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STRATEGY FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF EARLY CHILDHOOD INSTITUTIONS WITH THE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN IMPROVING THE BRANDING OF KB ASSYARBANI

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Abstract

This study aims to examine the strategic use of social media, particularly Instagram, as a means to strengthen branding at the Early Childhood Education institution KB Assyarbani, and to evaluate its impact on the institution's visibility and reputation in the public eye. The research uses a qualitative descriptive approach, with data collected through observation, interviews, and documentation. The study focused on a social media management training program provided to ECE staff, which included skills in content editing, hashtag usage, and consistent publishing. The findings reveal that well-planned and creative social media strategies enhance audience engagement, broaden the school's promotional reach, and contribute to building a positive institutional image. Visual documentation of children's activities, parent testimonials, and student achievements, as well as uniform design and unique educational programs, were found to be key elements in crafting a strong branding narrative. However, challenges such as the risk of disseminating inaccurate information highlight the need for clear digital policies and continuous content monitoring. The implications of this study suggest that professional training and management of social media represent a crucial investment in shaping the identity of educational institutions. In conclusion, social media can serve as a strategic tool for strengthening ECE branding when used consistently, creatively, and in alignment with the institution's vision.

Keywords: Early Childhood Institution Development; Social Media; School Branding

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji strategi pemanfaatan media sosial, khususnya Instagram, sebagai sarana penguatan branding di lembaga Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini (PAUD) KB Assyarbani, serta mengevaluasi dampaknya terhadap peningkatan visibilitas dan reputasi institusi di mata masyarakat. Metode yang digunakan adalah pendekatan deskriptif kualitatif dengan teknik pengumpulan data melalui observasi, wawancara, dan dokumentasi. Fokus penelitian diarahkan pada program pelatihan pengelolaan media sosial yang diberikan kepada staf PAUD, mencakup kemampuan mengedit konten, penggunaan hashtag, dan konsistensi publikasi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa strategi media sosial yang terencana dan kreatif mampu meningkatkan interaksi dengan audiens, memperluas jangkauan promosi sekolah, dan membentuk citra positif lembaga. Visualisasi kegiatan anak, testimoni orang tua, prestasi siswa, serta desain seragam dan program pendidikan yang unik menjadi elemen penting dalam membangun narasi branding yang kuat. Namun demikian, tantangan seperti potensi penyebaran informasi yang tidak akurat menuntut adanya kebijakan digital yang bijak dan kontrol konten yang berkelanjutan. Implikasi dari penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa pelatihan dan pengelolaan media sosial yang profesional merupakan investasi penting dalam membangun identitas institusi pendidikan. Kesimpulannya, media sosial dapat menjadi alat strategis dalam penguatan branding PAUD apabila digunakan secara konsisten, kreatif, dan terintegrasi dengan visi lembaga.

Kata Kunci: Pengembangan Lembaga PAUD; Media Sosial; School Branding

Introduction

Learning is the process of developing one's self. Furthermore, the first thing that is done to encourage the growth and development of children is Early Childhood Education (ECE). According to the Regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia Number 137 of 2014 concerning National Standards for Early Childhood Education, Article 1 Paragraph 14 of Law No. 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System, "Early Childhood Education is the level of education before the level of elementary education which is a coaching effort aimed at children from birth to the age of six years which is carried out through the provision of educational stimuli, Therefore, getting an education from an early age is the most important phase of life (Wowor et al., 2022).

The development of ECE (Early Childhood Education) institutions is one of the important efforts in improving the quality of human resources from an early age. High-quality Early Childhood Education will provide a strong foundation for children's future development. The development of Early Childhood Education institutions can be carried out in various ways, including improving the quality of educators, providing adequate facilities and infrastructure, and developing a curriculum that is relevant and fun for children.

In addition, the development of ECE institutions also needs to involve the active participation of parents and the community. Parents have an important role to play in supporting children's learning processes at home, while the community can contribute in the form of better support. The synergy between ECE institutions, parents, and the community will create a conducive environment for optimal child growth and development.

The development of ECE institutions also needs to pay attention to the diversity of children's needs. Each child has different uniqueness and potential, so the learning approach used must also be developed. An inclusive Early Childhood Education institution will provide equal opportunities for all children to learn and develop, regardless of social, economic, physical, or mental background. Thus, the development of ECE institutions is an important investment in building the next generation of the nation with quality and character (Wiyani, 2018).

The rapid development of information and communication technology has brought significant changes in various aspects of life, including in the world of education. Early Childhood Education Institutions, as an institution that plays an important role in the formation of children's character and intelligence from an early age, also need to adapt to these changes. One way to keep up with the times and increase competitiveness is to use social media as a means of strengthening school branding.

Educational institutions and educators must immediately adapt to social and technological changes in the 4.0 era. The goal is to prepare students with relevant skills and knowledge to face the challenges of the ever-changing modern world. Early Childhood Education institutions in the 4.0 era have also changed to prepare children from an early age to face increasingly sophisticated technology and a changing world. This requires an approach that focuses on future capabilities, innovation, and technology

(Nababan et al., 2023).

However, the development of ECE institutions through social media also faces challenges. Many ECE institutions still do not fully understand the potential and how to optimize the use of social media. In addition, limited human and financial resources can also be an obstacle to implementing an effective branding strategy through social media.

One of the main challenges faced is the lack of formal digital facilities such as websites, which function not only as a digital representation of the institution but also as the main tool in administrative activities and the delivery of information to parents of prospective students and the general public. In the current industrial era, websites are included in the most important part of an organization, both for business and educational purposes (Daffa et al., 2024).

Therefore, an in-depth study is needed on how PAUD institutions can develop and strengthen their branding through the effective and efficient use of social media. This research will explore strategies that can be applied by PAUD institutions in utilizing social media to improve the image of schools, expand their reach, and ultimately improve the quality of Early Childhood Education in Indonesia. By understanding and implementing the right branding strategy via social media, it is hoped that PAUD institutions can increase their competitiveness, attract more students, and ultimately make a greater contribution to the development of Indonesian human resources from an early age.

In this digital era, social media has become an integral part of the lives of modern society. Platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube have become the main source of information for many people, including parents who are looking for the right educational institution for their children. Therefore, the development of ECE institutions through social media is a strategic step in building a positive image and expanding the school's reach.

The benefits of social media as a school branding tool are very diverse. First, social media can increase the visibility of schools so that more people know the existence and advantages of the school. Second, social media can facilitate communication between schools, parents, and prospective students. Third, through social media, schools can build a solid community with students' parents, so that good relationships are established and mutually supportive. In addition, social media can also be used to promote the school's flagship programs, as well as establish cooperation with related parties, such as other educational institutions or companies (Praceka et al., 2023).

Based on the Hootsuite Digital Indonesia 2020 report, there are 175.4 million internet users in Indonesia and 160.0 million social media users, which experienced an 8.1% increase in users from April 2019 to January 2024. The highest percentage of social media users in Indonesia is in the age range of 18–24 years and 25–34 years. Most of them are married and are referred to as millennial parents (Rahmawati, 2021).

Social media in strengthening school branding can utilize various digital platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube to build a positive image and strong identity for Early Childhood Education institutions. Through social media, PAUD schools can communicate effectively with parents, prospective students, and the wider

community. By presenting interesting and informative content, such as teaching and learning activities, student achievements, and school facilities, schools can build public trust and interest in the institution. Through this social media, everyone can create, edit, and publish news, promotions, photos, and video content. In addition to being more flexible, it covers a wide reach and is effective, efficient, interactive, and varied (Asyifa, N. 2024).

Along with technological advances and social changes, people are using digital media more for communication and interaction. Digital branding is one of the quickest ways to spread information about ECE. Technology has greatly helped educational institutions today, and this is especially advantageous when using school branding tools to attract new students with advanced services (online and updated). Schools will find it easier to promote their excellence to the community with branding (Rizan, 2023). Branding is one or several combinations of appearances, designs, symbols, terminology, or names related to products or services (Rufaidah et al, 2015).

The current strategy of using social media is not only used by large companies but has penetrated various fields of small-scale community activities, such as strengthening school branding. The strategy of using social media to strengthen school branding is very necessary, the first underlying thing is that schools as non-profit institutions engaged in educational services need to convince the public as customers (parents, students, and other parties) that the educational institution still exists, secondly to assure the community that the services provided are aligned accordance with the needs of the community, Third, marketing to be widely known by the public, fourth, the existence of educational institutions is not abandoned by the wider community.

Strengthening branding is a new method to advance and develop the potential of an institution by focusing on goals or targets, especially on people who need and want educational institutions, while the development strategy of ECE institutions is the school's efforts in planning, compiling, and offering educational services to the community (Taan, H. 2021). Branding is an asset that creates value for customers by increasing satisfaction and appreciating quality (Sopiah, 2016).

Strengthening school branding through social media has several advantages. First, social media provides a broad and easily accessible platform for disseminating information about the school's programs, facilities, and achievements. Second, social media allows for direct interaction between school parents and the community, so it can build closer relationships and increase trust. Third, effective use of social media can increase the visibility of schools online, which in turn can attract more prospective students and improve the institution's reputation.

Various creative and innovative efforts are carried out by Early Childhood Education managers in the development of institutions to bring out uniqueness and excellence, to meet the branding needs of KB Assyrbani School and public trust. Today, many schools have emerged with special characteristics such as culture-based, nature-based, religious-based, entrepreneurship-based, and even schools with international concepts that offer foreign languages in the learning process. As well as many schools that offer various promotions such as fees, facilities, and others.

One of the ECE institutions established in Tegalsiwalan-Probolinggo is KB Assyarbani. KB Assyarbani is one of the non-formal Play Group in Probolinggo Regency, East Java Province. KB Assyarbani was established on January 19th, 2020, as a newly established ECE KB Assyarbani already has excellent programs offered such as tahsin and daily prayers, congregational dhuha (optional prayer), outing classes, market days, and parenting. To introduce the superior programs provided and the achievements that have been achieved, it is certainly necessary to do good marketing to introduce the programs provided to the community. So that these programs can develop ECE institutions in strengthening the branding of KB Assyarbani schools.

In the current technological era, KB Assyarbani develops institutions using the help of social media. Because social media can reach more prospective students without any space or time limitations. KB Assyarbani has Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube as social media. The strategy of using social media chosen by KB Assyarbani, is a way to foster a sense of public trust among consumers to send their children to school in the KB Assyarbani. Public trust or consumer trust is the willingness of a party to trust another party based on the expectation that the other party will take the best action for the person who believes it.

Digital technology will also provide society with flexibility and efficiency of services. Digital transformation in the education sector is not limited to the education sector. This includes learning focused on digital media and methods, school marketing strategies (digital marketing), and improving the school's reputation or school branding. The school will improve its value in the eyes of the public by branding it, making it look more memorable and easier to remember. Branding a school doesn't just introduce the school; It is also an attempt to establish the name of the school. There are many elements in it, such as brand names, logos, and color options. All components must be aligned with the school's goals and objectives (Oktarina et al., 2023).

Strengthening school branding has to be sustained. Schools must continue to innovate and adapt to the times. In addition, good communication with parents and the community is also important to maintain a positive image of the school. With strong branding and guaranteed quality, schools will be able to compete and become the first choice for parents who want to provide the best education for their children (Kusumaningrum, H. 2024).

The school branding process helps students find a school that suits their needs. This branding includes the selection of promises, principles, and elements that reflect the school's identity. Therefore, schools make branding efforts to attract attention and become the main choice of the community (DwiYanti, 2020).

The purpose of branding is: (1) As a company identity that distinguishes products from competitors' products, making them easily recognized and purchased by customers; (2) As a promotional tool that highlights the attractiveness of the product, such as attractive design and color; (3) Building a reputation by providing customers' confidence, quality assurance, and prestige image; (4) Control and dominate the market, using strategies such as attractive design shapes and colors (Mushlih, 2018).

Based on the presentation mentioned above, the author is interested in studying

the development of social media institutions using social media, which is an important part of strengthening school branding.

Research Methods

This study uses a qualitative descriptive approach, which aims to describe and understand in depth the use of social media as a strategy to strengthen branding in Early Childhood Education (ECE) institutions, especially in KB Assyarbani. This approach was chosen because it is suitable for exploring complex and contextual social phenomena, such as digital communication strategies and public perception of educational institution branding. In the qualitative approach, the focus of the research is not on hypothesis testing or statistically measuring variables, but on understanding the meanings, experiences, and real practices carried out by actors in the field.

This approach allows researchers to explore in depth how social media, especially Instagram, is used as a communication and promotional tool in Early Childhood Education. Thus, the social, cultural, and institutional context of the use of social media can be interpreted in its entirety, including the internal dynamics of the institution and the response from the community, especially the parents of students. The main purpose of this study is to comprehensively examine the strategy of using social media in building and strengthening the institutional image of KB Assyarbani. This research specifically aims to: (a) Identify the types of branding strategies and social media content used by institutions, including the types of visuals, narratives, and promotional messages conveyed; (b) Explain the perception and experience of ECE managers and parents regarding the effectiveness of social media in increasing the visibility, public trust, and reputation of the school; (c) Evaluate the impact of the social media use training that has been provided to ECE staff, both in terms of technical skills such as content editing, hashtag utilization, and the ability to maintain the sustainability and consistency of content uploads; (d) Analyse the challenges and opportunities faced by institutions in the use of social media as a means of communication and promotion, including ethical issues, information security, and limited resources.

Data collection was carried out through three main techniques, namely in-depth interviews, participatory observations, and documentation. These three techniques were chosen to obtain diverse, comprehensive, and complementary data (data triangulation). In-depth interviews were conducted with several key informants, including ECE managers, the school's social media staff, and several parents who actively interact through school social media. The interview guide is structured in a semi-structured manner so that the researcher can still direct the discussion according to the focus of the research, it also provides space for the informant to express their experiences and opinions freely and openly. Participatory observation is carried out directly in the ECE environment to observe the process of creating and uploading content, staff training related to social media, and interaction between the school and the audience through social media. The researcher also followed the activity of Instagram, Facebook, and other social media accounts owned by the institution to observe the type of content published, the response of the audience (likes, comments, shares), and the frequency of uploads.

Documentation is carried out by collecting various visual documents such as photos of activities, learning videos, promotional digital posters, and internal school documents related to training or social media policies. The instruments used in the documentation were developed in the form of content analysis sheets and content evaluation checklists, which are used to assess the regularity, suitability, and attractiveness of the content displayed. The data obtained was analyzed using thematic analysis, which is a method used to identify, analyze, and report patterns or themes that arise from qualitative data.

The analysis process is carried out systematically through several stages: (a) Transcription, which is transcribing all interview results and observation notes into text form; (b) Initial coding, i.e. the process of marking important parts of the text that focuses such as branding strategies, parental perception, social media training, and technical constraints; (c) Theme categorization, where coded data is grouped into broad themes, such as "effective content types", "audience responses", "training and impacts", and "digital content risks and controls"; (d) Data interpretation, which is analyzing and relating field findings with relevant theories, such as digital communication, branding management, and early childhood education theory.

To ensure the validity and reliability of the data, the researcher applied source triangulation techniques (comparing data from managers, staff, and parents) and analysis triangulation techniques (comparing the results of interviews, observations, and documentation). In addition, the researcher also conducts member checking by asking the main informants to verify the results of the provisional interpretation to ensure the correctness and accuracy of the analyzed data.

Results and Discussion

The development of Early Childhood Education institutions is a systematic process that aims to improve the quality and effectiveness of institutions in providing educational services to early childhood. This development covers various aspects, ranging from curriculum, educators, facilities, and infrastructure, to institutional management. Amelia R emphasized that the development of Early Childhood Education institutions must be planned and ensure sustainability, involving all components of the institution and related parties, such as parents and the community (Ramadhanti, A. 2023).

The development of ECE institutions can be carried out through various approaches, including research and development (R&D) approaches. This approach involves a series of stages, ranging from problem identification, model or program development, and trials, to evaluation and dissemination. In addition, there is also a capacity-building approach, which is an effort to increase the capacity of Human Resources (HR) in ECE institutions through training, mentoring, and professional development programs.

Therefore, the researcher emphasized that the development of Early Childhood Education institutions is a long-term investment that will provide great benefits for early childhood development. With high-quality ECE institutions, children will get a good

education from an early age, so that they have a strong foundation to face the next level of education and gain achievements in the future. Therefore, efforts to develop ECE institutions must continue to be carried out in a sustainable and well-planned manner.

One of the ECE institutions established in Tegalsiwalan Probolinggo is KB Assyarbani. KB Assyarbani is one of the non-formal Early Childhood Education in Probolinggo Regency, East Java Province. KB Assyarbani was established on January 19, 2020, as a newly established KB Assyarbani already has excellent programs offered such as tahsin (reciting the holy Qur'an) and daily prayers, congregational dhuha prayer, outing classes, market days, and parenting. To introduce the superior programs provided and the achievements, it is certainly necessary to do good marketing in introducing the programs provided to the community. These programs can develop ECE institutions in strengthening the branding of KB Assyarbani schools.

In the technological era, KB Assyarbani develops institutions using the help of social media. Because social media can keep you more prospective students without any space and time limitations. KB Assyarbani has social media such as Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube. The strategy of using social media chosen by KB Assyarbani, is a way to foster a sense of public trust as consumers to send their children to school in the KB Assyarbani. Public trust or consumer trust is the willingness of a party to trust another party based on the expectation that the other party will do the best action for the person who believes it.

At KB Assyarbani, the use of Instagram as a branding platform showed positive results. This program involves training ECE managers in content editing techniques and strategies for using hashtags to increase visibility. This is important considering the number of ECEs that compete in the current education market.

Social media is a transformative force that has a profound impact on the way humans communicate, interact, and obtain information. Social media is not just a platform for sharing status or photos, but also a virtual public space where various ideas, opinions, and information can be spread quickly and widely (Rasjid, H. 2021). Social media has great potential to empower society, allowing everyone to participate in public threats, voice opinions, and even influence public policy. Through social media, information can be accessed more easily and quickly, so that people can be more critical and informed in dealing with various issues. However, on the negative side of social media, such as the spread of hoaxes, hate speech, and polarization of opinions. He reminded us that social media can be a very powerful tool to manipulate information and influence public opinion, so social media users need to have good digital literacy and competence in receiving information.

Other research shows that the use of social media significantly increases the effectiveness of school promotion. By using platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube, educational institutions can reach a wider audience and convey information more interestingly and interactively.

The importance of consistency and creativity in using social media as a school branding tool. Schools need to have a clear content strategy, plan a regular posting schedule, and create content that is relevant, engaging, and in line with the institution's

targets. Quality content will help schools build a good reputation, increase public trust, and attract the interest of prospective students.

The researcher emphasized that social media can also be used as a tool to build a solid school community. Through social media, schools can create an adaptive space for students, parents, and alumni to interact, share information, and strengthen a sense of belonging to the school. By building a strong community, schools can create brand who will help promote the school voluntarily through word of mouth.

Ari Liyono defines branding as the process of creating a name, symbol, design, or combination of these elements to identify a product or service and differentiate it from competitors. In the context of education, it is stated that the branding of educational institutions aims to build a strong identity, improve reputation, and attract the interest of related parties (Liyono, A. 2022).

Diulang dari paragraf di atas

Strengthening school branding is an important step in attracting the interest of parents and prospective students. Strong branding will create a positive image of the school in the eyes of the public, thereby increasing trust and appeal. Some ways that can be done to strengthen school branding include: creating attractive logos and taglines, creating school interior and exterior designs that are cheerful and appropriate for children's age, and utilizing social media to promote school activities and achievements.

In addition, strengthening school branding can also be done through improving the quality of service and learning. Schools that have qualified educators, complete facilities, and an innovative curriculum will provide added value for parents. Positive testimonials from parents and alumni can also be an effective promotional tool. Therefore, schools need to continue to strive to improve their quality to provide the best for students.

The usefulness of school branding can increase public trust in the school and build a good school reputation. It can also help improve student behavior and improve the quality of services, as well as increase public interest and "awareness" (Wahyunto et al., 2024). The purpose of school branding is to build public trust with a good perception and form a sense of community love for brands (Burhan Jamaluddin, 2020).

School branding is an effort to form a positive image that can attract the attention of the public. In the context of early childhood education, good branding can help the institution in recruiting new students and building a strong reputation in the community. Social media provides an opportunity for ECE institutions to interact directly with parents and the community. Engaging content such as learning videos, photos of children's activities, and information about school achievements can be presented more dynamically. This not only increases visibility but also builds public trust in the institution. While there are many benefits offered, the use of social media also brings challenges, such as the risk of spreading inaccurate information or a lack of oversight of the content posted.

Therefore, ECE institutions need to have a clear policy regarding the use of social media.

Strengthening the Branding of KB Assyarbani

Several stages can be carried out in the development of an effective institution to strengthen the branding of the KB Assyarbani.

1.1. Cool school uniforms

Designing unique and creative school uniforms. Create a uniform design that reflects the school's identity with attention to elements such as colors, logos, patterns, or special accents that can set your school uniform apart from the rest. Each school has a specific uniform that has been arranged by the school's leadership; Add unique elements or accessories to reinforce the branding, consider adding unique elements or accessories to school uniforms. For example, adding a school logo to a tie or allowing students to use a special pin or accessory that shows achievement or membership in a school club or organization; Supporting a strong school culture and values. Make sure that the uniform is tailored to the school's vision, mission, and values, and make sure that students and school staff feel proud to wear the uniform.

1.2. Forming positive characteristics

Identify the school's core values. Determine the core values you want to promote and highlight in the school culture. For example, academic excellence, diversity, collaboration, leadership, or concern for the environment. The variation of these values refers to the school's vision and mission. These values will be the foundation for forming the positive characteristics of the school; Develop a unique educational program that is different from other schools. For example, specialized skills programs, creative curriculum, innovative learning approaches, or integrated approaches to arts, sports, organizations, or extracurricular activities. These programs will be the main attraction and positive characteristic of the school and allow students to express their interests and talents; Forming strong community relationships around the school. Involve the community in school activities, such as art performances, charity activities, or environmental projects. To encourage such harmonious relationships, community support and involvement in school activities are very important. This will help expand the school's reach and strengthen a positive image in the eyes of the community.

1.3. Pursue good achievement

Set achievement goals that the school wants to achieve in terms of academic and non-academic. For example, improving exam results, winning awards in competitions, or creating innovative and successful activity programs. Because an outstanding school is a school that dares to innovate to achieve results in the academic field from the learning and non-academic process that comes from honing soft skills outside of academic expertise and children's non-academic potential is developed through extra-curricular activities held outside of class hours; Support quality learning by ensuring that the quality of learning in schools is always improved. Focus on effective teaching strategies, adequate facilities, and adequate supporting resources to create a good learning environment; Provide support and training to teachers. Teachers are a key factor in gaining

achievements, therefore, support and training are needed for teachers so that they can provide the best teaching to students. Encourage them to develop innovative teaching methods and apply technology in learning; Provide opportunities for self-development. Provide opportunities for students to develop outside of the classroom through extracurricular activities, such as academic clubs, sports, arts, or student organizations. Support them in gaining achievements and publicizing their achievements; Support participation in competitions and academic activities. Encourage students to participate in academic competitions at the local, national, or international level. Provide the necessary support and preparation to increase their chances of success.

1.4. Visual documentation accompanied by written documentation with an attractive design

Use interesting photography and videos. Document school activities, events, and student achievements using high-quality photography and video. Make sure the photos and videos capture important moments and depict the excitement and excitement at school; Create engaging content. Content is all information contained in Internet media or online media. In addition to visuals, make writing documentation that is informative and interesting. Write articles, news, or reports about school activities, student achievements, and featured programs offered in language that is engaging, concise, and easy to understand for a wide range of audiences; Design with creativity. Pay attention to attractive designs for visual and written documentation by using graphics, typography, and layouts that are aesthetically pleasing and in keeping with the school's visual identity. That reflects the school's personality and message; Create sustainable content. Create a regular publication schedule for visual and written documentation. This will provide continuity in the school's brand storytelling and build positive expectations from students, parents, and the community for upcoming content.

Conclusion

This research answers the main question related to how the use of social media, especially Instagram, can strengthen the branding of the KB Assyarbani institution. The results show that the strategic use of Instagram has proven effective in increasing visibility and building a positive image of the institution. The training provided to ECE managers on content editing techniques, hashtag utilization, and publication consistency also has a significant impact on improving the quality of institutional digital communication, as well as expanding the reach of online audiences.

These findings imply that social media can be a very potent tool in supporting the branding strategy of Early Childhood Education institutions, provided it is managed professionally and sustainably. Visualization of children's activities, the delivery of educational values, and the publication of student achievements are important elements in building an attractive and trusted institutional narrative in the eyes of the public, especially the parents of students. In addition, image strengthening is also supported by

institutional programs such as creative uniform design, distinctive learning programs, and active involvement with the surrounding community.

As a recommendation, ECE institutions are advised to: (1) continue to develop staff capacity in social media management through periodic training and technical assistance; (2) develop internal digital policies to maintain the consistency and accuracy of published content; and (3) designing a long-term content strategy that is integrated with the vision, mission, and core values of the institution. Thus, social media is not only a promotional tool, but also a means of communication that builds emotional relationships between schools, students, and the wider community

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