

# Digital Marketing Training To Increase The Visibility Of Pesantren Al Amalul Khair (Islamic Boarding School)

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## ARTICLE INFORMATION

## ABSTRACT

**Keyword:**

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In the digital era, Islamic boarding schools face significant challenges in promoting their programs and values due to low digital visibility and limited branding efforts. This community service initiative is designed to provide comprehensive digital marketing training aimed at increasing the online presence, engagement, and credibility of Islamic boarding schools. The primary goal is to improve the digital literacy and marketing capacity of Islamic boarding school administrators through structured training in social media management, content creation, digital branding, SEO, and performance analysis. The training includes interactive workshops, hands-on practice, mentoring, and ongoing evaluation, with key performance indicators such as at least a 50% increase in social media engagement, growth in followers, and higher new student interest through digital outreach within six months after the program. Quantitative evaluation using pre-test and post-test shows that participants' competencies in digital marketing concepts, social media management, content creation, branding, and insight analysis increased in the "excellent" category, with several skill aspects improving by more than 100%. Qualitative indicators also demonstrate a rise in the number of participants confident in managing social media (from 10% to 90%) and able to create digital content (from 15% to 80%), as well as an increase in posting frequency to 3–4 times per week and the availability of formal branding guidelines. This program aligns with the national priority of digital transformation in education and community empowerment and proves effective in strengthening the professional, adaptive, and relevant image of Islamic boarding schools in the digital era.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Al Amalul Khair Islamic Boarding School is an Islamic educational institution located in an area with potential for the development of Islamic boarding school-based education and da'wah (Islamic outreach). However, in the ever-evolving digital era, this Islamic boarding school faces significant challenges related to its low visibility and image among the wider community, including prospective students and potential donors. Limited use of digital media and online marketing is a major obstacle in expanding the reach of the Islamic boarding school and increasing its competitiveness at the regional and international levels. The condition of the community and environment surrounding the Islamic boarding school shows great potential for social and economic development, especially through the optimization of digital technology. With the number of social media users in Indonesia reaching more than 143 million people by early 2025, or approximately 50.2% of the total population, digital marketing management is very strategic for reaching a wider and more diverse target audience (DataReportal, 2025). However, many Islamic boarding school administrators and managers still lack the skills and knowledge to manage digital marketing effectively, so structured and applicable training is needed.

This digital marketing training activity aims to increase the management capacity of Al Amalul Khair Islamic Boarding School in mastering digital marketing techniques and strategies, especially in the use of social media, SEO (Search Engine Optimization), and the creation of attractive and impactful digital content.

With this increased competency, it is hoped that the Islamic boarding school can significantly increase its visibility and positive image, thereby attracting the interest of a wider community, both at the national and international levels. This training is in line with the research and community service priorities related to digital transformation in Islamic education and community empowerment through the latest information technology. Expected key performance indicators (KPIs) include an increase in the number of interactions and followers on the Islamic boarding school's social media by at least 50% within 6 months after the training, increased community involvement in Islamic boarding school activities, and growth in registration of prospective new students from digital promotions.

This training will use interactive sessions, hands-on practice, digital content creation mentoring, and ongoing evaluation to measure its effectiveness. Furthermore, implementation will consider the readiness of the technological infrastructure and the specific needs of partners to ensure optimal application of the training results in the field. This activity is expected to have a long-term and sustainable impact on the development of Al Amalul Khair Islamic Boarding School as a modern Islamic educational institution, adaptable to current developments, and capable of expanding its da'wah and educational network with the support of effective digital marketing. This step aligns with digital marketing trends, which have been proven to increase the visibility and competitiveness of other Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia (Adha, Permatasari and Mudzakkir, 2024; Chaffey and Smith, 2022). Previous research has also shown that digital training is effective in increasing the visibility of educational institutions (Anggadwita & Wahyuningtyas, 2025). Al-Kifayah Islamic Boarding School in Riau, which implemented a digital strategy, experienced an increase in student enrollment (Akhyar, 2024).

Based on the team's observations and review, no digital marketing training program has yet been found that is implemented in a structured manner with a participatory approach, continuous mentoring, and digital performance evaluation at Al Amalul Khair Islamic Boarding School, so this community service activity provides a new contribution to strengthening the pesantren's digital capacity and developing sustainable promotional strategies. Thus, there is a gap in digital capacity-building programs within Islamic boarding schools, particularly at Al Amalul Khair Islamic Boarding School.

This research was conducted with the aim of analyzing the initial conditions of digital literacy and digital marketing capabilities of Islamic boarding school administrators. Developing and delivering a digital marketing training program that includes social media management, content creation, basic SEO, digital branding, and performance analysis. Improving participants' practical skills in managing Islamic boarding school digital platforms effectively and consistently. Measuring the impact of the training through digital performance indicators such as audience growth, increased engagement, and the quality of the content produced. Encouraging the formation of a sustainable digital marketing system that can be applied by Islamic boarding schools to strengthen their identity and increase the interest of prospective students and donors.

## II. PROBLEM

Based on existing observations, there are major problems related to digitalization, namely Low Digital Visibility : islamic boarding schools do not yet have an effective digital marketing strategy, minimal use of social media and websites to promote islamic boarding school activities and programs, and lack of knowledge among administrators in managing engaging digital content. Next related, unmanaged image and appeal to prospective students as information about islamic boarding schools is scattered and unstructured, making it difficult for the public to access it, lack of consistent branding in conveying the core values of islamic boarding schools, and inadequate skills in building positive narratives through digital platforms.



**Figure 1.** The location area of the community service activity at Al Amalul Khair Islamic Boarding School, Jl. Lunjuk Jaya, Lorok Pakjo, Kec. Ilir Barat I, Kota Palembang, Sumatera Selatan yang di Ambil dari Citra Google Earth pada tanggal 21 November 2025.

### III. METHOD

The approach and framework for this community service activity utilizes Participatory Action Training (PAT) combined with intensive mentoring. This participatory approach was chosen because it allows for active partner involvement at every stage, from problem identification to evaluation, ensuring that the solutions offered are relevant to the specific needs of the Al Amalul Khair Islamic Boarding School. Activities are carried out face-to-face within the Islamic boarding school environment, including training classrooms, a multipurpose hall, and a digital content creation practice area. Follow-up mentoring is provided online and offline through regular visits to the Islamic boarding school.

In designing this community service program, the participatory training and mentoring approach was adapted from previous community service and training models that combined stages of socialization, hands-on practice, and follow-up mentoring to ensure sustainable skill transfer in digital marketing. Similar structured methods have been implemented in digital capacity-building programs for Islamic educational institutions and pesantren, which typically include needs assessment, modular training, practice-based workshops, and periodic evaluation of digital performance. This methodological design is in line with community service programs reported by Adha et al. (2024), Huda et al. (2023), Kamalia et al. (2024), and Yudianto et al. (2023), which also employ stepwise digital marketing training, mentoring, and evaluation to improve participants' e-marketing competencies in Islamic educational settings.

The subjects involved in this activity include: Islamic Boarding School Administrators and Management; Islamic Boarding School Public Relations/Publication Team; Senior Students Interested in Digital Fields; Community Service Teams from Universities. This community service program is implemented through several structured stages to ensure effective training and mentoring and provide a sustainable impact for the Islamic boarding school. The activity stages are as follows:

#### 1. Preparation Stage

This stage includes all initial activities before implementing the training, including:

- a. Initial coordination with the Islamic boarding school management to determine the needs, schedule, and readiness of participants.
- b. Preparation of initial survey instruments (questionnaires & interviews).
- c. Preparation of training modules, presentation materials, and digital content examples.
- d. Preparation of supporting devices such as laptops, cameras, editing applications, and internet access.

#### 2. Survey and Needs Identification Stage

This activity aims to understand the condition of Islamic boarding school digital literacy, obstacles, and potential that can be developed.

- a. Field observations of social media accounts and Islamic boarding school information systems.
  - b. Interviews with administrators and senior students.
  - c. Digital marketing strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) analysis.
  - d. Determining the focus of training according to partner needs.
3. Core Training Implementation Stage
- The training is conducted face-to-face in several sessions, which include:
- Day 1: Digital Marketing Theory and Introduction
- a. Basic concepts of digital marketing.
  - b. Introduction to branding and digital identity of Islamic boarding schools.
  - c. Social media account management (Instagram, Facebook, YouTube).
- Day 2: Content Creation Practice
- a. Basic photography and videography training using smartphones.
  - b. Content design practice (posters, infographics, short videos).
  - c. Simulation of creating engaging and consistent posts.
4. Mentoring Stage
- Mentoring is carried out to ensure that training results can be implemented sustainably:
- a. Online guidance via WhatsApp/Telegram (content sharing, Q&A, evaluation).
  - b. Direct assistance through monthly visits.
  - c. Creating a content calendar for regular posting.
  - d. Monitoring the development of Islamic boarding school social media accounts.
5. Evaluation Stage
- Evaluation is carried out to measure program achievements based on success indicators.
- a. Assessment of participant skills before and after training (pre-test & post-test). Measurements were conducted using pre-test and post-test instruments administered before and after the training. Test questions covered understanding of digital marketing concepts, social media management skills, visual content creation (photos/videos), content editing skills (posters/short videos), understanding of branding and digital identity, caption and hashtag creation, understanding of content calendars/scheduling, social media insight analysis skills, use of the stories/reels feature, and confidence in managing digital accounts. Participant scores were analyzed descriptively and quantitatively (percentage improvement).
  - b. Analysis of social media performance (follower growth, engagement, content quality). Implementation success was measured through key performance indicators (KPIs) on the Islamic boarding school's social media accounts, including: follower growth, engagement rate, and post quality.
  - c. Preparation of an evaluation report covering strengths, challenges, and recommendations.
6. Final Report Preparation Stage
- a. Documentation of all activities in the form of photos, videos and narratives.
  - b. Preparation of the final report of community service activities.
  - c. Submission of report results to Islamic boarding schools and higher education institutions.

#### IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The stages of activities carried out are as follows:

##### 1. Preparation & Initial Survey

This stage involves coordinating with the Islamic boarding school administrators and observing the school's social media accounts and website. Interviews are conducted to identify digital needs and analyze participant capabilities. The goal is to ensure the training materials designed truly meet the needs and digital conditions of the Islamic boarding school. The output of this stage is a digital needs map, an initial survey report, and the determination of relevant training materials.

##### 2. Preparation of Training Materials

During the development phase, the team created digital marketing modules, prepared materials on branding and SEO, and prepared examples of post and video content. This phase aimed to ensure the training materials were applicable and tailored to the participants' needs. The resulting outputs included training modules, presentation slides, and content templates for participants to use.

##### 3. Digital Marketing Theory Education

Participants will be introduced to the basic concepts of digital marketing, branding, digital identity, and managing social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube. The goal of this phase is to strengthen their understanding of digital marketing fundamentals, marketing strategies, and key related theories. The outcome will be an understanding of Islamic boarding schools' digital positioning and a foundation of digital marketing knowledge.

#### 4. Content Creation Workshop

This phase includes simple photography and videography training, content editing (posters, reels, short videos), and daily posting practice. The primary output is 5–10 photo/video content pieces from the training, along with content drafts for the Islamic boarding school's official account. The goal of this phase is to enhance participants' creative abilities so they can create digital content independently.

#### 5. Social Media Management Practices

Participants are asked to upload content to official accounts, set a posting schedule (content calendar), and use hashtags, captions, and the Stories/Reels feature. The goal is to familiarize participants with managing social media consistently and in a structured manner. The output will be a monthly content calendar and regular posting activity on the Islamic boarding school account.

#### 6. Implementation of Islamic Boarding School Branding

This stage includes developing colors, a logo, a visual style, narrative consolidation, and a more professional design for the Islamic message, as well as a more professional Instagram feed. The goal is to create a strong and consistent image for the Islamic boarding school. The output will be a branding guideline and a more streamlined social media presence.

#### 7. Insight Analysis Training

Participants are introduced to using Instagram/Facebook Insights to analyze reach, engagement, and growth. They are taught to build data-driven strategies. The output is a weekly analysis report and content improvement strategy. The goal is to teach participants how to evaluate digital performance in a practical way.

#### 8. Mentoring & Monitoring

This phase consists of consultations via WhatsApp/Telegram, monthly mentoring visits, and post and performance evaluations. The resulting output includes content and strategy improvements, as well as progress monitoring over a three-month period. The goal is to ensure the program's sustainability after the training concludes.

#### 9. Evaluation & Reporting

The final stage is a pre-test and post-test evaluation of skills, measurement of improvements in digital engagement, and preparation of a final report. The output will be an evaluation report and a graph of the Islamic boarding school's digital performance improvement. The goal is to ensure the effectiveness of the training and the success of the education.

The implementation of the digital marketing training program at the Al Amalul Khair Islamic Boarding School resulted in several achievements related to increasing digital capacity, strengthening the institution's identity, and increasing the visibility of the Islamic boarding school in the digital space. The table below presents the results of the participant competency evaluation before (pre-test) and after (post-test) the digital marketing training. The pre-test was used as an initial measure to assess the participants' level of understanding and skills before receiving the training material. The post-test was administered after the training to measure the effectiveness of the training program in improving participant competency.

Table 1. Pretest and Post Test Assessment Results

| No | Assessment Aspects                               | Pre-Test (average) | Post-Test (average) | Increased (%) | Category  |
|----|--|--------------------|---------------------|---------------|-----------|
| 1  | Understanding the Concept of Digital Marketing   | 45                 | 85                  | 88,9          | Excellent |
| 2  | Social Media Management Skills                   | 40                 | 80                  | 100           | Excellent |
| 3  | Ability to create visual content (photos/videos) | 35                 | 75                  | 114,3         | Excellent |
| 4  | Content Editing Skills (Poster/Reels)            | 30                 | 78                  | 160           | Excellent |
| 5  | Understanding Branding and Digital Identity      | 38                 | 82                  | 115,8         | Excellent |
| 6  | Caption and Hashtag Creation Ability             | 42                 | 83                  | 97,6          | Excellent |
| 7  | Understanding Content Calendar/ Scheduling       | 32                 | 80                  | 150           | Excellent |
| 8  | Social Media Insight Analysis Ability            | 25                 | 72                  | 188           | Excellent |

|    |  |    |    |       |           |
|----|--|----|----|-------|-----------|
| 9  | Ability to Use the Stories/Reels Feature | 35 | 78 | 122,9 | Excellent |
| 10 | Confidence in Managing Digital Accounts  | 28 | 85 | 203,6 | Excellent |

Source: *Processed data, 2025*

The following table presents qualitative indicators that describe changes in the abilities of training participants from descriptive and narrative aspects:

Table 2. Qualitative Indicators

| No | Qualitative Indicators                                  | Before Training | After Training              |
|----|---|-----------------|-----------------------------|
| 1  | Participants who are confident in managing social media | 10%             | 90%                         |
| 2  | Participants who are able to create digital content     | 15%             | 80%                         |
| 3  | Participants who understand the content calendar        | 5%              | 85%                         |
| 4  | Participants who are able to analyze insights           | 0%              | 75%                         |
| 5  | Participants who are able to use editing tools          | 20%             | 82%                         |
| 6  | Frequency of social media posts per week                | 0-1 times       | 3-4 times                   |
| 7  | Number of active social media platforms                 | 1 platform      | 3 platform                  |
| 8  | Visual consistency of branding                          | None            | Available (brand guideline) |

Source: *Processed data, 2025*

Qualitative indicators include understanding of digital marketing concepts, practical skills in using social media for marketing, promotional content creation, and participants' motivation and attitudes toward using digital technology. These changes were measured through observations, interviews, and evaluation questionnaires, reflecting improvements in participants' knowledge, skills, and positive attitudes after the training.

### Improving Digital Literacy and Skills of Islamic Boarding School Managers

Digital marketing training in Islamic boarding schools directly contributes to improving digital literacy and administrators' understanding of social media utilization, content creation, and institutional branding. The results of the activity include improved ability to manage official Islamic boarding school accounts, organize upload schedules, and create content aligned with the Islamic boarding school's vision and mission, which aligns with Yudianto et al., (2023) findings that e-marketing training can improve the competence of students and administrators in utilizing the internet and social media to promote Islamic boarding school institutions and products. Furthermore, the results of the activities carried out are in line with other studies stating that digital marketing training consistently improves the understanding and skills of students and administrators in using social media, SEO, content design, and websites for promotion (Abbas et al., 2022; Yudianto et al., 2023; Huda et al., 2023; Kamalia et al., 2024; Sunardi et al., 2025; Hani, 2025). This supports the results of training activities at the Al Amalul Khair Islamic boarding school, where success indicators such as increased posting frequency, follower growth, and engagement can be explained as logical consequences of increased digital literacy and skills post-training.

### The Effectiveness of Training and Mentoring in Improving Islamic Boarding School Branding

The training, which combines interactive workshops, hands-on practice, and three months of follow-up mentoring, aligns with the pattern of previous community service programs that used stages of socialization, training, practice, and evaluation. The santripreneur training program at the Darul Ulum Tragung Islamic Boarding School, for example, was divided into three stages: an introduction to digital marketing, case studies from other Islamic boarding schools, and practice creating and managing a marketplace; the result was an increase in students' understanding and ability to manage a buying and selling platform independently. The ongoing mentoring model, as implemented in the training at the Al Amalul Khair Islamic Boarding School through online groups and regular visits, is consistent with the recommendations of various studies that emphasize the importance of follow-up to ensure effective and sustainable skills transfer. Empowering students and administrators through a series of mentoring trainings is also seen as a strategic strategy to transform Islamic boarding schools from mere religious institutions to centers for digital capacity development and community entrepreneurship.

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### **The Impact of Digital Marketing on Educational Promotion and New Student Admission**

The results of these activities include increased visibility of Islamic boarding schools on social media, an increase in the number of followers and interactions, and increased interest from new applicants, in line with the findings of several studies on Islamic boarding school marketing through digital marketing. Social media has proven highly effective in attracting the attention of prospective students and parents, increasing participation, and building emotional bonds with the Islamic boarding school. Optimal use of social media can significantly increase the number of applicants and strengthen the image of Islamic boarding schools as modern educational institutions that remain based on religious values (Nurmalasari & Masitoh, 2020; Syamsu et al., 2022; Fitri et al., 2022; Azizah & Sofiah, 2024; Rohman et al., 2025; Sormin et al., 2025). Institutions that actively produce digital content tend to be better positioned in global competition (Hashim et al., 2022; Beloglazova et al., 2025).

Thus, the training achievements at the Al Amalul Khair Islamic boarding school, such as the activeness of several social media channels, consistent branding content, and the increasing reach of information on the Islamic boarding school's programs, can be considered to support the argument that digital marketing is an important factor in increasing competitiveness and the attractiveness of prospective students.

### **Strengthening Islamic Identity and Digital Branding of Islamic Boarding Schools**

The results of the activity show that the content produced is not only promotional, but also integrates Islamic values of Islamic boarding schools (for example, study content, tilawah, student activities, and tahfiz programs). The integration of religious values in digital branding is in line with the findings of research on digital branding strategies for Islamic educational institutions, which concluded that consistently packaging religious values in digital content enhances the identity of the institution as well as emotional closeness to the audience. Digital marketing strategies that emphasize the institution's religious characteristics can build a positive image, increase engagement, and strengthen public trust in Islamic educational institutions. Thus, the success of Islamic boarding schools in building official accounts that showcase religious activities, student achievements, and narratives of the uniqueness of the boarding school can be understood as a form of application of the concept of religious digital branding that has been proven effective in previous research.

### **Contribution to the Economic Empowerment and Independence of Islamic Boarding Schools**

In addition to the educational promotion dimension, digital marketing training in Islamic boarding schools also has the potential to support the economic independence of the institution through the promotion of Islamic boarding school business units (e.g., food, beverage, or additional educational services) marketed via social media and marketplaces. Digital marketing-based santripreneur training programs in several Islamic boarding schools have also been reported to strengthen the entrepreneurial spirit of students and provide skills relevant to the needs of the digital job market. Referring to these studies, the results of training at the Al Amalul Khair Islamic boarding school, which led to the formation of a digital marketing team, improved promotional content creation skills, and the use of digital platforms to promote Islamic boarding school activities and products, can be categorized as part of the agenda for economic empowerment and independence of Islamic boarding schools in the digital era.

### **Strengthening Religious Digital Literacy and Preaching Transformation**

The use of social media and digital content by Islamic boarding schools has also had an impact on expanding the reach of da'wah and strengthening the community's digital religious literacy. Studies on religious digital literacy in Islamic universities show that the ability to critically access, evaluate, and produce religious content in the digital space is a key competency in dealing with the flood of religious information. Other research on the transformation of da'wah through digital content confirms that training in video production, YouTube channel management, and packaging Islamic messages relevant to the younger generation has an impact on improving the quality and reach of da'wah. Thus, the results of digital marketing training activities in Islamic boarding schools that produce creative da'wah content, activity videos, and short religious materials can be read as a contribution to the transformation of da'wah in the digital era, while also aligning with the recommendations of these studies.

### **Activity Documentation**

The following is documentation of the "Digital Marketing Training to Increase the Visibility of Pesantren Al Amalul Khair (Islamic Boarding School)" activity:



Figure 2. Activity Documentation

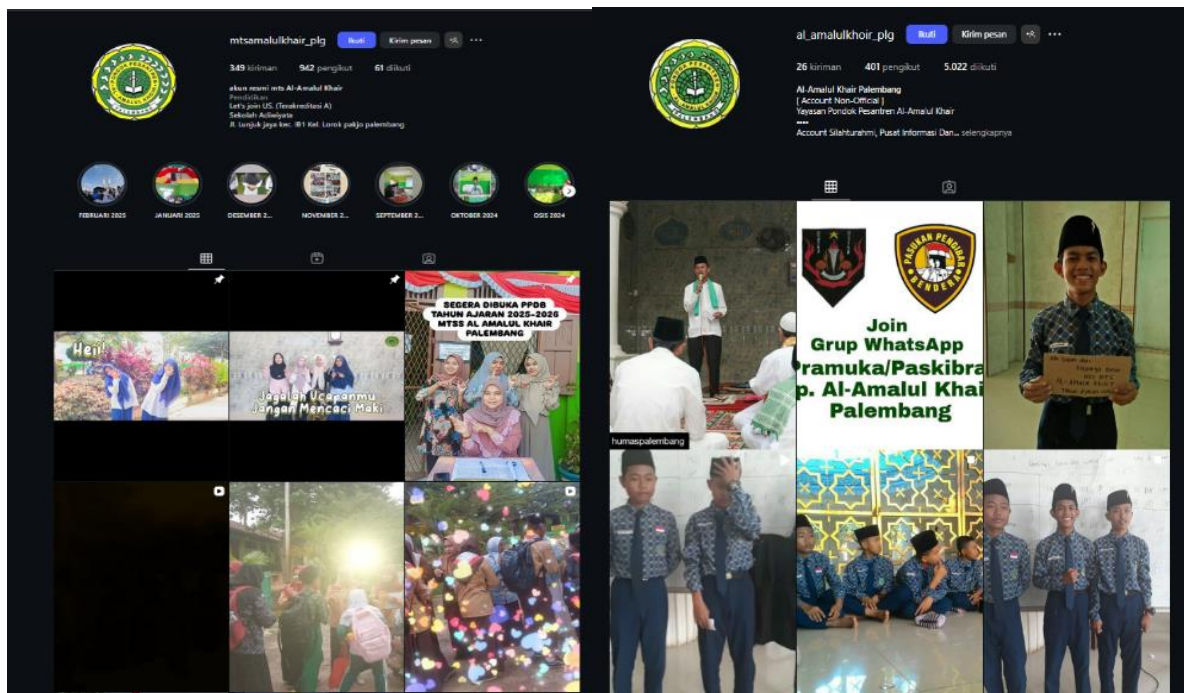


Figure 3. Content at Instagram Before – After

Table 3. Growth Summary (March 1, 2025 – December 1, 2025)

| Metric    | March 1, 2025 | Dec 1, 2025 | Growth (Difference) | Percentage Increase |
|-----------|---------------|-------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Followers | 401           | 942         | +541                | 134.9%              |
| Posts     | 26            | 345         | +319                | 1,226.9%            |

Based on the monitoring of digital activity during the community outreach period from March to December 2025, there was a significant improvement in the partner's social media key performance indicators. The follower count exhibited a growth of 134.9%, rising from an initial 401 to 942 individuals, which was linearly driven by a 1,226.9% escalation in content publication intensity, reaching a total of 345 posts. The implementation of a consistent information dissemination strategy averaging 1.16 posts per day proved effective in expanding public education reach, with each content unit contributing positively to new audience conversion. These findings indicate that the digital literacy mentoring program within this community service initiative successfully optimized the partner's communication channels toward a sustainable and measurable growth phase.

## V. CONCLUSION

Based on the results and discussion of digital marketing training at Islamic boarding schools, it can be concluded that the implementation of this training has had a significant impact on improving digital literacy, marketing skills, and brand awareness within the Islamic boarding school environment. Islamic boarding school administrators have not only become more skilled at managing social media and creating promotional content, but have also been able to build an image of a professional, adaptive, and relevant institution that meets the changing times and the needs of modern society.

Digital marketing training has proven effective in expanding promotional reach, increasing interaction with prospective students and their guardians, and facilitating the dissemination of information about the Islamic boarding school's flagship programs in a more measurable and efficient manner. The training's success is evidenced by increased engagement, follower growth, and increased interest in new applicants through digital channels, strengthening the Islamic boarding school's position amidst competitive educational institutions.

Furthermore, from an empowerment perspective, this activity provides students with opportunities to acquire useful digital skills after graduation, as well as strengthens the Islamic boarding school economy through product and business promotion. Overall, adopting a digital marketing strategy is a highly relevant strategic step for maintaining the existence, competitiveness, and sustainability of Islamic boarding schools in the digital era.

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