

A Digital Marketing-Based Public Relations Management Strategy for Increasing the Appeal of State Senior High School 3 Cilacap to Prospective Students

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Abstract: This study aims to analyze digital marketing-based public relations management strategies for increasing the appeal of MAN 3 Cilacap to new students, as well as to identify the supporting factors, inhibiting factors, and implications of these strategies for the institution's image. The study employs a qualitative approach using a case study design to gain an in-depth understanding of the implementation of digital marketing-based public relations strategies in the context of a madrasah. The research informants consisted of the Madrasah Vice Principal for Public Relations and the Madrasah Vice Principal for Student Affairs, who were selected through purposive sampling. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, observations, and documentation, then analyzed using the Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña interactive model, which includes data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. The results of the study indicate that the digital marketing-based public relations management strategy is implemented through four management functions: planning, organizing, executing, and evaluating. Promotional strategies are implemented by leveraging digital media such as Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, WhatsApp, and the madrasah's official website, and are reinforced through direct outreach, the publicization of student achievements, extracurricular activities, and alumni engagement. Key supporting factors include leadership support, teamwork, availability of digital media, and student achievements, while inhibiting factors include limited human resources, competition among educational institutions, and consistency in content production. The research findings indicate that digital marketing-based public relations strategies contribute to enhancing the visibility, positive image, and appeal of MAN 3 Cilacap within the community. This study strengthens the field of educational public relations management by emphasizing the importance of integrating management functions and digital marketing as an effective communication strategy in the digital age.

Keywords: public relations management, digital marketing, educational promotion, institutional image, student appeal.

The development of information and communication technology has driven major transformations in various sectors of life, including the Education sector (Wijaya, 2016). Digitalization not only changes educational learning and administration patterns, but also affects the way educational institutions build communication with the community (Sutarsih, 2024). In the digital era, people increasingly rely on the internet and social media as the main source of information, including information about the educational institution to be chosen (Hafiduddin, 2025). This change in behavior requires schools and madrasahs to be able to develop communication strategies that are more adaptive, innovative, and technology-based (Liriwati, 2024). In the increasingly competitive competition between educational institutions, the success of an institution is no longer only determined by the quality of its academics and facilities, but also by the

ability of the institution to build a positive image, expand the reach of information, and establish good relations with the community.

According to Chaidir (2024), the development of digital technology has changed the way organizations interact with their consumers through the use of more personalized, interactive, and data-driven technology. In the world of education, these conditions encourage educational institutions to integrate the public relations function (PR) with the strategy *digital marketing* in order to be able to increase the attractiveness and trust of the public in the institution (Scott, 2022). Therefore, *digital marketing* Currently, it is one of the strategic instruments that can be used to build the branding of educational institutions while strengthening the position of institutions in the midst of increasingly dynamic educational competition.

The phenomenon of increasing internet use in Indonesia further strengthens the importance of implementing *digital marketing* in the world of education. Based on the results of the Indonesian Internet Penetration Survey released by the Indonesian Internet Service Providers Association (APJII) which was analyzed by the research (Fardiana, 2026), the number of Indonesian internet users in 2024 will reach 221,563,479 people or around 79.5% of the total national population. The data shows a consistent increase compared to previous years and confirms that the internet has become an important part of the lives of the Indonesian people. In addition, the Generation Z group is the most dominant age group in internet use so that digital media is increasingly influential in the process of searching for information and making decisions related to education (Lock, 2024). People today tend to look for information about schools through official websites, *Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, Facebook*, as well as various other digital platforms before deciding on the choice of educational institution. This condition shows that digital media has become a strategic space that can be used by educational institutions to build communication with prospective students and parents. If educational institutions are able to manage digital media effectively, the opportunity to increase the visibility, reputation, and attractiveness of the institution will be greater (Nurhidayah, 2022). On the other hand, institutions that still rely on conventional promotion strategies have the potential to experience difficulties in reaching people who are increasingly active in the digital space. Therefore, the transformation of digital-based public relations strategies is an inevitable necessity in modern education management.

From the perspective of education management, public relations has a strategic role as a liaison between educational institutions and the community (Aulia, 2025). Public relations functions to build two-way communication that allows for effective information exchange between schools and various stakeholders, including parents, alumni, the government, and the wider community (Illah, 2025). Theory *Excellence in Public Relations* developed by (Grunig, 1992) emphasizing that the success of an organization is greatly influenced by its ability to build symmetrical and mutually beneficial communication with its public.

In education, effective communication can increase public trust in the quality of educational services

provided by institutions. However, the development of digital technology has changed the pattern of public relations communication that was previously dominated by print media and face-to-face communication to faster, broader, and interactive digital platform-based communication (Usiono, 2024). Social media allows educational institutions to convey various information in real-time, ranging from student achievements, learning activities, excellent programs, to various innovations carried out by schools. In addition, digital media also allows the public to provide direct feedback so that a closer relationship is created between educational institutions and the public. Therefore, the integration between the public relations function and *digital marketing* It is an important strategy that can help educational institutions build a positive image while increasing the attraction of new students.

Digital marketing In the world of education, it is not only understood as a promotional activity, but also as a strategy to build an institution's identity and branding in a sustainable manner. Educational branding is important because today's society not only considers academic quality in choosing a school, but also considers the reputation, achievements, organizational culture, and values offered by educational institutions. According to Mannayong (2024) Social media provides an opportunity for educational organizations to increase community engagement through more open and participatory communication. Through the management of interesting, consistent, and relevant content, educational institutions can build positive perceptions that are able to influence people's decisions in choosing schools. Various digital platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube have now become effective mediums to display the advantages of educational institutions visually and interactively. In addition, the school website also functions as an official information center that can increase the credibility of the institution in the eyes of the public.

Thus, *digital marketing* not only plays a role in expanding the reach of promotion, but also serves as a means of building public trust, strengthening institutional identity, and increasing public loyalty to educational institutions. Nonetheless, the implementation of *digital marketing* In educational institutions, they still face various challenges. Various studies show that many schools have not been able to optimize digital media as part of a planned and sustainable PR strategy. The use of social media is often only focused on the publication of activities without considering aspects of branding and strategic image management. In addition, the limitation of human resources who have digital competence is one of the main obstacles in the management of school digital media. Fauziah (2025) explained that the success of digital transformation in educational organizations is greatly influenced by the readiness of human resources, leadership, organizational culture, and adequate technological support. Lack of content planning, low digital literacy, and lack of evaluation of the effectiveness of digital media have caused many educational institutions to not get optimal benefits from the use of communication technology. As a result, various information conveyed to the public becomes less interesting, inconsistent, and less able to build institutional differentiation in the midst of increasingly fierce educational competition. This condition shows that the implementation of digital marketing requires a comprehensive strategy and is integrated with institutional goals in order to be able to have a significant impact on increasing the attraction of new students.

Madrasah Aliyah Negeri (MAN) 3 Cilacap is one of the Islamic educational institutions that faces the challenge of increasing the attraction of new students in the midst of increasingly competitive competition. As an Islamic-based educational institution, MAN 3 Cilacap is not only required to provide quality educational services, but also able to build a positive image in the eyes of the community. Based on the phenomenon found in the field, madrasahs have utilized various digital media as a means of promotion and publication of activities, but their implementation still needs to be strengthened so that it is more integrated in a sustainable public relations management system. The various potentials possessed by madrasahs such as students' academic and non-academic achievements, religious excellence programs, extracurricular activities, and a wide alumni network are important assets that can be used to build the institution's branding. However, this potential requires the right communication strategy to be able to reach the community effectively. On the other hand, changes in people's behavior that increasingly depend on digital media make the need for a digital marketing-based public relations strategy even more urgent. Therefore, MAN 3 Cilacap is a relevant context to examine how digital marketing-based public relations management strategies are applied in increasing the attractiveness of new students.

Studies on *digital marketing* In the world of education, a lot has been done by researchers in recent years. Various studies show that digital media has a significant contribution in improving the image and reputation of educational institutions. Irwan (2025) It was found that the use of social media affects public perception of educational institutions and can increase public involvement in various institutional activities. Research Harahap (2026) It also shows that the planned use of social media can increase the effectiveness of school promotion and attract the interest of new prospective students. Meanwhile, research Lisnawati (2026) Explained that good digital PR management can strengthen school branding and increase public trust in educational institutions. The findings suggest that *digital marketing* has an important role in supporting the success of education promotion. However, most previous research has focused more on the effectiveness of social media or educational branding in general, so it has not discussed much integration between PR management functions and *digital marketing* in the context of Islamic educational institutions.

Based on the analysis of various previous studies, there are still research *gaps* that need attention. Most of the previous studies have mostly discussed the use of digital media as a promotional tool, while studies that explore the overall public relations management process from planning, organizing, implementing, to evaluating *digital marketing strategies* are still relatively limited. In addition, previous research has generally focused on the use of social media without integrating other factors that contribute to the formation of the institution's image, such as the role of alumni, student achievements, extracurricular activities, madrasah culture, and community participation. In fact, these factors have a significant influence on building public perception of the quality of educational institutions. Therefore, this study offers novelty by examining the integration of public relations management and *digital marketing* more comprehensively in the context of madrasahs. This study is expected to be able to provide a deeper understanding of the strategies used by Islamic educational institutions in building an image and increasing the attractiveness of new students through the use of digital technology.

Based on these various descriptions, this study aims to analyze digital marketing-based public relations management strategies in increasing the attractiveness of new students at MAN 3 Cilacap. This research focuses on identifying the form of strategy implemented, the implementation process, the supporting and inhibiting factors faced, and the implications of the strategy on improving the image and attractiveness of the institution. Theoretically, this research is expected to enrich the study of Islamic education management, especially in the field of public relations and *digital marketing*. Practically, the results of the research are expected to be a reference for schools and madrasas in developing communication strategies that are more effective, innovative, and adaptive to the development of information technology. Thus, this research not only contributes to the development of science, but also offers recommendations that can be applied by educational institutions in increasing competitiveness and public trust in the digital era.

METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study research type to understand in depth a PR-based management strategy *digital marketing* in increasing the attractiveness of new students at MAN 3 Cilacap. The qualitative approach was chosen because this study seeks to comprehensively understand social phenomena based on the experiences, views, and practices carried out by actors involved in the management of madrasah public relations. Qualitative research allows researchers to gain a deep understanding of the meaning, process, and context behind a phenomenon that cannot be measured only through numbers or statistics (Creswell, 2009). The selection of case studies in this study is based on the need to understand in depth how public relations strategies are based *digital marketing* designed, implemented, and evaluated in a madrasah environment. Through this approach, researchers can obtain a complete picture of public relations management practices, the use of digital media, and the dynamics that affect the success of promoting new student admissions. In addition, the case study approach allows for a more in-depth exploration of the various factors that support and hinder the implementation of digital marketing strategies so as to produce a rich, contextual, and relevant understanding of the research objectives.

This research was carried out at MAN 3 Cilacap, Cilacap Regency, Central Java Province. The selection of research locations was carried out *purposively* because this madrasah is considered active in utilizing digital media as part of a promotion and public communication strategy. MAN 3 Cilacap has used various digital platforms such as *Instagram, Facebook, WhatsApp, YouTube, and* the official website of the madrasah as a means of publishing institutional information, academic activities, student achievements, and promotion of new student admissions. In addition, this madrasah has a number of excellent programs that are actively published through digital media so that it becomes a relevant context to examine the implementation of digital marketing-based public relations strategies. The research was carried out from October 4, 2025 to October 20, 2025 which included the initial observation stage, field data collection, data verification, and refinement of research findings. The research subjects consisted of the Deputy Head of

the Madrasah for Public Relations and the Deputy Head of the Madrasah for Student Affairs who were selected using *the purposive sampling* technique. This technique is used because both informants have direct involvement in planning, implementing, and evaluating madrasah promotion strategies. The selection of informants who have experience and in-depth knowledge of public relations strategies is expected to produce accurate, information-rich, and relevant data to research needs.

The data collection techniques in this study were carried out through in-depth interviews, observations, and documentation. Interviews were conducted with the Deputy Head of the Madrasah for Public Relations and the Deputy Head of the Madrasah for Student Affairs to obtain comprehensive information about the digital marketing-based public relations strategy implemented at MAN 3 Cilacap. The interview questions were focused on digital promotion planning, social media utilization, information content management, supporting and inhibiting factors, and the impact of these strategies on increasing the attraction of new students. In addition to interviews, observations were made directly on madrasah promotion activities, the use of digital media, the interaction of public relations managers with the community, and various activities related to institutional publications. Observation allows researchers to obtain factual and contextual data so that they can complement the information obtained through interviews. Documentation techniques are carried out by collecting various supporting documents such as photos of activities, social media archives, digital brochures, promotional videos, and new student admission reports.

To increase the credibility of the research findings, source triangulation and triangulation methods are carried out as recommended by Susanto (Susanto, D., & Jailani, 2023). Triangulation is carried out by comparing data from interviews, observations, and documentation so that the information obtained can be verified for its truth. In addition, the researcher also applies member checking by confirming the findings to the informant to ensure that the interpretation of the data is in accordance with the actual experience and views of the informant.

The data analysis technique in this study uses an interactive analysis model developed by (Miles, M. B., & Huberman, 1984), which consists of three main stages, namely data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions or verification. The analysis was carried out continuously from the beginning of data collection until the research was completed. The first stage, data reduction, is carried out by selecting, focusing, simplifying, and grouping data obtained from interviews, observations, and documentation according to the focus of the research. At this stage, the researcher identifies information relevant to the PR-based management strategy *digital marketing* and eliminating data that is not related to the purpose of the research. The second stage is the presentation of data which is carried out in the form of narrative descriptions, matrices, and thematic categorizations so that it makes it easier for researchers to understand the relationships between data and find patterns that appear. Systematic data presentation helps researchers organize information in a clearer and more structured manner. The third stage is drawing conclusions and verification, which is the process of understanding the meaning of the data that has been analyzed to find patterns, relationships, and substantive findings regarding a PR-based strategy *digital marketing* in MAN

3 Cilacap. The conclusions obtained are continuously verified throughout the research process to ensure the consistency and validity of the findings. Using Miles and Huberman's interactive analysis model, this study is expected to produce credible, systematic, and able to provide a comprehensive overview of the implementation of a public relations strategy based on *digital marketing* in increasing the attractiveness of new students.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

RESULTS

Planning of Public Relations Management Strategy Based on Digital Marketing

The results of the study show that the planning of digital marketing-based public relations management strategies at MAN 3 Cilacap is carried out systematically and structured before the implementation of New Student Admissions (PPDB). The planning stage is a very important first step because it determines the direction, objectives, and forms of promotional activities that will be carried out during the process of accepting new students. Based on the results of interviews and documentation, planning began with a coordination meeting involving the head of the madrasah, the deputy head of the madrasah for public relations, the deputy head of the madrasah for student affairs, teachers, and the PPDB committee. In the meeting, various aspects related to promotion strategies were discussed, ranging from determining target targets, preparing work programs, selecting promotional media, allocating tasks, to scheduling promotional activities. Planning is carried out by taking into account the increasingly fierce competition conditions between educational institutions and changes in people's behavior that tend to use digital media as the main source of information. Therefore, madrasahs strive to develop a promotional strategy that is able to reach the public at large through the use of various digital platforms. In addition to discussing the promotional media to be used, the public relations team also identified the advantages and potential of madrasahs that can be used as an attraction for prospective students. The results of the observations show that the planning carried out is not only focused on disseminating information, but is also directed to build a positive image of the madrasah through the publication of various achievements, excellent programs, and student activities. Thus, the planning stage is the basis for determining the success of the implementation of digital marketing-based public relations strategies at MAN 3 Cilacap.

Based on the results of the interview with the Deputy Head of Madrasah for Public Relations, it is known that the planning of the promotion strategy was carried out long before the PPDB period began. The planning process is carried out through discussion and coordination aimed at compiling promotional measures that are in accordance with the needs of the community and the development of information technology. The informant explained that the use of digital media is a top priority because most prospective students and parents currently obtain educational information through social media and the internet. The deputy head of the madrasah for public relations explained, *"Before PPDB starts, we hold a meeting first to determine the strategy to be used. We determine the target schools to visit, the type of content to create, and what social media to use for promotion."* The statement shows that planning is carried out carefully by considering the promotion goals, the form of content to be published, and the most effective media to reach the public. In

addition to determining the promotional media, the public relations team also compiles various publication materials that will be used during promotional activities. The material includes madrasah profiles, vision and mission, superior programs, academic and non-academic achievements, extracurricular activities, educational facilities, religious programs, to information related to new student registration paths and procedures. The results of the observation show that promotional materials have been prepared before PPDB activities start so that publications can be carried out on an ongoing and scheduled basis. The research documentation also shows that there is a design of promotional content that has been prepared in the form of a publication calendar to facilitate the implementation of promotions during the period of admission of new students.

The results of documentation and observations show that the planning of a digital marketing-based public relations strategy at MAN 3 Cilacap also includes the preparation of a detailed schedule of promotional activities. The public relations team compiles a calendar of activities that contains a schedule of social media publications, a schedule of visits to the target school, a schedule for the installation of outdoor promotional media, and an agenda of other activities that support the promotion of madrasahs. The plan aims to ensure that all promotional activities can run in a coordinated manner and there is no overlap in their implementation. In addition, the madrasah also determines the target of the promotion area based on the potential of prospective students from various junior high schools and MTs in Cilacap Regency and its surroundings. Through careful planning, madrasahs strive to ensure that each promotional activity has a clear purpose and is able to provide complete information to the community. The results of the observation show that all promotional activities carried out during the PPDB period refer to the plan that has been prepared in advance so that the implementation of activities becomes more directed and systematic. These findings show that planning not only functions as an initial stage in public relations management, but also becomes the main foundation in optimizing the use of digital marketing to increase the attractiveness of new students at MAN 3 Cilacap. With clear planning, madrasahs can manage their resources more effectively and maximize opportunities to reach the community through various promotional media that have been determined.

Organizing Public Relations Management Strategy Based on Digital Marketing

The results of the study show that the organization of a digital marketing-based public relations management strategy at MAN 3 Cilacap is carried out through the formation of a work structure that involves various elements in the madrasah. Organizing is carried out after the planning stage is completed so that each promotional program that has been designed can be implemented effectively and coordinated. Based on the results of interviews and documentation, the madrasah formed a promotion team consisting of the Deputy Head of the Madrasah for Public Relations, the Deputy Head of the Madrasah for Student Affairs, teachers, education staff, and several students who have abilities in the field of information technology and digital media. The formation of this team aims to facilitate the division of tasks and clarify the responsibilities of each member in the implementation of the promotion of new student admissions. Organizing not only focuses on the formation of a work team, but also includes setting up communication flows, coordinating activities, and reporting mechanisms during the promotion process. The observation results show that each team

member understands their respective tasks and roles so that the process of implementing activities can run more directed. In addition, the clear division of tasks allows each promotion program to be carried out optimally without overlapping work. Thus, organization is one of the important aspects that supports the success of a digital marketing-based public relations strategy because it is able to create effective cooperation between team members in achieving the goals of madrasah promotion.

Based on the results of interviews with informants, it is known that the division of tasks in the promotion team is carried out based on the competence, experience, and abilities of each member. The public relations team is responsible for developing communication strategies, managing relationships with the community, and supervising the implementation of overall promotional activities. Teachers and education staff play a role in assisting socialization activities to target schools, while students are involved in making activity documentation, graphic design, taking photos and videos, and managing social media content. The deputy head of student affairs explained, "*We formed a special team for promotional activities. Some are in charge of managing social media, some make publication designs, and some do socialization to schools.*"

The statement shows that each team member has different responsibilities according to their respective areas of duty. The results of the observation also show that social media management is one of the tasks that receives special attention because digital media is the main means in the promotional strategy implemented by madrasahs. The team in charge of the digital media sector routinely creates content, uploads information, and monitors public responses to various publications carried out. In addition, the documentation team is responsible for providing a variety of visual materials used to support promotional activities. The clear division of tasks helps madrasahs in optimizing their resources so that all promotional activities can run according to the previously set targets.

The observation results showed that coordination between team members was carried out continuously through direct meetings and online communication using *WhatsApp groups*. Coordination is carried out to ensure that each promotional activity runs according to the schedule and targets that have been set at the planning stage. In each activity, the public relations team acts as a coordinator who supervises the implementation of each member's duties as well as being a liaison between the promotion team and the madrasah leadership. In addition to involving internal elements of the madrasah, the organization of a digital marketing-based public relations strategy also involves alumni as promotional partners. Alumni play a role in introducing madrasahs to the community through their experiences while studying at MAN 3 Cilacap. Some alumni also help disseminate information about superior programs and the admission of new students through their personal social media and community networks. The results of the interviews show that the involvement of alumni is considered to be able to increase public trust because the information conveyed comes from individuals who have experienced firsthand the educational process at the madrasah. The research documentation also shows that there is cooperation between madrasahs and alumni in various promotional activities and publications of the institution's achievements. These findings show that the organization carried out by MAN 3 Cilacap not only utilizes internal resources, but also optimizes external support to expand the reach of information and increase the effectiveness of digital marketing-based public relations strategies.

Implementation (*Actuating*) of Public Relations Management Strategy Based on Digital Marketing

The results of the study show that the implementation of a digital marketing-based public relations management strategy at MAN 3 Cilacap is carried out through the use of various digital media combined with direct promotional activities to the community. The implementation of this strategy aims to expand the reach of information about madrasahs while increasing the attractiveness of new students. Based on the results of interviews, observations, and documentation, the digital media used include *Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, WhatsApp*, and the official website of the madrasah. The use of these various platforms is carried out in a sustainable manner by presenting information that is relevant and in accordance with the needs of the community. The information published includes madrasah profiles, flagship programs, learning activities, student achievements, extracurricular activities, educational facilities, and information related to New Student Admissions (PPDB). The results of observations show that social media is one of the most actively used means of communication because it is able to reach the public more widely and quickly than conventional promotional media. Apart from being a medium for disseminating information, digital platforms are also used to build interaction with the public through comments, direct messages, and various other communication features. Thus, the implementation of a digital marketing-based public relations strategy not only serves as a means of promotion, but also as a medium to build a closer relationship between madrasahs and the community. The findings of the study show that the use of digital media has become an important part of the implementation of public relations strategies because it is able to increase information accessibility and make it easier for the public to get to know the various programs and advantages owned by MAN 3 Cilacap.

Based on the results of observations on the official social media accounts of MAN 3 Cilacap, it was found that the madrasah actively uploads various content that displays students' academic and non-academic activities. The content published is in the form of photos of activities, short videos, digital posters, documentation of student achievements, and information on educational services. In addition, the madrasah also utilizes promotional video and live broadcast features to introduce the madrasah environment to the community in a more interactive manner. Publication is carried out periodically with the aim of maintaining the consistency of information received by the public. Based on the results of the interview, the deputy head of the madrasah for public relations said: *"We use Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, and WhatsApp to convey information to the public. Social media is very helpful because information can reach the public more widely and faster."*

The statement shows that digital media is the main means in implementing madrasah promotion strategies. The results of the observation also show that the most frequently published content is learning activities, student achievements, religious activities, and information about madrasah flagship programs. In addition to providing information, the publication is also intended to build a positive public perception of the quality of education owned by madrasahs. Research documentation shows that every important activity carried out by madrasahs is almost always published through social media so that people can follow the development of madrasahs directly. The implementation of promotion through digital media is a form of implementation of

a public relations strategy that adjusts to the development of information technology and changes in public communication patterns in the digital era.

In addition to utilizing digital media, the results of the study show that the implementation of digital marketing-based public relations strategies at MAN 3 Cilacap is also carried out through direct promotion to the community. Direct promotional activities are carried out by visiting various junior high schools and MTs in the Cilacap Regency area and its surroundings to introduce superior programs and provide information about the registration process for new students. The promotion team conveys information directly to students, teachers, and the school about the various advantages possessed by MAN 3 Cilacap. In addition to socialization activities, madrasahs also install banners, banners, and other promotional media in various strategic locations that are easily accessible to the public. The results of the documentation show that the publication of student achievements is one of the most frequently displayed promotional materials, both through digital media and outdoor media. Various academic, non-academic, religious, and extracurricular activities such as Scouting, PMR, sports, and student organizations are actively published to show the quality and excellence of the madrasah. The results of the observation show that the combination of digital promotion and direct promotion allows information about madrasahs to reach a wider group of people. Thus, the implementation of a digital marketing-based public relations strategy at MAN 3 Cilacap is not only carried out through the use of digital technology, but also supported by various direct promotional activities that complement each other in an effort to increase the attractiveness of new students.

Supporting Factors, Inhibiting Factors, and Implications of Digital Marketing-Based Public Relations Management Strategy on Improving the Image and Attractiveness of Institutions

The results of the study show that the successful implementation of the digital marketing-based public relations management strategy at MAN 3 Cilacap is supported by several factors that come from the internal and external environment of the madrasah. Based on the results of interviews and observations, the main supporting factors include the support of madrasah leaders, good teamwork, alumni involvement, student achievements, active extracurricular activities, and the availability of adequate digital media. The support of madrasah leaders can be seen from their active involvement in the process of planning, implementing, and evaluating promotional activities. In addition, good coordination between the public relations, students, teachers, and education staff also helps the smooth implementation of the promotion program. The results of observations also show that various academic and non-academic achievements of students are one of the main attractions that are often published through madrasah social media. Diverse and active extracurricular activities also strengthen the image of the madrasah as an educational institution that is able to develop the potential of students as a whole. In addition, the involvement of alumni in disseminating information about madrasahs is an important factor in expanding the reach of promotion to the community. The support of digital media such as *Instagram*, *Facebook*, *YouTube*, *WhatsApp*, and the official website of the madrasah also facilitates the rapid and wide dissemination of information so that various superior programs of madrasahs can be known by the public more effectively.

In addition to these various supporting factors, the study also found several inhibiting factors faced in the implementation of digital marketing-based public relations management strategies. Based on the results of the interviews, the most frequent obstacle is the competition between educational institutions which is getting tighter in obtaining new students. Many schools and madrassas are currently also using digital media as a means of promotion so that competition in attracting public attention becomes even higher. In addition, the limited number of human resources who have special abilities in digital media management is a challenge for madrasahs. The PR team must divide time between the main task as an educator and the responsibility of managing promotional content so that the consistency of publications sometimes encounters obstacles. The results of the observations show that the process of creating engaging content requires time, creativity, and technical skills that not all team members always have. Another obstacle is the limited time to implement socialization to target schools because they have to adjust to the academic schedule of each institution. In addition, the diverse characteristics of the community cause the communication strategies used to not always give the same results in each promotion target area. These various obstacles are challenges that must be faced and managed so that the implementation of digital marketing-based public relations strategies can run optimally.

The results of the study also show that the implementation of a digital marketing-based public relations management strategy has significant implications for improving the image and attractiveness of MAN 3 Cilacap in the community. Based on the results of the interview, the informant explained that it is easier for people today to obtain information about superior programs, student achievements, extracurricular activities, and information on the admission of new students through the digital media used by the madrasah. Publications that are carried out on an ongoing basis make the existence of madrasahs more known by the wider community and strengthen the institution's identity as one of the madrasahs that is active and adaptive to technological developments. The informant said that the increasing number of public interactions on madrasah social media accounts, the number of questions about PPDB submitted through digital media, and the increasing interest of prospective students to obtain further information are indicators of the positive impact of the strategies implemented. The results of the documentation show that content featuring student achievements, extracurricular activities, featured programs, and alumni testimonials received a high response from the community. The findings show that digital marketing-based public relations strategies not only function as a means of promotion, but also play a role in building public trust, strengthening the positive image of the institution, and increasing the attractiveness of MAN 3 Cilacap as an educational option for prospective students and parents.

DISCUSSION

Planning of Public Relations Management Strategy Based on Digital Marketing

The results of the study show that the planning of public relations management strategies is based on *digital marketing* at MAN 3 Cilacap is carried out through coordination meetings, determination of target targets, selection of promotional media, preparation of activity schedules, and design of content publications

before the implementation of PPDB. These findings show that the success of digital marketing strategies depends not only on the use of technology, but also on the quality of planning carried out by educational institutions. From a management perspective, planning is a basic function that determines the direction of the organization and becomes a guideline in the implementation of work programs. The findings of this study are in line with research conducted by Ismail (2026) which states that the success of educational marketing through social media is influenced by the planning of marketing activities that are structured, relevant to the needs of the audience, and able to build the involvement of prospective students through various digital platforms. The research shows that careful content planning can increase the effectiveness of communication between educational institutions and the community. The results of this study also support the findings Septiani (2024) which explains that digital communication strategies designed based on the needs of the target audience are able to increase trust in educational community institutions. In the context of MAN 3 Cilacap, planning does not only focus on disseminating PPDB information, but is also directed at image building institutions through the publication of student achievements, superior programs, and extracurricular activities. These findings provide a perspective that human planning in the digital era has evolved from just an information representation to a strategic process in building the identity and reputation of educational institutions through digital media (Solehah, 2026).

Organizing a Public Relations Management Strategy Based on Digital Marketing

The findings of the study show that the organization of a public relations strategy is based on *digital marketing*. It is carried out through the formation of a promotional team involving elements of public relations, student affairs, teachers, students, and alumni. The division of tasks is carried out based on the competence of each member so that every promotional activity can be carried out effectively. These findings show that the success of digital marketing is not only determined by the technology used, but also by the organization's ability to manage human resources. According to research Fatoni (2023), the success of digital media implementation in educational institutions is greatly influenced by collaboration between stakeholders and the readiness of human resources in managing digital communication. The results of the research at MAN 3 Cilacap strengthen these findings because good coordination between the public relations team, teachers, and students is able to produce various promotional content that is interesting and relevant to the community. In addition, the involvement of alumni as promotional partners shows the breadth of the public relations function that not only relies on internal resources, but also utilizes the social networks owned by the institution. These findings are different from some previous studies that put more emphasis on the role of school management and digital media as the main factors for promotion success. This research shows that alumni can function as effective promotional agents because they have direct experience as graduate institutions and are able to increase the credibility of information received by the public. Therefore, organizing that involves various elements of internal and external institutions is an important factor in strengthening the implementation of digital-based human marketing strategies (Nabila, 2025).

Implementation (*Actuating*) of Public Relations Management Strategy Based on Digital Marketing

The results of the study show that the implementation of digital-based PR marketing strategies at MAN 3 Cilacap is carried out through a combination of digital promotion and direct promotion. Social media such as *Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, WhatsApp, and websites* officially madrassas are used as the main means of disseminating information, while socialization to junior high schools and MTs is still carried out to strengthen direct relations with the community. These findings show that digital transformation in the field of education PR does not completely replace face-to-face communication, but rather integrates both approaches simultaneously. The results of this study are in line with the research Practical (2025) which explains that interactions built through social media can increase public engagement with an organization if supported by interesting, authentic, and relevant content. In this study, it was found that the publication of student achievements, extracurricular activities, superior programs, and religious activities received a higher response than administrative information alone. The findings also support the research (Anggelia, 2025) who found that social media activities that display students' real experiences can increase prospective students' interest in educational institutions. On the other hand, the use of direct promotion shows that interpersonal relationships still have an important role in building public trust. Thus, the implementation of a public relations strategy based on *digital marketing* at MAN 3 Cilacap displays the integration of digital technology and direct communication as a strategy to increase the effectiveness of educational institution promotion (Dedi 2026).

Evaluation (*Control*) of Public Relations Management Strategy Based on Digital Marketing

The findings of the study show that the evaluation was carried out through monitoring social media activities, analyzing community responses, identifying promotion obstacles, and reviewing the number of new students who were successfully recruited. The evaluation is carried out periodically to ensure that the strategy implemented is able to achieve the goals that have been set. The results of this study show that the use of digital media allows educational institutions to obtain more measurable data on the effectiveness of promotion compared to conventional methods. According to Aulia (2023), one of the advantages of digital media is its ability to provide user interaction data that can be used as a basis for decision-making. The findings of this study strengthen this opinion because MAN 3 Cilacap uses the number of impressions, comments, incoming messages, and the level of community involvement as indicators of promotion success. In addition, the results of the evaluation are also used as a basis for developing promotional strategies in the next period. These findings show that evaluation not only functions as a control tool, but also as a means of organizational learning to improve the quality of humanitarian strategies in a sustainable manner. Therefore, evaluation is an important part of ensuring that the implementation of digital marketing can continue to be adjusted to the needs of the community and the development of communication technology (Rachmatsyah, 2025).

Supporting Factors, Inhibiting Factors, and Implications of Digital Marketing-Based Public Relations

Management Strategies

The results of the study show that the success of the PR strategy is based on *digital marketing* Supported by the commitment of madrasah leaders, good teamwork, alumni involvement, student achievements, active extracurricular activities, and the availability of adequate digital media. These findings are in line with research Indriani (2021) which explains that the success of educational marketing is not only determined by the media used, but also by the quality of human resources and the strength of the institution's identity. However, this study also found obstacles in the form of limited human resources in digital media management, high competition between educational institutions, and challenges in maintaining consistency in content production. The findings show that digital transformation in the humanitarian field requires investment not only in technology, but also in the development of human resource competencies. In addition, this study found that the implementation of a digital marketing strategy based on public relations has a positive impact on improving the image and attractiveness of MAN 3 Cilacap. Publications that are carried out on an ongoing basis are able to increase the visibility of institutions, expand the reach of information, and strengthen public trust in the quality of education offered. These findings expand on the results of previous research because they show that digital marketing not only functions as a promotional instrument, but also as a means of strategy in building the reputation and branding of educational institutions in a sustainable manner (Camawi, 2024).

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

CONCLUSION

This study shows that the digital marketing-based public relations management strategy at MAN 3 Cilacap is carried out systematically through four management functions, namely planning, *organizing*, *actuating*, and *controlling*. At the planning stage, madrasahs develop promotional strategies through target identification, digital media selection, content preparation, and scheduling promotional activities. The organizing stage is carried out through the formation of a promotion team involving public relations, students, teachers, students, and alumni with a clear division of tasks according to their respective competencies. At the implementation stage, the promotion strategy is carried out through the integration of digital media such as *Instagram*, *Facebook*, *YouTube*, *WhatsApp*, and madrasah websites with direct promotional activities to target schools. Meanwhile, the evaluation stage is carried out through monitoring the effectiveness of promotional media, community response, and the achievement of new student admission targets.

The findings of the study also show that the success of a digital marketing-based public relations strategy is supported by the commitment of madrasah leaders, good teamwork, alumni involvement, student achievements, active extracurricular activities, and the availability of adequate digital media facilities. On the other hand, the implementation of the strategy still faces several obstacles, such as increasing competition between educational institutions, limited human resources in digital media management, and challenges in maintaining the consistency of promotional content production.

Theoretically, this study strengthens the study of education public relations management by showing that the integration of management functions and *digital marketing* can be an effective approach in building the image and reputation of educational institutions. These findings also expand the literature on Islamic education public relations management by placing digital media as a strategic instrument in building relationships with the community. Practically, this study shows that the planned and sustainable use of digital marketing can increase the visibility of institutions, strengthen public trust, and increase the attraction of new students. In terms of policy, the results of this study indicate the importance of strengthening the capacity of human resources in the field of digital communication and the development of technology-based promotion systems as part of the management strategy of educational institutions that are adaptive to the development of the digital era.

SUGGESTIONS

Based on the results of the research, MAN 3 Cilacap is advised to continue to develop a digital marketing-based public relations management strategy through improving the quality and creativity of digital content that is more innovative, interactive, and in accordance with the characteristics of the digital generation. Madrasah also needs to strengthen the competence of human resources involved in digital media management through training, mentoring, and capacity building in the fields of digital communication, content design, and educational digital marketing. In addition, the optimization of the role of alumni, students, and various other stakeholders needs to be continuously improved in order to expand the reach of promotion and strengthen the positive image of madrasahs in the community.

For education policy makers, the results of this research can be used as a consideration in encouraging digital transformation in the public relations function in educational institutions. Support in the form of strengthening digital infrastructure, increasing technological literacy, and providing digital public relations competency development programs needs to be a concern to support the effectiveness of promotion and public communication of educational institutions.

For the next researcher, it is recommended to conduct research with a wider scope on various types of educational institutions, both public schools and madrasahs, so that a more comprehensive picture is obtained regarding the implementation of digital marketing-based public relations strategies. Further research can also use a *mixed methods* or quantitative approach to more objectively measure the influence of digital marketing strategies on improving the image of institutions, public trust, and the number of new students. In addition, studies on the effectiveness of certain digital platforms, such as *Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, or educational websites*, also need to be conducted to enrich the development of education public relations management theories and practices in the digital era.

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