

Public Relations Management in Enhancing Branding and Quality at SD Negeri 1 Rensing

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ABSTRACT

In today's competitive educational environment, strategic public relations (PR) play a vital role in shaping school branding and enhancing institutional quality. This study investigates the implementation, challenges, and effectiveness of PR management at SD Negeri 1 Rensing, a public elementary school in East Lombok, Indonesia. Using a qualitative descriptive approach, the research involved interviews, field observations, and documentation analysis, conducted between June and July 2025. The findings reveal that PR activities, though not professionally structured, are actively carried out through religious and community events, WhatsApp-based parent communication, and limited use of social media. Key challenges identified include the absence of trained PR personnel, insufficient ICT infrastructure, and low parental digital literacy. Despite these limitations, PR efforts have led to increased enrollment—including students from outside the school zone—improved academic and non-academic performance, and stronger community involvement. The study contributes to the field by offering a rural perspective on school PR practices, often underrepresented in literature, and emphasizes the role of informal, community-driven communication strategies. It concludes that even in resource-constrained settings, effective PR can significantly support school branding and quality improvement.

INTRODUCTION

In the era of increasing competition among educational institutions, the ability of a school to develop a strong brand image has become a crucial determinant of its appeal and credibility in the community. A positive public image not only supports student recruitment but also promotes community trust, stakeholder involvement, and institutional sustainability. SD Negeri 1 Rensing, a long-established public elementary school in Sakra Barat District, East Lombok Regency, has demonstrated consistent student achievements in both academic and non-academic fields. However, the school still struggles to position itself as a leading institution due to suboptimal public relations (PR) management. Despite having a sizable alumni network and a longstanding reputation, the school's PR system remains underdeveloped, limiting its ability to convey its strengths and achievements to the broader public.

Public relations in education is not merely about publicity but involves strategic communication, relationship building, and image management. Alshammari and Alshammari

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(2025) emphasize that effective PR strategies, grounded in impression management theory, play a significant role in shaping organizational reputation and identity. This is echoed by Novita et al. (2025), who observed that social media platforms such as Instagram and TikTok have become vital tools in increasing school visibility and public engagement. Similarly, Zahro and Diana (2025) argued that a mature PR strategy—including alumni involvement and digital campaigns—can substantially elevate a school’s image, thereby increasing both quality and competitiveness.

Qomariyah and Wahyudi (2024) highlighted that PR plays a pivotal role in fostering school-community communication, which enhances understanding, trust, and the quality of education. Rofiki and Nurjannah (2024) supported this by asserting that active engagement with parents through digital platforms improves brand awareness and positively influences public perception. Walid and Malik (2023) reported that combining public relations with a systematic quality management approach—such as ISO standards—raises parental trust and institutional credibility. Meanwhile, Ejsen et al. (2025), through a global perspective, concluded that strategic and structured PR practices have a direct impact on educational service quality and the reputation of schools.

Greaves (2023) provides additional insight, showing that consistent school marketing contributes significantly to shaping parental choices, thus enhancing competitiveness. While his study focused on broader school choice dynamics, the implications for PR are evident. Manoharan (2025), though focusing on municipal branding, showed that digital platforms—particularly websites—serve as strategic instruments in institutional reputation-building. Similarly, ScientificDirect (2025) reported that practitioners of PR believe that authentic and transparent communication with stakeholders enhances institutional trust and image. These findings are strongly aligned with the Barcelona Principles 3.0 (AMEC, 2020), which stress that PR success must be evaluated not only by output (exposure) but by its outcomes (behavioral and attitudinal changes among stakeholders). Additionally, the Excellence Theory (Grunig & Grunig, 2008) underlines the importance of two-way symmetrical communication as a managerial approach to effective PR.

Although research in the field of educational public relations has increased in recent years, much of it focuses on secondary and tertiary institutions or urban contexts. There is a notable gap in the literature concerning how PR is implemented in public elementary schools in rural or semi-urban regions. The case of SD Negeri 1 Rensing, therefore, offers a unique and context-specific perspective on how schools in less-urbanized areas attempt to enhance their public image and educational quality through PR management. While previous studies (Musthofa et al., 2024; Astuti et al., 2024; Salafudin, 2023) have explored how PR strategies involving alumni and community engagement improve branding, little is known about the specific challenges and effectiveness of PR practices in schools like SDN 1 Rensing that are still in the process of institutional development.

The present study addresses this gap by investigating the management of public relations at SD Negeri 1 Rensing with particular attention to its role in enhancing the school’s branding and overall quality. The research is guided by the following questions: (1) How is public relations management implemented to enhance branding and quality at SD Negeri 1 Rensing? (2) What challenges are encountered in the implementation of PR management to improve branding and quality? (3) How effective is the PR management in optimizing branding and quality at SD Negeri 1 Rensing?

This study seeks to contribute to the academic and practical discourse on educational public relations by providing a detailed case analysis from an underrepresented context. The findings are

expected to offer insights not only for school administrators but also for policymakers and education stakeholders interested in leveraging PR to build institutional strength. By analyzing the implementation, challenges, and effectiveness of PR strategies in a rural public elementary school, this research highlights the strategic function of PR in shaping perceptions, enhancing school identity, and supporting quality improvement initiatives. Ultimately, this study aims to fill a contextual and practical void in the field of educational PR management and provide actionable recommendations for schools with similar profiles.

METHOD

1. Research Method and Approach

This research employed a qualitative descriptive method, aiming to explore how public relations (PR) management contributes to branding and educational quality at SD Negeri 1 Rensing. The qualitative approach was selected because it allows for in-depth exploration of social phenomena within natural settings. The study focused on describing and interpreting the implementation, challenges, and effectiveness of school PR efforts in building institutional image and improving service quality. This approach is appropriate for examining the roles, perceptions, and practices of key stakeholders involved in the school's PR processes (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

The qualitative method emphasizes naturalistic inquiry, with the researcher acting as the primary instrument for data collection. The data were analyzed inductively, and the emphasis was placed more on the meaning and context of phenomena rather than generalization (Miles et al., 2020).

2. Research Site and Time

This study was conducted at SD Negeri 1 Rensing, located in Rensing Village, Sakra Barat District, East Lombok Regency. The research activities, including data collection, took place from June 10 to July 20, 2025, focusing on the school's public relations practices, documents, and stakeholders.

3. Sources of Data

The sources of data consisted of primary and secondary data. Primary data were obtained directly from key informants through interviews, observations, and field documentation. The primary informants included: (1) The school principal, as the main authority in school management and public relations; (2) PR officers or teachers assigned PR responsibilities; (3) Teachers and school staff familiar with the school's PR activities and their influence on branding and quality; (4) Parents and community leaders who regularly interact with the school. Secondary data included institutional documents and archives, such as: (1) PR work programs; (2) Reports on promotional and public engagement activities; (3) Accreditation records and school performance data; (4) Promotional media (brochures, websites, social media); (5) School policies related to PR and quality development.

4. Data Collection Techniques

Three techniques were used to collect the data: interviews, observation, and documentation.

- a. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to obtain in-depth information while allowing flexibility in exploring emergent topics. Interviews were held with the principal, teachers, parents, and community representatives to gather insights on PR activities, challenges, and their impact on school image and quality (Yin, 2020).
- b. Observations enabled the researcher to directly witness PR-related activities in a natural setting. Observed events included school-community meetings, routine PR meetings, and the use of school facilities for promotional purposes.

- c. Documentation involved collecting school records, photos, official reports, promotional materials, and other relevant documents that supported the analysis of PR practices and school branding efforts.

5. Data Analysis Techniques

The data analysis followed the interactive model developed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2020), involving three concurrent steps:

- a. Data reduction – summarizing, selecting essential information, and identifying recurring patterns or themes.
- b. Data display – organizing the data in a structured manner to facilitate interpretation.
- c. Conclusion drawing and verification – interpreting the meaning of the findings to answer the research questions, while ensuring consistency and accuracy through iterative review.

This approach enabled systematic interpretation of qualitative data and supported the formulation of valid conclusions.

6. Data Trustworthiness and Validation

To ensure the credibility of the findings, the researcher applied triangulation, involving multiple data sources, methods, and perspectives. According to Moleong (2019), triangulation is a technique used to cross-check the data using other relevant sources to verify accuracy and reduce researcher bias. This process aligned with the multi-perspective nature of phenomenological inquiry, which is essential for enhancing the trustworthiness of qualitative research (Nowell et al., 2017).

RESULTS

1. The Implementation of Public Relations (PR) Management in Enhancing Branding and Quality at SD Negeri 1 Rensing

The implementation of Public Relations (PR) management at SD Negeri 1 Rensing has not yet been structured or professional. This is due to the absence of a dedicated personnel specifically assigned to PR functions. The PR role has instead been handled by the school committee, whose chair also serves concurrently as the vice principal in charge of PR.

Acting Principal Hj. Siti Raudah, S.Pd.I stated that her current status as acting principal (Plt) limits her authority to establish a formal and active PR structure. She explained:

"Because I am still serving as an acting principal, I have limited authority to make major decisions, including forming a formal and active PR team, as there is no dedicated or trained PR officer." (Interview, June 13, 2025)

Nevertheless, the school committee continues to play an active PR role through religious and community events that involve both parents and the wider community. The school committee chair stated:

"We usually hold parent meetings during major events such as Isra Miraj, competitions, or community service days, which become opportunities to promote the school and strengthen ties with the community." (Interview, June 15, 2025)

Based on observations conducted on June 18, 2025, the school has reactivated its social media account to publicize student achievements and school activities. Events such as athletics competitions and religious celebrations have been documented and shared through the school's digital platforms, albeit in a simple manner.

Additionally, informal communication channels have been utilized by teachers to foster closer relationships between the school and parents. A fifth-grade teacher explained that social media platforms, especially WhatsApp groups, are used for daily communication with parents:

"Sometimes we share school information directly through the class WhatsApp group, or when parents pick up their children, we convey important updates to help parents feel closer to the school." (Interview, June 21, 2025)

Further observation on June 24, 2025, showed that each classroom was equipped with an information board displaying school activities and student achievements, forming part of the school's internal strategy to build a positive image.

The school committee also initiated efforts to involve alumni in promoting the school. The committee chair shared:

"We are starting to reconnect with alumni, especially those with influential positions in society, so they can serve as ambassadors to enhance public trust in the school." (Interview, June 26, 2025)

Although the PR management is not yet systematic or professionally organized, the steps taken indicate a growing awareness and willingness to improve communication strategies to enhance the school's branding and educational quality.

Figure 1. Implementation Level of Public Relations Strategies at SD Negeri 1 Rensing

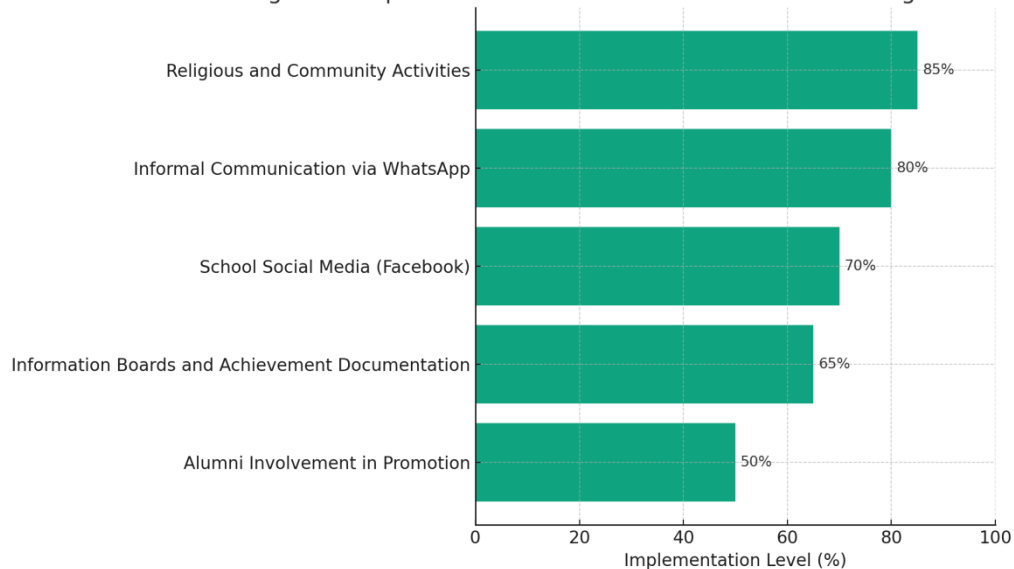


Figure 1 illustrates the implementation level of various public relations (PR) strategies employed by SD Negeri 1 Rensing to enhance school branding and quality. The data were collected through interviews, observations, and documentation analysis. The chart highlights that religious and community engagement activities are the most consistently implemented PR strategy (85%), reflecting the school's emphasis on relationship-building with the local community. Informal communication via WhatsApp follows closely (80%), indicating effective day-to-day outreach with parents. Meanwhile, the use of social media platforms such as Facebook (70%), classroom information boards (65%), and alumni involvement (50%) show moderate progress and areas for further development. This visualization provides insight into which strategies are currently prioritized and where further optimization is needed.

2. Challenges in Implementing PR Management to Improve Branding and Quality

The PR management at SD Negeri 1 Rensing faces various challenges, particularly in terms of human resources, infrastructure, and social context. Based on interviews and field observations, the main challenges are:

a. Limited Human Resources and PR Competence

PR duties are not managed by professionals with communication or public relations backgrounds. Instead, the responsibilities are shared informally among the committee and several

teachers, none of whom have received formal training in PR. Consequently, both external communication and school publicity are suboptimal.

The school committee chair confirmed the lack of a formal PR structure or comprehensive work program:

"We don't have a dedicated PR team. Usually, for events, I coordinate directly with teachers and the principal, but we haven't had any training or established systems." (Interview, June 17, 2025)

The acting principal also cited personnel limitations as a core issue (Interview, June 19, 2025).

b. Inadequate Infrastructure

Another major obstacle is the lack of information technology and communication tools. The school lacks adequate computer equipment for digital publication and experiences unstable internet access.

Observation on June 20, 2025, revealed that event documentation was still manually recorded in notebooks or captured using teachers' personal devices. There were no standardized digital archives or promotional visuals available.

The school's social media presence is also inconsistent, limiting its outreach to stakeholders, including parents.

c. Low Digital Literacy Among Parents

External challenges include the low digital literacy of parents. Many do not actively use social media or WhatsApp, hindering effective communication.

A fourth-grade teacher noted:

"Some parents don't have WhatsApp or don't check it regularly. So we often need to inform them directly during school pickups." (Interview, June 22, 2025)

This hampers the school's ability to engage the broader community and involve parents in branding and quality development initiatives.

Table 1 presents the main challenges in the implementation of public relations (PR) management at SD Negeri 1 Rensing.

Table 1. Challenges in the Implementation of PR Management at SD Negeri 1 Rensing

No.	Challenge Aspect	Brief Description	Data Source
1	Limited Human Resources and PR Competence	No designated personnel in PR; duties handled by the school committee/teachers without PR training.	Interview with the School Committee Chair, June 17, 2025; Interview with the Principal, June 19, 2025
2	Inadequate Infrastructure	Limited ICT facilities, manual documentation, inactive social media, no digital archive.	Field Observation, June 20, 2025
3	Low Parental Digital Literacy	Many parents are inactive on WhatsApp/social media; school information is hard to disseminate.	Interview with Grade IV Teacher, June 22

Table 1 shows that the implementation of PR management at SD Negeri 1 Rensing still faces considerable challenges. The primary issue lies in human resources, as there is no designated or professional staff handling PR responsibilities. In addition, the school's infrastructure—including internet access, computer equipment, and digital documentation systems—is not yet sufficient to support effective publicity activities. Furthermore, the low digital literacy among parents hinders effective communication through social media or online platforms. The combination of these three

factors has limited the optimization of PR management in supporting the improvement of school branding and educational quality.

3. Evaluation of PR Management Effectiveness in Optimizing Branding and Quality

An evaluation of PR effectiveness at SD Negeri 1 Rensing was conducted through interviews, document analysis, and field observations. The evaluation focused on three dimensions: school branding, educational quality, and internal evaluation processes.

a. Improving School Branding

Evidence of branding effectiveness includes growing community trust, increased public engagement, and the active use of social media. Based on enrollment data for the 2024/2025 academic year, there was an increase in new students, including those from outside the school's zone, indicating a positive public perception (Document Review, July 9, 2025).

Observation on July 8, 2025, confirmed that the school's Facebook account had been updated with at least eight posts showcasing student activities and events. Community participation also increased, with parents and local leaders joining events such as Islamic celebrations, clean-up drives, and school bazaars (Observation, July 5, 2025).

b. Educational Quality Indicators

Based on academic reports from the even semester of 2024/2025, students showed improved performance, particularly in Bahasa Indonesia and Mathematics (Report, July 11, 2025).

Non-academic achievements also improved; for example, one student won first place in a sub-district running competition (Interview, July 7, 2025). Additionally, a field observation on July 10, 2025, revealed improvements in the physical environment, such as reading corners and reorganized green areas, contributing to a more educational school setting.

c. Internal Evaluation Process

The school has begun regular internal evaluations, holding bi-monthly meetings with parents to gather feedback. This is complemented by input from neighborhood forums (RW) near the school (Interview, July 12, 2025).

Although PR management is not yet fully professionalized, these developments indicate increasing effectiveness and commitment to branding and educational quality improvement.

Table 2 – Evaluation of the Effectiveness of Public Relations Management in Optimizing School Branding and Quality

Evaluation Dimension	Evaluation Indicators	Data Source
School Branding Improvement	Increase in the number of new students, including those from outside the school zone	PPDB Recapitulation Data for Academic Year 2024/2025
	Activation of the school's social media (Facebook) with 8 activity posts since early July 2025	Observation Results, July 8, 2025
	Increased community participation in school activities (community service, PHBI events, bazaars, etc.)	Field Observation, July 5, 2025
Education Quality	Increase in students' average academic scores, especially in Bahasa Indonesia and Mathematics	End-of-Semester Report, Academic Year 2024/2025
	Non-academic achievement: First place in the district-level running competition in Sakra Barat	Competition Documentation, June 2025
	Cleaner, more organized, and educational school environment (reading corners, gardens, updated info boards)	Field Observation, July 10, 2025
Internal School Evaluation	Regular meetings between school and parents held every two months	School Meeting Agendas and Schedules
	The school receives feedback from parent forums	Interview with Acting Principal,

Table 2 describes the evaluation results of the effectiveness of public relations (PR) management in optimizing the branding and quality of education at SD Negeri 1 Rensing. The evaluation covers three key dimensions: school branding enhancement, education quality, and the internal evaluation process. In terms of branding, there has been an increase in the number of new students, including those from outside the school zone, more active use of the school's social media platforms, and greater community involvement in various school activities. Regarding education quality, improvements are evident in students' academic scores, achievements in non-academic competitions, and better organized and more educational school facilities. Meanwhile, in the internal evaluation dimension, the school has started holding regular meetings with parents and is open to receiving feedback from community forums. Although the PR structure is not yet fully professionalized, the findings in this table indicate progress and a clear commitment by the school to improve its image and the quality of its educational services through strategic public relations efforts.

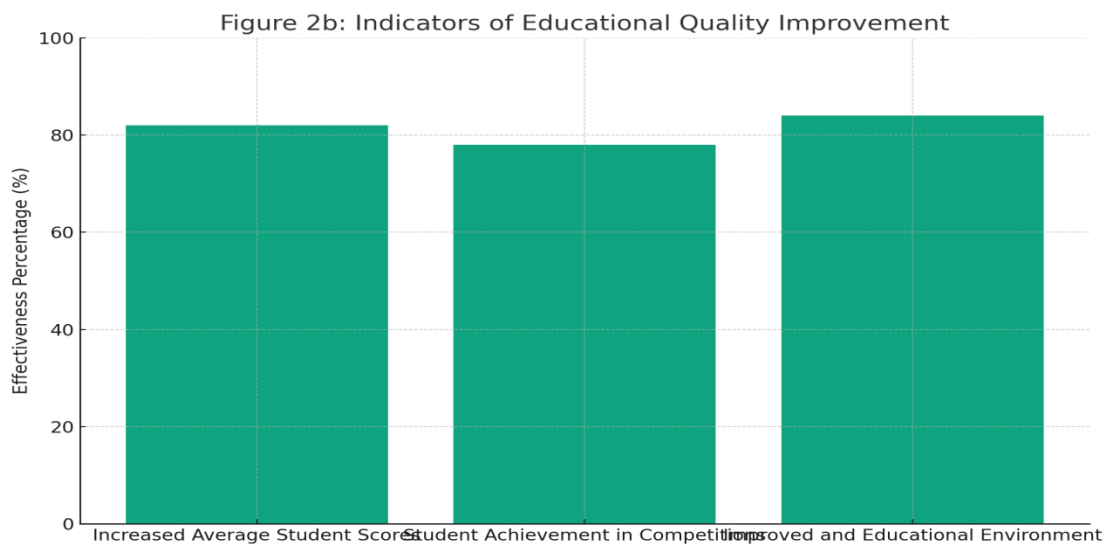
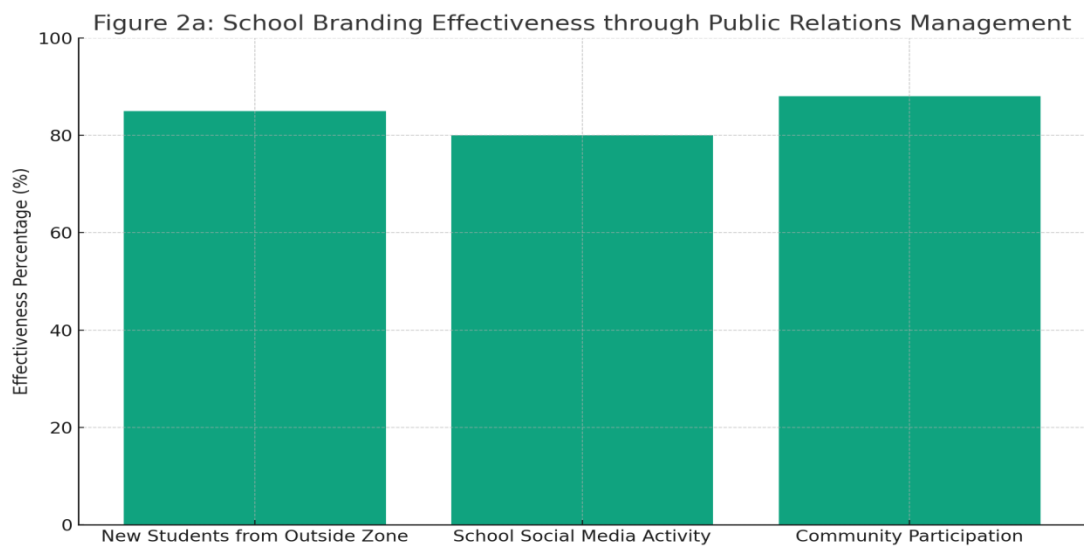


Figure 2a illustrates the implementation level of three main indicators of school branding improvement, namely the number of new students from outside the school zone (85%), school social media activity (80%), and community participation in school events (88%). Meanwhile, Figure 2b highlights the effectiveness of public relations in enhancing education quality, reflected

in increased average student scores (82%), student achievements in district-level competitions (78%), and a more organized and educational school environment (84%). These values are qualitative estimates derived from data triangulation of observations, interviews, and documentation, and are presented as percentages to indicate the level of achievement and impact.

DISCUSSION

1. Analysis of Results

This study investigated the implementation of Public Relations (PR) management at SD Negeri 1 Rensing in relation to school branding and quality improvement. The findings, analyzed in light of the research objectives and data triangulation, address three main aspects: implementation, challenges, and effectiveness.

a. Implementation of PR Management

The first research question explores how PR management is implemented in the school context. The results show that while PR activities are actively carried out, they are not yet professional or structurally formalized. There is no appointed public relations officer, and responsibilities are handled by the school committee and teachers, primarily through informal channels. Despite this, several strategic practices have been put in place.

Religious and community-based events, such as Islamic holidays and clean-up drives, have become the primary medium for engaging with parents and promoting the school. These activities, which scored an 85% implementation rate in Figure 1, show the school's reliance on culturally embedded practices for public engagement. Additionally, informal communication via WhatsApp groups (80%) allows for consistent updates and trust-building with parents. The school also maintains a modest presence on Facebook (70%), displays classroom information boards (65%), and has begun involving alumni (50%) to strengthen external relations. These findings illustrate a grassroots-level PR model that, although limited in formality, is functional and adaptive.

b. Challenges in Implementing PR Management

In response to the second research question, the study identifies several challenges that hinder the optimal implementation of PR strategies. First, there is a significant limitation in human resources and professional competence. The absence of trained personnel dedicated to PR tasks means that communication efforts are often ad hoc and inconsistent.

Second, infrastructural constraints such as limited ICT facilities, poor internet connectivity, and the absence of digital archiving tools prevent the school from conducting broader and more systematic publicity campaigns. These barriers are confirmed by direct field observation and stakeholder interviews.

Third, the low level of digital literacy among many parents affects the school's ability to disseminate information through online channels. Teachers often resort to face-to-face communication during student pickup times, which, while personal, limits the speed and reach of information sharing. These issues, summarized in Table 1, confirm that both internal and external factors influence the school's PR management performance.

c. Effectiveness of PR Management in Enhancing Branding and Quality

The third research question examines the extent to which PR management has been effective in improving school branding and quality. The evaluation, presented in Table 2 and visualized in Figures 2a and 2b, shows measurable progress across several indicators.

In terms of branding, the number of new student enrollments, including those from outside the school zone (85%), indicates a growing public trust. Active use of social media (80%) and

increasing community participation in school events (88%) also support the conclusion that PR efforts are positively impacting the school's image.

Regarding education quality, student academic scores have shown improvement, especially in core subjects like Bahasa Indonesia and Mathematics (82%). Additionally, non-academic achievements, such as winning a district-level competition (78%), and visible improvements in the learning environment (84%) reflect a more supportive and effective educational setting.

Finally, internal evaluation mechanisms are beginning to take shape, with regular parent meetings and community forums becoming a source of feedback for school improvement. While the PR system is still evolving, these developments suggest a shift toward a more responsive and strategic communication culture.

2. Comparison with Previous Studies

The findings of this study are consistent with and enrich prior research on public relations (PR) in educational settings. As highlighted by Alshammari and Alshammari (2025), effective PR strategies grounded in impression management theory significantly influence institutional image and reputation. This aligns with the case of SD Negeri 1 Rensing, where efforts such as community involvement and digital outreach—though informal—have improved public perception and student enrollment.

The school's use of WhatsApp and Facebook mirrors findings from Novita et al. (2025) and Zahro & Diana (2025), who emphasized the power of social media in increasing visibility and stakeholder engagement. However, unlike their cases where social media was used strategically by trained personnel, SDN 1 Rensing's PR practices remain largely community-driven and informal.

The study also supports Qomariyah and Wahyudi (2024) and Rofiki & Nurjannah (2024), who stressed the role of parent-school communication in building trust. The frequent use of WhatsApp groups by teachers at SDN 1 Rensing demonstrates an organic but effective form of relationship management. Still, the school's lack of PR-specific staff contrasts with findings from more structured urban institutions.

Moreover, while Walid & Malik (2023) and Ejsen et al. (2025) argue for integrated PR and quality management systems in schools, SDN 1 Rensing's case illustrates the struggles of resource-limited rural schools to adopt such frameworks. This emphasizes a critical contextual gap in PR research: while strategic communication theory is well-developed, its application in under-resourced primary schools remains limited.

Thus, this study adds a new dimension to existing literature by documenting PR implementation in a semi-urban, elementary-level Indonesian public school—an area often overlooked in PR discourse. Unlike previous studies that mostly focused on secondary or higher education institutions, this case reveals how culturally embedded practices, informal networks, and grassroots communication strategies can partially fulfill PR functions even in the absence of formal structures.

3. Implications of Findings

The findings of this study have both practical and theoretical implications. Practically, the study suggests that schools without formal PR structures can still develop effective communication strategies by leveraging existing community ties, digital platforms, and teacher-parent relationships. This is particularly valuable for educational institutions in rural or semi-urban areas where resources and professional PR personnel are scarce.

Moreover, the study shows that religious and social events can serve as informal but powerful PR channels, reinforcing the importance of contextual sensitivity in developing

communication strategies. The consistent involvement of parents and alumni in school events helps foster a positive school image, even without formal branding initiatives.

Theoretically, the findings extend the application of Excellence Theory (Grunig & Grunig, 2008) to grassroots educational institutions, showing that two-way communication—though informal—can still fulfill core PR functions. The case also illustrates the Barcelona Principles 3.0, emphasizing outcome-based evaluation in PR, as demonstrated by increased enrollment and community participation at SDN 1 Rensing.

Furthermore, the study offers a contribution to educational PR theory by presenting a rural perspective that often goes undocumented. It raises questions about how non-professional PR efforts can still contribute to institutional growth and identity, prompting future studies to explore alternative models of school PR in low-resource contexts.

4. Limitations of the Study

While this study offers valuable insights, several limitations must be acknowledged. First, the case study approach limits the generalizability of findings. The context of SD Negeri 1 Rensing may not reflect conditions in other schools, especially those in urban areas or with established PR departments.

Second, the data sources were limited to interviews, observations, and document reviews within a short timeframe (April–July 2025). Longer-term studies might reveal additional dynamics, such as changes in stakeholder behavior or evolving PR strategies over time.

Third, the lack of quantitative data limits the statistical strength of conclusions. Although percentage estimates were derived from triangulated qualitative data, future research could apply surveys or experimental designs to validate these findings more rigorously.

Finally, potential researcher bias in interpretation, especially during observation and informal interviews, could affect the objectivity of analysis. Efforts were made to maintain neutrality, but future studies should consider multi-researcher coding or external audits to strengthen validity.

5. Partial Conclusions

The discussion of findings leads to several partial conclusions that help bridge the results to the final conclusion section of the journal.

- a. PR implementation at SDN 1 Rensing, although informal and non-professional, demonstrates potential in improving school branding and community engagement through religious events, teacher-parent communication, and digital platforms.
- b. Key challenges include lack of PR-trained staff, limited infrastructure, and low digital literacy among parents. These factors hinder optimal communication and suggest the need for capacity building and infrastructural support.
- c. Despite these limitations, PR efforts have shown tangible outcomes, such as increased enrollment, improved academic and non-academic performance, and stronger community involvement—demonstrating the effectiveness of context-based and relational PR strategies.
- d. These findings contribute to educational PR literature by offering a rural public school perspective and highlighting the relevance of informal strategies in under-resourced settings.

These insights prepare the ground for a more comprehensive conclusion that addresses the central aim of the study: to explore the role of PR management in enhancing school branding and quality in an underrepresented context.

CONCLUSION

This study explored how public relations (PR) management at SD Negeri 1 Rensing contributes to school branding and educational quality. The findings reveal that although PR

management in the school is not yet structured professionally, it is actively implemented through community-based initiatives, informal communication, and digital platforms. The most significant strategies include religious and community events, use of WhatsApp for parental communication, and initial efforts to utilize social media and alumni networks. The research also identified several challenges inhibiting optimal PR performance, including the lack of trained PR personnel, inadequate infrastructure for digital communication, and low parental digital literacy. Despite these obstacles, the school's PR activities have shown effectiveness in increasing enrollment, improving academic and non-academic performance, and enhancing stakeholder engagement—demonstrating that contextual and relational PR strategies can be impactful even in low-resource settings.

Theoretically, the study extends the application of public relations frameworks to rural elementary schools, a context often overlooked in literature. Practically, it highlights the potential of leveraging informal networks and local community strengths to compensate for institutional limitations. Future research should explore comparative studies across diverse school settings, integrate quantitative assessments for broader generalizability, and examine long-term outcomes of school PR initiatives. In closing, this study underscores the strategic function of PR in educational development, especially for schools seeking to strengthen their public image and service quality amid limited resources.

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