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Research Article

BUILDING TRUST IN ISLAMIC ORGANIZATION: PUBLIC RELATIONS STRATEGIES FOR ENGAGING MUSLIM COMMUNITIES

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Abstract

Trust is an important foundation for Islamic organizations because their legitimacy is shaped not only by the services they provide but also by the consistency between their public communication and Islamic ethical principles. In Muslim communities, public relations can help organizations build meaningful relationships through transparency, consultation (Shura), honesty (Sidq), justice (‘Adl), and social responsibility. This article examines public relations strategies that may support trust and community engagement in Islamic organizations. Using a qualitative, literature-based approach, the discussion draws on relationship-centered public relations concepts and Islamic principles concerning truthful communication, mutual consultation, and community welfare. The analysis identifies several connected strategies: transparent communication, two-way dialogue, community participation, culturally responsive messaging, responsible use of digital media, and consistent accountability. The article argues that trust is developed through repeated organizational actions rather than promotional messages alone. Islamic organizations therefore need to align what they communicate with how they make decisions, manage resources, respond to criticism, and serve the community. The article offers a practical framework for strengthening public relationships while remaining grounded in Islamic values. It also notes that strategies should be adapted to local contexts and assessed through ongoing feedback rather than assumed to work equally in every community.

Keywords: Islamic Organizations, Public Relations, Trust, Muslim Communities, Shura, Community Engagement

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INTRODUCTION

Islamic organizations play an important role in the religious, social, educational, and charitable life of Muslim communities (Haqpana & Tsouroufli, 2023). Organizations such as mosques, Islamic educational institutions, zakat institutions, charitable foundations, and Muslim community associations provide various services and programs for society. Their existence is closely connected to the needs and expectations of the communities they serve. Therefore, maintaining a good relationship with the community is an important aspect of organizational sustainability. One of the main factors that influences this relationship is public trust (Saputri et al., 2026). When community members trust an organization, they are more willing to participate in its activities, support its programs, share information, and maintain long-term relationships with the organization.

In contemporary society, Islamic organizations face increasingly complex challenges in communicating with Muslim communities (Sherman et al., 2021). The development of digital technology has changed the way people receive, share, and evaluate information. Islamic organizations can now communicate through social media, websites, messaging applications, and other digital platforms (Nouira & Ayari, 2024). These developments provide opportunities for organizations to reach wider communities and communicate organizational activities more quickly. However, the large amount of information available to the public also creates challenges. Information that is unclear, inconsistent, incomplete, or not supported by organizational actions can create misunderstanding and reduce public confidence (Attrash-Najjar, 2026). Therefore, Islamic organizations need communication strategies that are not only informative but also capable of developing meaningful and sustainable relationships with their communities.

Trust is not created only through organizational promotion or the frequent publication of activities. Trust develops through consistent communication and organizational behavior (Garcia Yeste et al., 2020). Muslim communities may expect Islamic organizations to demonstrate honesty, responsibility, fairness, transparency, and concern for community welfare. These expectations make public relations an important part of organizational development (Alkasasbeh et al., 2026). Public relations can help organizations communicate their programs, respond to questions and concerns, maintain relationships with community members, and create opportunities for public participation (Georgiadou & Nickerson, 2021). In the context of Islamic organizations, public relations should therefore be understood not only as a means of building a positive organizational image but also as a process of maintaining ethical relationships with the community.

Islamic values provide an important foundation for developing such relationships. Principles such as amanah, sidq, ‘adl, shura, and maslahah can guide organizations in communicating and interacting with their communities (Sharif & Faisal, 2025). Amanah emphasizes responsibility and trustworthiness in carrying out organizational duties, while sidq emphasizes honesty and truthfulness. ‘Adl encourages fair treatment, shura encourages consultation and participation, and maslahah emphasizes the importance of community welfare (Bonang et al., 2026). These principles are relevant to public relations because effective relationships require organizations to communicate honestly, listen to stakeholders, treat people fairly, and consider the broader effects of organizational decisions.

Despite the important role of Islamic organizations in Muslim communities, several communication problems may affect the development of public trust (Benamraoui et al., 2023). Some organizations may focus heavily on delivering information without providing sufficient opportunities for community members to respond or participate. Others may use digital platforms mainly to announce programs rather than to establish two-way communication. In addition, differences between organizational messages and actual practices may create uncertainty among community members (Okpanum & Omeihe, 2026). A lack of transparency regarding programs, responsibilities, or the use of organizational resources can also influence

public perceptions. These problems demonstrate that communication between Islamic organizations and Muslim communities needs to move beyond one-way information delivery toward a more participatory and relationship-oriented approach.

Several strategies can be used to address these challenges. Islamic organizations can increase the use of digital media, conduct community outreach programs, organize public discussions, provide feedback channels, and improve the accessibility of organizational information (Ahmad Ariff & Nik Hashim, 2026). However, these strategies may not be sufficient when they are implemented separately. Increasing social media activity, for example, may increase organizational visibility but does not necessarily create trust if community members cannot express their concerns or receive appropriate responses (Alfawzan et al., 2024). Similarly, conducting community activities may create interaction but may not establish long-term trust if the organization does not maintain consistent communication after the activities have ended.

The solution proposed in this study is an integrated public relations strategy that places trust and community engagement at the center of organizational communication (Koc et al., 2024). This approach combines transparent communication, two-way dialogue, responsible digital communication, responsiveness to community concerns, organizational accountability, inclusive outreach, and community partnerships (Mujiatun et al., 2025). Through this approach, community members are not positioned only as audiences who receive organizational information but also as stakeholders who can provide opinions, identify needs, participate in discussions, and contribute to the development of organizational programs (Mursid et al., 2025). The integration of Islamic values into these communication practices can further strengthen the ethical foundation of the relationship between organizations and communities.

Community engagement is particularly important because Muslim communities have diverse needs, backgrounds, experiences, and communication preferences. Young people may prefer digital communication, while older community members may rely more on direct interaction (Wajdi et al., 2026). Some community members may actively participate in organizational activities, while others may only interact with the organization when they need particular services (Murali & Govindan, 2025). Therefore, Islamic organizations need to provide various communication channels and avoid relying on a single approach. Inclusive communication can help organizations understand community needs more accurately and develop programs that are more relevant to the people they serve.

Building trust also requires consistency between organizational communication and organizational actions (Singh, 2026). An organization may communicate values of honesty, responsibility, and community welfare, but these values need to be reflected in its actual practices. When an organization makes a commitment, provides information, responds to concerns, and follows up on community feedback, it demonstrates that communication is connected to action (Fahm, 2020). Conversely, repeated differences between organizational messages and experiences within the community can weaken trust. For this reason, public relations strategies should be supported by responsible organizational management and active involvement from organizational leaders, staff, and volunteers.

Based on these conditions, this study aims to examine public relations strategies for building trust and engaging Muslim communities within Islamic organizations (Dashti et al., 2026). The study focuses on how transparent communication, two-way dialogue, digital engagement, responsiveness, accountability, and community partnerships can be developed in accordance with Islamic values. The study is expected to provide a conceptual understanding of how Islamic organizations can strengthen relationships with their communities through ethical and participatory communication. Practically, the discussion can provide guidance for Islamic organizations in developing communication strategies that are more transparent, responsive, inclusive, and oriented toward community welfare (Aji et al., 2025). Through effective public

relations practices, Islamic organizations can strengthen public trust while maintaining their religious identity and social responsibility.

RESEARCH METHOD

Research Design

This study uses a qualitative descriptive approach to examine public relations strategies for building trust and engaging Muslim communities in Islamic organizations. The qualitative approach is used because the study focuses on understanding communication practices, organizational relationships, community engagement, and the ways Islamic values can be applied in public relations activities (Mondesir, 2023). This approach allows the researcher to describe the communication processes that occur between Islamic organizations and Muslim communities in a detailed and contextual manner. The study does not focus on measuring variables statistically, but rather on understanding the strategies, practices, and communication patterns that can contribute to the development of public trust and community engagement.

This study is conducted through the examination of information related to public relations practices in Islamic organizations and their relationships with Muslim communities. The research focuses on the context of Islamic organizations that carry out religious, educational, social, charitable, and community-oriented activities. The study is conducted during the research period determined by the researcher (Sannomaru et al., 2026). The research setting is related to the activities and communication practices of Islamic organizations, particularly communication conducted through organizational activities and digital communication platforms.

Research Target/Subject

The target of this study is the public relations strategy used by Islamic organizations to build trust and engage Muslim communities. The subjects of the study are Islamic organizations and the communication practices that occur between the organizations and their communities. The study focuses on communication activities such as the delivery of organizational information, community outreach, digital communication, public interaction, responses to community concerns, and opportunities for community participation. The selection of the research subject is based on its relevance to the research objectives, particularly the need to understand how Islamic organizations can develop sustainable relationships with Muslim communities.

Research Procedure

The research is conducted through several stages (Nematpour et al., 2024). First, the researcher identifies communication problems that may influence trust and engagement between Islamic organizations and Muslim communities. Second, the researcher examines the forms of public relations activities used by Islamic organizations in communicating with their communities. Third, the researcher identifies communication strategies related to transparency, two-way communication, digital engagement, responsiveness, accountability, and community participation. Fourth, the researcher examines the relationship between these strategies and Islamic values such as amanah, sidq, ‘adl, shura, and maslahah (Miled, 2020). Finally, the information obtained is organized and interpreted to formulate an integrated public relations strategy for strengthening trust and community engagement.

Instruments, and Data Collection Techniques

The main instrument in this study is the researcher because the study uses a qualitative descriptive approach. The researcher identifies, collects, organizes, and interprets information related to public relations strategies and community engagement in Islamic organizations.

Supporting instruments include observation guidelines, documentation guidelines, and data recording instruments that are used to organize relevant information.

The data collection process focuses on information related to organizational communication, public relations activities, community interaction, digital communication, organizational transparency, responsiveness, and community participation. Data are collected through observation and documentation of communication activities and organizational practices that are relevant to the research objectives (Riaz et al., 2023). The researcher also pays attention to information that describes how Islamic organizations communicate organizational programs, respond to community needs, provide opportunities for participation, and maintain relationships with Muslim communities.

Data Analysis Technique

The data obtained in this study are analyzed descriptively and systematically. The analysis begins by organizing the information according to the main aspects of the research, including public relations communication, trust building, community engagement, digital communication, organizational accountability, and Islamic values. The researcher then identifies important patterns and relationships among these aspects.

The next stage is to interpret the information based on the research objectives. The researcher examines how communication strategies can support trust and community engagement and identifies practices that can strengthen the relationship between Islamic organizations and Muslim communities (Timur et al., 2025). The results of the analysis are then presented descriptively to provide an understanding of an integrated public relations strategy that emphasizes transparent communication, two-way dialogue, responsiveness, accountability, inclusive engagement, and community partnerships in accordance with Islamic values.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of this study show that building trust in Islamic organizations requires a public relations strategy that is based on continuous communication, community participation, organizational responsibility, and Islamic values. The analysis indicates that communication between Islamic organizations and Muslim communities cannot be limited to the delivery of information about organizational programs. Community members also need opportunities to express their opinions, ask questions, provide feedback, and participate in organizational activities. Therefore, public relations in Islamic organizations needs to function as a relationship-building process rather than only as a communication activity.

The main findings of the study can be grouped into several important aspects, including transparent communication, two-way communication, digital engagement, responsiveness, accountability, inclusive community engagement, and community partnerships. These aspects are connected to one another because trust is difficult to develop when an organization communicates actively but does not respond to community concerns, or when an organization provides information but does not demonstrate responsibility through its actions.

Table 1. Public Relations Strategies for Building Trust and Engaging Muslim Communities

Public Relations Aspect	Main Strategy	Expected Contribution
Transparent Communication	Providing clear, accurate, and accessible information	Strengthening public confidence
Two-Way Communication	Providing opportunities for dialogue and feedback	Increasing community participation
Digital Engagement	Using social media and digital platforms interactively	Expanding communication and accessibility
Responsiveness	Responding to questions,	Developing stronger

	criticism, and community needs	relationships
Accountability	Demonstrating responsibility in programs and organizational activities	Maintaining public trust
Inclusive Engagement	Involving different groups within the Muslim community	Increasing inclusiveness and participation
Community Partnerships	Developing cooperation with community groups and institutions	Strengthening sustainable relationships

The first important finding concerns transparent communication. Islamic organizations need to provide information that can be understood easily by the communities they serve. Information about programs, activities, organizational responsibilities, and community services should be communicated clearly and consistently. Transparency is important because community members use organizational information as a basis for understanding and evaluating organizational activities. When information is difficult to access or unclear, community members may have difficulty understanding the purpose and implementation of organizational programs.

Transparent communication is also closely related to the development of trust. Trust cannot be developed only through positive organizational messages. It requires consistency between what the organization communicates and what the organization actually does. When organizational communication is open and supported by responsible actions, community members can develop a clearer understanding of the organization. This finding indicates that public relations strategies should place transparency as one of the basic elements of organizational communication.

The second finding is related to two-way communication. Islamic organizations need to provide communication channels that allow Muslim communities to participate in organizational communication. Social media comments, discussion forums, community meetings, feedback forms, and direct communication can provide opportunities for community members to express their needs and concerns. This approach changes the position of the community from a passive receiver of information into an active participant in organizational communication.

Two-way communication is important because organizations cannot fully understand community needs through one-way communication. Information delivered by an organization may explain what the organization wants to communicate, but feedback from the community provides information about how programs are understood and experienced by the people who receive them. Therefore, listening to the community is an important part of public relations strategy. The findings suggest that communication becomes more meaningful when organizations not only communicate with the community but also listen and respond to it.

The third finding concerns the use of digital communication. Digital platforms provide Islamic organizations with opportunities to communicate with Muslim communities more quickly and widely. Social media, websites, messaging applications, and other digital platforms can be used to announce activities, provide educational information, respond to questions, and maintain continuous interaction with community members. Digital communication can also help organizations reach younger members of the Muslim community who may have different communication habits.

However, digital visibility does not automatically create public trust. Frequent publication of organizational activities may increase awareness of an organization, but it does not necessarily establish a strong relationship with the community. Digital communication needs to be interactive, responsive, and connected to actual organizational practices. Therefore,

the important issue is not simply how often an Islamic organization communicates through digital platforms, but how effectively these platforms are used to establish meaningful relationships with community members.

The fourth finding is the importance of organizational responsiveness. Muslim communities may have questions, suggestions, criticisms, or requests related to organizational programs. The way an Islamic organization responds to these matters can influence the quality of its relationship with the community. A responsive organization does not only provide answers but also demonstrates that community concerns are taken seriously.

Responsiveness is particularly important in situations where misunderstanding or dissatisfaction occurs. If an organization provides clear explanations and appropriate follow-up, communication problems can be addressed before they become larger problems. On the other hand, when community questions are repeatedly ignored, the distance between the organization and the community may increase. Therefore, responsiveness needs to become a continuous part of public relations activities rather than an action that is only performed when problems appear.

The fifth finding concerns accountability. Islamic organizations often manage activities and programs that involve community support, participation, and resources. Therefore, accountability is important for maintaining the confidence of community members. Organizations need to demonstrate responsibility in carrying out programs and communicate relevant information about their activities appropriately.

Accountability is also closely related to the Islamic principle of amanah. In this context, organizational responsibility is not only an administrative obligation but also an ethical responsibility. When organizational leaders, staff, and volunteers understand their responsibilities and demonstrate them through their actions, public relations becomes connected to organizational integrity. This finding shows that trust-building cannot be separated from the internal behavior of the organization.

The sixth finding is related to inclusive community engagement. Muslim communities consist of people with different ages, backgrounds, experiences, needs, and communication preferences. Therefore, Islamic organizations need to avoid using only one communication approach. Younger community members may interact more frequently through digital platforms, while other members may prefer direct meetings or community activities. Providing different communication channels can help organizations reach a wider range of community members.

Inclusive engagement also means providing opportunities for different groups to participate in organizational activities. Community members should not only be positioned as audiences but also as stakeholders who can contribute ideas, identify problems, and participate in developing programs. Such participation can strengthen the sense of belonging between the organization and its community. As a result, community engagement becomes an important part of maintaining long-term organizational relationships.

The seventh finding concerns community partnerships. Islamic organizations can strengthen their relationships with Muslim communities by developing cooperation with mosques, educational institutions, youth groups, charitable institutions, community leaders, and other relevant organizations. Partnerships provide opportunities for organizations to understand community needs through direct interaction and collaborative activities.

Community partnerships can also strengthen the social role of Islamic organizations. When organizations work together with community groups, organizational programs can be developed based on actual community needs rather than only organizational assumptions. This approach can make public relations more participatory and community-oriented. Therefore, partnerships can function not only as a means of implementing programs but also as a strategy for building sustainable relationships.

Table 2. Islamic Values in Public Relations Strategies

Islamic Value	Application in Public Relations

Amanah	Demonstrating responsibility and trustworthiness
Sidq	Communicating information honestly and truthfully
‘Adl	Providing fair treatment to community members
Shura	Encouraging consultation and community participation
Maslahah	Prioritizing community welfare in organizational activities

The application of amanah means that organizations need to demonstrate responsibility in communicating and carrying out their programs. Public relations communication should not provide promises that cannot be fulfilled. The principle of sidq emphasizes honesty and truthfulness, which are important when organizations provide information to their communities. Meanwhile, ‘adl encourages organizations to communicate and provide services fairly without creating unnecessary differences among community members.

The principle of shura provides an important foundation for two-way communication and participation. Consultation allows community members to contribute opinions and become involved in organizational decision-making processes. This principle supports the idea that public relations should not only focus on delivering messages from the organization to the community but should also provide opportunities for the community to communicate its needs to the organization.

The principle of maslahah strengthens the orientation of public relations toward community welfare. Organizational communication should not only be used to build a positive image but should also support activities that provide meaningful benefits for the community. This means that public relations strategies need to be connected to the actual social and religious responsibilities of Islamic organizations.

Based on these findings, the study proposes an integrated public relations strategy for Islamic organizations. The strategy combines transparent communication, two-way dialogue, digital engagement, responsiveness, accountability, inclusive community engagement, and community partnerships. These elements should not be implemented separately because each element supports the development of the others. Transparent communication provides reliable information, two-way communication creates opportunities for participation, digital platforms expand access, responsiveness maintains interaction, accountability strengthens confidence, inclusive engagement broadens participation, and partnerships support sustainable community relationships.



Figure 1. Integrated Public Relations Strategy for Building Trust and Engaging Muslim Communities

The integrated strategy places trust at the center of the relationship between Islamic organizations and Muslim communities (Zafar et al., 2026). The organization communicates transparently, listens to community members, responds to their concerns, demonstrates accountability, and creates opportunities for participation. These activities are supported by Islamic values that provide an ethical foundation for organizational communication (Taufik Syamlan et al., 2026). In this model, trust is not treated as the result of promotional activities alone but as the outcome of continuous communication and responsible organizational behavior.

The novelty of this study lies in the integration of public relations strategies with Islamic ethical values and community engagement (Johansen, 2026). Public relations in Islamic organizations is often understood mainly as a means of communicating organizational activities or developing a positive public image. This study emphasizes that public relations can have a broader function, namely developing ethical, participatory, and sustainable relationships between Islamic organizations and Muslim communities (Iqbal et al., 2026). The integration of amanah, sidq, ‘adl, shura, and maslahah provides an Islamic foundation for implementing communication strategies that are oriented toward trust and community welfare.

The findings also have practical implications for Islamic organizations (Akkaya & Kurnaz, 2026). Organizational leaders and public relations practitioners need to consider communication as an ongoing relationship rather than a one-time activity. Organizations can establish clear communication procedures, provide accessible feedback channels, manage digital communication actively, respond to community concerns, and communicate organizational responsibilities transparently (Rostami et al., 2026). At the same time, community members can be involved in discussions, program evaluation, and collaborative activities.

Overall, the results indicate that trust and community engagement are closely connected (AlHouli, 2024). A community that receives clear information, has opportunities to communicate, receives appropriate responses, and observes consistency between organizational messages and actions can develop a stronger relationship with the organization. Therefore, public relations strategies in Islamic organizations need to combine communication effectiveness with ethical responsibility (Ashafa et al., 2025). Such an approach can help

Islamic organizations strengthen their relationship with Muslim communities while maintaining their religious identity and social responsibility.

CONCLUSION

This article has examined public relations strategies that can support trust and engagement in Islamic organizations. The discussion highlights transparent communication, two-way dialogue, community participation, consistency between values and practice, culturally responsive messaging, responsible digital communication, and ongoing accountability. Together, these strategies frame trust as a relationship built through repeated interactions and demonstrated responsibility rather than through promotional communication alone.

The article's central contribution is to connect relationship-centered public relations with Islamic ethical principles such as sidq, amanah, 'adl, shura, and community welfare. These principles can guide how organizations share information, consult stakeholders, respond to criticism, manage resources, and evaluate community programs. Their practical value depends on sincere implementation and on whether organizational behavior supports the values communicated to the public.

This article is conceptual and does not present empirical findings from a defined group of Islamic organizations. Its proposed framework therefore requires testing across different organizational types and local contexts. Future research could use interviews, surveys, observation, and comparative case studies to examine how Muslim community members experience trust, which communication practices they consider meaningful, and how these relationships change over time. Such research could support a more context-sensitive understanding of public relations in Islamic organizational settings.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Author 1: Conceptualization; Project administration; Validation; Writing - review and editing.
Author 2: Conceptualization; Data curation; In-vestigation.
Author 3: Data curation; Investigation.

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