



SOCIAL MEDIA-BASED PUBLIC RELATIONS MANAGEMENT IN IMPROVING SCHOOL BRANDING IN MADRASAH ALIYAH

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Abstract:

This study aims to analyze the evolution of research on the digital divide in In this fast-paced digital era, Islamic Senior High Schools (Madrasah Aliyah) now find themselves at a crossroads between preserving traditional values and responding to global innovation. School branding is no longer simply about a logo or slogan, but about building a narrative that touches the hearts and builds public trust. This paper examines a public relations management strategy that utilizes social media not merely as a broadcasting tool but as a bridge for empathetic dialogue. Through authentic content planning, warm interactions, and visual consistency, Islamic senior high schools can transform their image into a modern, competitive institution, while remaining rooted in their religious identity. The analysis shows that public relations management with a humanistic approach on social media effectively strengthens public loyalty and reinforces the school's branding position amidst the dynamic competition in education.

Keywords: *Public Relations; Social Media; School Branding*

INTRODUCTION

Education is a long journey in humanizing humanity, in which Madrasah Aliyah (Islamic high schools) play a unique role as institutions that align intellectual intelligence with spiritual depth (Abdurrahman, 2025). In today's increasingly dynamic world, madrasahs are not merely places for transferring knowledge, but rather ecosystems where noble moral values and character are cultivated. However, the beautiful values embedded within madrasahs often remain hidden if not properly communicated to the outside world (Problema, n.d.)

In this era of information disruption, the existence of an educational institution is demanded to be more than just "there". Modern society needs tangible evidence of the quality and integrity of an institution. This is where school branding becomes crucial; it is not merely a matter of marketing or image, but an effort to showcase the identity, dignity, and educational promise offered by Madrasah Aliyah to parents and prospective future generations of the nation. (Pustaka & Minang, n.d.).

Further in the discourse of contemporary education, the presence of mechanical technology often brings a crisis of alienation for society. Here, the humanistic approach in public relations finds its urgency (Sudarwan, 2025).

The public relations of Madrasah Aliyah is required to make a paradigmatic shift: from merely acting as a 'one-way information channel' to becoming an empathetic facilitator that humanizes the digital space. From a humanistic perspective, the audience, both prospective parents and the wider community, is not reduced merely to numbers of followers or marketing targets, but as human subjects who have existential anxieties regarding the future of their children's education (Sain, 2026). Therefore, the school branding promoted must be able to present 'digital hospitality', where every narrative built on social media becomes an oasis that offers certainty, spiritual tranquility, and an emotional embrace that convinces the public that the madrasah is a second home that is safe for the growth and development of the generation.

The biggest challenge for Madrasah Aliyah is often the perception of the community that still views this institution as a rigid traditional institution. An adaptive PR strategy through social media is expected to break this stigma (Zain, 2026). Through aesthetic, transparent, and dialogic content, the madrasah can show that they are an institution capable of embracing technological progress without in the slightest abandoning the values of *akhlakul karimah*. (Collins, 2021)

In this context, Public Relations management acts as a story curator. Every post, short video, or interaction in the comments section should be viewed as an effort to humanize the institution. PR is not solely tasked with disseminating administrative information; it must also be able to capture small, precious moments at the *madrasa*—such as a student's smile upon achieving a milestone, or the togetherness of teachers and students during worship—to be crafted into heartwarming narratives (Khofsah, 2026).

The effectiveness of social media-based school branding also lies in consistency and honesty. Today's public is highly perceptive in distinguishing between forced image-building and sincere dedication. A sound management strategy will ensure that what is showcased on social media is a true reflection of the quality of learning in the classroom, thereby creating harmony between public expectations and the reality within the *Madrasah Aliyah*.

Based on the description above, the specific objectives of this research include: first, to analyze and describe the planning and implementation of social media-based Public Relations management strategies in strengthening branding at *Madrasah Aliyah* based on a review of academic literature; second, to examine in-depth the efficacy and empower the use of social media platforms regarding public representation and the enhancement of academic quality at *Madrasah Aliyah*. By achieving these objectives, this research is expected to make a significant contribution to the development of educational management science, particularly in the field of educational human resource management (Sa'diyah et al., 2025).

RESEARCH METHODS

This study adopts a qualitative paradigm with a library research design (library study). The selection of this approach is based on the urgency to conduct a holistic, in-depth, and contextual investigation into the phenomenon under study, where the primary focus lies in interpreting the essence of the data rather than statistical quantification. This paradigm aligns with the perspective of Creswell (2018), who asserts that qualitative research serves as an exploratory instrument to understand the attribution of meaning in social and human dynamics. Epistemologically, this is supported by Sugiyono (2022), who

positions the researcher as the key instrument in exploring the natural condition of the object, with a tendency toward depth of meaning rather than generalization.

Referring to the library research design proposed by Zed (2018), this methodology encompasses a series of empirical procedures in collecting, reviewing, reducing, and processing the corpus of literature. Through this framework, the researcher facilitates a critical examination of various postulates, theories, and empirical precedents that intersect with the research locus. The library study design enables a comprehensive exploration of academic discourse regarding the application of rewards and punishments to educators' performance, as published in various scientific literature.

The data sources in this research are dichotomized into primary and secondary data (Novita, 2025). The primary data corpus is represented by articles in reputable journals, theses, and dissertations published within the last five years, which specifically address social media-based Public Relations management in enhancing school branding at Madrasah Aliyah. As supporting material, secondary data is extracted from reference books, previous research reports, regulatory frameworks, and educational strategy policy documents that align with the research ontology (Kamil et al., 2025). To ensure the degree of scientific authenticity and validity, the literature curation process is strictly based on indicators of relevance, source credibility, the author's academic authority, and the timeliness of the information.

The data collection process is facilitated through documentation techniques. As elaborated by Sugiyono (2022), this technique is a systematic method for inventorying and analyzing textual and visual products, as well as monumental works that hold significance to the object of study. The documents serving as the subjects of analysis are curated from various academic databases, including Google Scholar, national and international journal portals, and digital library repositories. The data collection procedure is implemented through structured stages, which include the identification, screening, classification, and codification of information centered on the research focus.

Data analysis, in dissecting the collected data, this research applies the content analysis technique. Referring to Krippendorff's (2018) conceptualization, content analysis is a research method designed to formulate valid and replicable inferences from textual representations based on their context of occurrence. In connection with this, Fadli (2021) underscores content analysis as a systematic mechanism for interpreting textual narratives to map out patterns, central themes, and contextual interconnections within the content (Ni'am, 2025). This analytical approach is projected to be capable of deconstructing and comprehensively describing the essence of thought from the various literature that forms the basis of the research data.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The initial step in cultivating the dignity of Madrasah Aliyah in the digital space begins with human-oriented planning, namely by intimately understanding the audience being addressed (Sandria et al., 2022). Through thoughtful segmentation, the madrasa weaves distinct yet harmonious narratives; it presents dynamic and vibrant visual content to touch the hearts of the younger generation, while maintaining credibility and informational transparency to win the trust of parents and community leaders (Rahman, 2026).

The utilization of various social media platforms goes beyond merely following trends; it is a manifestation of the madrasa's effort to be present in every digital space of connection with an appropriate purpose. Instagram serves as a showcase for visual aesthetics and achievements, TikTok acts as a medium for broad and highly creative interaction, while Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram simultaneously function as long-term documentation spaces and community builders for alumni and parents who wish to understand the madrasa more deeply (Rofik & Mudarris, 2024).

The uniqueness of Madrasah Aliyah is reinforced through the formulation of an identity that distinguishes it from general public schools, namely through the grand narrative of 'Religious yet Modern.' By highlighting flagship programs such as Quranic memorization (tahfidz) alongside research and vocational skills, the madrasa demonstrates that Islamic character education can harmonize with technological advancements, creating an institutional identity that is deeply rooted in tradition while remaining adaptive to the future (Sandria et al., 2022).

During the implementation phase, Public Relations management translates this vision into concrete action through the consistent production of 'soulful' content. By categorizing information into key pillars—such as showcasing student achievements, sharing soothing dakwah (Islamic preaching) messages, and presenting humanistic portraits of the students' (santri) daily lives—the madrasa successfully dispels any rigid impression (Hasanah, 2026). The inclusion of alumni testimonials also serves as tangible proof of how the madrasa has successfully guided noble individuals to the gates of success.

Visual consistency and a regular posting schedule are key to building an emotional connection with the audience. By utilizing a consistent color and design identity, every piece of published content will be instantly recognized as belonging to the madrasa. Furthermore, involving students in the multimedia team is not merely a technical matter, but rather a form of empowering the students' talents so that they can tell the story of their own school in a language that is more sincere and relevant to their peers.

In practice, humanistic-oriented Public Relations management implements what is known as digital storytelling, which is rooted in a pedagogy of care. The content presented is not exclusively oriented toward the glorification of elitist academic achievements; rather, it dares to showcase the vulnerability and sincerity of the learning process itself. For instance, narrating a santri's struggle in memorizing the Quran, the perseverance of teachers mentoring students outside of school hours, or the genuine togetherness across different social backgrounds within the madrasa dormitories (Khomairotusshiyamah, 2026). This type of narrative approach creates an authentic resonance in the minds of the public. Society is invited to witness the tangible manifestation of moral education that cannot be measured solely by algorithmic metrics. Furthermore, interactions on social media transform into a dialectical space filled with mutual respect; every appreciation, complaint, or inquiry from the public is addressed with language that highly upholds etiquette (adab) and noble character (akhlakul karimah), thereby solidifying the madrasa's image as an institution that is not only artificially smart, but also profoundly rich emotionally and spiritually.

Management does not cease once content has been uploaded; rather, it continues into a reflective evaluation process through data analysis and warm interactions (Haisuma et al., 2026). Public Relations consistently monitors

public engagement statistics not merely as raw numbers, but as indicators of relational closeness. By remaining responsive and friendly in answering every inquiry in the comments section and via direct messages, the social media admin serves as the digital face of the madrasa, exuding courtesy (Mubasir et al., n.d.).

The synergy of Public Relations, social media, and school branding has emerged as both a challenge and an opportunity in previous research; it has been clearly confirmed that PR management holds an exceptionally crucial function in efforts to enhance the quality of the madrasa through the optimization of social media tools (Naisya, 2025). The role of these digital communication platforms is not reduced merely to serving as static information distribution channels. Rather, they act as agents that facilitate direct two-way interaction with the broader public audience, actively promote the comparative advantages of the madrasa, and simultaneously prove successful in capturing the attention of prospective new students and their parents.

The harmonious integration of social media instruments with sophisticated digital technology has been deemed an essential key in formulating Public Relations strategies to multiply the competitiveness of the madrasa in this contemporary era (Saputra et al., 2026). This competitive dynamic is highly justified, as today's Madrasah Aliyah has demonstrated rapidly accelerating achievements in both academic competitions and the realm of non-academic proficiencies. Nevertheless, the step of utilizing social media within the framework of building a positive school image is certainly not without its accompanying obstacles and challenges. Every educational institution is required to dissect and precisely understand both the demographic and psychographic characteristics of its target audience. They must be capable of formulating highly engaging content for distribution to secure public interest, while also being adept at planning promotional strategies and effectively delivering the value of that content (Holidi et al., 2026). This is further compounded by a number of technical hurdles, such as the limited capacity of the managing human resources, the lack of structured regeneration or turnover of digital team personnel, external challenges in the form of dynamic algorithmic changes on the respective platforms, and an operational dependency that often relies on specific individuals.

All of these factors serve as inhibiting elements that frequently challenge the continuity of the strategy. However, despite the array of technical obstacles previously outlined, the integration of social media as a promotional lever and a vehicle for strengthening branding continues to prove its highly significant impact in increasing visibility and skyrocketing public appeal toward the madrasa institution (Razaq, 2026). A public communication strategy capable of marrying the noble educational moral values characteristic of a madrasa with the effective dissemination power of digital technology is a concrete form of school branding that will guarantee the madrasa's existence in the future.

Ultimately, this well-organized Public Relations management strategy brings a transformative impact to the image of Madrasah Aliyah in the eyes of the public. Social media has successfully shifted old perceptions into recognition of a holistic educational institution capable of competing globally. The tangible impact is evident in the growing interest from prospective new students who feel confident in the school's quality, alongside the creation of vastly broader and more measurable communication efficiency, proving that a positive digital footprint is a valuable investment for the future of Islamic education (Laila et

al., 2025).

CONCLUSION

This research concludes that social media-based Public Relations (PR) Management is not merely a communication trend, but an essential strategic instrument for Madrasah Aliyah in the digital era. The integration of social media into PR management has proven to be a primary catalyst in transforming, strengthening, and sustaining school branding amidst fierce competition among educational institutions.

More specifically, based on the research objectives, this conclusion can be elaborated into two main points: first, the Integrative Strategy of PR and Social Media: The planning and implementation of social media-centric Public Relations (PR) at Madrasah Aliyah is not merely an instrument for disseminating technical information, but a strategic pillar in strengthening institutional branding. Execution that aligns with the observations of academic literature is capable of creating a digital communication ecosystem that is proactive, measurable, and responsive to the dynamics of public needs; second, the Correlation between Public Representation and Academic Quality: The empowerment of social media platforms has significant utility and has proven effective in reconstructing the public representation of Madrasah Aliyah in a more positive direction. The visibility and excellent image built in the digital space have a direct implication on the enhancement of public trust, which is substantially directly proportional to the perception and recognition of the improvement in the institution's academic quality.

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