

Madrasah Digital Reputation Management Model: The Synergy of Transformational Leadership and Digital Branding Strategies

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ABSTRACT

The rapid digital transformation of the modern education sector heavily demands that Islamic educational institutions, specifically madrasahs, adapt their public communication strategies to maintain global competitiveness. This study aims to comprehensively analyze the strategic role of madrasah principals in enhancing institutional reputation through social media, utilizing the combined perspectives of transformational leadership and digital reputation management. Employing a qualitative descriptive-analytical approach, primary data were meticulously collected through in-depth interviews with principals and public relations teams, netnographic digital observation of official social media platforms, and documentation analysis. The findings reveal that madrasah principals effectively act as digital strategic leaders who formulate ethical, Islamic-based digital branding policies. Furthermore, these policies are executed through highly consistent educational content management, achievement-based storytelling, and professional visual branding. Consequently, this strategic execution fosters an authentic two-way dialogic communication culture, significantly increasing public engagement, stakeholder trust, and brand equity. The study successfully synthesizes these interrelated elements into a novel conceptual model of Digital Reputation Management. This model demonstrates a virtuous circle where active digital engagement directly elevates institutional competitiveness. Ultimately, this research implies that highly effective madrasah leadership requires integrating technological vision with spiritual values to sustainably navigate the digital era.

Keywords: Transformational Leadership, Institutional Reputation, Social Media, Digital Branding, Madrasah.

INTRODUCTION

The development of human civilization has now entered the gates of the Society 5.0 era, a human-centered society that is highly integrated with cutting-edge technological advancements. In this ever-changing landscape, the world of education is required to adapt rapidly. Digitalization can no longer be viewed merely as a supplementary instrument; rather, it has become an ecosystem that fundamentally transforms how educational institutions operate, interact, and deliver their values to the wider community. This transformation

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necessitates Islamic educational institutions, such as madrasahs, to shift from rigid and conventional administrative governance paradigms toward a more dynamic and technology-based approach.¹ Madrasahs now face a dual challenge: on the one hand, they must ensure that academic quality and the preservation of Islamic spiritual values remain firmly upheld, while on the other hand, they must be capable of demonstrating managerial agility amidst increasingly open global competition.

In such a highly competitive modern educational constellation, the reputation of an educational institution emerges as a highly crucial strategic variable in determining the institution's sustainability and competitiveness.² In the past, a school's reputation generally grew naturally and gradually through word-of-mouth communication within the local community. However, in today's era of information disruption, reputation is a social construction that is actively and rapidly mediated by communication technology, particularly through social media platforms.³ Social media has dismantled geographical boundaries and enabled madrasahs to reach a much broader audience, while simultaneously showcasing the quality of the services they offer in real-time. Therefore, contemporary educational institutions have no choice but to adopt well-planned public relations and digital marketing strategies. This step has become a managerial imperative for institutions to maintain their social legitimacy, build positive brand equity, and nurture public trust, which ultimately leads to public interest in the institution.⁴

Shifting to internal institutional dynamics, successful madrasah governance architecture in the digital era cannot be separated from the vital role of a leader. The madrasah principal is a central figure and key actor who holds the authority in determining the direction of strategic policies and facilitating the comprehensive integration of technology into institutional operations.⁵ Facing the complexities of interactions and public demands in cyberspace, a purely bureaucratic or authoritarian leadership style is no longer adequate. Institutions require a figure capable of applying the principles of transformational leadership. Through the formulation of a clear digital vision, the capacity to provide intellectual stimulation, and the ability to motivate the entire ranks of educators and staff, a madrasah principal can dismantle cultural resistance to the utilization of new technologies.⁶ More than merely leading administrative processes, a transformative madrasah principal has proven capable of synergizing digital tool innovations with noble religious values—such as

¹ Makherus Sholeh et al., “Madrasah Principal Leadership in Digital Transformation at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah: A Case Study,” *Dinamika Ilmu* 22, no. 1 (2022): 151–66, <https://doi.org/10.21093/di.v22i1.4241>.

² Siti Aminah et al., “Strategic Public Relations as a Driver of Institutional Positioning and Competitive Advantage in Higher Education,” *Business and Applied Management Journal* 3, no. 2 (2025): 195–208, <https://doi.org/10.61987/bamj.v3i2.1641>.

³ Ahmad Fauzi et al., “The Influence of Social Media on Public Relations as a Reinforcement of Higher Education Reputation,” *Managere: Indonesian Journal of Educational Management* 7, no. 1 (2025): 91–101, <https://doi.org/10.52627/managere.v7i1.650>.

⁴ Kurnia Alkafi et al., “Theoretical and Empirical Analysis of Relational Marketing in Educational Institutions: A Literature Review,” *Journal of Educational Management Research* 4, no. 6 (2025): 2736–50, <https://doi.org/10.61987/jemr.v4i6.1452>; Toetik Wulyatiningsih and Deske W. Mandagi, “A Systematic Review of Strategic Brand Management in Educational Institution: Towards an Integrative Approach,” *EDUKASIA Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Pembelajaran* 4, no. 2 (2023): 2961–72, <https://doi.org/10.62775/edukasia.v4i2.706>.

⁵ Tabroni Tabroni and A. A. Musyaffa Musyaffa, “The Digitization of Madrasah Administration: Relationship between Transformational Leadership and Technology Implementation in Jambi,” *AL-ISHLAH: Jurnal Pendidikan* 17, no. 4 (2025): 5846–57, <https://doi.org/10.35445/alishlah.v17i4.8880>.

⁶ Sulis Maryati, “Kepemimpinan Transformasional Kepala Madrasah Dalam Meningkatkan Mutu Pendidikan Islam Di Era Digital,” *IQRO: Journal of Islamic Education* 8, no. 2 (2025): 910–20, <https://doi.org/10.24256/iqro.v8i2.8384>.

honesty, trustworthiness (*amanah*), and transparency—ultimately giving rise to a public communication ecosystem that is ethical, agile, and highly competitive.⁷

The discourse surrounding the digitalization of educational institutions and the role of leadership styles has attracted significant interest from academics, yielding various relevant prior studies. As a foundational baseline, research conducted by Zainul et al. (2026)⁸ on the optimization of digital platforms in madrasahs found that the utilization of official social media and websites is a crucial step as a promotional instrument to boost the competitive advantage of madrasahs through public interaction spaces. In line with these findings, a study by Hadrianingtyas and Haq (2026)⁹ also proved that public relations management strategies capable of capitalizing on social media dynamics—including involving students and teachers as school content creators—have proven highly effective in elevating brand identity and educational visibility. In the context of education with deeply rooted traditions such as Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*), research by Khumairotusshiyamah et al. (2026)¹⁰ confirmed that the execution of digital branding on social media, which consistently displays educational activities and religious life, has successfully modernized the institution's image significantly, without degrading the dignity of its religious traditions in the slightest. From the perspective of leadership effectiveness, empirical research by Herdiaty and Widjaja (2025)¹¹ and Maryati (2025)¹² convincingly concluded that transformational leadership acts as the main catalyst enabling structural madrasah reform and a comprehensive surge in performance in this era of digital disruption.

Although the significance of digitalization, public relations practices, and managerial innovation has been extensively discussed in various literature, a critical review indicates that there is still a void in current academic studies. Most research on madrasah leadership still tends to focus its discussion partially on internal operational aspects, resolving staff dynamics, or merely enhancing pedagogical motivation. On the other hand, literature addressing the utilization of school social media often positions digital platforms solely as a matter of technical public relations and mere information dissemination. Not many studies have specifically and integratively woven these two central dimensions together to comprehensively examine how the essence of transformational leadership from a madrasah principal is converted into a digital reputation management strategy. It is this academic void (*research gap*) that this study seeks to address. Therefore, this study is formulated with the aim of conducting an in-depth analysis of the strategic role of madrasah principals in enhancing

⁷ Rinta Ratnawati et al., “TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP OF MADRASAH PRINCIPALS BASED ON ISLAMIC VALUES: AN INTEGRATIVE MODEL FOR TEACHER COMPETENCY DEVELOPMENT IN THE DIGITAL ERA,” *Reflektika* 20, no. 1 (2025): 31–56, <https://doi.org/10.28944/reflektika.v20i1.2077>; Didi Sartika et al., “The Influence of Visionary Leadership, Digital Marketing, and Digital Culture on Competitiveness at Institut Agama Islam Negeri (IAIN) Takengon,”

Tadbir: Jurnal Studi Manajemen Pendidikan 10, no. 1 (2026): 273–86, <https://doi.org/10.29240/jsmp.v10i1.16184>.

⁸ Mohammad Zainul et al., “Optimizing Social Media and School Websites for Promotional Branding in Indonesian Madrasahs: Achieving Competitive Advantage in the Digital Era,” *Munaddhomah: Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan Islam* 7, no. 1 (2026): 28–43, <https://doi.org/10.31538/munaddhomah.v7i1.2170>.

⁹ Balqis Hadrianingtyas and Mohammad Syahidul Haq, “Elevating School Brand Identity: Strategic PR Optimization Through Social Media Dynamics,” *Journal of Educational Management Research* 5, no. 2 (2026): 1879–92, <https://doi.org/10.61987/jemr.v5i2.1964>.

¹⁰ Unzilah Khumairotusshiyamah et al., “Digital Branding Strategies of Islamic Boarding Schools: A Social Media Marketing Content Analysis,” *Journal of Educational Management Research* 5, no. 3 (2026): 3330–44, <https://doi.org/10.61987/jemr.v5i3.2059>.

¹¹ Intan Shella Herdiaty and Anton Wachidin Widjaja, “The Impact of Transformational Leadership on Digital Transformation Towards Madrasah Reform and Performance,” *Indonesian Interdisciplinary Journal of Sharia Economics (IJJSE)* 8, no. 2 (2025): 5294–307, <https://doi.org/10.31538/ijse.v8i2.6301>.

¹² Maryati, “Kepemimpinan Transformasional Kepala Madrasah Dalam Meningkatkan Mutu Pendidikan Islam Di Era Digital.”

institutional reputation through social media optimization, framing it within the perspectives of transformational leadership and strategic educational management.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach with a descriptive-analytical design that specifically adapts the principles of digital observation to explore the institutional communication ecosystem in cyberspace.¹³ The use of a qualitative approach is deemed the most relevant for deeply dissecting the phenomena of leadership and complex social interaction dynamics in the digital space.¹⁴ The research subjects were determined using a purposive sampling technique, which included the madrasah principal as the primary actor formulating strategic policies, as well as the public relations (PR) team and social media managers as the operational technical executors.

Data collection was carried out through a multimodal approach to ensure the depth and validity of the information. The data collection techniques encompassed three main methods: (1) semi-structured in-depth interviews to explore the transformational leadership vision, decision-making processes, and managerial policies related to digitalization; (2) digital observation of activities on the madrasah's official social media platforms (such as Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube) to monitor upload frequency, content categorization, and audience engagement metrics;¹⁵ and (3) a documentation study of content calendar archives, publication standard operating procedures (SOP), and social media analytical reports.

The data collected from these various sources were subsequently analyzed using interactive qualitative data analysis techniques based on the Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña model. This analysis includes the stages of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing.¹⁶ In the initial stage, the researcher performed reduction and categorization of the interview transcripts and social media content records into themes related to transformational leadership and digital branding strategies. To guarantee the validity and credibility of the findings, this study applied source triangulation—by comparing the normative claims from the principal's interview with the reality of campaign execution on social media—as well as methodological triangulation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Madrasah Principal as a Digital Strategic Leader

In the era of information disruption and increasingly fierce inter-school competition, the role of the madrasah principal has metamorphosed significantly. The madrasah principal is no longer sufficient merely carrying out conventional administrative functions, but must transform into a digital strategic leader.¹⁷ Transformational leadership in this digital era requires leaders to have a clear vision and the ability to formulate policies that are adaptive

¹³ Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln, *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research* (SAGE Publications, 2017).

¹⁴ Meghan Lynch and Catherine Mah, "Using Internet Data Sources to Achieve Qualitative Interviewing Purposes: A Research Note," *Qualitative Research* 18, no. 6 (2018): 741–52, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1468794117731510>.

¹⁵ Caly Setiawan, "Representing Physical Education in Social Media: A Summative Content Analysis of A School Subject Through Big Data Analytics," *European Journal of Educational Research* 12, no. 2 (2023): 891–900, <https://doi.org/10.12973/eu-jer.12.2.891>.

¹⁶ Habib Zakaria Bahasyim and Akhmad Fauzi Hamzah, "Digital Transformation in Madrasahs: Optimizing the Role of Madrasah Principals in Developing Teachers' Digital Competencies," *ILJ: Islamic Learning Journal* 4, no. 2 (2026): 309–31, <https://doi.org/10.54437/iljislamiclearningjournal.v4i2.3053>; Sholeh et al., "Madrasah Principal Leadership in Digital Transformation at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah."

¹⁷ Maryati, "Kepemimpinan Transformasional Kepala Madrasah Dalam Meningkatkan Mutu Pendidikan Islam Di Era Digital."

to technological changes, without abandoning the dignity of the educational institution. The findings of this study align with the study by Tabroni and Musyaffa (2025),¹⁸ which asserts that the dimensions of transformational leadership, specifically idealized influence and inspirational motivation, are the main driving forces in facilitating digital transformation and institutional innovation in the madrasah environment.

The uniqueness of digital governance in madrasahs lies in the obligation to integrate technological innovation with Islamic ethical values. Madrasah principals do not merely pursue institutional popularity in cyberspace, but strive hard to ensure that the applied digital branding strategies are based on prophetic principles, such as *shiddiq* (honesty), *amanah* (trustworthiness), and *tabligh* (transparent communication).¹⁹ This transformation gives rise to a specific leadership paradigm, where the madrasah principal is required to be an *uswatun hasanah* (good role model) in orchestrating the public communication ecosystem.²⁰ As policy initiators, madrasah principals set the strategic direction governing the establishment of the institution's official platforms, social media ethical standards, and the vision of how the face and identity of the madrasah should be presented to the wider public.²¹

The practical reality of this strategic role is clearly illustrated through data in the field. Digital branding policies are not simply handed over to the technical team, but are directly guarded and supervised by the leadership. This is confirmed by the statement of one madrasah principal informant who emphasized the urgency of aligning content with the institutional vision:

"Social media is like the frontline storefront of our madrasah. I always emphasize to the public relations team, do not just upload content merely to chase virality. Every photo, every narrative, or caption that goes out must reflect our identity and character as an Islamic educational institution. I personally evaluate their draft content calendar routinely to ensure that no pesantren values or ethics are reduced by modern communication styles."

The statement above represents the direct application of the *intellectual stimulation* and *individualized consideration* dimensions. In this regard, the leader provides firm conceptual direction while simultaneously facilitating space for the public relations team to innovate professionally within the corridors of the institution's ethics and vision.²² Through this dialogic approach and the supervision of publication quality, the madrasah principal acts not only as a manager but also as a gatekeeper of the institution's reputation.

Furthermore, through this transformational leadership firmly rooted in Islamic values, the madrasah principal successfully mitigates potential cultural resistance from

¹⁸ Tabroni and Musyaffa, "The Digitization of Madrasah Administration."

¹⁹ Sofia and M. Hafiduddin, "Transformasi Nilai-Nilai Dakwah Menjadi Strategi Brand Loyalty: Studi Pada Lembaga Pendidikan Islam Berbasis Pesantren Modern," *Advances In Education Journal* 2, no. 1 (2025): 298–306.

²⁰ Ratnawati et al., "TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP OF MADRASAH PRINCIPALS BASED ON ISLAMIC VALUES"; Akhmad Fauzi Hamzah, "Santripreneur: A Model of Islamic Economic Management Through Pesantren-Based Entrepreneurship Education," *Al-Jadwa: Jurnal Studi Islam* 5, no. 2 (2026): 235–50, <https://doi.org/10.38073/aljadwa.4592>; Welli Yanto and Akhmad Fauzi Hamzah, "Implementation of the Madrasah Head's Academic Supervision Strategy in Improving the Quality of Beginning Teachers," *Hastabrata: Journal of Business and Management Studies* 1, no. 1 (2026): 20–30; Akhmad Fauzi Hamzah, "Academic Leadership in Organizational Cultural Transformation: Building a Biah Lugawiyah Ecosystem in the Pesantren Environment," *Literaturia: Journal of Linguistics, Literature, and Language Teaching* 1, no. 1 (2026): 27–36, <https://doi.org/10.38073/literaturia.v1i1.4661>.

²¹ Sartika et al., "The Influence of Visionary Leadership, Digital Marketing, and Digital Culture on Competitiveness at Institut Agama Islam Negeri (IAIN) Takengon."

²² Herdiaty and Widjaja, "The Impact of Transformational Leadership on Digital Transformation Towards Madrasah Reform and Performance."

internal elements against the onslaught of technological disruption. The madrasah principal is proven capable of creating an organizational culture that is both religious and innovative, where the entire academic community is motivated to actively participate in building the institution's digital reputation collaboratively.²³ Ultimately, the strategic policies and culture of openness initiated by the madrasah principal serve as a solid foundation for the formulation and execution of digital public relations campaigns in subsequent operational stages.

Execution of Digital Branding and Educational Content Management

The strategic policies formulated by the madrasah principal are systematically translated into technical operational steps by the public relations (PR) team through targeted digital branding execution.²⁴ A crucial element in this execution is the careful selection of social media platforms combined with the implementation of a structured content calendar. The PR team actively utilizes platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube, tailoring the communication style to the specific demographics and characteristics of each platform's audience.²⁵ The structured content calendar ensures publication consistency, preventing the madrasah's digital presence from becoming stagnant or sporadically managed. This consistency is vital for maintaining high visibility and projecting professional institutional governance amidst the competitive flow of digital information.

Rather than relying on rigid, conventional administrative reporting or static digital brochures, the madrasah employs an achievement-based storytelling approach.²⁶ The digital media team proactively publishes academic activities, teacher innovations, and student achievements through engaging narratives and high-quality visual branding. This narrative approach has proven highly effective in building an emotional connection with the audience, making the institution appear more dynamic, inspiring, and approachable. Professional visual aesthetics—including consistent color schemes, modern typography, and high-resolution imagery—serve as the institution's digital face, projecting an image of excellence that rivals contemporary general educational institutions.

Furthermore, the execution of digital content in the madrasah is strongly characterized by the integration of *dakwah* (Islamic propagation) and spiritual values. Educational and inspirational content that highlights religious activities, character building, and Islamic ethics acts as a unique brand differentiator for the institution in the digital space.²⁷ By packaging traditional Islamic values into modern digital formats, the madrasah successfully modernizes its public image without compromising its core identity as a religious educational institution. This strategy demonstrates that digital transformation in Islamic education does not equate to the erosion of tradition, but rather offers a new, expansive medium to amplify the institution's distinct religious and academic excellence to the broader community.

²³ Eci Sriwahyuni et al., "Building a Religious and Innovative Organizational Culture: Transformative Leadership Practices of Madrasah Principals," *Jurnal Kajian Ilmu Pendidikan (JKIP)* 7, no. 1 (2026): 187–97, <https://doi.org/10.55583/jkip.v7i1.1930>.

²⁴ Halimatuzzahrah Halimatuzzahrah et al., "Penguatan Strategi Branding Berbasis Digital Dan Etika Islam Pada Madrasah Swasta Melalui Pelatihan Pemasaran Pendidikan," *Ngarsa: Journal of Dedication Based on Local Wisdom* 5, no. 2 (2025): 137–52, <https://doi.org/10.35719/ykc75m74>.

²⁵ Zainul et al., "Optimizing Social Media and School Websites for Promotional Branding in Indonesian Madrasahs."

²⁶ Khumairotusshiyamah et al., "Digital Branding Strategies of Islamic Boarding Schools."

²⁷ Halimatuzzahrah et al., "Penguatan Strategi Branding Berbasis Digital Dan Etika Islam Pada Madrasah Swasta Melalui Pelatihan Pemasaran Pendidikan"; Khumairotusshiyamah et al., "Digital Branding Strategies of Islamic Boarding Schools."

Implications of Public Engagement on Reputation and Competitive Advantage

The professional management of educational content directly impacts the level of public engagement on the madrasah's digital platforms.²⁸ Interaction metrics such as likes, comments, and content shares serve as tangible indicators that the madrasah's communication strategy effectively resonates with the community's informational needs. Furthermore, the speed and accuracy of the public relations team in responding to public inquiries, direct messages, and comments foster an authentic, two-way interpersonal relationship between the institution and its audience.

This dialogic communication culture creates a strong public perception that the madrasah is present, attentive, and transparent. The importance of this responsiveness in building early stakeholder trust is captured in the statement of a digital public relations team member:

"We don't just post content and leave it unmanaged. Whenever parents ask about admission schedules, extracurricular details, or even just appreciate a student's achievement in the comments section, we make sure to reply promptly and politely. This two-way communication makes them feel valued and builds an immediate sense of trust before they even visit the school physically."

This high level of active digital involvement significantly contributes to strengthening public trust and fostering a sense of belonging among stakeholders, including alumni and parents of prospective students.²⁹ When the public continuously interacts with positive, achievement-based, and value-driven narratives, the madrasah successfully cultivates strong brand equity within a highly competitive educational market.³⁰ The digital engagement validates the institution's claims of quality, turning passive followers into loyal advocates for the school.

Ultimately, the optimization of social media, initiated by transformational leadership and executed through strategic content management, directly elevates the madrasah's competitive advantage. The institution's reputation, which was previously measured solely by physical infrastructure and localized word-of-mouth, has transformed into a modern, agile, and widely recognized educational entity. This strategy empirically proves capable of increasing the madrasah's public appeal and student enrollment rates without solely relying on conventional promotional methods, demonstrating that traditional Islamic educational institutions can achieve broader competitiveness through strategic digital reputation management.³¹

Conceptual Model of Digital Reputation Management

Synthesizing the empirical findings and theoretical analyses from the preceding sections, this study formulates a conceptual model of Digital Reputation Management tailored specifically for Islamic educational institutions. This model illustrates a systemic and causal pathway starting from leadership capacity to the establishment of a robust institutional

²⁸ Wulyatiningsih and Mandagi, "A Systematic Review of Strategic Brand Management in Educational Institution."

²⁹ Charitha Harshani Perera et al., "The Impact of Social Media Marketing and Brand Credibility on Higher Education Institutes' Brand Equity in Emerging Countries," *Journal of Marketing Communications* 29, no. 8 (2023): 770–95, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13527266.2022.2086284>.

³⁰ Aminah et al., "Strategic Public Relations as a Driver of Institutional Positioning and Competitive Advantage in Higher Education."

³¹ Fauzi et al., "The Influence of Social Media on Public Relations as a Reinforcement of Higher Education Reputation"; Wulyatiningsih and Mandagi, "A Systematic Review of Strategic Brand Management in Educational Institution."

reputation in the digital era. This model operates through an integrated, sequential workflow, as illustrated in Figure 1.

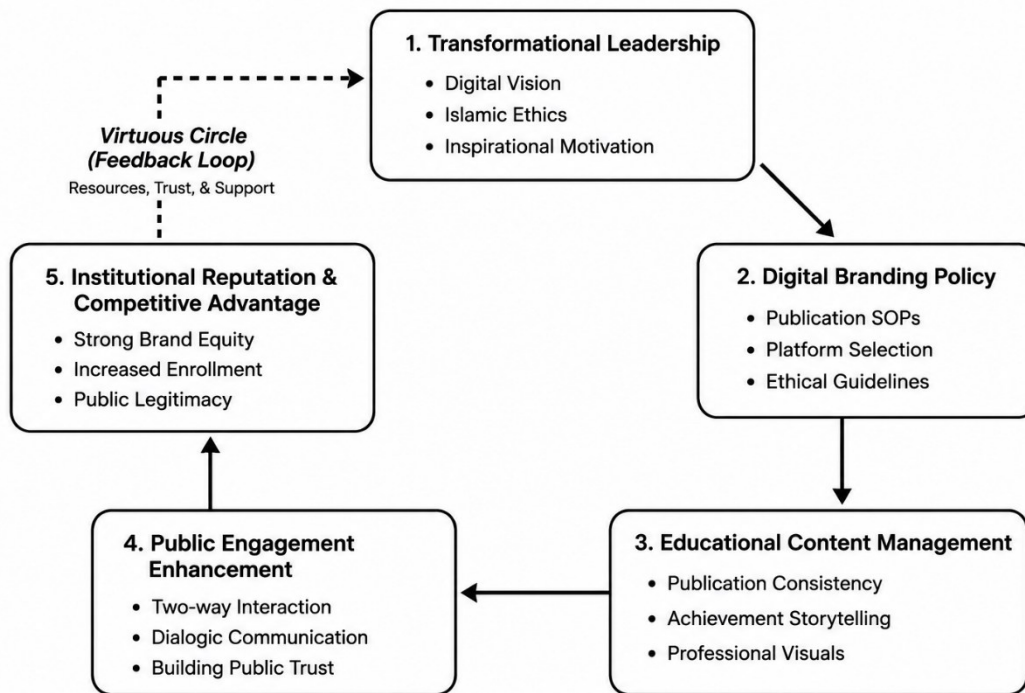


Figure 1. Conceptual Model of Digital Reputation Management in Madrasahs

The process is initiated by transformational leadership that seamlessly integrates a technological vision with Islamic ethical values.³² This leadership foundation is translated into strategic digital branding policies, which are subsequently executed by the technical team through consistent, narrative-driven, and value-based content management. This execution directly stimulates high public engagement, fostering a sense of belonging and building trust among external stakeholders.³³

Crucially, this conceptual framework operates not merely as a linear pathway, but as a continuous cycle or a *virtuous circle*. The strengthened reputation and heightened competitive advantage generated at the end of the process produce positive feedback for the institution, such as increased prospective student enrollment, stronger community advocacy, and expanded institutional partnerships. These newly acquired resources and public legitimacy, in turn, reinforce the madrasah leadership's capacity to innovate further, upgrade digital infrastructure, and refine future strategic policies.

The primary theoretical implication of this model is the successful synthesis of modern digital communication strategies with traditional educational quality management within a religious context. It emphasizes that digital transformation in madrasahs requires significantly more than just technical adoption; it demands an ethical infusion into organizational learning where modern technology and spiritual traditions coexist

³² Muwafiqus Shobri and Jasmani Jaosantia, "Digital Transformation in Islamic Education Management and Leadership: Strategies, Challenges, and Opportunities in the Society 5.0 Era," *FAKTA: Journal of Islamic Education* 1, no. 1 (2026): 1–13.

³³ Alkafi et al., "Theoretical and Empirical Analysis of Relational Marketing in Educational Institutions."

harmoniously.³⁴ The model asserts that if one element in the chain is disconnected—for instance, possessing excellent content management without visionary leadership support, or having a digital vision without consistent execution—the reputation-building strategy becomes artificial and unsustainable. Therefore, continuous digital literacy enhancement for madrasah leaders and the consistent integration of Islamic values remain the paramount keys to winning the educational quality competition in the Society 5.0 era.

CONCLUSION

The digital transformation of the educational landscape necessitates a paradigm shift in how Islamic institutions manage their public presence. This study concludes that madrasah principals play an indispensable strategic role as digital transformational leaders in building and enhancing institutional reputation. By internalizing the dimensions of idealized influence and inspirational motivation, principals successfully bridge the gap between technological innovation and Islamic ethical values. The formulation of visionary digital branding policies, when executed by the public relations team through consistent content management, achievement-based storytelling, and professional visual aesthetics, significantly fosters an authentic, two-way dialogic communication culture. This proactive digital engagement effectively cultivates public trust, heightens brand equity, and elevates the madrasah's competitive advantage. These interrelated elements constitute a novel conceptual model of Digital Reputation Management, demonstrating a virtuous circle where strategic leadership and ethical digital engagement mutually reinforce institutional sustainability in the modern era.

Despite these significant findings, this study acknowledges certain methodological limitations. First, the research employs a qualitative approach focused on specific madrasah cases, which may restrict the broad generalizability of the findings to other educational contexts with different socioeconomic demographics. Second, the observation of digital engagement was primarily centered on mainstream platforms such as Instagram and Facebook, potentially overlooking the nuances of emerging digital channels. Therefore, future research is highly recommended to employ quantitative or mixed-methods approaches to objectively measure the statistical impact of digital branding on student enrollment rates. Additionally, longitudinal studies comparing digital reputation management between state and private madrasahs across various regions would provide a more comprehensive understanding of digital leadership effectiveness in Islamic education.

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³⁴ Andi Warisno et al., "Transformative Islamic Education Management in Madrasah and Pesantren Integrating Tradition and Digital Innovation," *Journal of Cultural Analysis and Social Change*, November 25, 2025, 276–89, <https://doi.org/10.64753/jcasc.v10i2.1596>.

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