



Journal of Frontiers in Multidisciplinary Research

Communication Model on Social Media in Building the Image of the Yaspida Sukabumi Islamic Boarding School

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Article Info

E-ISSN: 3050-9726

P-ISSN: 3050-9718

Volume: 06

Issue: 02

July – December 2025

Received: 26-05-2025

Accepted: 21-06-2025

Published: 23-07-2025

Page No: 207-212

Abstract

This research departs from the phenomenon of increasing need for Islamic boarding schools to build a positive image in the digital era. The Yaspida Sukabumi Islamic Boarding School faces challenges in the form of negative stigma from the community, especially related to the issue of violence and low competitiveness of graduates. However, on the other hand, social media offers a great opportunity as a communication space to introduce a more open, adaptive, and up-to-date face of Islamic boarding schools. The purpose of this study is to analyze the communication model used by the Yaspida Sukabumi Islamic Boarding School in building a positive image through social media and identifying effective communication strategies in forming public trust. The method used is a qualitative approach with a case study design. Data was collected through in-depth interviews, participatory observations, and documentation. Interactive analysis techniques are used to process data so that a deep understanding of communication practices is obtained. The results of the study show that pesantren applies a two-way and interactive communication model by utilizing storytelling strategies, visual content, live streaming, and the involvement of students in digital content production. Professional, responsive, and transparent communication has been proven to be able to form positive public perceptions. In addition, the stimulus-response communication model plays an important role because every content uploaded triggers audience interaction in the form of comments, likes, and shares. In conclusion, social media functions not only as a communication tool, but also as a strategic instrument to strengthen the existence of Islamic boarding schools in the midst of competition from educational institutions. The implication is that value-based communication management is the key to building a credible and sustainable positive image. The next research is expected to expand the study on comparisons between Islamic boarding schools or explore the use of other digital technologies in the management of pesantren communication.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.54660/JFMR.2025.6.2.207-212>

Keywords: Communication Model, Social Media, Positive Image of Islamic Boarding Schools, Digital Strategy, Yaspida Islamic Boarding School Sukabumi

Introduction

The use of social media in Indonesia has increased significantly. Based on data from data.boks.katadata.co.id, the number of social media users in 2024 will reach 191 million people or equivalent to 73.7% of the total active internet users of 167 million (Pangabea, 2024) ^[16]. This dynamic requires Islamic boarding schools to be able to respond to various public questions related to responsibility, capability, and resilience in facing the era of globalization (Ciptadi & Tobroni, 2025; Ijudin & Nenden Munawaroh, 2021; Yusuf, 2025) ^[2, 7, 27].

However, there is still a lot of negative stigma against Islamic boarding schools. This stigma is often associated with the low quality of education so that graduates are considered less able to compete with public educational institutions (Ananda *et al.*, 2025) ^[1]. This negative view is also reinforced through news in the mass media, both print and online (Nasir, 2024) ^[15]. The weak branding of Islamic educational institutions on social media has also worsened this condition. Previous research shows that the use of social media by Islamic boarding schools still faces problems, one of which is the difficulty in managing content that not only focuses on da'wah, but also student activities and other important information (Maulana, 2024) ^[11].

A positive image is one of the benchmarks for the success of educational institutions because it is closely related to public trust (Wahid, 2023) ^[25]. However, cases of violence in Islamic boarding schools also strengthen negative stigmas. Data from the Indonesian Education Monitoring Network (JPPI) in 2024 recorded 206 cases of violence in religious-based institutions, including 114 cases in Islamic boarding schools (Sigi & Hasani, 2021) ^[23]. These various forms of violence create public concern, especially for parents who do not know the pesantren environment directly. To overcome these negative views, a transparent, accountable, and comprehensive communication strategy is needed. Strategic measures include improving the quality of education, positive information campaigns, cooperation with the media, building relationships with communities, and implementing violence prevention policies (Haromain, 2023; Kurli, 2023) ^[8].

In addition to cases of violence, bullying is also a real problem in Islamic boarding schools (Ramhan, 2023). The form can be physical (kicks, punches, pushes), verbal (ridicule, insults), and social (ostracization, sarcasm). The causative factors include lack of supervision, a contagious bullying culture, a lack of clear rules, and a lack of prevention education. The impact can cause insecurity, depression, and long-term behavioral problems. This condition emphasizes the need for a transparent and proactive communication strategy through social media to strengthen the positive image of the Islamic boarding school.

On the other hand, the development of educational institutions in Indonesia shows a rapid increase. The Ministry of Religious Affairs noted that there were 39,551 Islamic boarding schools with the number of students reaching 4.9 million in the odd semester of the 2023/2024 school year (Maarif, 2023). This condition shows that there is fierce competition between educational institutions, so the role of social media in forming a positive image of pesantren is increasingly important. Yaspida Sukabumi Islamic Boarding School as one of the boarding school-based educational institutions uses social media to convey information, share content in the form of photos and videos of student activities, articles, and alumni testimonials. This effort is a form of communication strategy in building a positive existence and image in the eyes of the public. This research focuses on the analysis of communication models on social media in building the image of the Yaspida Sukabumi Islamic Boarding School.

Method

This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study method to deeply understand the communication process and

strategies used by the Yaspida Sukabumi Islamic Boarding School in building an image through social media. The qualitative approach was chosen because it allows for contextual and interpretive exploration of social realities (Creswell & Poth, 2018) ^[3], while case studies provide flexibility in exploring the internal dynamics of the organization comprehensively.

The location of the research was determined at the Yaspida Islamic Boarding School, Sukabumi, West Java, with a purposive sampling technique because this pesantren actively uses social media as a means of external communication. The research was carried out for three months, namely January to March 2025. Data was collected through three main techniques, namely in-depth interviews with social media managers, principals, students, alumni, and followers of Yaspida accounts to understand communication goals and public perception; participatory observation of digital activities and content on Yaspida's official accounts such as Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, and YouTube; as well as documentation in the form of digital archives, including content uploads, comments, and interaction statistics.

The collected data was analyzed using the interactive analysis model of Miles *et al.* (2014) ^[13], which included three stages, namely data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawn. To maintain validity, this study applied triangulation of sources and methods and conducted member checking of key informants. Ethical aspects are also considered, including by maintaining the confidentiality of participants' identities, obtaining informant consent, and ensuring that data is used only for academic purposes. With this approach, the research is expected to fully describe how the Yaspida Islamic Boarding School utilizes social media in building a positive image as an Islamic educational institution in the digital era.

Results and Discussion

The information obtained in the field is the result of the researcher's findings as well as from the procedure that has directed to dig up information about the facts and realities in the field, then from the findings obtained through the process of observation, observation, interview and documentation so that the researcher will explain all information in accordance with the situation in the Darussyifa Al-Fithroh Islamic Boarding School.

Result

The Communication Model Used by the YASPIDA Sukabumi Islamic Boarding School in Building an Image in the Community

Communication plays an important role in daily life, because everyone interacts with each other at all times, both with themselves and with others. In communicating, a communication model is needed as a picture that shows the relationship between one component of communication and another. Communication models are made to make it easier to understand the communication process. Therefore, in the use of social media, the communication model must be determined so that the purpose of the communication can be conveyed to the community so as to form a good image for the Islamic boarding school, as the results of information obtained from the Head of Division. IT and Head of Department. Public Relations of the Darussyifa Al-Fitroh Sukabumi Islamic Boarding School, as follows:

Based on the Results of Interviews with Informants, it was Stated that:

... To build a good communication model on social media, of course, it is necessary to have digital infrastructure and the IT field plays an important role in it so that the content management system delivers information quickly and efficiently. In addition, digital communication strategies also need to be carried out so that the specified communication model can reach the target audience such as choosing the right platform, content publication time, and managing interaction with followers. Then, content production and management also need to be done to build communication on social media and the IT field should produce interesting visual and audio-visual content, such as videos of student activities, lectures for kyai or ustad/ustadah at Islamic boarding schools during recitations and the most important attraction is the documentation of the achievements of Islamic boarding schools because quality content can increase the attractiveness and credibility of the boarding school YASPIDA Islamic boarding school in the eyes of the general public. We, in the IT field, also play a role in analyzing social media data such as engagement, reach, and insight) to be able to evaluate the effectiveness of the communication campaigns carried out and the results of this evaluation help determine the next steps so that the image of the YASPIDA Islamic Boarding School is more positive. Apart from all that was mentioned earlier, data and digital information security is also our responsibility in the IT field, namely, ensuring that Islamic boarding school social media accounts are safe from misuse or cyber attacks that can damage the image of the Islamic boarding school. And most importantly, we in the IT field always try to make digital innovations in communicating on social media, such as conducting Live Streaming activities that are ongoing at Islamic Boarding Schools, as well as the use of chatbots for new student registration information. This innovation certainly looks modern and responsive. ... (HSWIT ABMN, 17/05/25)

Another Opinion was also Conveyed by the Informant that:

... Building a strategy in communication is the main target so that the image of the institution is good in the eyes of the community at large, namely by forming two-way communication, the term we use is two-way communication where we as admins in every platform that holds social media accounts of Islamic Boarding Schools must interact by opening a dialogue space so that we do not only provide one-way information but we do interactions such as answering comments or giving messages directly to the community. Then, provide useful content such as live streaming of Q&A activities with *asatdzah* because this can increase closeness and public trust in YASPIDA. In addition, the communication model we use is storytelling such as short video content or articles in telling inspiring stories of students, the journey of successful alumni and even the history of Islamic boarding schools. The content we provide is in the form of visuals and audio-visuals by using graphic design, infographics, quality photos or documentary videos to

convey messages in an interesting way that makes it easier to convey messages. Even in YASPIDA itself, students/students who like IT are involved to contribute to communication on social media.... (HSWIT RHMN, 17/05/25)

A Similar Statement was also Conveyed by Another Informant who Stated that:

The communication model carried out by YASPIDA is certainly an interactive, innovative and creative communication model so that the purpose of the information conveyed can be received effectively and efficiently. Because basically the purpose of communication on social media is to build a positive image and public trust in Islamic Boarding Schools as Islamic educational institutions that are relevant, open and adaptive to the times. With a two-way communication model between us *pesantren* as informants and audiences or followers on social media can expand networks and support by utilizing social media strategically and communicatively, *pesantren* not only maintain its existence but are able to appear as a modern institution but still based on Islamic values and local culture... (HSWHMS NIRMA, 5/19/25)

Similar Questions were also asked by the informant:

... Basically, the communication model applied by YASPIDA is that it can provide stimulus-responses as a process of actions that occur based on the content that has been uploaded on social media of the Islamic boarding school. In the context of communication, a stimulus is a message or content published by a party (in this case), while a response is the reaction of the audience or social media user to the content. This reaction can be in the form of comments, likes, shares, reposts, or even a change in perception and attitude towards the *pesantren*. Social media is interactive and real-time, so every piece of content uploaded directly triggers a response from the audience, both verbally (comments) and non-verbal (emoji reactions or number of views). Thus, the communication model in social media is no longer one-way like conventional media, but rather an interactive pattern based on actions and reactions that continue to repeat and influence each other.... (HSWHMS MFS, 5/19/25)

The communication model used by the Darussyifa Al-Fitroh Sukabumi Islamic Boarding School is interactive communication known as two-way communication. The communication model used on social media (*pesantren* accounts) of the IT and Public Relations team first forms a digital infrastructure so that the content management system enables the delivery of information quickly and efficiently. This two-way communication model is applied in order to provide stimulus-responses as actions and reactions to the content that has been posted on social media of the Islamic boarding school. Therefore, the communication model applied is no longer one-way but affects each other. Thus, the existence of the YASPIDA Islamic boarding school itself has a good image in the community.

Image of YASPIDA Sukabumi Islamic Boarding School on Social Media

Image is an impression received by a person based on conformity with the facts that occur in the field. To know the image that a person has of an object, it can be known from the attitude and perception of that person towards an object. (Rain, 2024) The image of Islamic boarding schools on social media is very important (the urgency is high) because social media is currently the main means of communication used by the wider community. Social media is a space to show that pesantren are not outdated, but are actually able to adapt to technological developments. This is important to build the impression that pesantren is a modern and open institution. A positive image on social media can attract the attention of parents and prospective students who are looking for information online. Visual content, student testimonials, daily activities, and pesantren achievements can be an attraction in itself. A good image makes it easier for Islamic boarding schools to collaborate with various parties: alumni, donors, government institutions, and other educational institutions. This is important to support the sustainable development of pesantren with a strong and active image on social media, pesantren can immediately respond to issues or negative news circulating and provide quick and appropriate clarification.

Thus, building the image of Islamic boarding schools on social media is not just an option, but a strategic need so that Islamic boarding schools continue to exist, be trusted, and develop in the midst of the dynamics of today's digital society. The explanation that has been described above is in line with the information obtained by the researcher in interviews with several information in the field of public relations and the community (guardian of students) of the Darussyifa Al-Fitroh Islamic Boarding School, which is as follows:

As Information Obtained by the Researcher from Several Informants, who stated that:

... Social media as a means of communication that is very effective, fast, and wide-reaching in today's digital era. Because with social media, information can be conveyed in real-time and reach diverse audiences, without being limited by space and time. Social media is a flexible means of communication for various purposes, both promotion, education, da'wah and even clarification, and if social media is used properly, it can be a powerful branding tool and increase public trust in the Islamic boarding school itself by paying attention to the ethical value, the truth of information, and the goals to be achieved in sharing or uploading content to social media platforms.... (HSWHMS RHMN, 5/17/25)

Another informants also said that:

... The effectiveness of content posted on social media in conveying information depends largely on how the content is structured and who the target audience is. In some cases, content created with a good communication strategy can be very on target, but there are also those that are less effective because they do not consider the characteristics of the audience. Social media can be a means of being right on target, as long as the content management is carried out in a planned manner and adjusted to the characteristics of the target audience. Therefore, those of us who are interactive in the use of

social media in Islamic boarding schools always consider every content or article uploaded both in the language style, content that does touch with life that is being felt or issues that are developing, as well as accuracy in the delivery of information. All this is because we have to maintain the good name and image of the YASPIDA Islamic boarding school.... (HSWHMS NIRMA, 5/19/25)

The Same Thing was also Conveyed by the Informant (Guardian of the Students) who said that:

... Of course, the influence must be there, although yes, maybe not significant, which I feel, both personally and for my children, after seeing content or information on social media belonging to the Yaspidaofficial Islamic Boarding School. Well, because social media is currently one of the sources of information that is very fast and easily accessible. There is a lot of content that provides new knowledge, religious insights, moral values, and motivations that we may not have known before, such as, lecture content, quotes from Qur'anic verses, or hadith that are delivered in a light and easy-to-understand manner, videos about pesantren activities, inspirational stories, or tips for educating children in Islam can be a practical guide and through social media the official Yaspida Islamic boarding school also introduces many humanitarian and social issues that foster a sense of empathy... (HSWWLS YD, 11/05/25)

Another Informants also states that:

... I have a positive view of Islamic boarding schools that actively communicate through social media. This shows that pesantren is able to keep up with the times without abandoning Islamic values and traditions. The activities of the pesantren shared on social media make the public know and trust more about the activities carried out, showing openness and transparency. And also gives a positive light to the image of the Islamic boarding school from the content that has been uploaded.... (HSWWLS LLS, 5/13/25).

The Same Thing was also Conveyed by other Informants, namely:

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Pembahasan

Based on the results of research at the Yaspida Sukabumi Islamic Boarding School, it can be seen that the communication model through social media has a significant role in shaping the positive image of the pesantren in the eyes of the public. This is in line with the views of Herman and Efendi who emphasized that social media provides a great opportunity for Islamic boarding schools to publish achievements, achievements, and various positive activities so that they can increase public trust. Through social media, pesantren can appear more open, communicative, and adaptive, thereby strengthening their position as dynamic Islamic educational institutions that are in line with the times (Muid *et al.*, 2024; Son, 2025; Yanti, 2022) ^[14, 26].

These findings are relevant if they are associated with Shannon and Weaver's (1949) model of communication, known as the linear communication model. The model describes the five main elements of communication, namely sender, message, channel, receiver, and noise. In the context of Yaspida, the sender is the pesantren as the manager of social media accounts, messages in the form of published content such as student activities, achievements, or Islamic values (Sari, 2025) ^[21], channels are social media platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, Facebook, and YouTube, the recipients are the wider community including prospective students, parents, and alumni, while the distractions include misleading information, negative stigma, or messages that are less attractive and not attractive according to the characteristics of the audience (Daniati, 202; Faqih, 2024) ^[5]. Although Shannon and Weaver's (1949) model is linear, communication practices in social media allow for more dynamic two-way interactions (Rina *et al.*, 2024; Swarna *et al.*, 2024) ^[20, 24]. Therefore, this model can be developed in the direction of interactive communication, where pesantren and audiences connect with each other in repetitive patterns of action and reaction. The essence of this model remains relevant, which is that the success of communication is greatly influenced by the clarity of the message, the accuracy of the channel, and the lack of interference. With good management of these elements, the positive image that Yaspida Islamic Boarding School seeks through social media can be achieved more effectively.

Conclusion

Based on the findings and discussions, it can be concluded that the Darussyifa Al-Fitroh Sukabumi Islamic Boarding School has implemented a two-way communication model through social media effectively. This communication allows for stimulus-response interactions between pesantren and the community, thus forming dynamic and mutually influencing communication. With the support of digital infrastructure and an organized content management system, pesantren are able to convey information quickly, efficiently, and in a targeted manner. This has a positive impact on the image of Islamic

boarding schools, where people view Islamic boarding schools as institutions that are open, adaptive to technology, and have transparency in communication. Social media has proven to be an important communication strategy in building public trust and strengthening pesantren branding in the digital era.

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