

Strategic Public Relations Management: Bridging Madrasah and External Stakeholders for Educational Excellence

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Abstract:

This study aims to analyze public relations management in strengthening external institutional collaboration in madrasahs. This research uses a qualitative case study approach, with data collected through interviews, observation, and documentation. Data analysis was conducted through three main stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing/verification. The results indicate that public relations management plays a strategic role in facilitating collaboration through structured planning, organizing, implementing, and controlling mechanisms based on the POAC (Planning, Organizing, Actuating, and Controlling) principles. This institutional collaboration contributes to improving educational programs, student activities, and the madrasah's institutional support system. However, the implementation process still faces several obstacles, particularly limited human resources and ineffective communication practices. Nevertheless, the results of the established collaboration indicate increased stakeholder participation, strengthened institutional support, and easier access to external resources that support educational development. This study suggests that a structured public relations management approach grounded in POAC principles can enhance the effectiveness of external collaboration, strengthen institutional support, and maximize stakeholder participation. Madrasahs are advised to strengthen their human resource capacity and internal communication to optimize and sustain PR practices.

Keywords: *Public Relations Management, Institutional Cooperation, Madrasah, POAC*

Abstrak:

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis manajemen hubungan masyarakat dalam memperkuat kerja sama kelembagaan eksternal di madrasah. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif jenis studi kasus dengan teknik pengumpulan data melalui wawancara, observasi, dan studi dokumentasi. Teknik analisis datanya dilakukan melalui tiga tahapan utama; reduksi data, penyajian data, dan penarikan kesimpulan/verifikasi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa manajemen hubungan masyarakat berperan strategis dalam memfasilitasi kerja sama melalui mekanisme perencanaan, pengorganisasian, pelaksanaan, dan pengendalian yang terstruktur berdasarkan prinsip POAC (Planning, Organizing, Actuating, dan Controlling). Kerja sama kelembagaan tersebut berkontribusi terhadap peningkatan program pendidikan, kegiatan peserta didik, serta sistem pendukung kelembagaan madrasah. Namun demikian, proses implementasi masih menghadapi beberapa kendala, terutama keterbatasan sumber daya manusia dan kurang efektifnya praktik komunikasi. Meskipun demikian, hasil kerja sama yang terjalin menunjukkan peningkatan partisipasi pemangku kepentingan, penguatan dukungan

kelembagaan, serta kemudahan akses terhadap sumber daya eksternal yang mendukung pengembangan pendidikan. Penelitian ini memberikan implikasi bahwa pengelolaan hubungan masyarakat yang terstruktur dan berbasis prinsip POAC dapat meningkatkan efektivitas kerja sama eksternal, memperkuat dukungan kelembagaan, dan memaksimalkan partisipasi pemangku kepentingan. Madrasah disarankan memperkuat kapasitas SDM dan komunikasi internal agar praktik PR lebih optimal dan berkelanjutan.

Kunci: *Manajemen Hubungan Masyarakat, Kerja Sama Kelembagaan, Madrasah, POAC*

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INTRODUCTION

Public relations (PR) management is a managerial function that focuses on building, maintaining, and managing harmonious relationships between an organization and its publics. In the educational context, PR serves as a bridge between schools and the external community, fostering mutual understanding, cooperation, and support for educational programs. Ideally, PR practices involve strategic communication, image building, and the systematic management of public opinion to strengthen institutional credibility and sustainability (Sakiatul et al., 2025; Yansah et al., 2025). Collaboration with external institutions can provide significant benefits for educational development, including skills-oriented training and character development programs that prepare students for real-world challenges (Rahman et al., 2024; Salsabila et al., 2025). However, in practice, many educational institutions have not optimally implemented structured public relations management. Communication with external stakeholders often occurs informally without systematic planning, evaluation, or strategic collaboration. This gap between theoretical expectations and practical implementation indicates that effective PR management remains a critical issue for strengthening cooperation between schools and external stakeholders.

The importance of collaboration between educational institutions and the community is also emphasized in the national education policy. Law Number 20 of 2003 on the National Education System states that education is a conscious and well-planned effort to create learning conditions that enable students to actively develop their potential, including intellectual ability, character, and practical skills needed by society and the nation (Indrayani, 2023; Novrizal, 2025). High-quality education is reflected not only in learning outcomes but also in the effectiveness of the learning process and the availability of adequate resources, such as teachers, facilities, funding, and infrastructure. In reality, however, the implementation of community participation in education often falls short of these expectations. Schools frequently struggle to establish strong cooperation with external stakeholders despite policy encouragement for such involvement. As a result, the role of public relations in facilitating partnerships and communication becomes increasingly important to bridge institutional goals and societal expectations (Siahaan et al., 2023; Oktafia & Halwati, 2023).

Several studies have emphasized the strategic role of public relations in strengthening institutional communication and community participation in education. Public relations activities enable schools to build positive perceptions, maintain transparency, and encourage community involvement in educational

programs. In the context of educational institutions, PR also functions as a communication coordinator that connects internal stakeholders such as school leaders and teachers with external parties, including parents, communities, and media organizations. Effective PR management involves planning communication strategies, implementing programs, and conducting evaluations to ensure that communication objectives are achieved (Kurniasari et al., 2024; Zulfa et al., 2025). Furthermore, cooperation with external institutions through structured agreements, such as Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs), can support improvements in educational quality, human resource development, and institutional reputation. Such cooperation reflects a mutually beneficial relationship between schools and external partners in supporting educational development (Fatmawati et al., 2024; Salsabila et al., 2025).

The development of communication technology has further expanded the role of public relations in educational institutions. In the digital era, credibility and trust are essential elements that determine the effectiveness of PR communication strategies. Digital platforms and social media have transformed the way organizations interact with stakeholders, enabling more direct and immediate communication with the public. This transformation allows educational institutions to disseminate information more widely while strengthening stakeholder engagement and transparency (Sunar, 2022; Kusumaning et al., 2024). Public relations also plays an important role in fostering harmonious relationships between schools and parents by providing accurate information and organizing programs that benefit the community. In educational institutions, these relationships are often guided by principles such as *ta'aruf* (mutual acquaintance), *tafahum* (mutual understanding), *tarahum* (mutual care), and *ta'awun* (cooperation), which support collaborative problem-solving in education (Shufiatuddin & Tazkiyah, 2023; Igben & Ugbome, 2022).

Although previous studies have discussed the importance of public relations in building communication and cooperation between schools and external stakeholders, most research focuses broadly on PR strategies or institutional communication practices. These studies generally examine the role of public relations in improving institutional image, strengthening stakeholder relationships, and managing communication within educational organizations. However, there is still limited research examining how public relations management is implemented to establish structured cooperation with selected external institutions and how this cooperation contributes to strengthening educational programs and institutional development. Previous studies by Hakim & Rozi (2024) and Nuryathrib & Mubarak (2025) examined the implementation strategies of public relations management in building various forms of collaboration. Nevertheless, their analysis tends to focus on comprehensive partnership networks rather than exploring specific collaborations and their practical implementation in a particular institutional context.

Based on these considerations, this study aims to analyze the implementation of public relations management in building cooperation with external parties at Islamic Junior High School 2, Jambi City. The research focuses on selected forms of collaboration established with several external institutions,

including government agencies, health institutions, the police, and higher education institutions. The study does not examine all existing partnerships but focuses on collaborations that directly strengthen educational programs, character development, and students' knowledge and insight. Therefore, the main research question of this study is: How is public relations management implemented to build cooperation with external institutions at Islamic Junior High School 2 in Jambi City, and how do these collaborations support educational development and strengthen the madrasah's institutional image?

This study assumes that effective public relations management can strengthen cooperation between educational institutions and external stakeholders through structured planning, implementation, and evaluation processes. When public relations functions as a strategic communication bridge between schools and external partners, collaboration can be organized more systematically and produce mutually beneficial outcomes. Such cooperation is expected to support educational program development, improve students' knowledge and character development, and enhance the institution's credibility within the community. Therefore, this study argues that implementing well-managed public relations practices will significantly strengthen partnerships with external institutions and improve the madrasah's overall image and effectiveness.

RESEARCH METHODS

The researcher conducted the study at Public Islamic Junior High School 2, Jambi City, located on Aditiyawarman Street, Thehok Village, South Jambi District, Jambi City. In this study, the research subjects included the principal, public relations staff, head of administration, teachers, and ninth-grade students of the school. The selection of these research subjects was intended to enhance the usefulness and relevance of the information obtained from this group. The informants in this study were interviewed and directly observed. Data collection techniques are the methods researchers use to gather the data needed for a study. Data collection is a systematic process aimed at obtaining valid and reliable data. Therefore, the process must be carried out in an organized and structured manner so that the collected data can be verified. Based on the qualitative research method and the data sources used in this study, the researcher employed observation, documentation, and interviews as data collection techniques (Takona, 2024; Tisdell et al., 2025; Nashrullah et al., 2023).

Interviews were conducted using a semi-structured format with question guidelines developed based on the POAC management indicators and public relations functions. The interviews aimed to obtain in-depth information on the madrasah's planning, implementation, evaluation, and forms of external cooperation. The participants included the principal, the vice principal for public relations, the head of administration, and teachers. Observations were conducted directly on public relations activities, both in publication efforts and in the implementation of cooperation with external parties, to obtain factual data about practices in the field. Meanwhile, a documentation study was carried out by reviewing records of PR activities and several Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) with external institutions to strengthen the data obtained from interviews and observations.

Table 1. Key Findings from Informant Interviews on Public Relations Roles, Strategies, and Challenges in Madrasah

Informant	Discussion Focus	Core Findings	Main Conclusion
Head of Madrasah	Public relations roles & policies	Public relations as a communication bridge with parents & external parties; publications must be educational and controlled.	Public relations plays a strategic role in maintaining communication and the image of the madrasah
Deputy head of public relations	Strategy & management	Active digitalization (website, IG, FB, YT); website competition winner; publication of >1000 news items; regular evaluation & satisfaction surveys	Effective digital branding strategies increase reputation and public trust
Head of administration	Administrative support & constraints	Public relations helps with administration and public information; the main constraints are human resources and time	HR support and time management need strengthening
Teacher	Impact on learning & publication	Learning activities are widely exposed; increasing applicant interest; external cooperation is running well	Public relations publications have a positive impact on public image and enthusiasm
All Informants	General obstacles	Limited human resources, time management, and facilities	Need to strengthen special teams and public relations infrastructure

The data analysis technique used the Miles and Huberman approach, which includes three main stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing/verification. Data from semi-structured interviews, direct observations, and documentation studies were summarized and coded to identify patterns, then presented in a table of findings for easy interpretation. Conclusions were verified through triangulation of sources, methods, and theories, as well as member checking to ensure the accuracy and credibility of the field data.

Data validity in qualitative research is a crucial concept for ensuring the credibility and reliability of research findings. Data validity in qualitative research can be achieved through several methods, such as data triangulation, method triangulation, and researcher triangulation. Data validity serves as a standard of truth for research data. In qualitative research, findings or data are considered valid when there is no discrepancy between what the researcher reports and what actually occurs in the research setting (Luthfiyani & Murhayati, 2024). The validity of the data in this study was ensured through four criteria: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Credibility was established through prolonged engagement, triangulation, and member checking to ensure that the data accurately reflected field conditions. Prolonged engagement was conducted through repeated visits to deepen contextual understanding and verify the consistency of the information. Triangulation included source, method, and theory triangulation. Source triangulation was carried out by comparing data obtained from the principal, vice principal for public relations, head of

administration, teachers, and external partners. Method triangulation involved interviews, observations, and documentation, including records of PR activities and Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs). Theory triangulation was conducted by analyzing the findings based on public relations management theory and the POAC principles.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

The operational definition in this study refers to the implementation of public relations (PR) management at Islamic Junior High School 2, Jambi City, in establishing collaboration with external institutions. Public relations management is defined as a series of planning, implementation, and evaluation processes of cooperation between the madrasah and external parties to achieve institutional goals. This cooperation is carried out through partnerships with various external institutions, including government agencies, private organizations, and other educational institutions. The main objective of this collaboration is to enhance and develop students' knowledge and learning experiences. PR implementation is conducted through educational activities such as seminars, training programs, socialization activities, and development programs. The success of the collaboration is measured by the extent to which students gain additional relevant knowledge and experience. Another indicator of success is positive feedback from external partners on the implemented programs. However, several challenges remain in practice. These include limited human resources in managing partnership programs and inadequate communication facilities that hinder the dissemination of information. This situation affects the optimization of PR's role in building the institution's image and network. Therefore, strengthening human resource capacity and providing adequate communication media are strategic needs. Operationally, PR management is considered effective if it produces sustainable educational programs. This effectiveness is reflected in the establishment of productive two-way communication between the madrasah and external institutions. Thus, the collaboration is not merely administrative but also has a real impact on improving the quality of education in the madrasah.

The results of the interview with the Principal show that the "planning of cooperation with external institutions begins with a needs analysis to ensure that the partnerships are well-targeted and provide maximum benefits for students. The collaboration aims to provide educational activities that broaden students' knowledge and support their development at Islamic Junior High School 2, Jambi City. In the organizing stage, the principal appoints a teacher as the Vice Principal for Public Relations and forms a special team to manage and facilitate partnership programs. Clear task distribution is expected to ensure that the cooperation implementation runs effectively and in a well-directed manner. The interview with the Vice Principal for Public Relations indicates that the implementation of PR "programs involves various external institutions, such as the Public Health Center (Puskesmas), the police, the General Election Commission (KPU), and halal product certification bodies. These collaborations are realized through health

awareness programs, security education, democratic education, and halal product literacy activities. The madrasah also collaborates with Sultan Thaha Saifuddin State Islamic University of Jambi to introduce the school environment (PLP) program, in which university students are placed at the madrasah to provide new learning experiences for students. Program evaluation is conducted regularly through meetings at the beginning and end of the academic year to obtain feedback on program implementation. The madrasah also conducts surveys on integrity and satisfaction among students, teachers, and parents to assess transparency, accountability, and stakeholder satisfaction. In addition, the PR team actively involves parents, alumni, and the community through WhatsApp groups for communication and information sharing. This involvement enables effective two-way communication and constructive feedback to improve the quality of education at Islamic Junior High School 2, Jambi City.

To maintain the quality of information, the Public Relations (PR) team of Islamic Junior High School 2 Jambi City regularly publishes content on social media that is not only informative but also inspirational and educational. Each news post is presented engagingly, contains positive messages, and leaves a meaningful impression, encouraging readers to participate in madrasah activities. Activity documentation is carried out carefully and selectively, while observing ethical standards and avoiding sensitive issues related to ethnicity, religion, race, and intergroup relations (SARA). Consistent, informative, and norm-based communication is key to building branding and maintaining the madrasah's reputation. Through these efforts, the relationship among the madrasah, parents, students, alums, and the surrounding community is strengthened, creating a positive, supportive educational environment. Intensive publication activities have increased public interest in enrolling their children in the madrasah. Over the past three years, the number of applicants has been around 700-800 each year, though only about 352 are admitted after a selection process. The PR team actively publishes various activities and achievements, including winning first place in website and news publication competitions at the Provincial level organized by the Ministry of Religious Affairs of Jambi. For the past two years, the madrasah has consistently participated in this competition by producing high-quality, engaging news content, resulting in thousands of published articles. This achievement reflects significant progress in digitalization and branding development, especially with the active involvement of students in the publication process, which ultimately enhances public trust and the quality of education at Islamic Junior High School 2, Jambi City. The observation results show that the implementation of Public Relations (PR) management to strengthen relationships with external institutions at Islamic Junior High School 2, Jambi City, has been carried out systematically through the planning, implementation, and evaluation stages. In summary, the findings are as follows:

Establishing Cooperation with External Institutions

The organization of programs is clearly structured through the appointment of the Vice Principal for Public Relations and the formation of a special team responsible for managing external partnerships. The implementation of programs involves various institutions, including the General Election Commission (KPU), the Public Health Center (Puskesmas), the police, halal certification bodies, and Sultan Thaha Saifuddin State Islamic University of Jambi. Through cooperation with the KPU, students are expected to understand the concept of democracy, especially in the practice of electing the Chairperson of the Student Organization (OSIM). Collaboration with health institutions aims to increase students' awareness of the importance of maintaining personal and environmental health. Meanwhile, cooperation with the police focuses on providing legal education and preventing juvenile delinquency. Observations also indicate the implementation of the PLP program from a university, which provides additional learning experiences for students. Program evaluation is conducted regularly through meetings and satisfaction surveys to ensure transparency and accountability.

Public Relations Publication Activities

The PR team also uses social media and WhatsApp groups for two-way communication with parents and the community. The researcher's interpretation of the data indicates that PR management at Islamic Junior High School 2 in Jambi City plays a strategic role in strengthening external collaboration and building the institution's image. The established partnerships are not merely administrative but have a direct impact on strengthening students' character, knowledge, and learning experiences. The integration of democratic values, health awareness, and legal education through external partnerships reflects a contextual educational approach. Regular evaluations and surveys demonstrate a commitment to continuous quality improvement. Active, inspirational, and ethical publications further strengthen the madrasah's branding in the digital space. The researcher concludes that consistent communication strategies help build public trust. This is evidenced by the increasing number of applicants in recent years, which has reached around 1,000 per year. Therefore, active publication and the optimization of external cooperation significantly improve the reputation and competitiveness of Islamic Junior High School 2, Jambi City.

Discussion

Public Relations Management at State Islamic Junior High School

Public relations management plays an important role in strengthening communication between educational institutions, parents, and the wider community. Cooperation with external institutions and active parental participation are essential for improving the quality of education. Therefore, schools need to raise public awareness about the importance of community involvement in educational development and maintain intensive communication

with stakeholders. Effective public relations management allows schools to build mutual trust, support, and collaboration with the community (Afandi et al., 2025; Owan et al., 2025).

One management approach commonly used in educational institutions is the POAC framework (Planning, Organising, Actuating, and Controlling). Within this framework, schools can plan strategic programs, allocate available resources, implement activities effectively, and evaluate outcomes to ensure educational goals are achieved. In modern educational management, integrating technology, professional teacher development, and active stakeholder participation is essential. Therefore, well-managed public relations becomes a strategic tool for maintaining institutional reputation and strengthening relationships with the community (Faiz et al., 2024; Rabban et al., 2024; Azza et al., 2024; Syaufiqina et al., 2023).

Implementation of Public Relations Management in Strengthening Cooperative Relationships

Public relations in Islamic educational institutions functions as a bridge that connects the institution with the community through mutual communication and cooperation. This relationship aims to build trust, strengthen the institution's image, and encourage community participation in supporting educational programs. Through various communication channels such as social media, institutional publications, and direct interaction with stakeholders, public relations can effectively disseminate information and maintain positive relationships with the public (Yansah et al., 2025; Jawhari & Kurniasari, 2025).

At Islamic Junior High School 2 in Jambi City, public relations programs are implemented through systematic planning and involve various elements of madrasah management, including the principal, vice principals, teachers, and educational staff. Annual work programs and allocated budgets support these activities. In practice, public relations also collaborates with parents and the community to support madrasah programs. The research findings indicate that public relations plays an important role in disseminating information about school activities, encouraging transparency, and increasing community participation in supporting educational programs (Salsabila et al., 2025; Afandi et al., 2025; Muryali et al., 2025).

Barriers to Implementing Public Relations in Strengthening Cooperative Relationships

Although public relations plays a strategic role in strengthening school-community relationships, several challenges often arise in its implementation. One common obstacle is limited communication between educators and parents, which can lead to misunderstandings, low parental involvement, and reduced support for school programs. According to Law Number 20 of 2003 on the National Education System, parents have the right to obtain information about their children's education and participate in educational decision-making. However,

differences in expectations, limited time, and lack of communication channels can hinder effective collaboration between schools and families (Anazia et al., 2025; Susanti et al., 2024).

In addition, public relations activities often face internal challenges, including limited human resources, time constraints, and the need for effective communication strategies. Public relations must also manage information about school achievements, policies, and programs in a transparent and timely manner to maintain public trust. Therefore, continuous evaluation of programs and effective management practices are necessary to ensure that public relations functions optimally. Through proper management and stakeholder involvement, public relations can strengthen cooperation between schools and the community while improving the institution's reputation and sustainability (Kusumaning et al., 2024; Oktafia & Halwati, 2023).

CONCLUSION

The research findings show that implementing Public Relations (PR) management at Islamic Junior High School 2 in Jambi City plays a strategic role in strengthening cooperation with external institutions and building harmonious relationships with the community. The most important finding of this study is that the consistent application of PR management functions based on the POAC principles (planning, organizing, actuating, and controlling) increases communication effectiveness, expands partnership networks, and strengthens the madrasah's image and reputation. An important insight from this research is the significance of PR as a driver of participatory collaboration, where the involvement of parents, alums, and external institutions becomes a key factor in improving the quality of education. The strength of this article lies in its analytical approach, which positions PR management not merely as an administrative function but as an institutional strategy for building sustainable partnerships.

The scientific contribution of this study is that it enriches the field of educational management, particularly in the context of madrasah institutions, by emphasizing that strengthening external cooperation and active publication are essential instruments for improving institutional competitiveness and educational quality. In addition, this study offers an implementable PR management model based on POAC principles that other educational institutions can replicate. However, this study has several limitations. First, it was conducted at only one madrasah, so the generalizability of the findings remains limited. Second, the study has not explored in depth the use of digital technology in public relations (PR) management. Therefore, future research is recommended to expand the research setting to more institutions and to examine digital-based PR management innovations in order to address communication challenges in the era of technological transformation.

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