Yani Jabung and MTs NU Pakis, this research provides a comprehensive understanding of how different institutional contexts implement digital public relations strategies while maintaining authentic organizational identities and local Islamic values in the era of information disruption.

Accordingly, this study aims to analyze digital public relations strategies employed by madrasahs in building public trust during the era of information disruption. Specifically, the research investigates (1) the planning of digital communication strategies, (2) the implementation of integrated digital public relations programs, and (3) the evaluation, challenges, and capacity-building efforts that support institutional reputation and digital trust. The findings are expected to contribute to the development of digital public relations theory within educational management while offering practical recommendations for Islamic educational institutions seeking to strengthen public trust and institutional resilience in an increasingly complex digital communication environment.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a qualitative approach with a multisite case study design. The qualitative approach was chosen to obtain an in-depth understanding of digital public relations strategies in building public trust in madrasahs, particularly regarding the processes of planning, implementing digital communication, and managing public relations within Islamic educational institutions. The multisite case study design was used to enable the phenomenon under investigation to be understood contextually across two different research locations, thereby allowing comparison and reinforcement of findings between sites (Makateng, & Mokala, 2025).

This research was conducted at two locations, namely MTs Ahmad Yani Jabung and MTs NU Pakis. The selection of these two madrasahs was based on the consideration that both institutions explicitly demonstrate a strong commitment to maintaining public trust in the digital era while instilling Islamic character values amid the challenges of information disruption. The study was carried out from January to March 2026 at the two research sites, namely MTs Ahmad Yani Jabung and MTs NU Pakis. The selection of these madrasahs was also based on the consideration that both actively utilize digital media in building public communication and demonstrate commitment to strengthening institutional image based on Islamic values. Furthermore, both institutions were open to research activities and had informants who understood the process of managing digital public relations in madrasahs.

Data collection was conducted through in-depth interviews and field observations. Interviews were used to explore the perspectives, personal experiences, and strategic decisions of the informants. The research informants included the Head of Madrasah, Vice Principal for Public Relations Affairs (*Waka Humas*), teachers, and digital media management staff who were selected purposively based on their level of involvement and participation. Field observations were conducted to directly examine digital content manifestations, media interaction activities, and the madrasah culture that reflected the communication strategies being implemented, so that interview data could be confirmed through empirical findings in the field.

Data validity was ensured through source triangulation, technique triangulation, and member checking. Source triangulation was carried out by comparing data obtained from the head of the madrasah, vice principal for public relations, teachers, and social media administrators. Technique triangulation was conducted by comparing the results of interviews, observations, and documentation. Meanwhile, member checking was performed by confirming the research findings with the informants to ensure the accuracy of the data in relation to actual field conditions.

Data analysis was conducted interactively by referring to the Miles and Huberman model, which includes the stages of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification (Paul & Kaurav, 2025). Data condensation was carried out by selecting, focusing, and organizing raw data obtained from interview transcripts and field notes to ensure relevance to the research focus. The condensed data were then presented in the form of descriptive-analytical narratives and thematic matrices to facilitate understanding across categories. The verification stage was conducted continuously throughout the research process to ensure the consistency of findings, so that the conclusions generated were credible and accountable.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Participatory Planning and Formulation of Digital Public Relations Strategies

MTs Ahmad Yani Jabung and MTs NU Pakis formulate their digital public relations (PR) strategies through a participatory planning process involving both internal and external stakeholders. Rather than assigning responsibility exclusively to the PR division, both institutions actively engage the foundation, madrasah committee, teachers, administrative staff, and parents' representatives in determining communication priorities and institutional narratives. This collaborative approach is implemented through annual strategic meetings and regular deliberative forums aimed at aligning communication objectives with the vision of the madrasah and the expectations of the surrounding community.

The participatory planning process also functions as a mechanism for strengthening collective responsibility for institutional communication. Teachers are encouraged to view classroom documentation, student achievements, and religious activities as valuable communication assets that contribute to the institution's digital reputation. Consequently, digital communication is no longer perceived as a technical activity managed solely by PR personnel but as an integral component of daily educational practices involving the entire academic community.

This finding is reflected in the statement of the Head of Madrasah:

“At the beginning of every academic year, we formulate our communication direction together with the foundation, committee members, teachers, and parents' representatives. In the era of information disruption, even a small communication mistake can affect the institution's reputation. Therefore, our communication strategy must reflect the real conditions of the madrasah and the expectations of the community.”

Similarly, the Vice Principal for Public Relations emphasized the importance of collective participation in digital communication:

“Publication planning is everyone's responsibility. Teachers are encouraged to document learning activities and students' achievements because public trust is built through the consistent presentation of authentic educational practices rather than through artificial image-building.”

Field observations further confirmed that communication planning was not limited to formal meetings but was continuously reinforced through coordination among teachers and PR personnel before educational activities were published on official digital platforms. This collaborative mechanism enabled both madrasahs to maintain consistency between institutional values, educational practices, and digital communication, thereby reducing the possibility of contradictory or misleading public information.

Another notable contribution concerns the relationship between participatory planning and the development of digital trust. Existing studies generally associate digital trust with technological capability, transparency, and information quality. The findings of this study suggest a broader perspective in which trust is primarily constructed through authentic

communication generated from organizational consensus. When communication narratives are jointly formulated by school leaders, teachers, parents, foundations, and committees, institutional messages become more credible because they represent shared organizational realities rather than individual interpretations. Such collective validation reduces the likelihood of misinformation and strengthens the consistency of institutional narratives across different communication channels.

The findings also reveal that participatory planning functions as a preventive strategy against information disruption. Involving diverse stakeholders enables the institution to identify potential communication risks, anticipate public responses, and establish common standards before information is disseminated through digital platforms. Consequently, communication planning serves not merely as an administrative procedure but as a mechanism for organizational risk management that enhances institutional resilience in responding to rapidly changing digital environments.

Socialization and Internalization of Digital Public Relations Management

The findings demonstrate that both MTs Ahmad Yani Jabung and MTs NU Pakis systematically socialize and internalize digital public relations (PR) management to ensure that transparency, communication ethics, and information accuracy become part of the institutional culture. Rather than relying solely on written policies, both madrasahs employ a combination of formal organizational mechanisms and everyday professional practices to embed digital communication values among teachers and administrative staff.

Internally, digital PR management is introduced through annual work meetings, monthly coordination meetings, In-House Training (IHT), workshops, and the implementation of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) governing public communication. These activities are designed not only to improve technical competencies in digital communication but also to cultivate a shared understanding that every member of the academic community contributes to the institution's public image. Teachers receive practical guidance on documenting classroom activities, presenting students' achievements, and communicating Islamic values through digital platforms in ways that are informative, ethical, and visually engaging.

Externally, both institutions adopt a media convergence strategy by integrating official websites, Instagram, Facebook, WhatsApp groups, and physical information displays such as banners and notice boards located in strategic areas of the madrasah. This combination of digital and conventional communication channels enables consistent dissemination of institutional information while ensuring that stakeholders with different levels of digital access receive the same official messages. The synchronization of communication across multiple platforms also strengthens institutional visibility and reduces the risk of inconsistent or misleading information circulating within the community.

As explained by the Vice Principal for Public Relations:

“We developed public communication SOPs and introduced them through In-House Training and monthly meetings. Teachers learn not only how to document activities but also how to present students' character development through meaningful photographs and captions. Externally, we synchronize information across Instagram, the school website, and physical information boards so that all communication remains consistent.”

Field observations further revealed that digital communication practices gradually became integrated into teachers' daily routines. Documentation of learning activities, religious programs, and student achievements was no longer undertaken solely for administrative purposes but was intentionally prepared as communication content that reflected the educational values and identity of the madrasah. This process indicates that

digital PR management has evolved from an organizational policy into a shared institutional habit.

Rather than viewing digital trust solely as the outcome of effective online communication, the findings indicate that trust originates from consistent communication behavior practiced internally before being projected externally. As teachers routinely document authentic learning experiences, communicate educational values, and adhere to institutional communication standards, official digital platforms become populated with credible and coherent narratives that accurately represent organizational reality. This consistency reduces discrepancies between institutional representation and actual educational practices, thereby reinforcing stakeholder confidence in the authenticity of information disseminated by the madrasah. Effective digital public relations is therefore not achieved merely through technological adoption or communication guidelines but through continuous organizational learning, leadership support, cultural habituation, and integrated media management. Within the context of Islamic educational institutions, the internalization of communication values transforms digital PR into a strategic organizational capability that strengthens institutional resilience and supports the long-term development of public trust amid the challenges of information disruption.

Implementation of Digital Public Relations Strategies in Madrasah Programs and Organizational Culture

The findings indicate that digital public relations (PR) strategies at MTs Ahmad Yani Jabung and MTs NU Pakis are implemented through the integration of communication activities into the core educational process rather than through stand-alone promotional programs. Both madrasahs consistently transform everyday academic activities, student achievements, and religious programs into digital communication content that reflects their institutional identity. This approach ensures that digital communication represents authentic educational practices instead of symbolic promotional narratives.

Learning activities constitute the primary source of digital content. Teachers routinely document classroom instruction, project-based learning, student competitions, literacy programs, and extracurricular activities before disseminating them through official digital platforms. Beyond highlighting academic achievement, the published content emphasizes character education, discipline, collaboration, and students' active participation in learning. Consequently, digital communication serves not only to inform external audiences but also to demonstrate the educational values practiced within the institution.

Religious and cultural programs are equally integrated into the digital PR strategy. Daily congregational prayers, Qur'anic recitation, Islamic character development, commemorations of Islamic holy days, and other religious activities are systematically documented and communicated through social media and the madrasah website. These publications portray the madrasah as an educational institution that combines academic excellence with Islamic values, thereby strengthening its distinctive organizational identity in the public sphere.

As explained by the Head of Madrasah:

“Our digital content does not merely display activities for promotional purposes. It reflects the real educational culture of the madrasah, including Qur'anic recitation, character education, discipline, and classroom learning. When the public sees these authentic activities through our digital platforms, they develop trust because the information genuinely represents what happens in our institution.”

Field observations confirmed a high level of consistency between digital communication and daily institutional practices. Educational activities published on official digital platforms corresponded closely with actual classroom instruction and religious

programs observed during the research process. This consistency indicates that digital communication is grounded in authentic organizational practices rather than constructed primarily for institutional promotion.

Religious culture serves as the foundation of digital communication strategies, not merely as communication content. Islamic values are embedded throughout classroom instruction, student character development, leadership practices, and extracurricular activities before being communicated through digital media. Effective external communication is rooted in strong internal organizational values. In this context, digital public relations becomes an extension of organizational culture, not a separate managerial function.

A key aspect emerging from this research is the close alignment between educational practices and digital representations. Visibility alone is not enough to build sustainable public trust. Stakeholders increasingly evaluate institutional credibility based on whether online communications accurately represent the everyday reality of education. The observed consistency between classroom practices, religious activities, and digital publications therefore minimizes the discrepancy between institutional representations and organizational realities, strengthening the credibility of digital communications.

Evaluation Systems, Challenges, and Capacity-Building Efforts in Digital Public Relations Management

The findings indicate that both MTs Ahmad Yani Jabung and MTs NU Pakis implement continuous evaluation mechanisms to ensure the effectiveness and sustainability of their digital public relations (PR) strategies. Evaluation is conducted through regular coordination meetings, managerial supervision, performance reviews, and periodic reflection involving school leaders, PR personnel, and teachers. Rather than focusing exclusively on social media performance indicators, the evaluation process also examines the consistency of communication messages, the accuracy of published information, stakeholder responses, and the alignment between institutional communication and educational practices.

Both institutions have also developed communication mitigation strategies to anticipate potential reputational risks arising from the rapid circulation of digital information. Before important information is published, PR personnel coordinate with school leaders and teachers to verify the accuracy of content and ensure consistency across official communication platforms. Monitoring public responses through comments, direct messages, and community feedback has become an integral part of institutional communication management, enabling both madrasahs to respond promptly to misinformation or public misunderstanding.

Despite these systematic efforts, several challenges remain. The most significant constraints include limited digital literacy among senior teachers, insufficient budgets for digital infrastructure and media production, and the multiple responsibilities assigned to teachers who simultaneously serve as PR personnel. These conditions occasionally reduce the speed of content production and limit the optimization of digital communication initiatives.

To address these challenges, both madrasahs have implemented various capacity-building initiatives. These include regular digital literacy training, In-House Training (IHT), peer mentoring, cross-unit collaboration, and gradual integration of artificial intelligence (AI)-assisted applications to support content production, editing, and communication management. Organizational restructuring has also enabled a more balanced distribution of communication responsibilities among teachers and administrative staff, thereby reducing individual workloads while improving the efficiency of PR activities.

The Vice Principal for Public Relations explained:

“Digital communication presents real challenges. Some senior teachers are still adapting to technology, while PR responsibilities add to teachers' existing workload.

Limited equipment is another obstacle. Therefore, we continuously conduct training, strengthen collaboration across units, and gradually use AI-assisted applications to make content production more efficient without compromising its quality.”

Field observations confirmed that evaluation is viewed as an ongoing organizational learning process rather than merely an administrative requirement. Feedback generated during coordination meetings is consistently translated into improvements in communication planning, content development, and institutional collaboration, enabling both madrasahs to adapt their communication strategies to the rapidly evolving digital environment.

The multisite case study conducted at MTs Ahmad Yani Jabung and MTs NU Pakis revealed that, in responding to the era of information disruption, both institutions fundamentally reconstructed the role and function of Public Relations (PR). Public communication management shifted from a traditional technical-administrative function into a strategic managerial instrument aimed at building digital trust and public confidence. In summary, the various strategies, implementation findings, and public trust outcomes at both sites are presented in Table 1

Table 1. Synthesis of Field Findings and the Implementation of Digital Public Relations Management

Focus of Digital PR Management	Field Findings & Implementation	Public Trust Outcomes
Strategy Formulation & Direction Setting	- Involved committees, foundations, parents, and teachers participatively. - Conducted periodic deliberative forums in open dialogue spaces.	Eliminated one-sided narratives and produced authentic content aligned with real community expectations.
Socialization & Internalization of Values	- Internal: work meetings, official meetings, In-House Training (IHT), and SOP preparation. - External: media convergence through social media, Instagram, websites, and physical banners.	Fostered teachers' sense of ownership toward madrasah reputation and reduced misinformation.
Program Integration & Cultural Reinforcement	Content was derived from authentic learning activities, achievements, and religious habituation such as congregational prayers, Qur'anic recitation, and Islamic ethics.	Built digital trust through the originality of madrasah culture rather than superficial image displays.
Evaluation & Capacity Strengthening	Managerial supervision, social media sentiment monitoring, AI-based content training, and teacher stress management.	Enabled rapid crisis information mitigation and accelerated institutional PR agility.

Based on the results of in-depth interviews with the heads of madrasahs and vice principals for public relations at both research sites, it was found that the formulation of public communication directions at MTs Ahmad Yani Jabung and MTs NU Pakis was carried out through a participatory process involving the madrasah committee, foundation representatives, parents' representatives, and the entire teaching staff. The involvement of multiple stakeholders was considered crucial to ensure that public narratives disseminated in digital spaces were not one-sided, but rather reflected the actual needs of the madrasah and the real expectations of the surrounding community. The strategy formulation process was facilitated through periodic deliberative forums that provided open dialogue spaces to align the institution's communication vision.

Discussion

The participatory communication planning identified in this study supports the perspective of strategic communication management, which emphasizes stakeholder involvement as an essential prerequisite for organizational legitimacy and long-term

sustainability (Wiesenberga & Verčič, 2021; Fitriani et al., 2026). Inclusive decision-making encourages stakeholders to develop a shared understanding of institutional goals while simultaneously strengthening their commitment to organizational reputation. Unlike conventional public relations models that centralize communication authority within a single administrative unit, the findings demonstrate that digital communication in madrasahs becomes a collective organizational responsibility shared across multiple institutional actors.

Communication planning incorporates local religious values, community aspirations, and Islamic ethical principles into the formulation of institutional narratives. Such integration enables digital communication to represent the authentic identity of the madrasah rather than functioning merely as promotional content. This finding is consistent with previous studies suggesting that communication strategies rooted in local cultural identity are more easily accepted by communities because they reflect shared social values (Alam & Mohanty, 2023; Wati et al., 2025; Hidayat et al., 2025). However, the present study extends these arguments by demonstrating that religious values serve not only as communication content but also as fundamental principles guiding participatory decision-making throughout the communication planning process.

The findings support the perspective that effective organizational communication requires more than the establishment of formal regulations; communication values must be continuously internalized through leadership practices, organizational learning, and professional socialization (Dewi et al., 2026; Yakin et al., 2025). In both madrasahs, the existence of communication SOPs was complemented by continuous mentoring through meetings, workshops, and In-House Training, enabling teachers to translate institutional communication policies into everyday educational practices. This finding demonstrates that digital PR management becomes sustainable when communication competencies are developed through continuous learning rather than one-time policy implementation.

The implementation of media convergence also represents an important contribution to contemporary digital public relations in Islamic educational institutions. While previous studies have highlighted the effectiveness of social media in expanding institutional visibility, the present findings demonstrate that combining digital platforms with conventional communication media enhances information accessibility across diverse stakeholder groups. Parents, community members, and local stakeholders who are less active on social media continue to receive official institutional information through physical communication channels, thereby reducing communication inequality and strengthening institutional transparency. This integrated communication model supports previous arguments regarding the strategic role of multimedia communication in educational institutions (Hefniy et al., 2025; Nasution et al., 2025), while extending the discussion by emphasizing the importance of synchronizing online and offline communication environments.

The implementation of digital public relations in both madrasahs extends beyond promotional communication toward the strategic representation of organizational identity. This finding supports image-based educational management theory, which argues that institutional reputation is strengthened when public communication accurately reflects the integration of educational quality, organizational values, and student development (Putri et al., 2024; Mahbubi et al., 2025; Afandi et al., 2025). Instead of producing isolated promotional campaigns, both institutions utilize their routine educational activities as the primary source of institutional narratives, thereby enhancing the credibility and authenticity of their digital communication.

The evaluation practices identified in this study reflect the principles of Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI), which emphasize systematic reflection, continuous learning, and evidence-based organizational development. Rather than functioning as a mechanism for monitoring compliance alone, evaluation serves as a collaborative process through which

institutional members collectively assess communication performance, identify emerging challenges, and formulate strategic improvements. This finding supports previous studies arguing that educational quality management becomes more effective when evaluation is embedded within routine organizational learning rather than implemented as a periodic administrative exercise (Sanjani et al., 2025).

The challenges identified in this study—including limited digital competence, resource constraints, and multiple professional responsibilities—are consistent with broader issues reported in the management of Islamic educational institutions. Previous research has highlighted that digital transformation frequently encounters resistance due to inadequate technological readiness and limited institutional resources (Khoiroh et al., 2025; Juhaidi, 2024; Saputra & Aras, 2023). However, the present findings demonstrate that such constraints do not necessarily impede digital public relations when institutions adopt adaptive leadership, collaborative work structures, and continuous professional development. This suggests that organizational adaptability may be more critical than technological availability in sustaining effective digital communication.

This study extends the literature on educational public relations by proposing an adaptive digital PR management model grounded in continuous organizational learning. The findings suggest that sustainable digital trust is achieved through the interaction of four mutually reinforcing elements: participatory governance, authentic organizational culture, continuous quality improvement, and responsible technological innovation, including AI-assisted communication. Rather than positioning technology as the primary determinant of institutional reputation, this model emphasizes that technological tools become effective only when embedded within strong organizational values, collaborative leadership, and systematic professional learning. This perspective contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of digital public relations in Islamic educational institutions operating within increasingly dynamic and disruptive information environments.

CONCLUSION

The era of information disruption requires Islamic educational institutions to undertake a fundamental transformation in the governance of their public communication. Based on the multisite case study conducted at MTs Ahmad Yani Jabung and MTs NU Pakis, it can be concluded that effective digital communication-based Public Relations (PR) strategies must be grounded in the reconstruction of the PR role, shifting from a traditional technical-administrative function into a strategic managerial instrument. The findings demonstrate that digital trust is fostered through participatory communication planning, the internalization of digital communication values, the integration of authentic educational and Islamic cultural practices into digital content, and continuous evaluation based on Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) supported by artificial intelligence (AI). The study contributes theoretically by positioning digital PR as a strategic governance mechanism that integrates organizational culture, stakeholder participation, and reputation management in Islamic educational institutions. However, as this research was limited to two madrasahs, future studies are recommended to employ broader comparative or mixed-method approaches to validate and extend these findings across diverse educational contexts.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The authors would like to express their sincere gratitude to MTs Ahmad Yani Jabung and MTs NU Pakis for their openness, cooperation, and valuable support throughout the research process. Special appreciation is also extended to the heads of madrasahs, vice principals for public relations, teachers, administrative staff, and all research informants who willingly shared their experiences, perspectives, and data, enabling this study to be completed successfully.

REFERENCES

- Afandi, M. A., Muadin, A., & Ridani, A. (2025). The Role of Public Relations in Improving the Quality of Education in Schools. *Nidhomiyyah: Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan Islam*, 6(1), 37–52. <https://doi.org/10.38073/nidhomiyyah.v6i1.2119>
- Alam, A., & Mohanty, A. (2023). Cultural Beliefs and Equity in Educational Institutions: Exploring the Social and Philosophical Notions of Ability Groupings in Teaching and Learning of Mathematics. *International Journal of Adolescence and Youth*, 28(1), 2270662. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02673843.2023.2270662>
- Dewi, A. T. A., Hikmah, U., Kusumawati, I., Rahman, M., & Manshur, U. (2026). Madrasah Vision Management Strategy in Realizing Superior Educational Quality. *EDUCARE: Jurnal Ilmu Pendidikan*, 5(1), 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.71392/ejip.v5i1.122>
- Fitriani, R., Kurniawan, A. R., & Budianto, A. (2026). Optimizing Indonesian Language Learning Evaluation Management to Enhance Student Learning Outcomes. *Journal of Educational Management Research*, 5(1), 381–394. <https://doi.org/10.61987/jemr.v5i1.1656>
- Hefniy, H., Azizah, N., Zahro, F., Baharun, H., Tohet, M., Widat, F., & Fauzi, A. (2025). Assistance in the Use of YouTube Kids as a Creative Learning Resource for Educators and Education Staff. *Communautaire: Journal of Community Service*, 4(1), 14–24. <https://doi.org/10.61987/communautaire.v4i1.834>
- Hidayat, R., Mulyana, R., Salleh, M. J., & Mahanum, M. (2025). Transmission of Islamic Educational Values Through Local Wisdom in Malay Nusantara Oral Traditions. *Fitrah: Journal of Islamic Education*, 6(1), 272–291.
- Huda, M. (2025). The Role of Public Relations in Marketing Educational Services at Madrasah Aliyah Tahfidz Al-Qur'an Al Islami Pesanggaran Banyuwangi. *Electronic Journal of Education, Social Economics and Technology*, 6(1), 354–361. <https://doi.org/10.33122/ejeset.v6i1.445>
- Juhaidi, A. (2024). Social Media Marketing of Islamic Higher Education Institution in Indonesia: A Marketing Mix Perspective. *Cogent Business & Management*, 11(1), 2374864. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311975.2024.2374864>
- Khoiroh, U., Baharun, H., Agus, A. H., & Mundiri, A. (2025). Emotional Management in Local Wisdom: Strategies for Enhancing Teachers' Work Resilience in Pesantren-Based Madrasah. *Journal of Educational Management Research*, 4(5), 2296–2309.
- Kumar, V., & Nanda, P. (2024). Social Media as a Learning Tool: A Perspective on Formal and Informal Learning. *International Journal of Educational Reform*, 33(2), 157–182. <https://doi.org/10.1177/10567879221094303>
- Maemonah, M., Zuhri, H., Masturin, M., Syafii, A., & Aziz, H. (2023). Contestation of Islamic Educational Institutions in Indonesia: Content Analysis on Social Media. *Cogent Education*, 10(1), 2164019. <https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186X.2022.2164019>
- Mahbubi, M., Cholili, A. H., & Huda, A. A. S. B. (2025). Enhancing Educational Quality Through Effective Communication in Private Universities. *Journal of Education and Learning Sciences*, 5(1), 23–38. <https://doi.org/10.56404/jels.v5i1.124>
- Makateng, D. S., & Mokala, N. T. (2025). Understanding Qualitative Research Methodology: A Systematic Review. *E-Journal of Humanities Arts and Social Sciences*, 6(3), 327–335. <https://doi.org/10.38159/ehass.2025637>
- Maulidia, M., & Fahmi, M. A. (2023). Enhancing Educational Impact: Exploring Effective Media and Public Relations Techniques in Educational Institutions. *Ar-Rosikhun: Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan Islam*, 2(3), 214–225. <https://doi.org/10.18860/rosikhun.v2i3.21644>

- Nasution, H. S., Basri, H., Batubara, W. W., & Mukhlisin, A. (2025). Islamic Education Teachers Strategies for Character Building Through Digital Literacy Based Islamic Values in the Society 5.0 Era. *Fitrah: Journal of Islamic Education*, 6(1), 259–271.
- Nuzula, J. F., Ariarta, A. P., Nur, M. A., & Fadilah, I. (2024). Implementation of Public Relations in Building the Image of Educational Institutions in Madrasah Aliyah. *Asatiza: Jurnal Pendidikan*, 5(3), 291–306. <https://doi.org/10.46963/asatiza.v5i3.2022>
- Paul, J., & Kaurav, R. P. S. (2025). Research Methods in a Nutshell: What, Why, When, Where, Who, and How? *International Journal of Consumer Studies*, 49(6), e70134. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ijcs.70134>
- Perez, E., Manca, S., Fernández-Pascual, R., & Mc Guckin, C. (2023). A Systematic Review of Social Media as a Teaching and Learning Tool in Higher Education: A Theoretical Grounding Perspective. *Education and Information Technologies*, 28(9), 11921–11950. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10639-023-11647-2>
- Putri, D. F., Qushwa, F. G., Putri, D. M. S., Widiyarsari, F., Zahro, F., & Baharun, H. (2024). Behaviour Management in the Classroom: Improving the Quality of Education Through Systematic Optimization of the Learning Environment. *FALASIFA: Jurnal Studi Keislaman*, 15(1), 35–47. <https://doi.org/10.62097/falasifa.v15i1.1787>
- Rahmadi, R., & Hamdan, H. (2023). Religious Moderation in the Context of Islamic Education: A Multidisciplinary Perspective and Its Application in Islamic Educational Institutions in Indonesia. *Khazanah: Jurnal Studi Islam Dan Humaniora*, 21(1), 59–82. <https://doi.org/10.18592/khazanah.v21i1.8487>
- Rohmiati, E. (2025). The Use of Digital Media in Learning Islamic Religious Education: Opportunities and Challenges. *Urwatul Wutsqo: Jurnal Studi Kependidikan Dan Keislaman*, 14(1), 33–45. <https://doi.org/10.54437/urwatulwutsqo.v14i1.1952>
- Saharani, L., & Diana, S. (2024). Optimization of Islamic Values-Based Public Relations Strategy in Increasing New Student Admissions. *Managere: Indonesian Journal of Educational Management*, 6(2), 194–206. <https://doi.org/10.52627/managere.v6i2.523>
- Sanjani, M. A. F., Mulyadi, M., & Sutiah, S. (2025). Academic Supervision as a Catalyst for Professional Growth in Schools. *Applied Community Services Journal*, 1(1), 1–9.
- Saputra, A., & Aras, M. (2023). The Strategic Frameworks in Digital Marketing Communication for Educational Institutions: A Case Analysis of Universitas Islam Negeri in Indonesia. *ILTIZAM Journal of Shariah Economics Research*, 7(2), 239–248. <https://doi.org/10.30631/iltizam.v7i2.2275>
- Setiawan, D. (2025). Effective Strategy of Madrasah Public Relations: Building Image and Encouraging Educational Program Innovation. *Journal of Advanced Islamic Educational Management*, 5(1), 35–48.
- Sivakumar, A., Jayasingh, S., & Shaik, S. (2023). Social Media Influence on Students' Knowledge Sharing and Learning: An Empirical Study. *Education Sciences*, 13(7), 745. <https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci13070745>
- Sudarmanto, T., Asy'ari, M., & Almasi, M. (2025). Strategic Transformation of Public Relations Management in Islamic Boarding Schools in the Digital Age. *IJIBS*, 3(1), 58–69.
- Wati, F. W., Tasnur, I., & Boontra, M. (2025). Pappaseng Values: A Cultural Framework for National Character Development. *AL MA'ARIEF: Jurnal Pendidikan Sosial dan Budaya*, 7(1), 43–56. <https://doi.org/10.35905/almaarief.v7i1.13115>
- Wiesenbergh, M., & Verčič, D. (2021). The Status Quo of the Visual Turn in Public Relations Practice. *Communications*, 46(2), 229–252. <https://doi.org/10.1515/commun-2019-0111>
- Yakin, A., Agus, A. H., Baharun, H., & Mundiri, A. (2025). Transforming Organizational Culture in Islamic Educational Institutions: Cultivating a Quality-Oriented Learning Environment for Academic Excellence. *Journal of Educational Management Research*, 4(4), 1711–1731.