

Madrasah Principal's Strategy in Optimizing Public Relations as a Promotion and Collaboration Tool: A Case Study at the State Islamic Junior High School

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Abstract: Madrasah Principal's Strategy in Optimizing Public Relations as a Promotion and Collaboration Tool: A Case Study at the State Islamic Junior High School

Objective: This study aims to determine the madrasah principal's strategy in optimizing public relations as a promotional and collaborative tool at MTsN Padang Panjang. **Method:** This research uses a case study method. Data were collected through observation and interviews. Data analysis followed the Miles and Huberman model. **Results:** The strategies applied by the madrasah principal in optimizing public relations include using social media for publications, open communication via WhatsApp, collaboration with external parties, and social activities with the community. **Conclusion:** The active role of public relations in communication and collaboration is key to building and maintaining the school's image as an educational institution. **Contribution:** This research contributes as a model of public relations strategy that integrates digital technology in promotion and collaboration in madrasah, as well as a reference for other schools.

Keyword: Strategy; Madrasah principal; Public Relations; Promotion; Collaboration

Abstrak: Strategi Kepala Madrasah dalam Mengoptimalkan Humas sebagai Alat Promosi dan Kolaborasi: Studi Kasus di Madrasah Tsanawiyah Negeri

Tujuan: Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui strategi kepala madrasah dalam mengoptimalkan humas sebagai alat promosi dan kolaborasi di MTsN Padang Panjang. **Metode:** Penelitian ini menggunakan metode studi kasus. Data dikumpulkan melalui observasi, wawancara. Analisis data mengikuti model Miles dan Huberman. **Hasil:** Strategi yang diterapkan kepala madrasah dalam mengoptimalkan Humas meliputi penggunaan media sosial untuk publikasi, komunikasi terbuka via WhatsApp, kolaborasi dengan pihak eksternal, dan kegiatan sosial dengan masyarakat. **Kesimpulan:** Peran aktif humas dalam komunikasi dan kolaborasi menjadi kunci dalam membangun dan mempertahankan citra sekolah sebagai lembaga pendidikan. **Kontribusi:** penelitian ini berkontribusi sebagai model strategi humas yang mengintegrasikan teknologi digital dalam promosi dan kolaborasi di madrasah, serta sebagai acuan bagi sekolah lain.

Kata Kunci: Strategi; Kepala Madrasah; Humas; Promosi; Kolaborasi

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A. INTRODUCTION

The relationship between schools and communities occurs through mutual communication to increase community understanding of various educational needs to foster motivation to advance schools (Mulditasari & Noviani, 2023). The higher the community members understand their role in promoting education, the greater their support for school progress. School progress depends on the support of those committed to the nation's intellectual life through moral and financial support (Suardi, 2017).

Through public relations, schools can understand and respond to the needs and opinions of various stakeholders, including learners, parents, and the wider community. School public relations serve as a mechanism for effective communication and administration for the sustainability of educational institutions (Ezinwa, 2024). Similarly, (Rahminawati, 2023) notes that public relations can not only facilitate the dissemination of information but are also necessary to foster community trust and support.

Furthermore, the impact of public relations is not only limited to communication. A school's ability to manage its public image and build relationships can directly affect learner recruitment and staff quality. Shimawua & Ternenge (2022) highlight how effective public relations practices promote a positive image to attract potential learners and improve overall school performance. In this regard, public relations can be considered a strategic tool that not only enhances a school's status but also contributes to its long-term viability.

An effective school public relations strategy is important in strengthening the school's public image and improving the school's competitiveness (Farizal et al., 2021). However, in its application, there are still many schools that have not been able to manage public relations well; according to Hasna (2019), which states that public relations activities often turn into one-way communication channels without encouraging mutual involvement, which can limit the potential of stakeholder relationships.

Furthermore, Syauki (2021) asserts that the principal's role in implementing effective public relations communication is vital to ensure parental satisfaction and increase public trust in the quality of education. This highlights the need for professional and systematic public relations management in school organizations (Dewi, 2024). Therefore, principals must be able to manage public relations and schools effectively and efficiently.

In terms of managing the field of Public Relations, the madrasah principal of MTsN Padang Panjang has made achievements in his success in creating effective communication with stakeholders through a strategically planned public relations approach so that MTsN Padang Panjang can improve its image, meet community needs, and achieve madrasah goals. One of the proofs is that MTsN Padang Panjang has become a favourite school by prospective students from various regions within and outside the province of West Sumatra with the overflow of prospective students three times the school capacity quota (Padek.Jawapos accessed on January 1, 2025).

The strategies implemented by public relations to enhance their role and function in supporting madrasahs are essential. In this regard, public relations can use social media to disseminate information about madrasah activities, maintain open and constructive communication with parents of students, and collaborate with various external parties to expand networks and support. Public relations officers should also focus on building good relationships with school staff and the surrounding community through social activities that strengthen bonds of unity (Knickmeyer, 2020). Through active communication and collaboration, public relations officers play a crucial role in building and maintaining the positive image of the madrasah as an inclusive and competitive educational institution (Shah & Cardozo, 2014).

This research identifies a lack of literature that discusses public relations strategies at the madrasah level, especially in using digital technology such as social media, websites, and podcasts. Most previous studies focus more on using traditional methods in building a positive image of the school, such as brochures, face-to-face meetings and other offline activities

(Yen et al., 2018; Asghar et al., 2022; Gradel & Edson, 2011). Therefore, the research gap lies in the lack of in-depth studies on how digital technology can be integrated into madrasah public relations strategies to increase community outreach and engagement more effectively. The novelty of this research lies in using podcasts as a communication medium involving educational figures, which has not been widely applied in madrasahs, as well as the integrated application of digital platforms to strengthen relationships with the community, parents, and external parties.

This study aims to explore and analyze the strategy of madrasah principals in optimizing public relations as a promotion and collaboration tool using digital media. This research aims to identify the effectiveness of using websites, social media, and podcasts in strengthening the positive image of the madrasah and increasing community and parent involvement. In addition, this research also aims to assess how collaboration with external parties, such as health agencies and other schools, can enrich the development of the madrasah and support student welfare. Thus, this research is expected to provide new insights into using digital technology to manage public relations in madrasahs and develop innovative communication models.

B. METHOD

This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study type to analyze the madrasah principal strategy of MTsN Padang Panjang in optimizing PR as a madrasah promotion and collaboration tool. Case studies were chosen because this approach allows for a thorough exploration of information related to phenomena that occur in an organization or educational institution. The primary focus of this research is to gain an in-depth understanding of the public relations practices implemented at MTsN Padang Panjang, especially those related to the use of digital technology as a means of promotion and communication.

The research subjects were determined using the snowball sampling technique, which allowed the number of informants to grow according to the needs of the data obtained. The primary informant in this study was the madrasah principal of MTsN Padang Panjang, which was then extended to the vice principal of Public Relations, vice principal of student affairs, homeroom teachers, teaching staff, education staff, and students. The informants were selected to obtain a comprehensive perspective on implementing public relations strategies in the madrasah.

Data were collected through several methods, namely interviews, observations, and document studies. Interviews were conducted using an interview guideline to ensure the smoothness and direction of the interview focused on topics relevant to the research objectives. Observations were conducted using a passive approach, where the researcher only observed activities at the school without being directly involved. In addition, documentation through searching madrasah websites and social media was also used to collect data related to publications and interactions on digital platforms.

In analyzing the data, this study refers to the data analysis model of Miles and Huberman, which includes three main stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing and verification. The first process is data selection, which identifies and selects the most relevant data for research purposes. Next, the selected data was organized in narrative form to facilitate interpretation and understanding. Finally, conclusions were drawn based on evidence obtained from all the data collected, with verification to ensure its validity.

Data validity testing was carried out through the triangulation method, which includes triangulation of sources, techniques, and time. Source triangulation is done by matching information from various sources to ensure data consistency. Triangulation techniques were used by comparing data obtained through interviews, observations, and document reviews to obtain more valid results. Time triangulation was applied by conducting observations at different times to ensure the stability and consistency of the data collected. With this triangulation method, the data obtained is expected to be more accurate and valid.

C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result

The results revealed four research findings with a focus on the research objectives. First, to strengthen the positive image of the madrasah through the madrasah website, social media and podcasts, the madrasah principal of MTsN Padang Panjang manages public relations by utilizing digital technology. The madrasah uses the official website and social media (Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, and YouTube) to publish various school programs and student achievements. Through digital platforms, the madrasah can inform extracurricular activities, student achievements, and documentation of events and competitions. Podcasts uploaded to YouTube have become a wider communication channel supporting school promotion. This is in line with the opinion of [Rahmat \(2021\)](#), which states that publications through digital platforms can introduce schools and build public trust. Research by [Hidayati \(2021\)](#) and [Anggelia et al. \(2025\)](#) showed that websites and social media effectively increase interaction with the community and attract new prospective students.

Second, regarding effective communication with parents, MTsN Padang Panjang implements cooperation through social media and WhatsApp groups. WhatsApp groups allow parents to get information about teaching and learning activities and children's development in the dormitory. Research by [Liu \(2023\)](#) shows that collaboration with parents can increase student engagement and foster a dynamic school culture. Social media also plays a role in maintaining relationships between schools, parents, and alumni, as well as improving the school's public image, according to the findings of [Herika & Ruliana \(2018\)](#) and [Morehouse \(2021\)](#).

Third, in collaboration with external parties, Madrasahs collaborate with various external agencies, such as health centres, for routine checks and other schools for benchmarking. This collaboration supports student welfare and enhances school leadership capabilities. Research by [Thiellking et al. \(2018\)](#) and [Rahmat \(2021\)](#) showed that external collaboration is important in building trust and support for madrasahs. In addition, activities publicized through social media also strengthen the madrasah's image as an open educational institution that cooperates with other parties.

Fourth, social activities involving the community, such as the distribution of takjil and qurban that involve the community, are also published through madrasah social media. The research results by [Wiyono et al. \(2023\)](#) showed that e-leadership can increase the effectiveness of public relations and support educational progress. These social activities strengthen the relationship between madrasah and the community and build a positive image in the eyes of the public. According to [Maulidia & Sanjani \(2023\)](#), social activities are an important interaction channel that encourages parental involvement and enhances shared experiences at school.

Discussion

Using digital platforms such as websites and social media by MTsN Padang Panjang is an essential strategy for building a positive image for the school. This is in line with the opinion of [Rahmat \(2021\)](#), who revealed that publication through digital media aims to introduce the school to the broader community and strengthen its positive image. As shown by [Hidayati \(2021\)](#) and [Anggelia et al. \(2025\)](#), social media and websites can increase interaction between schools and the community, thus bringing in new prospective students and strengthening relationships with the public. Digital transformation, as [Pucci \(2021\)](#) explains, not only improves the quality of education but also bridges more effective relationships with the community. In addition, podcasts as a communication medium have also proven effective in expanding the reach of information to a broader audience so that more people can access information related to school programs.

Parental involvement in education influences student success, as [Liu \(2023\)](#) stated. MTsN Padang Panjang utilizes social media such as WhatsApp to build effective communication with parents, which helps deliver information quickly and accurately. This two-way communication builds a closer relationship between parents and the school, creating a more open and dynamic school culture. This is consistent with the findings of [Satria et al. \(2019\)](#), who showed that good communication between schools and parents plays an important role in improving the quality of education. Using social media platforms to deliver information and communicate directly increases transparency and trust between the school and parents.

Collaboration with various external parties, such as health agencies and other schools, enriches the public relations strategy implemented at MTsN Padang Panjang. This collaboration helps improve the quality of education and supports students' well-being, in line with the findings of [Eisenschmidt et al. \(2024\)](#). This collaboration strengthens the school leadership in understanding the community's needs and extends the external support network. In this context, a public relations strategy prioritizes collaboration with external parties is proven to bring significant benefits to school progress, as [Rahmat \(2021\)](#) and [Novitasari et al. \(2021\)](#) suggested. These activities also increase the school's capacity to communicate with the community and expand external support, encouraging the development of better educational programs.

Social activities involving the community, such as the distribution of takjil and qurban, serve as an important communication channel between the madrasah and the community. These activities improve the image of the madrasah and strengthen the relationship between the school and the surrounding community, as stated by [Wiyono et al. \(2023\)](#). Through social media, schools can publicize these social activities, which provide positive support both materially and non-materially. By utilizing e-leadership, principals can improve communication effectiveness and leverage social media platforms to reach a wider audience, as [Aurangzeb & Mazhar \(2019\)](#) described. In this context, social activities also play a role in building a positive public perception of the school, increasing community engagement, and strengthening the school's position as a dynamic community centre responsive to the community's social needs ([Povey et al., 2016](#)).

As suggested by [Kurniawati & Pardimin \(2021\)](#), successful education management depends not only on the internal quality of the school but also on the external support established through effective community relations. Therefore, a strategy that combines internal promotion with managing good relationships with the community, as practised by the madrasah principal of MTsN Padang Panjang, is essential to building a positive school image and supporting educational development. Good relationships with the community and external stakeholders are key to creating an environment that supports the success of education in schools.

The public relations strategy implemented at MTsN Padang Panjang has proven to increase community participation in supporting education at school. Public relations acts as a bridge between the school and the community, helping create effective communication and build public trust in the quality of education. [Rahmat \(2021\)](#) and [Novitasari et al. \(2021\)](#) emphasize that public relations activities can increase community participation, supporting the success of education delivery. A participatory school marketing approach through social media can also strengthen positive public opinion about the school, as suggested by [Hidayat \(2021\)](#).

This research's novelty lies in applying public relations strategies that utilize digital technology, primarily through websites, social media, and podcasts, as a means of promotion and collaboration at MTsN Padang Panjang. The use of podcasts to expand the reach of information and community involvement is an innovation that has not been widely applied in madrasah. In addition, this study revealed the importance of collaboration with external parties, such as health agencies and other schools, to improve student welfare and build public trust.

By integrating social media in managing relationships with the community and external parties, this research makes a new contribution to understanding how digital technology can optimize the role of public relations in enhancing the positive image of madrasahs and supporting educational success.

D. RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS AND CONTRIBUTIONS

1. Research Implications

This research implies the importance of implementing digital technology-based public relations strategies in education, especially at the madrasah level, to strengthen a positive image and increase community engagement. Social media, websites and podcasts can effectively build broader and more transparent communication between schools and parents, communities and external parties. The results also show that collaboration with outside agencies, such as health services and other schools, can enrich the development of the madrasah and support students' well-being. Therefore, for madrasah principals and education managers, this study provides insights into the importance of innovation in public relations strategies to increase community participation and sustainably advance the quality of education.

2. Research Contribution

The contribution of this research is as a source of study on developing a public relations strategy model that integrates digital technology in promotion and collaboration in madrasah, which can be a reference for other schools in optimizing the role of public relations. This research shows that using social media, websites, and podcasts is effective for building a positive image of the school and as a means of communication that increases community and parent involvement. In addition, this research highlights the importance of collaboration with external parties to enrich the quality of education and student welfare, making a significant contribution to education by introducing new approaches in public relations management that are more innovative and technology-based.

E. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

Further research can focus on several aspects that can deepen the understanding of public relations strategies in madrasahs. First, further research could explore the long-term impact of using social media and podcasts in strengthening the positive image of the madrasah on the level of community trust and new student enrollment. This research could examine the effectiveness of various digital media platforms in attracting the attention of parents and prospective students and evaluate the extent to which promotion through social media contributes to the madrasah's success in achieving its goals.

F. CONCLUSION

The madrasah principal's strategy in optimizing public relations as a promotion and collaboration tool can be seen from four main aspects. First, strengthening the positive image of the madrasah is done by utilizing digital media platforms such as websites, Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, and YouTube to actively promote the school's activities, programs, and achievements. In addition, using podcasts as a means of communication by involving educational figures further enriches the reach of madrasah information to the broader community. This allows the community to recognize and appreciate the madrasah's achievements and contributions.

Effective communication strategies with parents of learners are integral to the success of community relations in the madrasah. Through WhatsApp groups for each class and dormitory, the madrasah maintains open communication with parents, providing information on their children's learning progress and dormitory activities. This healthy collaboration between

the madrasah and parents creates a more harmonious relationship, supports achieving optimal educational goals and strengthens the emotional bond between school and family.

Collaboration with external parties such as health centres, other schools, committees, and alums is key to expanding the support network for the madrasah. Activities such as routine health checks, benchmarking with other schools, and meetings with committees and alums help madrasahs create positive synergies, strengthening relationships with the community. In addition, social activities that are publicized through social media contribute to building a sense of social awareness among learners and the surrounding community while creating a positive image that supports the madrasah's educational progress.

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AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS STATEMENT

All authors discussed the results and contributed to the final manuscript. EC: Conceptualization, Writing - Original Draft, and Methodology. DP: Writing - Review & Editing. OY: Conceptualization. KA: Conceptualization. RV: Conceptualization.

DECLARATION OF COMPETING INTEREST

The authors declare that they have no significant competing financial, professional or personal interests that might have influenced the performance or presentation of the work described in this manuscript.

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