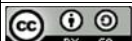


Public Relations Management Strategies in Improving School Image

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ABSTRACT

School image is an important factor in increasing public trust in educational institutions. However, some schools still experience obstacles in building a positive image due to suboptimal public relations management, such as limited public communication, low community involvement, and less than optimal use of information media. This study aims to analyze public relations management strategies in improving school image at Nurul Falah Vocational School in Bondowoso Regency. This study uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive research type. Data collection techniques were carried out through interviews, observation, and documentation involving the principal, public relations team, teachers, education staff, parents, and the surrounding community as research informants. Data analysis was carried out through the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. The results of the study indicate that public relations management strategies at Nurul Falah Vocational School are carried out through systematic public relations program planning, collaborative public communication implementation, and continuous evaluation of school services. The school also utilizes digital media and direct communication in building harmonious relationships with the community. These strategies have a positive impact on increasing public trust, parent participation, and strengthening the school's image as an open, professional, and quality educational institution.

Keywords: Communication Strategy, Public Relations, School Image

INTRODUCTION

Education is a strategic sector in the development of quality and competitive human resources. In the context of national development, education serves not only as a means of transferring knowledge but also as an instrument for character building, skill development, and strengthening national competitiveness. In the era of rapidly developing globalization and digitalization, educational institutions are required to be able to adapt to changes occurring, both in technological and social aspects, as well as community needs. Schools, as formal educational institutions, have a responsibility not only to produce academically superior graduates but also to build public trust through quality services and professional management.¹ As public awareness of the importance of quality education increases, expectations of educational institutions are also rising. People now consider not only academic aspects but also the reputation, transparency, facilities, and quality of services provided by a school. In this context, school image is a key factor influencing public decisions when choosing an educational institution. A positive image will increase public trust and interest, while a negative image can decrease a school's appeal, even if it has good potential. Theoretically, school image represents public perception of the quality, credibility, and reputation of an educational institution.²

¹ Abdul Manaf, "Management of School-Community Relations at SMAN 7, Banjarmasin City," *Journal of Islamic Education Management* 1, no. 1 (2015): 30–40, <https://doi.org/10.18592/moe.v1i1.344>.

² Natalia Bektı Kurniawati and Pardimin Pardimin, "Manajemen Hubungan Sekolah Dengan Masyarakat Dalam Mewujudkan Mutu Pendidikan Sekolah Dasar," *Media Manajemen Pendidikan* 3, no. 3 (2021): 470, <https://doi.org/10.30738/mmp.v3i3.9120>.

Kotler and Keller state that image is a collection of perceptions, beliefs, and impressions formed in the public mind about an organization. This image is not formed instantly, but rather through a long process influenced by experience, information, and interactions between the organization and its public. In the context of education, a school's image is influenced not only by student academic achievement but also by the quality of service, effective communication, information transparency, and the school's ability to establish harmonious relationships with the community.³ However, the reality on the ground shows that many schools still face challenges in building and managing an optimal institutional image. Common phenomena include a lack of transparency in conveying information to the public, limited use of digital media as a means of communication, and low participation of parents and the community in school activities. Furthermore, some schools still lack a clear communication strategy, so public relations activities tend to be administrative, reactive, and unsystematically planned.⁴

In today's digital era, the rapid flow of information also presents a challenge for schools. Poorly managed information can lead to misunderstandings and even damage the institution's image. For example, delays in responding to public issues or complaints can lead to negative perceptions of the school. Conversely, schools that are able to manage information effectively and utilize digital media such as websites and social media will more easily build a positive public image. Therefore, the ability to manage public communications is a necessity that cannot be ignored. In this context, public relations management plays a very strategic role⁵. According to Kotler, public relations is a series of programs designed to build, maintain, and protect an organization's image. Cutlip, Center, and Broom also emphasize that public relations is a management function aimed at building mutually beneficial relationships between an organization and its publics. Meanwhile, Grunig and Hunt, through the concept of symmetrical two-way communication, emphasize the importance of dialogue, openness, and feedback in the organizational communication process. This approach is relevant in the school context to create harmonious relationships with the community and increase public trust.⁶

Thus, the implementation of public relations management in schools still faces various obstacles. Many schools lack strategic public relations planning, do not conduct systematic evaluations, and are unable to integrate various communication activities into a coherent framework. As a result, public relations activities do not significantly impact the school's image. This situation indicates a gap between the ideal concept of public relations management and actual practice. Several previous studies have examined the role of public relations in improving the image of educational institutions. Suryani (2019) found that structured and sustainable public relations program planning positively impacts school image. Hidayat and Nurhayati (2020) demonstrated that two-way communication between schools and parents can increase public trust. Rahmawati (2021) revealed that the use of digital media as a public relations tool significantly contributes to the formation of a positive school image. Meanwhile, Putra (2022) emphasized that the success of a public relations strategy is greatly influenced by the support of leadership and the involvement of the entire school community. However, these

³ Charlie Giovani Gunardi and Rezi Erdiansyah, "Pengaruh Citra Merek Dan Kualitas Pelayanan Terhadap Kepuasan Pelanggan Restoran Mangkok Ku," *Prologia* 3, no. 2 (2019): 456–63.

⁴ Nuraini Nuraini, Muhammad Syaifuddin, and Syahraini Tambak, "Supervisi Hubungan Masyarakat Dalam Membangun Citra Positif Sekolah," *Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan Dan Ilmu Sosial* 3, no. 2 (2022): 849–56, <https://doi.org/10.38035/jmpis.v3i2.1182>.

⁵ Masduki Ahmad, "Manajemen Hubungan Sekolah Masyarakat Dalam Meningkatkan Citra Sekolah Di Masa Pandemi Covid-19 1 Universitas Negeri Jakarta School Community Relationship Management In Improving School Image In The Covid-19 Pandemic Abstract : The Reputation of the School," *IMProvement Jurnal* 8, no. 2 (2021): 55–71.

⁶ Aghna Mar'atul Fitri et al., "Implementasi Strategi Manajemen Hubungan Masyarakat Dalam Membangun Citra Sekolah SDN Lakarsantri II 473," *Jurnal Teknologi Pendidikan* 1, no. 2 (2023): 7, <https://doi.org/10.47134/jtp.v1i2.122>.

studies still tend to discuss public relations aspects separately and have not developed a comprehensive and integrated strategic model.

Based on the above description, it can be identified that there is an urgent need to develop a strategic model of public relations management that is able to address the challenges of managing school image in the digital era. The urgency of this research lies in the importance of presenting a strategic framework that not only focuses on the implementation of public relations activities, but also includes aspects of planning, implementation, and evaluation in an integrated manner. In addition, this research also offers novelty in the form of developing a contextual and applicable public relations management model according to current school needs, so that it can be a solution to the problem of image management that is still partial.⁷

The purpose of this study is to analyze and develop a strategic model for public relations management to improve school image, encompassing the planning, implementation, and evaluation aspects of public relations activities. Furthermore, this study also aims to examine the impact of public relations strategy implementation on school image formation in the eyes of the public. The results of this study are expected to provide theoretical contributions to the development of educational management science, particularly in the field of public relations management, as well as provide practical contributions for schools in improving the quality of public communication management in a professional, effective, and sustainable manner.⁸

RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive research type. This approach was chosen because the study aims to understand and describe in depth the strategic model of public relations management in improving the school's image. Descriptive qualitative research allows researchers to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the processes, strategies, and meanings implemented by schools in building relationships with the community. The study was conducted at Nurul Falah Vocational School, which was selected purposively, with the consideration that the school has active public relations activities and demonstrates various strategic efforts in building a positive image within the community, making it relevant to the research focus.⁹

Data collection techniques were conducted through interviews, observation, and documentation. Interviews were conducted to gather information directly from informants comprising one school principal, one public relations manager, four teachers, three education support staff members, and three representatives of parents or the community regarding the planning, implementation, and evaluation of the school's public relations strategy. Observations were conducted to observe public relations activities and interactions between schools and the community, while documentation was used to supplement data in the form of work programs, activity reports, publication archives, and school communication media. The data obtained were analyzed using an interactive analysis model through the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. To maintain data validity, this study used source triangulation and technical triangulation techniques by comparing data results from various informants and data collection methods used.¹⁰

⁷ Dhea Agustina et al., "Public Relations Strategy in Building a Positive Image and Public Trust at SMP IT Rabbi Radhiyya," *AL-MANAR: Journal of Islamic Communication and Education* 14, no. 2 (2025): 599–614.

⁸ Luthfi Khorotunniswah, "Manajemen Hubungan Masyarakat Dalam Membangun Citra Lembaga," *Jurnal Kependidikan Islam* 10, no. 2 (2020): 176–89, <https://doi.org/10.15642/jkpi.2020.10.2.176-189>.

⁹ Adhi Kusumastuti and Ahmad Mustamil Khoiron, *Metode Penelitian Kualitatif* (Lembaga Pendidikan Sukarno Pressindo (LPSP), 2019).

¹⁰ Abdul Fattah Nasution, "Metode Penelitian Kualitatif" (Harva Creative, 2023).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Strategic Planning of Public Relations at Nurul Falah Vocational School

Based on research results obtained through observation, interviews, and documentation at Nurul Falah Vocational School in Bondowoso Regency, it is known that strategic public relations planning is implemented systematically and purposefully in an effort to improve the school's image within the community. Public relations activities are not only understood as mere public relations activities, but are an important part of supporting the achievement of the school's vision and mission. This data was obtained through interviews with the principal and the public relations team, who explained that each public relations program is always designed based on the needs of the school and the conditions of the surrounding community.

The initial stage of public relations planning involves analyzing the school's situation, both internally and externally. Based on interviews with the deputy head of public relations, the school first identified its potential, including student achievement, teacher competency, school discipline, and community involvement in supporting public relations activities. Furthermore, the school also considered community perceptions, parental expectations, and competition among educational institutions in Bondowoso Regency. One informant stated: "Before developing a public relations program, we usually first assess the community's needs and the school's conditions. This ensures the program is not merely a random program, but one that aligns with the prevailing conditions on the ground."¹¹ This statement indicates that the school's public relations program was developed through a contextual, needs-based approach. The school did not design the program solely as a promotional activity, but as a strategic effort to respond to community expectations, strengthen parental trust, and position the institution competitively among other educational institutions in the region. Thus, the public relations program functioned not only as a communication medium but also as an instrument for building institutional credibility and maintaining the school's relevance within its social environment.

The research also shows that after conducting a situational analysis, the school established a clear strategic public relations objective, namely to build the school's image as a superior, professional vocational education institution capable of responding to community needs. This objective was then translated into various communication targets aimed at both internal and external audiences. Based on interviews with the principal, public relations planning was aimed at fostering public trust in the quality of educational services at Nurul Falah Vocational School.

During the strategy formulation stage, the school developed various public relations programs that were both promotional and preventative. Based on research documentation and observations, these programs included publicizing student achievements, disseminating information about school activities through social media, strengthening relationships with parents and alumni, and collaborating with the community and other institutions. One teacher explained: "*We strive to showcase the school's positive activities to the community, both through social media and in-person events, so that the public is aware of the school's progress.*"¹² This statement shows that the public relations program was intended not only to disseminate information but also to construct a positive institutional image through the systematic communication of school achievements and activities. The use of both digital media and direct community engagement indicates that the school sought to reach different segments of the public effectively. Therefore, the implementation of public relations activities can be

¹¹ Fauzi Ahmad, "Perencanaan Strategis Hubungan Masyarakat Di SMK Nurul Falah" (Bondowoso: wawancara pribadi, 2026).

¹² Fajar Hidayat, "Analisis Situasi, Pihak Sekolah Menetapkan Tujuan Strategis Hubungan Masyarakat Secara Jelas," (Bondowoso, indonesia: wawancara dengan pihak hubungan masyarakat smk nurul falah, 2026).

understood as a strategic effort to strengthen public trust, increase institutional visibility, and build sustainable relationships with parents, alumni, and the wider community.

Furthermore, the research findings indicate that Nurul Falah Vocational School utilizes both digital and conventional communication media to support its public relations activities. Based on the researchers' observations, the school actively uses social media and its official website to disseminate school information. However, the school also continues to utilize conventional media such as brochures, banners, and information boards to ensure information reaches all levels of society. The public relations team explained that the use of various media is intended to make school communications more effective and accessible to the public.

Strategic public relations planning at Nurul Falah Vocational School is also supported by clear coordination and division of tasks among the school community. Interviews revealed that the principal plays a role in strategic policymaking, while the public relations team is responsible for implementing public relations programs. Teachers and educational staff are also involved in building positive communication with the community. One informant stated " *All school residents play a role in maintaining the school's good name, so it's not just the public relations' job.*"¹³ This statement indicates that public relations planning at Nurul Falah Vocational School is understood as a collective institutional responsibility rather than a task limited to a specific unit. The involvement of principals, public relations officers, teachers, and educational staff reflects a collaborative communication strategy in which each school member contributes to shaping and maintaining the school's public image. Thus, the effectiveness of public relations planning depends not only on formal program design, but also on the shared commitment of the entire school community to represent the institution positively in its interactions with the public.

Overall, the research results indicate that strategic public relations planning at Nurul Falah Vocational School has been implemented in a planned and sustainable manner. The planning, based on needs analysis, clear goal setting, communication strategy development, and collaboration among the school community, are crucial factors in building a positive image and increasing public trust in the school.¹⁴

Implementation of Collaborative Public Communication in Building School Image

Based on research results obtained through interviews and observations at Nurul Falah Vocational School, Bondowoso Regency, the implementation of collaborative public communication was carried out in a planned manner and oriented towards building a positive image of the school. Communication activities carried out by the school were not only intended to convey information, but also to build participatory relationships between the school and the community. Research data showed that school public relations actively conveyed various information regarding school programs, student achievements, religious activities, and extracurricular activities through social media, the school website, information boards, and direct communication with the community.

Based on the researchers' observations, the school's social media is actively used to publicize school activities, allowing the public to stay informed about developments and activities. Furthermore, interviews with the public relations team revealed that transparency is a key strategy for building public trust in the school. One informant stated: " *We strive to convey school information openly so that the public is aware of school activities and developments.*

¹³ Rizal Renaldi, "Perencanaan Strategis Hubungan Masyarakat Di SMK Nurul Falah" (Bondowoso, Indonesia, 2026).

¹⁴ Alfi, Badrina. "Perencanaan Strategis Humas Pendidikan Di Era Digital Untuk Optimalisasi Komunikasi Publik Melalui Media Sosial." *Advances In Education Journal* 2, no. 3 (2025): 1651–592025 .

This way, the public will have more trust in the school."¹⁵ This statement indicates that transparency is not merely about sharing information but is a deliberate public relations strategy to strengthen the school's credibility. By openly communicating school programs, achievements, and institutional developments, the school seeks to reduce information gaps between the institution and the community. Therefore, the active use of social media serves as both an information channel and a trust-building tool, supporting a more positive public perception of the school.

The research also shows that the involvement of parents and guardians is a crucial part of implementing collaborative public communication. Based on interviews with parents and the school, Nurul Falah Vocational School regularly holds parent meetings, socializes school programs, and engages families in student development activities. These activities aim to strengthen the relationship between the school and parents, thereby fostering harmonious and open communication. During the research process, researchers found that the two-way communication pattern implemented by the school has a positive impact on the school's relationship with the community. Parents feel involved in the educational process and are more easily able to convey suggestions and complaints to the school. One parent stated: "*The school is always open to parents. If there is information or a problem, it is usually immediately conveyed and a solution is sought together.*"¹⁶ This statement indicates that parental involvement at Nurul Falah Vocational School is not limited to receiving information from the school, but also includes active participation in discussions and the resolution of educational issues. The school's openness reflects a collaborative communication pattern that positions parents as partners in supporting student development. Thus, two-way communication between the school and parents' functions as an important mechanism for strengthening trust, reducing misunderstandings, and creating a more responsive relationship between the institution and the wider school community.

Furthermore, the research results indicate that the school responds quickly to the community's information needs. Based on observations and interviews, the school's public relations team strives to maintain good communication by providing friendly and professional information services. This approach is considered effective in minimizing misunderstandings between the school and the community and strengthening the school's image as an open and communicative educational institution.

However, collaborative public communication is also implemented through collaboration between schools and the business and industrial sectors. Based on documentation and interviews with the school, Nurul Falah Vocational School implements fieldwork internship programs, industrial visits, and aligns learning with workplace needs. These programs have positively impacted public perception of the quality of the school's graduates. One informant explained: "*We collaborate with several businesses and industries to provide students with work experience and skills that meet the needs of the field.*"¹⁷ This statement indicates that collaboration with the business and industrial sectors is not merely a supplementary school program, but a strategic form of public communication that connects the institution with external stakeholders. Through fieldwork internships, industrial visits, and curriculum

¹⁵ Samaneh Alinejad Mofrad, "Media Sosial Sekolah Digunakan Secara Aktif Untuk Mempublikasikan Kegiatan Sekolah Sehingga Masyarakat Dapat Mengetahui Perkembangan Dan Aktivitas Yang Dilakukan Oleh Sekolah." (Bondowoso, indonesia, 2026).

¹⁶ Samaneh Alinejad Mofrad, "Media Sosial Sekolah Digunakan Secara Aktif Untuk Mempublikasikan Kegiatan Sekolah Sehingga Masyarakat Dapat Mengetahui Perkembangan Dan Aktivitas Yang Dilakukan Oleh Sekolah." (Bondowoso, indonesia, 2026).

¹⁷ Miftah Muhammad. "Implementasi Komunikasi Publik Kolaboratif Juga Dilakukan Melalui Kerja Sama Antara Sekolah Dengan Dunia Usaha Dan Industri." Bondowoso: Wawancara dengan Pihak Hubungan Masyarakat, 2026.

alignment, the school demonstrates its responsiveness to labor market demands and strengthens the relevance of vocational education. Thus, this collaboration contributes to building public trust by demonstrating that the school is committed to preparing graduates with practical competencies that meet workplace needs.



Figure 1. Interview documentation

Figure 1 illustrates the direct interaction between school representatives and stakeholders during the data collection process, reflecting the school's commitment to participatory communication. The research also shows that schools actively build relationships with community leaders and participate in social and religious activities in the surrounding area. Based on the researchers' observations, school involvement in community activities creates a more harmonious relationship between the school and the surrounding community. The community views the school as an active part of local social life.

Furthermore, based on interviews and documentation, the implementation of collaborative public communication has had a significant impact on improving the school's image. This is evident in the increasing number of new student enrollments, high community participation in school activities, and alumni loyalty to their alma mater. Public perception of Nurul Falah Vocational School has evolved into an open, communicative school committed to educational quality. One informant stated.¹⁸

Overall, the research results indicate that the implementation of collaborative public communication at Nurul Falah Vocational School has been effective through information transparency, parental involvement, collaboration with the community and industry, and responsive communication services. These strategies are crucial in building and maintaining the school's positive image in the community.¹⁹

Evaluation and Strengthening of Public Trust in Schools

Evaluation and strengthening of public trust in the school at Nurul Falah Vocational School is carried out through a continuous assessment process integrated with the community

¹⁸ Lidiawati, Lidiawati, and M Asif Nur Fauzi. "Budaya Kolaboratif Kepala Sekolah Dalam Membangun Citra Sekolah: Studi Manajemen Kepemimpinan Pendidikan Islam." *EL-BANAT: Jurnal Pemikiran Dan Pendidikan Islam* 15, no. 2 (2025): 554–73.

¹⁹ Astuti, Yani Tri, Nirva Diana, Eti Hadiati, and Syarif Maulidin. "Manajemen Humas Dalam Membangun Citra Sekolah: Studi Multikasus Di SD Muhammadiyah Pringsewu Dan SD IT Cahaya Madani Pringsewu." *DIMAR: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 6, no. 1 (2024): 12–26.

relations program.²⁰ The school conducts periodic evaluations through management meetings, parent-teacher communication forums, and direct dialogue with the surrounding community to determine the level of satisfaction with educational services. The data obtained includes not only complaints but also community expectations and needs regarding the quality of learning, character development, and graduate readiness. The evaluation results are then used as a basis for improving the school's programs, particularly in aspects of information services, student discipline, and coaching effectiveness.²¹

Public trust is also strengthened through transparency in educational information. Schools consistently communicate student academic progress, attendance, behavior, and achievement to parents. This transparency allows the public to understand the educational process in a concrete way, thereby reducing negative prejudice against the institution.²² Furthermore, schools provide easy communication access through direct consultation services, online messaging, and face-to-face meetings, allowing any issues to be resolved quickly and communicatively. This humanistic and persuasive communication pattern makes parents feel valued as educational partners, not simply as service recipients.

Table 1. Evaluation and Strengthening of Public Trust in Schools

No	Aspect	Field Findings	Impact
1	Information Delivery	The school actively conveys information about activities and achievements through social media and direct communication.	The public is more aware of school developments
2	Information Disclosure	The school implements open communication with the community and parents of students.	Increasing public trust in schools
3	Impact of Implementation	The number of new students and community participation increased	The school's positive image is getting stronger in the community
4	Social Relations	The school is active in social and religious activities in the community	The relationship between the school and the community is getting better
5	Communication Services	Public relations provides fast and responsive information services	Reducing misunderstandings between schools and the community

The findings suggest that transparency and responsive communication are the two most influential factors in strengthening public trust. On the other hand, schools strengthen trust through program accountability. Every school activity, whether academic, vocational practice, or religious and social activities, is reported to the community as a form of public accountability. Parental involvement in character building activities, discipline monitoring, and

²⁰ Siregar, Esli Zuraidah, M Sos, M Ag Magdalena, Anas Habibi Ritonga, Nuhariyah Hasibuan, M Sos, Masrul Effendi Umar Harahap, M Sos, Zulfa Noni Yuli Eviyanti, and M M Se. *Strategi Membangun Citra Fakultas Dakwah Dan Ilmu Komunikasi Di Ptkin*. Bypass, 2026.

²¹ Hasanushifah, Muchammad, and Moch Nurcholis. "Strategi Penguatan Hubungan Sekolah Dan Masyarakat Dalam Meningkatkan Mutu Pendidikan." *Jurnal Multidisiplin Ilmu Akademik 2*, no. 5 (2025): 26–35.

²² Wahyudi, Apri, and Idelia Marzuki. "Perencanaan Strategis Untuk Membangun Citra Positif Dan Daya Saing MIN 4 Bandar Lampung Di Era Kompetitif." *JMPA (Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan Al-Multazam)* 7, no. 1 (2025): 82–90.

religious activities also fosters a sense of belonging to the school. This harmonious relationship fosters community support for school policies and minimizes potential conflict between the institution and parents. Evaluation of the success of strengthening trust is evident in tangible indicators, such as increased parent participation in school meetings and activities, an increase in the number of prospective students each year, and the increasing active participation of alumni in supporting educational programs. The community begins to view the school as a professional, open institution, and responsible for student development. Thus, consistent evaluation not only serves to improve the program but also serves as an important strategy in maintaining the school's reputation and sustaining a positive image within the community.²³

The strategic model of public relations management in improving school image shows that the success of educational institutions is not only determined by academic quality, but also by the school's ability to build effective communication with the community. The results of research at Nurul Falah Vocational School show that public relations functions as a strategic part in supporting the achievement of the school's vision and mission through planned, systematic, and sustainable communication management. Public relations planning is carried out through identifying community needs, analyzing the school's internal and external conditions, and mapping stakeholders including parents, students, alumni, and industry partners. This finding is in line with the opinion of Safari and Hikmah who stated that the relationship between schools and the community is a communication process aimed at building cooperation and public support for improving the quality of education.²⁴

Furthermore, the implementation of public relations strategies at Nurul Falah Vocational School emphasizes the importance of open and dialogical two-way communication. The school not only conveys information about educational activities but also provides space for community participation through parent forums, educational consultations, and direct communication between the school and parents. This communication pattern demonstrates a collaborative relationship between the school and the community in supporting the educational process. This finding aligns with the theory of symmetrical two-way communication proposed by Grunig and Hunt, which states that organizations that are able to build open communication with their publics will more easily gain public trust and support. In the educational context, parental and community involvement is a crucial factor in strengthening a school's image because the community feels involved in the decision-making process and the development of school programs.²⁵

The use of digital communication media is also an important part of the school's public relations strategy. Based on research results, Nurul Falah Vocational School actively uses social media and the school website as a means of publishing information and promoting school activities. The use of digital media makes it easier for the public to obtain information regarding student achievements, learning activities, and other school programs quickly and openly. This condition indicates that the development of digital technology has a significant influence on the communication patterns of educational institutions with the public.²⁶ The results of this study align with research by Alfi, which states that social media is a strategic tool in building a positive image of educational institutions because it can reach a wider community and increase the effectiveness of public communication. Thus, the use of digital media functions

²³ Dhea Agustina et al., "Public Relations Strategy in Building a Positive Image and Public Trust at SMP IT Rabbi Radhiyya," *AL-MANAR: Journal of Islamic Communication and Education* 14, no. 2 (2025): 599–614.)

²⁴ Safari, Haris Maulana, and Nurul Hikmah. "Strategi Humas Di SDIT Mujahidul Amin: Membangun Branding Lembaga Pendidikan Islam." *Edu Society: Jurnal Pendidikan, Ilmu Sosial Dan Pengabdian Kepada Masyarakat* 5, no. 1 (2025): 832–38.

²⁵ Hasanushifah, Muchammad, and Moch Nurcholis. "Strategi Penguatan Hubungan Sekolah Dan Masyarakat Dalam Meningkatkan Mutu Pendidikan." *Jurnal Multidisiplin Ilmu Akademik* 2, no. 5 (2025): 26–35.

²⁶ Ramadhani, Desvananda, and Muhamad Sholeh. "Evaluasi Implementasi Program Proyek Penguatan Profil Pelajar Pancasila (P5) Tema Suara Demokrasi Untuk Fase F." *Inspirasi Manajemen Pendidikan* 11, no. 4 (2023): 1023–34.

not only as a tool for disseminating information but also as a medium for building school branding amidst increasingly competitive educational competition.

On the other hand, school collaboration with the business and industrial world is a crucial strategy in enhancing the professional image of vocational schools. Fieldwork internship programs, industrial visits, and curriculum alignment with the needs of the workplace demonstrate that schools strive to produce graduates who are relevant to the needs of society and the job market. This finding supports research by Fatimah, who explained that external relations between educational institutions and various parties, including the industrial world, can strengthen the institution's reputation and increase public trust in the quality of graduates. For vocational schools, good relations with the business and industrial world are important indicators in building an image as an educational institution capable of producing competent and work-ready graduates.²⁷

The research also shows that school involvement in social and religious activities in the community contributes positively to the formation of the school's image. School participation in community activities demonstrates that educational institutions not only focus on academic aspects, but also have social concern for the surrounding environment. A harmonious relationship between schools and the community creates a positive perception that schools are an important part of the community's social life.²⁸ This is in line with research by Sri et al. (2025) which states that school participation in social activities can strengthen social legitimacy and improve the image of educational institutions in the eyes of the community. Thus, the image of the school is not only built through academic achievement, but also through the school's real contribution to the community's social life.

Evaluation of the implementation of public relations strategies is conducted periodically through evaluation meetings, parent-teacher communication forums, and analysis of public response to school services. These evaluations aim to determine the level of public satisfaction and serve as a basis for improving the quality of educational services. The results of the study indicate that schools strive to maintain consistent communication and increase responsiveness to community needs. This finding aligns with Amalia and Sudadi, who stated that public relations evaluations are necessary to maintain the stability of the school's image and ensure that communication programs remain relevant to community needs. Through ongoing evaluation, schools can address deficiencies and improve the quality of public relations more effectively.²⁹

Furthermore, this study confirms that a school's image is formed through the accumulation of positive community experiences with the educational services provided by the school. Information transparency, responsive service, humanistic communication, and community involvement in school activities are key factors in building a positive reputation for educational institutions. Therefore, public relations management at Nurul Falah Vocational School serves not only as a promotional tool for the school but also as a managerial strategy in building public trust, strengthening social relations with the community, and maintaining the sustainability of the school's positive image in the long term. This finding supports the opinion of Hasanushifah and Nurcholis who stated that school-community relations strategies play a crucial role in improving educational quality while strengthening the competitiveness of educational institutions in the modern era.

²⁷ Fatimah, Thalita Syifa. "Studi Kualitatif Tentang Peran Public Relations Dalam Membangun Citra Institusi Pendidikan Tinggi Swasta." *BCPR Research: Business Communication and Public Relations Journal* 1, no. 1 (2025): 10–23.

²⁸ Sri, Ita, Lailatul Fitriyah, Dwi Cahyo Kurniawan, Ima Widiyanah, and Karwanto Karwanto. "Strategi Manajemen Humas Dalam Meningkatkan Citra Sekolah Di SMPN 16 Surabaya." *Jurnal Penelitian* 10, no. 3 (2025): 227–45.

²⁹ Rizka Amalia and Sudadi Sudadi, "Strategi Humas Dalam Membangun Kepercayaan Publik Terhadap Mutu Pendidikan Di Sekolah," *Jurnal MappesonA* 8, no. 2 (2025): 97–106.

CONCLUSION

Public relations management at Nurul Falah Vocational School plays a strategic role in building and maintaining a positive image of the school through open, collaborative, and ongoing communication. The success of public relations management is determined not only by the delivery of information to the public, but also by the school's ability to build harmonious relationships with various parties, such as parents, the community, the business and industry sectors, and alumni. Effective communication, information transparency, and community involvement are crucial factors in increasing public trust in the school, enabling the educational institution to maintain a positive reputation amidst increasingly competitive educational markets.

This study still has limitations because it was conducted at only one educational institution, so the results cannot generally describe the condition of all schools. Furthermore, the study focused more on public relations strategies for building school image without examining in-depth the impact of digital technology use on the effectiveness of school public communication. Therefore, future research is expected to expand the research location, use a more diverse approach, and examine digital-based public relations strategies to obtain more comprehensive results relevant to current educational developments.

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