

Madrasah Public Relations Strategy in Building a Positive Image Based on Islamic Values

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Abstract:

This study aims to explore madrasah public relations strategies for building a positive institutional image grounded in Islamic values in the digital era. This study used a qualitative case study design. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, participant observation, and document and digital content analysis. Data were then analyzed using the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña. The results indicate that digital public relations practices at the madrasah are implemented through a structured communication system utilizing websites and social media as the primary channels. Islamic values, such as *tabayyun* (references), politeness of language, and publication ethics, are effectively integrated into the process of content planning, verification, and dissemination. This strategy is supported by leadership commitment, a collaborative culture among teachers and students, and adequate digital infrastructure. However, this study also identified several challenges, including limited time for administrators, variations in digital literacy, and the lack of standard procedures for managing public interactions on social media. Overall, this study confirms that integrating Islamic values into digital public relations practices not only strengthens the institution's image but also increases public trust and credibility in the madrasah.

Keywords: *Madrasah Public Relations, Digital Communication, Islamic Values, Institutional Image*

Abstrak:

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi strategi humas madrasah dalam membangun citra kelembagaan positif berbasis nilai-nilai Islam di era digital. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan desain studi kasus. Data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara mendalam, observasi partisipatif, dan analisis dokumen serta konten digital, kemudian dianalisis menggunakan model interaktif Miles, Huberman, dan Saldaña. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa praktik humas digital di madrasah tersebut dijalankan melalui sistem komunikasi yang terstruktur dengan memanfaatkan situs web dan media sosial sebagai saluran utama. Nilai-nilai Islam, seperti *tabayyun*, kesantunan bahasa, dan etika publikasi, terintegrasi secara nyata dalam proses perencanaan, verifikasi, dan penyebaran konten. Strategi ini didukung oleh komitmen kepemimpinan, budaya kolaboratif antara guru dan siswa, serta ketersediaan infrastruktur digital yang memadai. Namun demikian, penelitian ini juga mengidentifikasi sejumlah tantangan, antara lain keterbatasan waktu pengelola, variasi literasi digital, dan belum adanya prosedur baku dalam pengelolaan interaksi publik di media sosial. Secara keseluruhan, penelitian ini menegaskan bahwa integrasi nilai-nilai Islam dalam praktik humas digital tidak hanya memperkuat citra lembaga, tetapi juga meningkatkan kredibilitas dan kepercayaan publik terhadap madrasah.

Kata Kunci: *Humas Madrasah, Komunikasi Digital, Nilai-Nilai Islam, Citra Lembaga*

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INTRODUCTION

The rapid expansion of digital communication has fundamentally reshaped how educational institutions interact with the public and construct their institutional image. In the context of Islamic education, madrasahs are increasingly required to manage their public presence through digital platforms such as websites and social media, where information circulates quickly and shapes public perception in real time. Public relations, therefore, no longer functions merely as an administrative unit but as a strategic actor that mediates institutional identity, values, and credibility (Arceneaux, 2024; Shin, 2023; Strauß et al., 2025). For Islamic educational institutions, this transformation raises a critical challenge: how to engage effectively in digital communication while maintaining adherence to Islamic ethical principles such as honesty, prudence, and moral responsibility (Maulidy & Sanjani, 2025; Saleem, 2023; Veronika & Hasan Baharun, 2024). Digital visibility offers opportunities for transparency and engagement, yet it also exposes institutions to risks related to misinformation, ethical lapses, and reputational vulnerability (Guo & Zhou, 2025; Harness et al., 2024; Suárez-Álvarez & Pastor-Rodríguez, 2025). Within this setting, public relations practices in madrasahs require careful management that balances technological efficiency with value-based communication, particularly as digital media increasingly serves as the primary interface between Islamic educational institutions and society (Andersson, 2025; Hermansah, 2022; Müller, 2022).

Existing studies on digital public relations in educational settings emphasize consistency, transparency, and strategic content management as key determinants of institutional image. Research on school and university public relations suggests that systematic digital communication strengthens trust and enhances organizational legitimacy (Fu & Wang, 2024; Lim & Zhang, 2025; Marschlich & Ingenhoff, 2021). Parallel to this, studies in Islamic public relations highlight the importance of ethical communication rooted in religious values, such as *tabayyun* (verification), *amanah* (trustworthiness), and *adab* (ethical conduct) (Al-Kandari et al., 2025; Eyo & Hasan, 2021; Maulidi, 2025). However, the literature tends to develop along two largely separate trajectories. On the one hand, digital public relations scholarship focuses on platforms, strategies, and audience engagement, often emphasizing technical efficiency and branding outcomes (Al-Kandari et al., 2025; Ansoriyah, 2025; Muhammad et al., 2024). On the other hand, Islamic public relations research frequently remains normative, discussing ethical ideals without sufficiently examining how these values are operationalized in everyday digital practices. As a result, limited attention has been given to how Islamic educational institutions translate ethical principles into concrete procedures for content creation, verification, and dissemination within digital public relations workflows.

This fragmentation in the literature reveals a clear Research gap. While prior studies acknowledge the significance of Islamic values in communication, few empirical investigations examine how these values are embedded in the

routine management of digital public relations at the institutional level. In particular, there is a lack of qualitative Research that explores the internal processes, actor interactions, and organizational mechanisms through which Islamic values shape digital communication practices in madrasahs. Most existing studies focus on outcomes such as reputation or public trust, rather than the processes that produce them. Moreover, Research rarely examines how leadership support, collaborative culture, and digital infrastructure interact with ethical considerations to shape public relations strategies. This study responds to this gap by offering an in-depth qualitative case study of a madrasah that actively integrates Islamic values into its digital public relations management. The novelty of this Research lies in its process-oriented analysis, which connects ethical principles with concrete digital practices rather than treating values as abstract ideals.

Accordingly, the purpose of this study is to explore how public relations strategies in a madrasah context integrate Islamic values into digital communication practices to build a positive institutional image. Specifically, this Research seeks to examine how digital content is planned, verified, and disseminated; how Islamic ethical principles inform decision-making in publication processes; and how organizational factors such as leadership commitment and collaborative culture support these practices. By addressing these objectives, the study aims to extend existing scholarship on digital public relations by incorporating a value-based perspective grounded in Islamic educational management. From an academic standpoint, the study helps bridge the gap between digital communication theory and Islamic public relations ethics. In practice, it offers insights for madrasah leaders and public relations practitioners seeking to develop ethical, credible digital communication strategies in an increasingly complex media environment.

The central argument of this study is that effective digital public relations in Islamic educational institutions cannot be understood solely through technical or managerial lenses; rather, it must be examined as a value-driven organizational practice. Public relations activities in madrasahs involve continuous sensemaking processes in which actors interpret events, filter information, and construct narratives that align with institutional identity and religious norms. Through qualitative exploration, this study focuses on how public relations actors negotiate ethical considerations in content selection, visual representation, and audience interaction. By foregrounding process, meaning, and context, the study provides a nuanced understanding of how Islamic values are enacted within digital public relations practices. This focus not only clarifies the internal dynamics of madrasah communication management but also lays the foundation for the methodological discussion that follows, which explains how these processes were examined through a qualitative case study.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employs a qualitative approach using a case study design to examine how Islamic values are integrated into digital public relations practices in an Islamic educational institution. The case study design was chosen because it

allows for an in-depth exploration of complex social processes within a real-life context, particularly when the phenomenon under investigation cannot be separated from its institutional setting (Bicer et al., 2025; Dey et al., 2022; Lu & Shelley, 2023). The research was conducted at MAN Insan Cendekia Paser, which was purposively selected as a bounded case due to its structured digital public relations system and strong emphasis on Islamic values. This type of qualitative case study enables the researcher to explore meanings, practices, and interactions among institutional actors involved in public communication. The qualitative approach is theoretically appropriate because the study focuses on understanding experiences, interpretations, and organizational processes rather than measuring variables (McDonough & Stephenson, 2024; Sawyer et al., 2024; Yu, 2024). This approach supports the examination of value-based practices and provides rich contextual insights into how ethical and religious principles are embedded in digital communication strategies (Alshammari & Alshammari, 2025; Halldórsson, 2025; Seawright et al., 2025).

Data collection was conducted through in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and document analysis to obtain comprehensive and context-sensitive data. In-depth interviews were used to explore informants' perspectives on public relations strategies, the incorporation of Islamic values in digital publications, and challenges encountered in practice. Participatory observation enabled the researcher to directly observe content production processes, publication workflows, and interactions among public relations actors within the madrasah. Document analysis involved reviewing public relations standard operating procedures, publication schedules, archives of social media posts, and official digital content. The researcher acted as the primary research instrument and engaged closely with the research setting while maintaining reflexivity and ethical awareness.

Data analysis followed the interactive model, consisting of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing (Christou, 2025; Laari, 2025; Lochmiller, 2021). The process began with a comprehensive reading of all data to understand the overall research context. Initial coding was then applied to identify recurring patterns related to public relations strategies, Islamic value integration, and digital content management. These codes were subsequently organized into broader themes through categorization and abstraction. Digital content analysis focused on content types, visual and textual elements, and their alignment with Islamic ethical principles such as *tabayyun*, respectful language, and publication ethics. The credibility of the analysis was strengthened through continuous comparison across data sources, reflective interpretation by the researcher, and confirmation of findings with informants (Liu et al., 2025; Matthews, 2021; Vella, 2024). This analytical approach allowed for a systematic yet flexible interpretation of data, producing in-depth insights into how digital public relations practices are shaped by organizational culture and Islamic values within the madrasah context.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

The madrasah's public relations strategy is operationalized through three primary communication channels: the website, Instagram, and Facebook. Content

for these platforms is initially documented by the teacher in charge of the activity, then reviewed, selected, edited, and published by the public relations team. The Public Relations Coordinator emphasized that "every event must have documentation, then we choose the ones that are suitable for uploading." Observations revealed a consistent visual style and concise narratives that not only capture the context of activities but also reflect the institution's values. The participation of multimedia club students accelerates the publication process, improving workflow efficiency. Ultimately, the PR strategy is structured around a well-organized process and a collaborative culture among madrasah residents, ensuring smooth, consistent publication of content.

The public relations practices at the madrasah are guided by Islamic ethical principles, with a strong focus on prudence. The content verification process is layered to ensure appropriateness, considering factors such as the selection of student photos, the politeness of poses, and the accuracy of the information shared. One informant, Mrs. Rina Hartati, highlighted that "Not all photos can be uploaded; we make sure only those who are polite" are chosen for publication. The language used in the narratives is consistently polite, emphasizing values such as gratitude, discipline, and the spirit of learning. Religious content, including updates on *Tadarus* (Quran recitation), congregational prayers, and moral development, is regularly shared, reflecting the madrasah's daily activities. This ensures that the publications appear authentic and reflective of the institution's true practices.

Through content analysis, four main categories emerged: informative, educational, religious, and institutional profiles. Religious content and student achievements were the most consistent types of posts, generating the highest levels of public interaction. Teachers regularly send documentation of activities to a dedicated public relations group, where it is reviewed and selected for publication. The frequency of posts increases during periods of intensive activities, such as Research competitions and the end of the semester, further reinforcing the madrasah's image as a religious, productive, and accomplished institution.

Table 1. Factors Supporting Public Relations Success at MAN Insan Cendekia Paser

Factor	Details	Impact on PR Success
Leadership Support	Leadership encourages innovation while maintaining Islamic values.	Ensures alignment of public relations strategies with Islamic principles.
Publication Facilities	Availability of DSLR cameras, editing computers, and internet networks.	Facilitates high-quality content creation and efficient publication process.
Collaborative Culture	Teachers document activities voluntarily; multimedia club assists with content creation.	Promotes teamwork, leading to faster and more consistent content publication.
Culture of "Publication Cooperation"	A common norm where all stakeholders (teachers, students, PR team) contribute to publications.	Enables smooth and stable publication workflows, ensuring timely updates.

Table 1. Illustrates that the interaction between structural support and an established institutional culture shapes the success of public relations at MAN Insan Cendekia Paser. Leadership plays a decisive role by encouraging innovation while ensuring that all public relations activities remain grounded in Islamic

values. Adequate publication facilities, including cameras, editing tools, and stable internet access, enable the production and dissemination of content more effectively and professionally. At the same time, a collaborative culture among teachers and students strengthens the workflow, as teachers willingly document activities and students contribute technical assistance. This shared responsibility for publications creates a stable, efficient system that delivers information consistently and on time, reinforcing the institution's positive image in the digital space.

As part of the documentation management process, the public relations team follows a structured workflow to ensure that all published content complies with established standards and institutional policies, as illustrated in Figure 1.

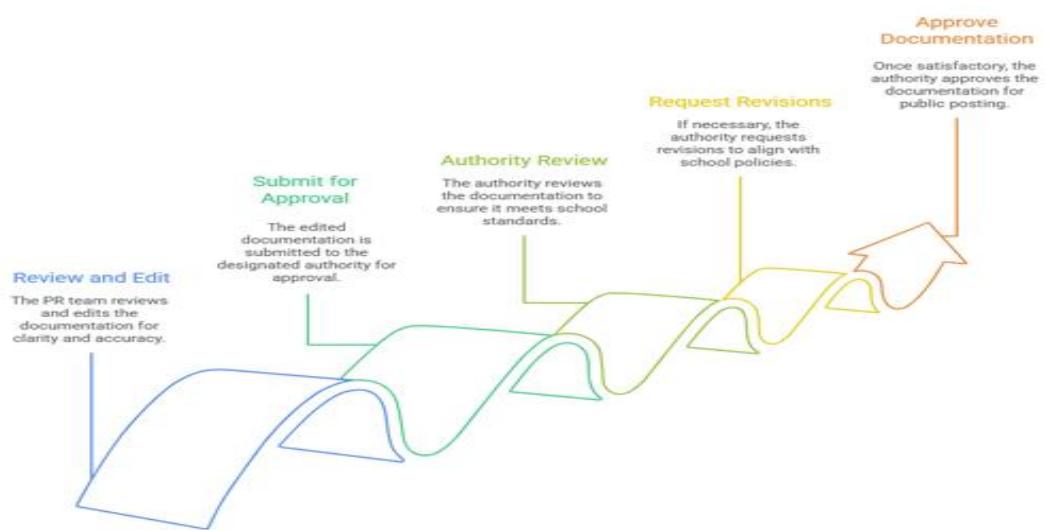


Figure 1. Content Approval Process

Figure 1. Illustrates a sequential and controlled content approval process implemented by the public relations team to maintain quality and compliance with institutional standards. The process begins with the review and editing stage, where the PR team examines the documentation to ensure clarity, accuracy, and appropriateness. Once refined, the content is submitted for approval to the designated authority, who then conducts an authority review to verify alignment with school policies and Islamic values. If the content does not fully meet the required standards, revisions are requested to address identified issues. The process concludes with formal approval, at which point the documentation is authorized for public release. This step-by-step workflow reflects a careful and ethical approach to digital publication, ensuring that all content shared with the public is accurate, respectful, and institutionally accountable.

The success of public relations at MAN Insan Cendekia Paser is strongly shaped by consistent leadership support, which ensures that institutional values are upheld while encouraging innovation. The availability of publication facilities, including DSLR cameras, editing equipment, and stable internet access, significantly contributes to the quality and timeliness of digital content

production. In addition, a collaborative working culture involving teachers, students, and the public relations team, supported by a shared norm of "publication cooperation," enables documentation and dissemination processes to run efficiently. Teachers actively document institutional activities, while students from the multimedia club provide technical assistance, allowing the publication process to proceed more quickly and in a coordinated manner.

Despite these strengths, several challenges remain. Teachers' limited time and varying levels of digital literacy sometimes result in undocumented activities or content that requires further improvement before publication. Ethical procedures related to the use of student images, particularly consent verification, may also slow spontaneous uploads. Furthermore, the management of public comments on social media requires careful attention, as formal standard operating procedures for comment moderation have not yet been established. An example of published content reflecting these practices is shown in Figure 2.



Figure 2. Example of Published Content on Social Media

Figure 2. Illustrates the effective integration of Islamic values within public relations practices. The use of respectful language, appropriate visual presentation, and careful content selection reflects a strong commitment to Islamic principles, particularly courtesy and accuracy. Furthermore, the documentation reinforces the idea that the madrasah's public relations activities extend beyond information dissemination to the consistent maintenance of a values-based institutional image.

Discussion

This study reveals that public relations management at MAN Insan Cendekia Paser is not merely a technical function of information dissemination but operates as a value-driven strategic process. The findings show that digital public relations activities are structured through clear workflows, collaborative involvement of teachers and students, and consistent use of digital platforms such as websites and social media. Most importantly, Islamic values such as *tabayyun*, courtesy, and ethical responsibility are embedded throughout the content creation

and approval processes. These values shape how information is verified, how visuals are selected, and how narratives are framed before publication. Leadership support and adequate digital infrastructure further strengthen the effectiveness of this strategy by enabling innovation while preserving institutional identity. At the same time, the study identifies practical constraints, including limited managerial time, uneven digital literacy, and the absence of formal guidelines for moderating public interaction on social media. Together, these findings highlight that effective digital public relations in Islamic educational institutions requires not only technological capacity but also an ethical and organizational framework that aligns communication practices with religious values and institutional goals.

The findings of this study contribute to and extend existing literature on digital public relations and Islamic educational management. Prior research has emphasized the importance of consistent digital communication in shaping institutional image and public trust (Arrese, 2024; Lim et al., 2025; Rodin, 2023). This study supports those arguments by demonstrating that regular and structured content publication fosters transparency and credibility. However, it advances previous work by showing how Islamic ethical principles are operationalized in everyday digital practices rather than remaining at a normative or conceptual level, as noted by Vella (2024). Unlike earlier studies that focus primarily on technological adoption, this research addresses a gap by integrating sensemaking with Islamic public relations values, particularly *tabayyun* as a mechanism of verification in fast-moving digital environments. In doing so, the study challenges the assumption that digital speed must come at the expense of ethical deliberation and instead demonstrates that value-based communication can coexist with efficient digital practices.

This research offers several important contributions to the field of Islamic educational management. First, it provides an empirically grounded framework for managing digital public relations that integrates managerial professionalism with Islamic ethical values. While many studies discuss leadership, infrastructure, and communication separately, this study demonstrates how these elements interact within a value-based management system. Second, it extends the application of sensemaking theory in Islamic education by showing how institutional actors collectively interpret, filter, and communicate information through religious and organizational norms. This contribution enriches existing management literature by positioning Islamic values not as symbolic additions but as operational principles guiding decision-making processes. Third, the study contributes practically by identifying collaborative publication culture as a managerial asset, where shared responsibility among teachers, students, and public relations staff enhances efficiency and institutional coherence. For Islamic educational institutions, these findings suggest that effective public relations management is closely linked to leadership policies, organizational culture, and ethical governance. As such, the study provides a conceptual and practical reference for madrasahs seeking to strengthen institutional reputation while remaining faithful to Islamic educational values.

This study underscores the significance of integrating Islamic values into digital public relations as a strategic component of institutional management in Islamic education. The findings demonstrate that value-based communication practices contribute not only to a positive institutional image but also to sustained public trust in increasingly complex digital environments. By combining ethical principles, collaborative culture, and structured communication systems, MAN Insan Cendekia Paser exemplifies how Islamic educational institutions can navigate digital transformation without compromising their core identity. These insights have broader implications for policy and practice, suggesting the need for clearer institutional guidelines, capacity-building in digital literacy, and formalized procedures for managing online engagement. For future research, comparative studies across different madrasahs or regions could further examine how variations in leadership style, infrastructure, and organizational culture influence digital public relations effectiveness. Additionally, integrating other theoretical lenses, such as activity theory or institutional theory, may deepen understanding of how ethical values are negotiated within digital organizational practices. Overall, this study contributes to advancing scholarly discussions on Islamic educational management by offering a nuanced understanding of how ethics and technology intersect in contemporary public relations practice.

CONCLUSION

This study addressed the challenge madrasahs face in managing public communication in an increasingly digital environment while remaining consistent with Islamic ethical principles. The findings demonstrate that public relations at MAN Insan Cendekia Paser functions as a structured and value-oriented practice rather than a purely technical activity. Digital communication is managed through clearly defined workflows that integrate Islamic values such as *tabayyun*, respectful language, and publication ethics into content planning, verification, and dissemination. These practices are reinforced by strong leadership commitment, a collaborative culture among teachers and students, and adequate digital infrastructure. At the same time, the study highlights practical constraints, including limited managerial time, uneven digital literacy, and the absence of formal guidelines for moderating public interaction on social media. Taken together, the findings suggest that effective digital public relations in Islamic educational institutions depends on the alignment of ethical values, organizational support, and professional communication practices. This study underscores the need for madrasahs to strengthen institutional policies and capacity building in digital communication, while offering a reference point for future research to examine similar value-based public relations models across different Islamic educational contexts.

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