



# How Social Media Drives Brand Awareness in Educational Institutions: Evidence from Madrasah Marketing Strategies

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.61987/jemr.v4i1.767>

## ABSTRACT

### Keywords:

Social Media,  
Madrasah Digital  
Marketing, Brand  
Awareness

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This study explores the use of social media to enhance brand awareness in madrasah institutions, focusing on MA Nurul Jadid. The research investigates how specific social media platforms, such as Instagram, TikTok, Facebook, and WhatsApp, contribute to increasing the visibility and appeal of madrasah to prospective students and their families. Given the rising importance of digital marketing in education, this study examines how madrasahs can adopt modern strategies to enhance their digital presence. This research used a qualitative approach and a case study methodology; data were collected through in-depth interviews with stakeholders, including social media managers, students, parents, and alumnus, and content analysis of the madrasah's social media activity. The findings suggest that Instagram and TikTok are particularly effective in engaging younger audiences, while Facebook and WhatsApp are crucial for formal communication with parents and alumnus. The study highlights the importance of strategic content creation and consistent engagement in building a strong online presence. These findings contribute to the broader understanding of digital marketing in religious and educational settings. They offer valuable insights for other madrasahs seeking to strengthen their brand image and community engagement through social media.

### Article History:

Received: January 2025; Revised: March 2025; Accepted: May 2025

### Please cite this article in APA style as:

Yaqin, M. A., & Aini, R. N., (2025). How Social Media Drives Brand Awareness in Educational Institutions: Evidence from Madrasah Marketing Strategies. *Journal of Educational Management Research*, 4(1), 42-54.

## INTRODUCTION

In today's digital era, social media has become dominant in various aspects of life, including education. As educational institutions, Madrasahs have a big challenge in increasing brand awareness and their appeal in the eyes of prospective students and the public (Bamberger et al., 2020; Eger et al., 2021; Koochang et al., 2023). With the rise in the use of social media, many madrasahs have begun to adapt and utilize these platforms to promote their image. Platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, Facebook, and WhatsApp are used to convey information, introduce activities, and interact directly with the audience (John & Yunus, 2021; Sarman & Tuncay, 2023; Tetteh & Kankam, 2024). Previously, many studies have highlighted how social media can strengthen branding in the education sector (Moran et al., 2020; Perera et al., 2022; Song et

al., 2023). However, few discuss in depth how madrassas, as faith-based educational institutions, use social media to achieve these goals, which is the primary focus of this study.

Several previous studies have explored the use of social media in educational contexts. This can be seen from several studies that explain that social media is effective in building the school's image and increasing the involvement of students, parents, and alumnus (Bhattacharya & Faisal, 2020; Hutchison et al., 2020; Maresova et al., 2020). Some previous studies have also found that visual platforms such as Instagram and TikTok are more effective at attracting young audiences, while other platforms such as Facebook are more used for formal communication (Haenlein et al., 2020; Hase et al., 2023; Pourazad et al., 2023). The following research also strengthens Some of the above research, which explains the importance of relevant and engaging content strategies to increase audience engagement (Atiq et al., 2022; Giertz et al., 2022; Tafesse & Wood, 2021). These studies provide important insights into how social media can be leveraged in educational contexts. However, there are shortcomings in studies on how madrasas, especially those based on religious education, optimize the use of social media to increase their brand awareness.

Although many studies have explored the use of social media in educational contexts, there is still a lack of studies focusing on how madrassas use social media to increase their brand awareness. Most of those studies focus more on public schools or universities. The main problem faced is the lack of understanding of how madrasas, with the hallmarks of faith-based education, can adjust their social media strategies to appeal to a broader audience. Therefore, this study analyzes social media strategies at MA Nurul Jadid to dig deeper into how madrassas can optimize their social media to increase brand appeal and awareness.

This research offers a new contribution by examining the use of social media in the context of madrasas, an area that has received less attention in the existing literature. The uniqueness of this study lies in selecting MA Nurul Jadid as a case study to understand how madrassas can use social media to build their brand awareness. By combining visual platforms such as Instagram and TikTok with a two-way communication approach, this study reveals how interactive elements can play an important role in increasing audience engagement, especially young audiences, and strengthening the bond between madrassas and the community. The study also introduces a new perspective on the use of social media in faith-based education, which enriches the discourse on digital marketing in the education sector.

This study analyzes how madrassas can leverage social media, especially Instagram, TikTok, Facebook, and WhatsApp, to increase brand awareness. This research was conducted to explore the strategies used by MA Nurul Jadid to maximize the potential of social media to build a stronger image and attract more prospective students. Using a qualitative approach and case studies, this study will explore how relevant and interactive content can strengthen relationships between madrassas, students, parents, and alumnus, as well as contribute to developing digital marketing practices, especially in educational institutions that are religiously nuances.

## RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study type, which allows an in-depth understanding of specific phenomena in madrasah education. The case study was chosen because it allows for an in-depth exploration of the dynamics and challenges faced by MA Nurul Jadid in leveraging social media to increase brand awareness. This approach is suitable for answering research questions that focus on participants' subjective experiences and social interactions in real contexts (Behnamnia et al., 2020; Mishra et al., 2019; Wood et al., 2020). The analytical approach is inductive, where data is collected without rigid initial theories and analyzed to find naturally occurring patterns (Bouncken et al., 2021; Fife & Rodgers, 2021; Hassad, 2020). This study uses case studies to provide a comprehensive understanding of how social media is implemented in madrassas and examines the influence of local factors on the effectiveness of their marketing strategies.

The data was collected through in-depth interviews with various informants, including social media managers, students, parents, and alumnus of MA Nurul Jadid. These interviews allowed researchers to gain direct insight into participants' experiences, perceptions, and motivations related to the use of social media in madrassas. In addition, observations of the madrasah social media activities and analysis of published content were also carried out to complete the interviews. This triangulation technique increases the depth and credibility of the data obtained, by ensuring that information from various sources can be verified. Purposive sampling is used to select informants who have direct understanding and experience related to the topic being studied (Ankrah et al., 2020; Hicks et al., 2021; Pahwa et al., 2023). With diverse participants, this study can present a holistic picture of the implementation of social media strategies in madrassas.

Data analysis was carried out using a systematic data reduction approach, following the steps of Milles and Huberman (Gayoso et al., 2022; J. Wang et al., 2022; Y. Wang et al., 2021). The analysis begins with transcribing the interview and openly coding the data to identify the main themes that emerge. After that, the data is categorized based on a broader theme to explore the patterns and

relationships between concepts. This technique also involves comparing data between informants to identify similarities and differences in their experiences. The analysis process is carried out iteratively, verifying findings through discussion with participants (member checking) to ensure the accuracy and reliability of interpretation (Chung et al., 2020; Janis, 2022; Singh et al., 2021). With this approach, the analysis maps the data. It provides an in-depth understanding of how social media strategies are implemented in the context of madrasah education and their impact on brand awareness.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This research aims to explore and analyze strategies to increase madrasah brand awareness through social media, using a case study at MA Nurul Jadid. It uses a qualitative approach with a case study method, which involves in-depth interviews, observation of social media activities, and analysis of published content. Data was obtained from various informants, including social media managers, students, alumnus, and students' parents. This research focuses on exploring how madrassas can effectively utilize social media platforms to improve their image and attract prospective students.

Choosing the Right Social Media Platform

Choosing the right social media platform is the first strategic step in building Madrasah brand awareness. Each social media platform has a different audience, with characteristics that can affect the effectiveness of message delivery. In this digital era, schools or madrassas must utilize the most relevant platforms for their target audience. Based on the research results, MA Nurul Jadid chose Instagram and TikTok as the main platforms to reach prospective young students who are more interested in visual content and interactive formats. On the other hand, Facebook and WhatsApp are used for more formal and structured communication with parents and alumnus. The proper platform selection significantly affects Madrasahs' ability to optimize audience reach and engagement. The selection of social media platforms can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1. Choosing the Right Social Media Platform	
Jenis Platform	Explanation
Instagram	A visual platform that is more appealing to young students is very effective for displaying school activities in the form of fresh and easy-to-understand visual content.
TikTok	An interactive platform better suited for creative and fun short video content is used to grab the attention of potential students with lighter content.
Facebook	More formal platforms are used for communication with parents and alumnus and are suitable for sharing more serious information, such as academic or administrative announcements.

WhatsApp	It is used for direct communication with parents and alumnus, providing space for more personal interaction and formal conversations between madrassas and parents.
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Table 1 shows the selection of social media platforms by MA Nurul Jadid based on their suitability with different audiences. Instagram and TikTok are used to capture the attention of young audiences with engaging and creative visual content. Instead, Facebook is more used as a formal communication channel for parents and alumnus, with more structured and academically related content. WhatsApp is used for more personal direct communication with parents and alumnus. This platform segmentation indicates the strategic segmentation of the audience, where each platform has a different goal within the broader marketing strategy. Based on these findings, it can be assumed that the appeal of Instagram and TikTok to young demographics can increase engagement rates among prospective students. At the same time, the formal nature of Facebook and WhatsApp can strengthen relationships with parents and alumnus.

In addition, this is also strengthened by several statements delivered by one of the informants who explained, "I find Instagram and TikTok more interesting because the content is in the form of short videos that are easy to understand and more fun." Platforms like Instagram are very effective at displaying enjoyable activities in madrassas. At the same time, Facebook is more suitable for parents who want more serious and structured information." I see content on Instagram more often because it looks fresher and easier to digest, in contrast to the more rigid Facebook."

The statements made by some of the informants above reveal a central theme related to the difference in the effectiveness of social media platforms in attracting the attention of different audiences. The informant stated that Instagram and TikTok are more appealing to young audiences because the content is in the form of short, fun, and easy-to-understand videos. The informant said, "I find Instagram and TikTok more interesting because the content is in the form of short videos that are easy to understand and fun." This reflects the tendency of young audiences to prefer the consumption of information in a fast and interactive visual format. This phenomenon is increasingly dominant in today's social media use. On the other hand, Facebook is considered more suitable for communication with parents, who want more serious and structured information.

Selecting the appropriate platform based on the audience's habits and preferences is crucial for the success of a digital marketing strategy. Instagram and TikTok dominate for younger audiences, offering a visual and interactive experience. Short videos, filters, and engaging challenges keep users entertained, making these platforms ideal for attracting attention with dynamic visual

content. In contrast, Facebook and WhatsApp are better suited for formal and structured communication, connecting effectively with parents and alumnus. Facebook excels at sharing detailed, serious information, while WhatsApp fosters private, in-person conversations, helping to build stronger relationships with these key groups and ensuring tailored messaging for each audience.

### **Consistency in Content Publishing**

Consistency in content publication is important in building and maintaining Madrasah brand awareness on social media. In this context, regular publication can ensure that the audience stays connected to the madrasah and receives updated information. MA Nurul Jadid tries to maintain this consistency by uploading content regularly, at least three times a week. However, the data shows there are challenges in maintaining the frequency of uploads, especially during holidays or periods of less activity, which affect engagement rates and audience reach. Consistency in choosing the right time to publish content also plays a significant role in maintaining audience engagement.

This can be seen from the statements submitted by several informants selected in this study, where it was stated that one of the informants, the Head of Public Relations of the Supreme Court Nurul Jadid, explained the importance of maintaining a consistent upload schedule, "We try to maintain a content upload schedule at least three times a week so that the audience stays connected with the madrasah." This is in line with the admission of one of the students who stated that regular updates provide a sense of more involvement, "I prefer regular updates about school activities because it makes me feel more involved and proud of the madrasah." On the other hand, although MA Nurul Jadid has tried to maintain consistency, there have been some moments where the frequency of uploads has decreased, especially during holidays. One of the informants felt this: "During the holidays, content uploads decrease, affecting our interaction with followers."

This study shows that consistency in the publication of social media content plays an important role in maintaining audience engagement. For example, the Head of Public Relations of the Supreme Court, Nurul Jadid, emphasized that setting a consistent upload schedule at least three times a week ensures the audience stays connected to the madrasah. This aligns with the experience of students feeling more engaged and proud of receiving regular updates. However, the decline in the frequency of posts during the holidays created challenges, which was reflected in the recognition that the lack of content during that time affected interactions with followers. These findings underscore the importance of careful content planning, even during periods of inactivity, to



maintain relationships with audiences and prevent significant declines in engagement.

Based on the findings presented above, it is evident that consistency in content publication significantly impacts audience engagement. Audiences who receive regular content feel more connected to the madrasah, as noted by interviewees who expressed pride in the consistent availability of up-to-date information about school activities. This highlights that regular publications inform and foster an emotional connection between the madrasah and its audience. However, maintaining upload frequency during holiday periods poses a challenge. Despite efforts to ensure consistency, reduced holiday activity can lead to lower audience interaction. This emphasizes the need for strategic planning of relevant or theme-based content that can be shared during quieter periods.

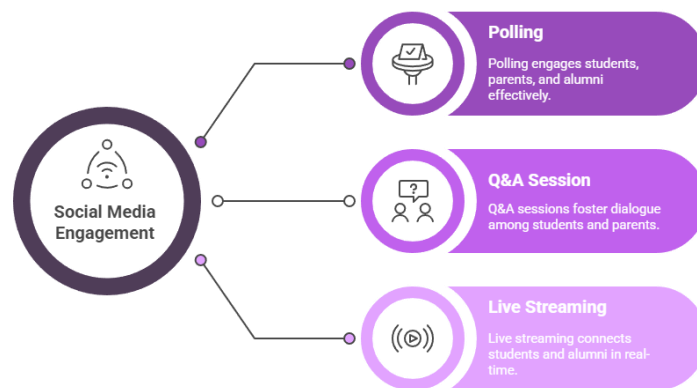
### **Audience Interaction with Content**

Audience interaction with content published on social media is one of the determining factors in measuring the success of digital strategies to increase brand awareness. The level of audience interaction, primarily through interactive features such as polls, Q&A sessions, and live streaming, shows a significant increase in engagement. This two-way communication approach has proven to be more appealing to the audience than a one-way approach that relies only on static information. Audiences who feel engaged are more likely to trust and share the content, which expands the reach of the madrasah's message.

This can be seen from the statement that one of the informants states, "Active interaction on social media helps increase the involvement of students and parents in various school activities." This shows that the audience consumes information and actively participates in discussions involving the school, strengthening the bond between the madrasah and its community. In addition, one student revealed, "I am more interested in following the development of madrasahs through Instagram and TikTok because they often hold Q&A sessions and polls." This confirms that young audiences prefer content that invites their participation, such as polls or Q&A sessions, which allow them to provide direct feedback to the school. In addition, an alumnus also added, "Interactive content such as polls and Q&A sessions made me more involved and trusted this school". From this quote, it can be seen that two-way interaction can increase confidence and loyalty to madrasahs. Participating in discussions or polls makes the audience feel their voice is valued, increasing their sense of belonging to the institution.

Departing from the results of the statements delivered by some of the informants above, it can be seen that it is revealed that active interaction on social media, primarily through features such as polls and question-and-answer sessions, has a significant role in increasing audience engagement with madrasahs.

Social media serves as a tool for disseminating information and as a platform to build a closer dialogue between madrassas and audiences. Moreover, young audiences, particularly students, tend to be more interested in interactive content, which facilitates direct participation in school activities, as expressed by students who prefer Instagram and TikTok due to the presence of Q&A sessions and polls. This two-way approach increases audience confidence and loyalty, which is reflected in the statements of alumnus who feel more engaged and trust in the madrasah thanks to interactive content. This interaction reinforces the sense of belonging to the madrasah audience, which ultimately positively impacts the school's image and brand awareness. In addition, the audience's interaction with the type of interactive social media content is shown in Figure 1.



**Figure 1. Audience Interaction with Interactive Content Types on Social Media**

This diagram illustrates key elements of a social media engagement strategy to increase engagement in educational settings. This diagram highlights three types of interactive content: polls, Q&A sessions, and live broadcasts. Each contributes to building stronger relationships between institutions and their communities. Polls were identified as an effective tool for engaging students, parents, and alumnus, allowing participation and feedback. Q&A sessions, on the other hand, are very beneficial in facilitating dialogue between students and parents, creating an active communication space. The live broadcast, meanwhile, facilitates real-time interaction, especially connecting students and alumnus, enhancing a sense of community and closeness in communication.

These strategies are most likely to increase engagement and trust, as students and parents feel more engaged and connected to the institution. While polls and Q&A sessions encourage reflective participation, live broadcasts build real-time dynamic connections. With this interactive strategy, madrassas can strengthen audience engagement and develop a more personal and emotional



relationship with them. It also shows that audiences are more interested in the type of content that allows them to participate and feel valued, increasing the brand awareness of the madrasah among the public.

## Discussion

These findings suggest that selecting the right social media platform is key to building madrasah brand awareness. In line with the theory of digital communication (Moran et al., 2020; Perera et al., 2022; Song et al., 2023), where social media platforms serve as the main channels in message delivery, the results of this study confirm that visual platforms such as Instagram and TikTok are more effective at attracting young audiences, while platforms such as Facebook and WhatsApp are more suitable for audiences that need formal communication. Previous research by John & Yunus, (2021) also emphasized the importance of audience segmentation in determining the right platform for marketing strategies. These findings expand the literature by showing that selecting social media platforms based on audience characteristics allows madrasahs to increase audience reach and engagement, by leveraging social media's visual and interactive power.

Consistency in content publication has proven to be a crucial element in maintaining audience engagement with madrasahs. Eger et al. (2021) explain that the frequency and sustainability of content uploads can affect the audience's perception of an institution's brand. As found in this study, a decrease in the frequency of uploads during the holidays risks lowering engagement and brand image. This aligns with a study by Bamberger et al. (2020), which shows that consistency is key to building loyalty and long-term relationships with audiences. Thus, these findings suggest that while MA Nurul Jadid strives to maintain consistency in content, careful content planning, including during periods of inactivity, is essential to maintain closeness to the audience and avoid significant declines in engagement.

These findings support the argument that active interaction on social media, such as those found through polls, Q&A sessions, and live streaming, can increase audience engagement with madrasahs. This is in line with the theory of two-way communication in social media developed by Gajardo and Costera Meijer (2023), which states that audience interaction with content increases engagement and strengthens the emotional bond between institutions and audiences. In this case, approaches that invite active participation, such as polls or live streaming, are more effective in building emotionally connected communities and increasing trust in madrasahs. These findings reinforce previous research by Ibrahim and Aljarah (2023) that showed that interactive strategies help create closeness and loyalty and expand the reach of messages on social media. Therefore, interactive strategies that involve the audience directly have great potential to strengthen the brand awareness of madrasahs.

These findings make an important contribution to the literature on educational digital marketing, especially in the context of madrasahs. Based on the research results, it can be suggested that madrasahs must focus more on platforms relevant to the target audience and maintain consistency in content publications to ensure a sustainable relationship with the audience. Additionally, interactive strategies that invite direct participation should be an integral part of their marketing approach. Future research could examine the long-term impact of audience engagement on prospective students' decision-making. Additionally, it would be valuable to explore how cultural and demographic differences among audiences influence their responses to the digital marketing strategies employed by madrasahs.

## CONCLUSION

This study explored the effectiveness of social media strategies in increasing brand awareness for madrasah institutions, focusing on MA Nurul Jadid. The research identified key social media platforms, such as Instagram, TikTok, Facebook, and WhatsApp, and examined their relevance based on audience demographics and engagement needs. The findings highlight the importance of choosing the right platform, maintaining content consistency, and fostering interactive engagement with the audience through tools like polling, Q&A sessions, and live streaming. The results suggest that interactive and visual-based platforms are more effective in engaging younger audiences, while formal platforms are better for communication with parents and alumnus. These strategies contribute significantly to increasing brand awareness and enhancing community engagement. Looking ahead, further research could explore the long-term effects of these strategies on student enrollment and the role of social media in the evolving landscape of educational marketing.

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