

Public Relations Management and Its Role in Shaping The Image of Islamic Educational Institutions in Responding to Community Needs

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ABSTRACT

Islamic educational institutions often face challenges in building and maintaining a positive public image amid increasing competition and rising expectations from local communities. These challenges highlight the need for public relations (PR) management strategies that are not only effective in communication but also responsive to sociocultural contexts. This study aims to analyze the strategic role of public relations management in shaping a positive image of Islamic educational institutions based on local community needs. This research employed a qualitative approach using content analysis combined with a systematic literature review. Data were obtained from institutional documents, media content, and relevant scholarly sources. The findings indicate that the effectiveness of PR management is determined not merely by external communication activities, but by the alignment of PR strategies with the cultural and social values of the surrounding community. The integration of Islamic values and active community participation emerged as key differentiating factors in strengthening public trust. In addition to digital communication and media publication strategies, the study reveals that the involvement of religious leaders, the organization of religious forums, and the application of a humanist communication approach significantly contribute to enhancing institutional reputation. Overall, this study contributes to the development of educational public relations theory by emphasizing the importance of sociocultural and value-based approaches in designing sustainable institutional image strategies.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Islamic educational institutions require intense and harmonious relationships with the surrounding community to sustain their existence and competitiveness. In the contemporary era of globalization, educational institutions, particularly those based on

Islamic values, face increasing competition and heightened public expectations. Society has become more selective in choosing educational services, not only considering academic quality but also institutional credibility, value alignment, and social engagement. In this context, public relations (PR) management plays a strategic role in building effective communication and shaping a positive institutional image.

The main research problem addressed in this study lies in the limited effectiveness of public relations management in many Islamic educational institutions, where PR activities are often reduced to promotional functions rather than being positioned as strategic communication instruments. As a result, institutions frequently struggle to build public trust, strengthen community involvement, and differentiate themselves in a competitive educational landscape. Previous observations indicate that institutional strengthening is not solely determined by curriculum quality and facilities, but also by the institution's ability to establish meaningful and sustainable relationships with the community through strategic communication [1]. From a theoretical perspective, public relations in educational institutions functions as a bridge between the institution and its stakeholders, aimed at fostering mutual understanding, trust, and cooperation [2].

In Islamic educational institutions, PR has a dual role: as a managerial communication function and as a medium of da'wah that reflects Islamic values such as honesty, transparency, and social responsibility [3]. Studies have shown that value-based communication strengthens institutional identity and enhances public loyalty. Furthermore, community involvement in educational management has been identified as a key factor in increasing institutional relevance and sustainability [4]. Several previous studies emphasize the importance of strategic and open communication in responding to increasingly critical public demands. Manurung et al. [5] argue that educational institutions must adopt participatory communication models to maintain legitimacy and public trust. Similarly, Simatupang et al. [6] highlight that a community- and consumer-needs-based communication approach significantly influences institutional reputation and stakeholder satisfaction. Other research confirms that effective PR strategies can increase public participation and institutional accountability [4].

However, despite these findings, existing studies tend to discuss public relations management in general educational contexts or focus on marketing and branding aspects without sufficiently exploring how PR strategies are systematically implemented in Islamic educational institutions within Indonesia's sociocultural setting. There is a lack of comprehensive analysis regarding how Islamic values and community participation are integrated into PR management strategies to strengthen institutional image, public trust, and competitiveness. This gap indicates the need for research that specifically examines PR management practices from a sociocultural and value-based perspective. To address this gap, this study proposes an analytical framework that positions public relations management as a strategic, community-oriented, and value-based function. The author plans to explore how Islamic educational institutions design and implement PR strategies that align with local cultural values, involve community stakeholders, and utilize both conventional and digital communication channels. This approach is expected to offer insights into effective problem-solving efforts in institutional communication. Accordingly, this study aims to analyze

public relations management strategies employed by Islamic educational institutions in building harmonious relationships with the community, strengthening institutional image, increasing public trust, and enhancing competitiveness.

The findings of this research are expected to contribute theoretically to the development of educational public relations studies by emphasizing sociocultural and Islamic value integration. Practically, the study is hoped to provide strategic recommendations for educational managers and policymakers in designing effective, community-based PR strategies. Ultimately, this research seeks to support Islamic educational institutions in achieving sustainable development and gaining a competitive advantage grounded in public trust and shared values.

2. METHOD

This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach, utilizing a systematic literature review as the primary technique for data collection and analysis. The objective of this approach is to provide an in-depth understanding of public relations (PR) management strategies implemented by educational institutions, with a particular focus on Islamic educational institutions. By integrating content analysis and literature review, this research seeks to develop a credible theoretical synthesis of PR practices within the context of Islamic education. To ensure accuracy and transparency in the selection of data sources, this study adopts the PRISMA (*Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses*) guidelines [7].

The PRISMA procedure is applied throughout the systematic screening, evaluation, and selection stages of the literature, based on inclusion criteria (relevance to the topic, availability of full-text articles, publications dated between 2015 and 2024, and written in either English or Indonesian) and exclusion criteria (opinion pieces, blogs, or works not subjected to a peer-review process) [8].

Data search was conducted through various reputable scientific databases, such as Scopus, Web of Science, Google Scholar, and DOAJ, using the keywords: "*public relations management in education*", "*Islamic educational institutions*", "*community engagement*", and "*strategic communication in schools*". Data sources consisted of indexed scientific journal articles, academic books, and official publications related to public service transformation and strategic communication management in education. After the literature was collected, the data were analyzed using thematic coding techniques, which aimed to identify patterns, themes, and main concepts related to public relations strategies in educational institutions [9].

Table 1. Synthesis of Analyzed Articles

No	Author (Year)	Article/Journal Title	Key Findings
1	[10]	<i>Journal of Islamic Education</i>	Public relations is effective when integrated with cultural da'wah.
2	[11]	<i>International Journal of Educational Management</i>	Digital strategies increase community engagement.
3	[12]	<i>Jurnal Komunikasi dan Pendidikan Islam</i>	Collaboration between public relations and religious figures strengthens legitimacy.
4	[13]	<i>Education and Society Journal</i>	Strengthening internal communication is the basis for successful public relations.
5	[14]	<i>Tarbiyah: Jurnal Ilmiah Kependidikan Islam</i>	Community events boost parent participation.
6	[15]	<i>Journal of Public Relations in Education</i>	School PR must be adaptive to the local context.
7	[16]	<i>Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan Islam</i>	Application of SWOT as a tool for evaluating public relations strategies.
8	[17]	<i>Journal of Strategic Communication</i>	The role of social media in shaping school reputation.
9	[6]	<i>Indonesian Journal of Islamic Education Studies</i>	Islamic values need to be reflected in PR practices.
10	[18]	<i>Jurnal Transformasi Pelayanan Publik</i>	Transparency and accountability are important in public relations.

The findings of this analysis were then compared with theories and previous research results to strengthen the arguments in the article. Thus, the structure of this article is built based on the process of interpretation and synthesis of the results of the literature review that have been analyzed systematically. Through this methodological approach, it is hoped that the research can provide relevant scientific contributions in the field of Islamic Education Management, as well as offer a comprehensive picture of effective public relations strategies to build harmonious relationships between Islamic educational institutions and the community [19].

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. How Public Relations Management is Implemented in Islamic Educational Institutions

In general, management is seen as a methodical process that includes organizing, planning, leading, and supervising operations to achieve predetermined goals through the use of non-human resources and existing human resources. The continuation of public relations is public relations. In English, the term "public relations" refers to certain communication practices carried out by an individual or group of individuals with the intention of disseminating information according to the desired goals. Some interpret public relations as an effort to foster mutual understanding and goodwill, as well as positive public opinion and cooperation efforts based on positive public relations. Public relations can also be interpreted as an effort to build and maintain mutual understanding between a public figure and an institution. Another study defines public relations as the process of creating articles about organizational operations that need to be widely known by the outside world.

In short, public relations is a management function with good intentions to present a good image of the organization it represents [20]. In order to create a positive perception of educational institutions, public relations is very important in helping institutions relate to the public. Public relations managers must have a plan to achieve this goal.

Creating a comprehensive strategy and carrying out the tasks of educational institute management properly is the first step in practicing public relations management. The main function of public relations includes organizing the achievements of the institute to be presented in the best image and then educating the public. Some of the tasks of public relations in institutions to form a good image of educational institutes according to Irma et al. [3] are: (1) Creating an image of hope that is aspired to by the institute; (2) Creating a corporate/institutional image that emerges from the institute as a whole, including products, services, history, social responsibility, and commitment to the institution's achievements; (3) Creating a compound image that emerges from several individuals or representatives of the institution; (4) Building a negative perception that strengthens the institution's sense of security and ignores input from the community; (5) Creating a prevailing partner, namely an image that is believed by outsiders or the community towards the institute. In addition to the strategies above, Arafah et al. [21] describe the factors that make public relations management effective, including the appointment of a public relations manager by the institution's leadership as the institution's social competence and the goal of improving service quality. To facilitate effective communication of the institution's vision and mission, the institution's leaders have the responsibility to do everything they can to make the public relations work program a success. The task of public relations is to develop a work plan that encourages collaboration, humanizes the organization, and improves the standard of social services for the organization's community.

Furthermore, digital information and communication services are used to socialize institutional programs. In addition to digital media, public relations needs to use posters and other print media, organize events at the institution such as art performances to help individuals who are not tech-savvy, organize community events such as meetings and guest lectures, ensure the dissemination of internal information through the institute's magazine, bulletin boards, and media, and employ teachers who meet the minimum requirements to ensure that public relations is carried out effectively and efficiently. In order for public relations management to package the institution's goals effectively, a good public relations management plan must be implemented after the institution's management function. Public relations can then develop a plan to improve an institute's reputation by promoting its brand, excellence, and various marketing initiatives [22]. In his research, he collected various implementations of public relations management strategies to improve the image of educational institutions, one of which is schools.

The strategy includes several activities, such as collaborating with parents regarding various school activities, introducing the school to new students, informing the school's advantages and achievements through various media, packaging various advantages in implementing learning, such as technology-based learning, publishing school activities and programs through various mass media platforms, making advertisements through print media, electronic media, or making direct contact with the community, actively participating

in KKG and KKS activities to become better known, and inviting community leaders to events or activities organized by the school. The activities chosen by the educational institute also need to be balanced with the composition of the strengths of the target unit.

This concerns the human resources who will carry out the tasks needed to achieve the goals. Choosing the tactical components of the PR strategy is the sixth phase. Public relations can choose from a variety of strategies to spread the word about initiatives carried out by the human resources of the institution and the target unit. Public relations uses print, electronic, and web media as well as press releases, brochures, and protocol activities to communicate and inform internal and external publics. The main approach that needs to be considered by public relations management is organizing and managing the management of the educational institute systematically and appropriately. In addition, public relations management can design various tactics to improve the reputation of the institute in the community. These tactics can be in the form of implementing promotional strategies, utilizing print and digital media, working with people within the institute to encourage the implementation of public relations programs, working with the community, conducting a SWOT analysis to determine the strengths and weaknesses of the institute, participating in various community activities, and holding events or programs that can be done by the general public (Divina & Saifullah, n.d.). In order for the planned program to be achieved well, the strategy that has been planned must be as systematic as possible regarding the role of the institute's management.

All institute communities must work together effectively, in addition to careful planning, with special emphasis on the position of the head of the institute as a policy maker and supervisor of all activities in the institute. Identifying issues, identifying target units, assessing patterns and degrees of attitudes of the targeted unit's actions, determining the power structure of a target, selecting components of the PR strategy plan, finding out and evaluating changing rules (*policies*), and explaining strategies, plans or procedures for implementing the stages of the planned program are some of the other seven aspects of PR management strategies that can be applied in educational institutes [2]. However, problems in educational institutes can damage the institute's reputation, which in turn can damage competitiveness. When problems are ignored, they will develop into weaknesses that endanger the institution's reputation. Therefore, these problems must be fixed immediately to maintain the institution's good name. To identify problems in an organization and find their sources, the problem must first be recognized.

Finding the target unit is the second tactic after determining the problem. This is achieved by examining the level of significance of the problem. When setting goals, it is appropriate to prioritize addressing pressing issues that impact the general public. Applying the pattern and level of attitude or activity required for the target unit is the third phase. Activities that have been completed and those that will be completed in the near future are evaluated and compared to determine the best course of action to resolve the issue. In addition, it is possible to reassess the tactics used to ensure the changes that have been achieved. The biggest expense an organization must incur when trying to win the hearts and minds of stakeholders and the general public is its image. The problems of the institute are expected to be resolved immediately through the use of seven public relations management

strategies, which will ultimately ensure the implementation of effective internal and external public relations of the institution [23].

Management is generally understood as a systematic process that includes planning, organizing, directing, and supervising various activities to achieve certain goals by utilizing available human and non-human resources. In this context, public relations management (PR) becomes an integral part that plays an important role in building a positive image of an institution, including Islamic educational institutions. Public relations (PR) or PR is defined as a strategic communication practice carried out by individuals or organizations to create and maintain a good understanding and relationships with the public. According to Rizal and Vella [24], PR is a management function that aims to present a positive image of the organization to the wider community. Therefore, the existence of strategic public relations in educational institutions is very important to convey the vision, mission, and advantages of the institution to the public. Previous research by Kejora [8] showed that strategic public relations planning at the An-Nur II Bululawang Islamic Boarding School was carried out through an analysis of the internal and external environment. This process includes determining the vision, mission, and objectives of public relations that are specific, measurable, and time-bound, so that institutions can design communication programs that are in accordance with the needs of the community. This strategy supports the initial steps of effective public relations management. The implementation of public relations also needs to pay attention to social and religious values.

Kejora's research emphasizes the integration of social and religious approaches in public relations programs, such as community empowerment and local economic activities. This strategy strengthens the relationship between the institution and the community while increasing the social role of the institution in the community. In the digital era, the use of social media is a crucial element. Saifudin and Rosilawati [25] found that private elementary schools in Bantul succeeded in building a positive image through mature social media management, starting from goal planning, division of tasks based on competencies, and ongoing communication strategies.

Furthermore, ongoing evaluation is also an important part of the public relations management cycle. SDI Miftahul Huda, Tulungagung, conducted evaluations through interviews, observations, and documentation to measure the effectiveness of public relations activities and adjust them to community needs, as explained in the research by Saifudin and Rosilawati [25]. Strong relationships with parents and alums have also been shown to improve the image of the institution. [26] explained that the active involvement of parents and alums in school activities builds trust and support from the wider community, and strengthens the institution's social network. In addition, two-way strategic communication is key to increasing public participation, especially in facing the challenges of the Society 5.0 era. Mardes et al. [27] emphasized the importance of a communication strategy that actively involves the community in order to create mutually beneficial reciprocal relationships. To support this, according to Hakim et al. [26], several public relations tasks in building a positive image of the institution include creating institutional expectations, highlighting history and achievements, and delivering information through print, electronic, and digital

media. In practice, the role of the head of the institution greatly determines the success of the public relations program as the main policy maker and supervisor.

Public relations management must also be able to identify problems, determine unit targets, evaluate attitude patterns, and choose PR strategy components. These steps, as explained by Rachmad and Rohmah [28], are important to respond to issues that have the potential to damage the institution's reputation. The right strategy will prevent problems from developing into threats to the institution's competitiveness. Overall, systematic public relations management, based on community needs analysis and adaptive to technological developments, is the main key in building a positive, strong, and highly competitive image of Islamic educational institutions. Based on the results of a systematic review of 25 scientific articles, several main findings were obtained that indicate the existence of thematic patterns in the implementation of public relations management in Islamic educational institutions. The synthesis process was carried out using thematic coding techniques, which resulted in the following four major themes: Several studies [8] show that the success of public relations in Islamic educational institutions is greatly influenced by careful planning based on internal and external environmental analysis. This strategy includes determining the vision, mission, PR objectives, and mapping strengths and weaknesses through the SWOT approach. This supports the view that systematic planning is a crucial first step in the effective PR management cycle.

Synthesis: Strategic planning based on local context and institutional values is the main foundation for successful public relations management.

Several studies [8], [28] emphasize the importance of integrating social and Islamic values in public relations programs. Public relations not only functions as a promotional tool, but also as a means of social preaching and community empowerment. This approach emphasizes that Islamic educational institutions have a unique identity that must be reflected in every strategic communication.

Synthesis: Public relations in Islamic institutions is not only a communication instrument, but also a medium of social preaching that strengthens the role of institutions in community life.

Research by [26] and [25] revealed the importance of managing social media and print media as a means of two-way communication between institutions and the community. The use of digital media such as Instagram, Facebook, and school websites has been shown to increase transparency and strengthen public engagement. On the other hand, print media such as bulletins, school magazines, and billboards are still used to reach communities that are less familiar with technology.

Synthesis: The combination of digital and traditional media allows for inclusive and adaptive PR reach to audience needs.

The results of the study (Hakim et al., 2024; Kurnia et al., 2013) show that the success of a PR program is highly dependent on the leadership of the principal and the involvement of key stakeholders such as parents, alums, and community leaders. Participatory leadership is able to encourage cross-unit collaboration and accelerate the institution's response to reputation issues.

Synthesis: The success of public relations lies in transformative leadership and a strong relational network between the institution and the external public.

From the four themes above, it can be concluded that the implementation of effective public relations management in Islamic educational institutions has the following characteristics. Based on systematic and contextual strategic planning, integrating Islamic values in every communication activity, using a multichannel media approach to reach various public segments, and actively involving institutional and community leaders as partners in public relations programs. The results of this synthesis strengthen the theory of strategic public relations management, where the effectiveness of PR is not only determined by communication techniques, but also by the depth of understanding of the characteristics of institutions and society. This study also confirms that PR practices in Islamic educational institutions have their own characteristics that cannot be separated from religious values, social structures, and local cultures where the institutions are located.

3.2. Communication and Social Relations Strategies Used by Institutions to Meet Community Expectations

Several previous studies have shown that effective public relations management strategies can improve the positive image of educational institutions, including Islamic-based institutions. The following is a synthesis of the results of several relevant studies: Kejora [8] in his research at the An-Nur II Islamic Boarding School in Bululawang revealed that public relations planning was carried out through a SWOT analysis, namely assessing the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of the institution. This strategy is then translated into a communication program that is in accordance with Islamic and social values, such as community empowerment and strengthening the local economy. This approach not only creates a positive image but also confirms the social role of Islamic boarding schools in society. Prendergast and Humphrey [29] studied the digital PR strategy at a private elementary school in Bantul.

The results of the study showed that planned social media management - starting from the formation of a special team, scheduling content, and the use of humanistic narratives - succeeded in building public trust and increasing the number of new registrants. This proves that the digital presence of an institution is an important element in shaping public perception. Bryant and Oliver [30] highlighted the importance of collaboration between the school, public relations, parents, and the surrounding community. In the study, various activities such as publication of achievements through mass media, involvement in local activities, and holding school events such as art performances, were proven to strengthen the institution's branding and make the school an inseparable part of the community.

Prendergast and Humphrey [29] in their study stated that the active involvement of parents and alums not only increases the sense of belonging to the institution, but also expands the social network that is useful in supporting the sustainability of school programs. This interpersonal relationship is an important social capital in building a sustainable image. Lutfiah et al. [31] emphasized the importance of a two-way communication strategy, especially in the Society 5.0 era. Public relations that not only conveys information, but also

opens up a space for dialogue with the public, is considered more capable of creating mutually beneficial relationships between institutions and the community. Responsiveness to public input is key to maintaining reputation and trust. Dunselman et al. [32] formulated seven strategic stages in public relations management, including: identifying problems, setting target units, evaluating public attitudes, designing communication strategies, and evaluating program implementation.

This strategy is seen as a comprehensive approach in dealing with issues that have the potential to degrade the image of the institution, while strengthening institutional capacity in dealing with crises. Kotler and Keller [1] show that problems with institutional image often stem from failures in issue management and delays in responding to crises. Therefore, public relations professionals are required to be responsive, strategic, and able to build positive narratives proactively so that the institution's reputation is maintained. Synthesis of various studies shows that the communication and social relations strategies implemented by Islamic educational institutions have distinctive characteristics that are built on three main pillars: a value-based approach, integration of digital and conventional media, and strengthening interpersonal relationships. From the data collected, these strategies can be grouped into the following five main themes: Kejora [8] emphasized that public communication in Islamic institutions is not just about conveying information, but also instilling Islamic and social values, such as community empowerment and support for the local economy. This strategy shows that institutions are not only oriented towards image alone, but also towards social contributions as part of the institution's positioning.

Synthesis: Communication that integrates religious and social values is a strategic instrument in building public trust and loyalty towards institutions.

Rachmad and Rohmah [28] highlight the important role of social media management in shaping public perception. Starting from the formation of a content team, scheduling information, and compiling a humanistic and inclusive narrative has been proven to increase public involvement and expand the reach of institutional promotion.

Synthesis: Digital media is not only a promotional tool but an interaction platform that dynamically shapes public perception, so it must be managed strategically and sustainably.

Marpaung [33] shows that collaboration between the school and public relations with parents, alums, and local communities strengthens the institution's position in society. Activities such as art performances, publication of achievements, and involvement in local activities form reciprocal social bonds.

Synthesis: Social relationships built through the active involvement of various community actors strengthen the institution's social legitimacy and create a strong collective identity.

Khofi et al. [10] emphasize the importance of two-way communication in the context of the Society 5.0 era. Institutions that open up space for public participation, respond to input, and are willing to engage in dialogue demonstrate a high adaptive capacity to changes in community expectations.

Synthesis: Participatory and responsive communication not only maintains reputation but also forms mutually beneficial and sustainable relationships between institutions and the community.

Givari [2] mapped that the main weakness in maintaining an institution's reputation lies in the failure of issue management and delays in responding to crises. The seven-stage PR strategy (from problem identification to program evaluation) has been shown to strengthen institutional resilience in the face of complex social dynamics.

Synthesis: A systematic crisis management strategy allows institutions to anticipate and address reputation issues before they develop into crises that endanger the sustainability of the institution.

Overall, the results of the synthesis of various studies show that effective communication and social relations strategies in Islamic educational institutions are characterized by. The existence of an orientation of Islamic values that frames every communication practice, the professional use of digital media to build engagement, and active social involvement with various local stakeholders. application of the principle of two-way communication that is responsive to public input. managerial readiness in facing crises and reputation issues. These strategies are interrelated and form an adaptive, participatory communication ecosystem that is rooted in local values and global demands. This approach is the main differentiator for Islamic educational institutions in building a positive and sustainable image.

3.3. The Impact of PR Management on Public Trust and the Institution's Position Within the Community

Based on the research results above, it can be concluded that effective public relations management must be based on mapping community needs, systematic communication strategies, and adaptive use of digital technology. Islamic educational institutions that are able to integrate religious values with modern PR strategies will have a better chance of building public trust and increasing community participation. Institutional leadership, especially the principal or head of the Islamic boarding school, has a central role in ensuring the success of public relations strategies. The success of public relations depends not only on the media used but also on the alignment between the institutional vision, the competence of the public relations team, and the involvement of key stakeholders such as parents, alums, and community leaders. Thus, a holistic, collaborative, and community needs-based public relations approach is an important foundation in realizing superior and competitive Islamic educational institutions amidst changing times. The synthesis of research results shows that effective public relations management in the context of Islamic educational institutions has a significant impact on two main aspects: building public trust and strengthening the institution's position in society.

This impact is not linear, but rather the result of interactions between various strategic factors that support each other. Based on the findings that have been analyzed, three main axes of synthesis can be formulated: Several studies [8] show that institutions that are able to combine Islamic values in modern public relations practices succeed in building moral legitimacy in the eyes of the public. This is reinforced by the central role of the head of the institution (principal or head of the Islamic boarding school) as an opinion leader who directs the public narrative and maintains the consistency of the institutional vision.

Synthesis: Public trust grows stronger when the public relations strategy reflects the integrity of religious values that are consistent with the managerial practices and leadership of the institution.

Findings from Qutaishat and Li [34] emphasized that the strength of public relations lies in its ability to establish solid social networks with parents, alums, community leaders, and local communities. This relationship is the foundation of social trust that not only expands the community support base but also increases participation in the institution's activities and programs.

Synthesis: Public relations based on social relations expands the institution's position as an integral part of the community, not just as a provider of educational services.

Bryant and Oliver [30] emphasized that the strategic use of social media contributes to public perception of the institution's transparency and accountability. A well-managed digital presence not only accelerates the dissemination of information but also strengthens positive perceptions of the institution's professionalism and openness to the public.

Synthesis: Digital presence is not only a communication tool, but also an instrument for building trust based on transparency and openness to public aspirations.

Holistically, the impact of public relations management on public trust and the position of institutions in the community cannot be separated from the interaction between them. The strength of religious narratives and local values that are the identity of the institution, visionary and participatory leadership, which is able to bridge institutional vision with social reality, strong social networks with key community actors, and strategic and adaptive use of information technology to expand communication reach and strengthen positive images. A collaborative public relations strategy, based on community needs and responsive to social dynamics, has proven to be a key factor in strengthening public trust and the existence of Islamic educational institutions as relevant and competitive institutions in the contemporary era.

3.2. Public Relations Management and Its Role in Shaping The Image of Islamic Educational Institutions in Responding to Community Needs

This study found that although many Islamic educational institutions have implemented public relations strategies, there are still some gaps in their implementation, especially in terms of strategic planning, mastery of digital media, systematic program evaluation, and optimal stakeholder involvement. This gap is important to be further analyzed within the framework of strategic management theory and organizational communication. Some institutions have not fully utilized the SWOT analysis approach to develop public relations strategies. In fact, as explained by Manurung [35], this analysis is very important in determining realistic promotional steps based on institutional strengths. In addition, the evaluation of public relations programs carried out is still informal and not sustainable. In this case, the results of the study by Manurung and Pohan [36] emphasize the importance of periodic data-based evaluations in order to adjust activities to community needs and measure program effectiveness.

The findings of this study confirm the importance of managerial functions in public relations strategies as theorized in modern management (*planning, organizing, leadership, and controlling functions*). This is in line with the opinions of [30] and [37], who emphasize that the success of a PR strategy is largely determined by clear planning and strong

leadership. The findings also reinforce the importance of strategic two-way communication, as stated by Sutrisna [38], especially in building mutually beneficial relationships with the community and parents of students. This shows that public relations not only acts as a conveyor of information but also as a facilitator of social dialogue. However, major challenges still lie in adapting to the digital era and Society 5.0, especially in the use of social media and technology-based communication. Findings from Nosratabadi et al. [39] and Nafiah and Faih [40] show that the capacity of public relations human resources and the ability to use digital media effectively are the main determinants of public relations success in the current era.

This study proposes an integrative and collaborative strategy involving all units in educational institutions as a solution to the gaps found. This includes the active involvement of alums, community leaders, and parents of students, as emphasized by Rachmad and Rohmah [28]. In addition, the use of multichannel communication is a must to reach audiences with diverse backgrounds. This strategy is considered effective in building reputation and increasing the credibility of the institution, according to the findings of Kejora [8].

Table 2. Summary of Discussion Results of Research Findings and Theory Relevance

Discussed Aspects	Research Findings	Previous Theories/Studies	Critical Notes
Strategic Planning of Public Relations	Not all institutions use SWOT analysis optimally	[8]	Need special training in strategic planning
Evaluation of Public Relations Programs	Evaluation is not systematic and not based on data	[37]	Need SOP for public relations evaluation in the annual cycle
Use of Social Media	Still limited, not utilizing the potential of digital platforms	[41]	Human relations and human resources need ICT training
Role of Public Relations Manager	Not all institutions have competent public relations managers	[15]	Recruitment and training of public relations need to be improved
Parent & Alumni Involvement	Not optimal for building external networks	[42]	kepentingan Need to strengthen the community and communication forum between stakeholders.
Collaboration of Internal Institutional Units	Collaboration between units is not optimal	[22]	Need SOP for collaboration between fields and leadership support
Adaptation to the Digital Era & Society 5.0	Not all public relations programs are adaptive to the latest issues and technologies.	[43]	Need a roadmap for the digitalization of PR of Islamic educational institutions.

Public relations management strategies in Islamic educational institutions have shown a positive direction, but still face a number of gaps, especially in data-based planning, the use of digital technology, and stakeholder involvement. This study emphasizes the importance of managerial and collaborative roles in building a strong and trusted institutional image. Strengthening of evaluation aspects, HR training, and strategic use of digital media is needed to face the dynamics of communication in the Society 5.0 era.

4. CONCLUSION

This study affirms that effective public relations management in Islamic educational institutions must be positioned as a strategic governance function rather than merely a technical or promotional activity. The main finding highlights that the alignment of

managerial planning, organizational coordination, leadership collaboration, and systematic evaluation within a situational communication framework is essential for strengthening institutional image and public trust.

By integrating classical management principles with strategic communication perspectives, this research demonstrates how public relations can serve as a bridge between institutional values and societal expectations. The implications of this study are twofold. Theoretically, it contributes to the discourse on educational public relations by extending the relevance of managerial function theory to external communication and reputation-building processes within Islamic educational contexts. Practically, the findings suggest that educational institutions can enhance legitimacy and stakeholder engagement by adopting participatory communication models, utilizing diverse communication channels, and aligning messaging with local sociocultural and Islamic values.

This research is bounded by its focus on secondary-level Islamic educational institutions and its reliance on classical management and communication theories. Consequently, the findings may not fully capture the dynamics of digital-native communication environments or be directly generalizable to non-formal or higher education institutions with different organizational characteristics. Future research is encouraged to incorporate contemporary communication theories, such as digital public relations, media ecology, and algorithm-driven communication models, better to understand institutional reputation-building in the Society 5.0 era. Expanding the research scope to include various types of educational institutions and employing mixed-method approaches would also provide more comprehensive insights. For the general public, this study offers a valuable framework for understanding how transparent, inclusive, and value-based communication practices can strengthen trust in educational institutions and support more participatory and accountable educational governance in an increasingly digital society.

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