



Communication Strategy and Institutional Image in Managing Zakat, Infaq, and Sadaqah Funds: A Study of LAZNAS Nurul Hayat Kediri

Bagus Sujatmiko,¹ Sri Mulyani,²

¹Universitas Pangeran Diponegoro Nganjuk, ² Universitas Pangeran Diponegoro Nganjuk
¹ bagussujatmiko@updn.ac.id, ²itusrimulyani@gmail.com

ABSTRACT :

This study examines the communication strategies and institutional image-building practices employed in the management of zakat, infaq, and sadaqah (ZIS) funds by LAZNAS Nurul Hayat Kediri. Persistent public skepticism toward zakat institutions highlights the increasing need for strategic communication approaches capable of strengthening institutional credibility, transparency, and long-term public trust. Using a descriptive qualitative method, data were collected through in-depth interviews, three months of participant observation, and comprehensive documentation. Data analysis followed Miles and Huberman's interactive model, allowing an in-depth interpretation of communication patterns and organizational dynamics. The findings reveal that multichannel communication, transparent financial reporting, message consistency, and the professionalism of fundraisers significantly contribute to building and sustaining the institution's positive public image. The organization's financial independence through its supporting business units further enhances donor confidence and reinforces perceptions of reliability. Theoretically, this research enriches scholarly discussions on strategic communication and institutional reputation within the field of Islamic philanthropy. Practically, it provides a replicable and adaptive communication framework for zakat institutions aiming to strengthen donor engagement, improve accountability, and enhance ZIS fund management in a more sustainable and impactful manner.

Key words: *communication strategy, institutional image, zakat, transparency, donor loyalty.*

INTRODUCTION

Zakat, infaq, and sadaqah (ZIS) management plays a crucial role in Islamic philanthropic systems aimed at promoting social welfare. In practice, however, zakat institutions continue to face major challenges, including inconsistent transparency, limited public accountability, and fluctuating levels of trust from donors.¹ These issues demand strategic communication efforts capable of reinforcing institutional credibility and strengthening public perception.

This research is grounded in four major theoretical frameworks:

1. Public Relations Theory (Cutlip, Center & Broom), emphasizing the function of communication in cultivating public trust;²

¹ Indah Permata Sari, "Transparency in Zakat Institutions Through Digital Reporting Systems," *Journal of Islamic Philanthropy Studies*, 2021; A Hassan, "Institutional Accountability in Zakat Fund Management," *Journal of Islamic Social Finance*, 2020.

² Elvinaro Ardianto, "Public Relations: Pendekatan Praktis," *Widya Padjadjaran*, 2008; Rosady Ruslan, "Manajemen Public Relations Dan Media Komunikasi," *Rajagrafindo Persada*, 2007.

2. Corporate Image Theory, which highlights how institutional reputation shapes stakeholder responses;
3. Communication Strategy Theory (Kriyantono), stressing the alignment of messages, media, and target audiences;³
4. Facework Theory (West & Turner), focusing on the interpersonal ethics that sustain social relationships.⁴

Based on these theoretical considerations, the research addresses two central questions:

1. How does LAZNAS Nurul Hayat Kediri implement communication strategies to build its institutional image?
2. In what ways do these strategies support transparency, donor trust, and long-term engagement?

Academically, this study contributes to the growing literature on communication strategy in Islamic philanthropic organizations. Practically, it provides insights for zakat institutions seeking to enhance institutional legitimacy and improve ZIS fund governance.⁵

METHODS

This study employed a qualitative descriptive approach. Data were collected through:⁶

1. In-depth interviews with the branch manager, two fundraisers, a loyal donor, and a beneficiary;
2. Participant observation conducted over three months to capture communication flows, operational routines, and field dynamics;
3. Documentation, including institutional reports, archives, and published materials.

Data were analyzed using Miles and Huberman's interactive model, which includes data collection, reduction, display, and conclusion drawing.

RESULT

The findings of this study provide a comprehensive understanding of how LAZNAS Nurul Hayat Kediri communicates with its stakeholders and manages its institutional image in relation to ZIS fund governance. The results highlight several strategic dimensions that collectively contribute to the organization's credibility and public trust. These findings are presented as follows:

³ Rachmat Kriyantono, "Public Relations & Crisis Management," *Kencana*, 2012.

⁴ Richard; Turner West Lynn H., "Pengantar Teori Komunikasi: Aplikasi Dan Praktek.," *Salemba Humanika*, 2008.

⁵ Umi Fitriani, "Donor Engagement Models in Islamic Charity Organizations.," *Indonesian Journal of Social Research*, 2023; D Samodra, "The Impact of Social Media Strategies on Donation Intention.," *The Messenger*, 2022; A Rahman, "Strategic Branding in Islamic Philanthropy Organizations.," *Journal of Islamic Marketing*, 2024.

⁶ Indah Permata Sari, "Transparency in Zakat Institutions Through Digital Reporting Systems.," *Journal of Islamic Philanthropy Studies*, 2021; S Ibrahim, "Multichannel Communication Strategies in Non-Profit Fundraising.," *Asian Journal of Communication*, 2022.

1. *Multichannel Communication Strategy*

Nurul Hayat Kediri utilizes a range of communication channels, including home visits, public seminars, social media platforms (Instagram and WhatsApp), and monthly printed publications. This multichannel communication ensures message coherence, expands donor reach, and improves accessibility of information.⁷

2. *Institutional Branding and Image Formation*

The institution establishes its branding through a narrative of financial independence and professional service delivery. Business units—such as Aqiqah services and Umrah facilitation—serve as supporting elements of this brand identity, positioning the institution as trustworthy and self-sustaining.⁸

3. *Transparency and Accountability in Fund Management*

Routine publication of program activities, financial distributions, and humanitarian interventions demonstrates the institution's commitment to transparency. This openness strengthens donor confidence and enhances the credibility of ZIS fund management.⁹

4. *Donor Emotional Engagement*

Fundraisers play a central role in cultivating emotional bonds with donors. Through empathy, responsiveness, and courteous communication, fundraisers foster relational trust that aligns with the principles of Facework Theory. This engagement becomes a major driver of donor retention.¹⁰

5. *Contextual Relevance to the Kediri Region*

The socioeconomic landscape of Kediri shows significant demand for economic empowerment and humanitarian programs. Nurul Hayat's communication strategies are tailored to these local needs, increasing the resonance and impact of its messaging.¹¹

DISCUSSION

This section discusses the implications of the findings in relation to existing theories and the practical realities of Islamic philanthropic organizations. The analysis connects empirical insights with theoretical frameworks to provide a deeper understanding of how communication strategies shape institutional image, donor behavior, and public trust. The discussion is elaborated as follows:

⁷ S Ibrahim, "Multichannel Communication Strategies in Non-Profit Fundraising," *Asian Journal of Communication*, 2022; D Samodra, "The Impact of Social Media Strategies on Donation Intention," *The Messenger*, 2022; A Rahman, "Strategic Branding in Islamic Philanthropy Organizations," *Journal of Islamic Marketing*, 2024.

⁸ A Rahman, "Strategic Branding in Islamic Philanthropy Organizations," *Journal of Islamic Marketing*, 2024; Rosady Ruslan, "Manajemen Public Relations Dan Media Komunikasi," *Rajagrafindo Persada*, 2007; A Hassan, "Institutional Accountability in Zakat Fund Management," *Journal of Islamic Social Finance*, 2020.

⁹ A Hassan, "Institutional Accountability in Zakat Fund Management," *Journal of Islamic Social Finance*, 2020; Indah Permata Sari, "Transparency in Zakat Institutions Through Digital Reporting Systems," *Journal of Islamic Philanthropy Studies*, 2021.

¹⁰ Umi Fitriani, "Donor Engagement Models in Islamic Charity Organizations," *Indonesian Journal of Social Research*, 2023; Richard; Turner West Lynn H., "Pengantar Teori Komunikasi: Aplikasi Dan Praktek," *Salemba Humanika*, 2008.

¹¹ Umi Fitriani, "Donor Engagement Models in Islamic Charity Organizations," *Indonesian Journal of Social Research*, 2023; A Hassan, "Institutional Accountability in Zakat Fund Management," *Journal of Islamic Social Finance*, 2020.

1. *Communication Strategy as a Tool for Image Construction*

The findings reinforce Public Relations Theory, demonstrating how strategic communication shapes public perception. Consistent messaging across multiple platforms contributes to a stable and positive institutional image.¹²

2. *Institutional Branding and Donor Trust*

Branding grounded in independence and professionalism strengthens institutional legitimacy. This aligns with Corporate Image Theory, which posits that a positive institutional image influences donor attitudes and behavior.¹³

3. *Transparency as a Foundation of Trust*

Transparent reporting emerges as a core component of public accountability. Regular updates and detailed financial disclosures reflect modern governance practices and minimize the potential for distrust.¹⁴

4. *Emotional Engagement and Ethical Communication*

The interpersonal role of fundraisers highlights the relational nature of donor engagement. Ethical and empathetic communication, as emphasized in Facework Theory, builds long-term relationships critical for recurring donations.¹⁵

5. *Theoretical and Practical Contributions*

Theoretically, this research advances understanding of communication strategies within Islamic philanthropy by linking institutional image, communication ethics, and donor behavior. Practically, the findings provide a communication framework that zakat institutions can adopt to enhance donor relations, improve transparency, and strengthen ZIS fund management.¹⁶

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that integrated communication strategies, transparent fund management, and ethical interpersonal communication significantly contribute to the institutional image of LAZNAS Nurul Hayat Kediri. The organization's financial independence, communication consistency, and relational engagement with donors foster trust and strengthen donor loyalty. Academically, the study contributes to strategic communication theory in the

¹² Elvinaro Ardianto, "Public Relations: Pendekatan Praktis," *Widya Padjadjaran*, 2008; Rachmat Kriyantono, "Public Relations & Crisis Management," *Kencana*, 2012; S Ibrahim, "Multichannel Communication Strategies in Non-Profit Fundraising," *Asian Journal of Communication*, 2022.

¹³ Rosady Ruslan, "Manajemen Public Relations Dan Media Komunikasi," *Rajagrafindo Persada*, 2007; A Rahman, "Strategic Branding in Islamic Philanthropy Organizations," *Journal of Islamic Marketing*, 2024.

¹⁴ Indah Permata Sari, "Transparency in Zakat Institutions Through Digital Reporting Systems," *Journal of Islamic Philanthropy Studies*, 2021; A Hassan, "Institutional Accountability in Zakat Fund Management," *Journal of Islamic Social Finance*, 2020.

¹⁵ Richard; Turner West Lynn H., "Pengantar Teori Komunikasi: Aplikasi Dan Praktek," *Salemba Humanika*, 2008; Umi Fitriani, "Donor Engagement Models in Islamic Charity Organizations," *Indonesian Journal of Social Research*, 2023.

¹⁶ S Ibrahim, "Multichannel Communication Strategies in Non-Profit Fundraising," *Asian Journal of Communication*, 2022; A Rahman, "Strategic Branding in Islamic Philanthropy Organizations," *Journal of Islamic Marketing*, 2024.

context of Islamic philanthropy; practically, it offers an applicable communication model for zakat institutions seeking to enhance organizational performance and public legitimacy.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Ardianto, Elvinaro. *Public Relations: Pendekatan Praktis*. Bandung: Widya Padjadjaran, 2008.
- Drzeniek, Katarzyna. "Developing Communication Strategies to Engage a New Donor Base in Non-Profit Organisations." *Nonprofit Management Review* 12, no. 2 (2024): 1–15.
- Fauzi, Ahmad. "Donor Fund Empowerment Strategy in Increasing Donor Trust." *Jurnal Ekonomi Islam La Riba* 18, no. 1 (2024): 55–68.
- Fitriani, Umi. "Donor Engagement Models in Islamic Charity Organizations." *Indonesian Journal of Social Research* 5, no. 2 (2023): 140–156.
- Halim, Rizky N. "Digital Marketing Development Strategy in Non-Profit Organizations." *Budapest International Research and Critics Institute Journal* 6, no. 3 (2023): 1120–1132.
- Hassan, A. "Institutional Accountability in Zakat Fund Management." *Journal of Islamic Social Finance* 4, no. 2 (2020): 33–49.
- Ibrahim, S. "Multichannel Communication Strategies in Non-Profit Fundraising." *Asian Journal of Communication* 32, no. 3 (2022): 301–317.
- Kriyantono, Rachmat. *Public Relations & Crisis Management*. Jakarta: Kencana, 2012.
- Nasution, T. "Organizational Image Building Through Strategic Communication." *Journal of Public Relations Research* 11, no. 4 (2021): 244–259.
- Rahman, A. "Strategic Branding in Islamic Philanthropy Organizations." *Journal of Islamic Marketing* 15, no. 1 (2024): 88–104.
- Ruslan, Rosady. *Manajemen Public Relations dan Media Komunikasi*. Jakarta: Rajagrafindo Persada, 2007.
- Samodra, D. "The Impact of Social Media Strategies on Donation Intention." *The Messenger* 14, no. 1 (2022): 45–58.
- Sari, Indah Permata. "Transparency in Zakat Institutions Through Digital Reporting Systems." *Journal of Islamic Philanthropy Studies* 3, no. 1 (2021): 12–25.
- West, Richard, and Lynn H. Turner. *Pengantar Teori Komunikasi: Aplikasi dan Praktek*. Jakarta: Salemba Humanika, 2008.
- Wijaya, Muhammad, and Lestari, A. "Donor Segmentation Analysis Using RFM and K-Means to Optimize Fundraising Strategies." *Journal of Applied Informatics* 5, no. 2 (2024): 77–90.

Yusuf, N. "Communication Ethics in Faith-Based Organizations." *International Journal of Communication Studies* 11, no. 2 (2022): 167–182.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The authors express their gratitude to the INCOILS 2025 Committee, the academic community of Pangeran Diponegoro University Nganjuk, Dr. Soetomo University Surabaya, and all individuals who supported this research..