



# Reimagining Islamic Philanthropy in the Digital Economy: A Comparative Analysis of Branding as Ethical Capital in Private and State-Owned Institutions

Muhammad Deni Putra <sup>1\*</sup>, Aziz Muslim <sup>2</sup>, Mukhamad Yazid Afandi <sup>3</sup>  
Abdullah Sahroni <sup>4</sup>, Muhammad Kamil Husain <sup>5</sup>, Sari Utami <sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Islamic Studies Program, Graduate School, Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta, Indonesia

<sup>2</sup>Islamic Studies Program, Graduate School, Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta, Indonesia

<sup>3</sup>Islamic Studies Program, Graduate School, Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta, Indonesia

<sup>4</sup>Department of Zakat and Waqf Management, Faculty of Islamic Economics and Business, Universitas Islam Negeri Raden Fatah Palembang, Indonesia

<sup>5</sup>Department of Islamic Economics, Faculty of Islamic Studies and Education, Universitas Serang Raya, Indonesia

<sup>6</sup>Islamic Studies Program, Graduate School, Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta, Indonesia

<sup>1\*</sup>Corresponding author: [mdeniputra@uinmybatusangkar.ac.id](mailto:mdeniputra@uinmybatusangkar.ac.id) email: [aziz.muslim@uin-suka.ac.id](mailto:aziz.muslim@uin-suka.ac.id),

[mukhamad.afandi@uin-suka.ac.id](mailto:mukhamad.afandi@uin-suka.ac.id), [abd.sahroni@radenfatah.ac.id](mailto:abd.sahroni@radenfatah.ac.id), [kamilhusain74@yahoo.com](mailto:kamilhusain74@yahoo.com),

[sariutami@iainbone.ac.id](mailto:sariutami@iainbone.ac.id)

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## ABSTRACT

This qualitative library research examines the contrast in social media branding effectiveness between private and state-owned Islamic philanthropic institutions, an important issue in the digital era where public trust and engagement are essential. Using a systematic thematic analysis of scholarly literature published between 2014 and 2024, the study finds that private institutions consistently outperform their state-owned counterparts by leveraging organizational agility, innovative storytelling, and transparent communication. These practices are further interpreted as contemporary manifestations of core Islamic values, namely *amanah* (trust) and *ihsan* (excellence). The primary objective of this study is to identify the underlying factors contributing to this disparity and to generate actionable insights for optimizing digital outreach in Islamic philanthropy. The findings suggest that effective branding is not merely a technical advantage but also reflects a deeper institutional alignment with ethical principles, enabling private institutions to build stronger community engagement and donor loyalty. Accordingly, this study offers important implications by proposing a transformative approach through which state-owned institutions can adopt value-based digital strategies to enhance transparency, public appeal, and overall social impact, thereby strengthening the Islamic economic ecosystem in the twenty-first century.

**Keywords:** islamic philanthropy, digital branding, social media communication, state-owned institutions, private institutions.

## INTRODUCTION

In the evolving landscape of Islamic philanthropy, a distinct digital divide has emerged: while both private and state-owned institutions share the sacred

mandate of channeling zakat, sadaqah, and waqf for community welfare,<sup>1</sup> their effectiveness in harnessing social media for branding and public engagement starkly diverges.<sup>2</sup> This study contends that beyond mere operational disparities, this gap reflects a deeper misalignment between traditional bureaucratic approaches and the principles of amanah (trustworthiness) and ihsan (excellence) in the digital age.<sup>3</sup> Private philanthropic entities often exhibit agility, narrative innovation, and transparency, qualities that resonate with Islamic ethics and modern donor expectations.<sup>4</sup> In contrast, state-owned institutions, despite their scale and reach, frequently appear constrained by rigid structures, resulting in diminished appeal, particularly among younger, digitally-native Muslims.<sup>5</sup> Through a critical examination of branding strategies and digital communication, this research argues that optimizing social media is not merely a technical upgrade but a religious imperative to uphold trust, enhance accountability, and maximize the social impact of Islamic philanthropic practice.

Private institutions appear to be more effective in leveraging social media to strengthen their image and reach a broader base of donors<sup>6</sup>. Although both

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<sup>1</sup> Sri Herianingrum et al., "Zakat as an Instrument of Poverty Reduction in Indonesia," *Journal of Islamic Accounting and Business Research* 15, no. 4 (March 2024): 643–60, <https://doi.org/10.1108/JIABR-11-2021-0307>; Iqra Anugrah, "Effective Altruism, Islamic Philanthropy, and Public Welfare: A Critique," *Sodality: Jurnal Sosiologi Pedesaan* 11, no. 2 (November 2023): 168–80, <https://doi.org/10.22500/11202348227>.

<sup>2</sup> Zaimah Abdullah et al., "Zakat Institutions' Adoption of Social Media," *Journal of Islamic Accounting and Business Research* 14, no. 8 (November 2023): 1261–80, <https://doi.org/10.1108/JIABR-01-2022-0013>; Gongli Luo, Junying Hao, and He Ma, "The Impact of Corporate Philanthropy on the Evolution of Social Media Brand Community – Based on the Case of ERKE," *Asia Pacific Journal of Marketing and Logistics* 36, no. 3 (March 2024): 533–48, <https://doi.org/10.1108/APJML-04-2023-0326>.

<sup>3</sup> Firman Mansir, "Problems of Islamic Religious Education in the Digital Era," *At-Ta'dib* 17, no. 2 (December 2022): 284, <https://doi.org/10.21111/at-tadib.v17i2.8405>; T Purwanto, "Digital Engagement of Indonesian Millennials in the Prism of the Scripture, Social Media, and Religious Practices," paper presented at Proceedings of the 19th Annual International Conference on Islamic Studies, AICIS 2019, 1-4 October 2019, Jakarta, Indonesia, Jakarta, Indonesia, *Proceedings of the Proceedings of the 19th Annual International Conference on Islamic Studies, AICIS 2019, 1-4 October 2019, Jakarta, Indonesia, 2020*, <https://doi.org/10.4108/eai.1-10-2019.2291735>.

<sup>4</sup> Mukhamad Yazid Afandi, "Analyzing the Impact of Digital Transformation in Islamic Philanthropy Using Utaut Model," *Afkaruna: Indonesian Interdisciplinary Journal of Islamic Studies* 19, no. 2 (December 2023): 317–37, <https://doi.org/10.18196/afkaruna.v19i2.16086>; Rizki Ulfahadi, "Islamic Philanthropy on Social Media in Youth Volunteering Movements," *Dialog* 46, no. 2 (December 2023): 135–44, <https://doi.org/10.47655/dialog.v46i2.737>.

<sup>5</sup> Dmitry Udalov and Julia Koblova, "Digital Economic Space: Formation, Laws, Modeling," paper presented at Proceedings of the Volgograd State University International Scientific Conference "Competitive, Sustainable and Safe Development of the Regional Economy" (CSSDRE 2019), Volgograd, Russia, *Proceedings of the Volgograd State University International Scientific Conference "Competitive, Sustainable and Safe Development of the Regional Economy" (CSSDRE 2019)*, 2019, <https://doi.org/10.2991/cssdre-19.2019.74>.

<sup>6</sup> Luo, Hao, and Ma, "The Impact of Corporate Philanthropy on the Evolution of Social Media Brand Community – Based on the Case of ERKE"; Jeanne M. Pursuit, "The Potential for Paracrisis in Corporate Philanthropy and Social Media," *International Journal of Organization Theory & Behavior* 20, no. 1 (March 2017): 51–71, <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJOTB-20-01-2017-B002>;

types of institutions share the same goal, enhancing the welfare of the ummah, their approaches to brand building and audience engagement differ significantly. Private philanthropic institutions tend to be more dynamic, innovative, and adaptive to digital technologies.<sup>7</sup> In contrast, state-owned philanthropic organizations are often constrained by bureaucracy and less agile in responding to digital trends, making their social media campaigns less appealing to the public, particularly to younger generations.<sup>8</sup>

This difference is crucial in the digital era, where social media has become a key platform for building public trust and promoting social missions.<sup>9</sup> Private philanthropic organizations have successfully used storytelling-based campaigns on social media, whereas state-owned institutions still have much room for improvement in their digital communication strategies.<sup>10</sup> Thus, optimizing branding through social media has become one of the key factors influencing the success of Islamic philanthropic institutions in attracting public participation. Although many studies have examined the role of Islamic philanthropy in distributing zakat and sadaqah, little attention has been given to the aspects of branding and social media use.

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Kevin Walby and Crystal Gumieny, "Public Police's Philanthropy and Twitter Communications in Canada," *Policing: An International Journal* 43, no. 5 (September 2020): 755–68, <https://doi.org/10.1108/PIJPSM-03-2020-0041>.

<sup>7</sup> Afandi, "Analyzing the Impact of Digital Transformation in Islamic Philanthropy Using Utaut Model"; Piotr S. Bobkowski and Lisa D. Pearce, "Baring Their Souls in Online Profiles or Not? Religious Self-Disclosure in Social Media," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 50, no. 4 (December 2011): 744–62, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-5906.2011.01597.x>; Purwanto, "Digital Engagement of Indonesian Millennials in the Prism of the Scripture, Social Media, and Religious Practices."

<sup>8</sup> Hannah Trittin-Ulbrich and Alexa Böckel, "Institutional Entrepreneurship for Responsible Digital Innovation: The Case of Corporate Digital Responsibility," *Creativity and Innovation Management* 31, no. 3 (September 2022): 447–59, <https://doi.org/10.1111/caim.12513>; Udalov and Koblova, "Digital Economic Space"; Sergey V. Volodenkov, Sergey N. Fedorchenko, and Yulia D. Artamonova, "Contemporary State in the Context of Digital Technological Transformations: Political Opportunities, Risks, and Challenges," *RUDN Journal of Political Science* 24, no. 3 (September 2022): 351–66, <https://doi.org/10.22363/2313-1438-2022-24-3-351-366>; Ioannis Zervas et al., "A Sustainable Approach to Define Important Digital Skills of Digital Currency Users," preprint, *Business, Economics and Management*, April 2, 2024, <https://doi.org/10.20944/preprints202404.0076.v1>.

<sup>9</sup> Hüseyin İnce et al., "Antecedents and Consequences of Trust in Public Sector Websites and Social Media," *EMAJ: Emerging Markets Journal* 10, no. 1 (September 2020): 21–29, <https://doi.org/10.5195/emaj.2020.182>; Luo, Hao, and Ma, "The Impact of Corporate Philanthropy on the Evolution of Social Media Brand Community – Based on the Case of ERKE."

<sup>10</sup> María Lourdes Arco-Castro et al., "Do Stakeholders Modulate Philanthropic Strategy? Corporate Philanthropy as Stakeholders' Engagement," *Sustainability* 12, no. 18 (September 2020): 7242, <https://doi.org/10.3390/su12187242>; Jeanne M. Pursuit, "The Potential for Paracrisis in Corporate Philanthropy and Social Media," *International Journal of Organization Theory & Behavior* 20, no. 1 (March 2017): 51–71, <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJOTB-20-01-2017-B002>; Mariarosaria Taddeo, "Data Philanthropy and the Design of the Infraethics for Information Societies," *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society A: Mathematical, Physical and Engineering Sciences* 374, no. 2083 (December 2016): 20160113, <https://doi.org/10.1098/rsta.2016.0113>.

Existing research tends to focus more on financial management and zakat administration without considering the role of social media in supporting the success of philanthropic institutions. Three main tendencies can be identified in the current literature. First, studies focusing on zakat distribution and its impact on poverty alleviation.<sup>11</sup> Second, research that emphasizes the optimization of zakat management.<sup>12</sup> Third, analyses related to good governance in philanthropic institutions.<sup>13</sup> However, few studies have explored in depth how differences in branding strategies and digital communication between private and state-owned philanthropic organizations influence their success in implementing Islamic philanthropy.

This study aims to fill that gap in the literature by analyzing how branding strategies and social media usage affect the effectiveness of Islamic philanthropic institutions, particularly in the context of comparing private and state-owned organizations. By focusing on digital aspects, this research explores the factors that make private philanthropic institutions more successful in brand building and attracting public participation through social media. Three main research questions are explored: (1) Why are private organizations more effective in social media branding than state-owned ones? (2) How do the digital communication strategies used by private institutions attract public attention and trust? (3) What can state-owned philanthropic institutions learn from the approaches of private organizations in leveraging social media? The answers to these questions are

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<sup>11</sup> Thifal Azhar et al., "Impact of Disaster on Economic Performance of ASEAN-9: Does Philanthropy Help?," *Jurnal Ekonomi & Studi Pembangunan* 23, no. 1 (April 2022): 21–34, <https://doi.org/10.18196/jesp.v23i1.12593>; Amin Hamdani and Malik Akbar Abdul Aziz, "Digitalization of Islamic Philanthropy: Development of a Philanthropic Da'wah Model Rumahzakat.Org," *Ilmu Dakwah: Academic Journal for Homiletic Studies* 18, no. 1 (June 2024): 97–116, <https://doi.org/10.15575/idajhs.v18i1.30332>; Herianingrum et al., "Zakat as an Instrument of Poverty Reduction in Indonesia"; Md. Karimul Islam et al., "Perceptions about the Common Malpractice of Zakat Paying in Bangladesh during Covid-19 Pandemic: Evidence from the Supply Side," *Journal of Islamic Accounting and Business Research* 14, no. 3 (March 2023): 361–78, <https://doi.org/10.1108/JIABR-09-2021-0253>.

<sup>12</sup> Devi Narulitasari, Andwina Sekar Mawarni Mulya, and Tamrin Subagyo, "Zakat Accounting and Public Accountability: Evidence from Indonesia," *JIFA (Journal of Islamic Finance and Accounting)* 6, no. 1 (June 2023): 45–59, <https://doi.org/10.22515/jifa.v6i1.6805>; Nur Aisyah Indarningsih, Muhammad Agus Futuhul Ma'wa, and Muh. Noval Waliyuddinsyah, "Zakat, Infaq, Shadaqah, and Waqf Using Financial Technology: Millennial Generation Perspective," *Review of Islamic Social Finance and Entrepreneurship*, March 28, 2023, 13–28, <https://doi.org/10.20885/RISFE.vol2.iss1.art2>.

<sup>13</sup> Hendri Hermawan Adinugraha, Muhammad Shulthoni, and Zohaib Hassan Sain, "Transformation of Cash Waqf Management in Indonesia: Insights into the Development of Digitalization," *Review of Islamic Social Finance and Entrepreneurship*, March 26, 2024, 50–66, <https://doi.org/10.20885/RISFE.vol3.iss1.art4>; Muhammad Miqdad Alfarisy and Firmansyah Firmansyah, "Description of Money Waqf Program Management in Indonesia," *Jurnal Ekonomi Dan Perbankan Syariah* 9, no. 1 (April 2021): 90–97, <https://doi.org/10.46899/jeps.v9i1.269>; Husam Ananzeh, Hamzeh Al Amosh, and Khaldoon Albitar, "The Effect of Corporate Governance Quality and Its Mechanisms on Firm Philanthropic Donations: Evidence from the UK," *International Journal of Accounting & Information Management* 30, no. 4 (August 2022): 477–501, <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJAIM-12-2021-0248>.

expected to provide a deeper understanding of the role of social media in Islamic philanthropy and offer recommendations for state-owned institutions to improve their branding efforts.

## METHOD

This study employs a qualitative literature review approach to ensure analytical rigor and transparency in examining the optimization of branding within Islamic philanthropy, with a specific focus on explaining the disparity in social media advancement between private and state-owned institutions. The qualitative methodology is chosen for its capacity to provide an in-depth, emic understanding of social phenomena by prioritizing the subjective perspectives and experiences of the actors involved, in this context, the philanthropic organizations, their communicators, and their donor communities. This perspective is crucial for uncovering the nuanced strategic decisions and contextual challenges that underpin digital engagement in this field.<sup>14</sup> The primary object of analysis is the constellation of branding strategies and social media practices employed by Islamic philanthropic organizations, with a deliberate comparative lens on private and public entities. The research design is exploratory, utilizing a systematic qualitative review of scholarly literature to build an explanatory framework for the observed digital divide.<sup>15</sup>

The “participants” in this study are the academic texts themselves. Their selection involved a systematic search across databases such as Google Scholar, Scopus, and Web of Science, guided by criteria of topical relevance to philanthropy-branding-digital media intersections, the scholarly credibility of the authors and sources, and the substantive contribution of each work to the research questions.<sup>16</sup> The data consist of textual material from peer-reviewed journal articles, books, and credible reports. The collection procedure ensured validity through the application of explicit inclusion and exclusion criteria and a critical appraisal of each source. Data analysis followed a thematic approach, encompassing stages of data reduction, presentation of key patterns, and critical interpretation. Techniques such as open coding and constant comparative analysis were used to identify themes related to effective branding techniques, engagement strategies, and trust-building factors. Methodological triangulation was achieved by comparing insights and evidence across a diverse range of

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<sup>14</sup> Darcy E. Furlong and Jessica Nina Lester, “Toward a Practice of Qualitative Methodological Literature Reviewing,” *Qualitative Inquiry* 29, no. 6 (July 2023): 669–77, <https://doi.org/10.1177/10778004221131028>.

<sup>15</sup> Aris Purwatiningsih Purwatiningsih et al., “Insights into the Evolution of Philanthropy: A Systematic Literature Review,” *Journal of Ecohumanism* 3, no. 7 (October 2024): 1994–2002, <https://doi.org/10.62754/joe.v3i7.4351>.

<sup>16</sup> Fahmi Medias et al., “A Systematic Literature Review on the Socio-Economic Roles of Waqf: Evidence from Organization of the Islamic Cooperation (OIC) Countries,” *Journal of Islamic Accounting and Business Research* 13, no. 1 (January 2022): 177–93, <https://doi.org/10.1108/JIABR-01-2021-0028>.

scholarly sources.<sup>17</sup> By adopting this exploratory, actor-oriented qualitative approach, the study is able to integrate the prevailing values and norms of Islamic society, such as amanah (trustworthiness) and ihsan (excellence), into the core of its analysis. Consequently, this research moves beyond mere descriptive comparison to offer a value-sensitive framework for enhancing both the effectiveness and the religious integrity of philanthropic communication in the digital age.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

### Islamic Philanthropy and Social Media

The role of social media in Islamic philanthropy has gained growing attention in recent years, particularly due to its capacity to enhance engagement, transparency, and community participation in various charitable activities. Social media, with its global reach and accessibility, enables Islamic philanthropic organizations to interact with wider audiences, raise awareness about charitable initiatives, and encourage direct involvement,<sup>18</sup> conducted a comprehensive bibliometric analysis on Islamic philanthropy, showing that social media plays a critical role in shaping contemporary philanthropic practices. The study highlights that social media serves not only as a communication tool but also as a platform for promoting zakat and sadaqah, supporting social justice and community welfare. Historical and cultural factors also influence how social media is used in philanthropy, emphasizing its ability to foster solidarity within Muslim communities. By integrating social media into their strategies, Islamic philanthropic organizations can effectively reach broader audiences and engage them in charitable activities, ultimately enhancing the social and spiritual impact of their work.<sup>19</sup> explored the concept of Islamic charity in a transnational context and emphasized how social media plays a key role in facilitating everyday acts of giving. Platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram allow individuals to easily participate in philanthropy, either through direct donations or by sharing information related to charitable campaigns. According to Erdal and Borchgrevink, this process reinforces norms of generosity within Muslim communities, especially by connecting donors and beneficiaries across different countries. Their study further stresses that social media strengthens a sense of collective identity among philanthropic supporters and increases the overall effectiveness of charitable efforts. Social media provides a powerful tool for mobilizing resources quickly and efficiently, while allowing donors to witness the direct impact of their contributions. This transparency and immediacy

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<sup>17</sup> Roxanne Vandermause et al., "Qualitative Methods in Patient-Centered Outcomes Research," *Qualitative Health Research* 27, no. 3 (February 2017): 434–42, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1049732316668298>.

<sup>18</sup> Eva Nurul Huda, Achmad Tohirin, and Muhammad Afiat Anang Luqmana, "A Bibliometric Analysis of Islamic Philanthropy," *Journal of Islamic Economic and Business Research* 3, no. 1 (June 2023): 97–124, <https://doi.org/10.18196/jiebr.v3i1.109>.

<sup>19</sup> Kaja Borchgrevink and Marta Bivand Erdal, "With Faith in Development: Organizing Transnational Islamic Charity," *Progress in Development Studies* 17, no. 3 (July 2017): 214–28, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1464993417713276>.

encourage more individuals to engage in philanthropy, both locally and globally.<sup>20</sup> investigated accountability and narrative disclosure practices among Muslim charitable organizations in the United Kingdom. They found that transparency is vital for building trust among donors.

Social media can serve as an effective platform for organizations to present activity reports and demonstrate financial accountability in a way that is accessible and transparent to the public. When charities openly communicate how donations are utilized and how their programs impact beneficiaries, public trust increases, leading to greater support and donations. Similarly, Taylor<sup>21</sup> discussed how social media modernizes philanthropic practices in Northern India, noting that digital technology enables charities to expand their outreach and enhance public engagement,<sup>22</sup> also underscored the importance of adopting new technologies to attract younger generations and improve institutional efficiency. In the Somali context,<sup>23</sup> illustrated how social media strengthens awareness and engagement in philanthropy by connecting organizations with supporters across regions.<sup>24</sup> highlighted the integration of new media and prophetic communication in fundraising for zakat, infaq, sadaqah, and waqf, while Lidiawati et al.<sup>25</sup> emphasized the significance of embedding local cultural values into social media strategies to foster a stronger sense of ownership and commitment among supporters, thus amplifying the overall impact of philanthropy. In conclusion, existing literature demonstrates that social media holds immense potential to strengthen Islamic philanthropy by enabling organizations to reach wider audiences, improve transparency, and promote charitable activities more effectively. Social media functions not only as a communication bridge between organizations and supporters but also as a platform for resource mobilization, community building, and public engagement. Moreover, it offers opportunities for Islamic philanthropic institutions to align their digital strategies with local cultural and religious values, fostering deeper and more meaningful connections with the communities

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<sup>20</sup> Sofia Yasmin and Roszaini Haniffa, "Accountability and Narrative Disclosure by Muslim Charity Organisations in the UK," *Journal of Islamic Accounting and Business Research* 8, no. 1 (February 2017): 70–86, <https://doi.org/10.1108/JIABR-06-2015-0024>.

<sup>21</sup> Christopher B. Taylor, "Receipts and Other Forms of Islamic Charity: Accounting for Piety in Modern North India," *Modern Asian Studies* 52, no. 1 (January 2018): 266–96, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0026749X17000221>.

<sup>22</sup> Mansir, "Problems of Islamic Religious Education in the Digital Era."

<sup>23</sup> Valeria Saggiomo, "From Charity to Governance: Islamic NGOs and Education in Somalia," *The Open Area Studies Journal* 4, no. 1 (June 2011): 53–61, <https://doi.org/10.2174/1874914301104010053>.

<sup>24</sup> Mohamad Anwar Thalib, "'Mosukuru To Eya' Uncovering The Local Cultural Values Behind Profit," *EL MUHASABA: Jurnal Akuntansi (e-Journal)* 14, no. 2 (July 2023): 115–27, <https://doi.org/10.18860/em.v14i2.18806>.

<sup>25</sup> Lidiawati et al., "Construction Of Islamic Philanthropy Based On Local Culture (Study On Wonorejo Digital Village, Poncokusumo District, Malang Regency)," *Proceeding of International Conference on Islamic Philanthropy* 1 (July 2023): 92–100, <https://doi.org/10.24090/icip.v1i1.306>.

they serve. These studies collectively underscore the necessity of integrating digital technology and social media into modern philanthropic strategies, particularly to enhance accountability, participation, and trust. By adopting a transparent and interactive approach, Islamic philanthropic organizations can reinforce their relationships with donors and communities while ensuring that the ethical and spiritual values underpinning philanthropy remain respected and promoted.

### Why Private Philanthropic Institutions Excel in Social Media Branding

Private philanthropic institutions have demonstrated a consistent and multi-faceted advantage in social media branding compared to their state-owned counterparts. To systematically deconstruct this superiority, our analysis synthesizes findings from the literature into five key strategic dimensions. These dimensions not only highlight operational disparities but, more significantly, reveal how the strategic choices of private institutions inherently operationalize core Islamic ethical values, thereby transforming digital platforms into spaces for building religiously-grounded trust (*amanah*) and excellence (*ihsan*). This comparative framework is presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Comparative Analysis of Digital Branding Strategies and Islamic Ethical Alignment

Strategic Dimension	Private Philanthropic Institutions	State-Owned Philanthropic Institutions	Embedded Islamic Value & Critical Analysis	Key Supporting References
Agility & Innovation	High adaptability; rapid deployment of campaigns leveraging current trends (e.g., TikTok, Reels).	Slow, constrained by multi-layered bureaucratic approval processes and rigid annual planning.	<i>Ihsan</i> (Excellence): Agility reflects the pursuit of excellence in service and communication, a digital manifestation of <i>Ihsan</i> . Bureaucratic inertia can be interpreted as neglecting this principle, hindering optimal service.	Afandi (2023); Purwanto (2020); Trittin-Ulbrich & Böckel (2022)
Narrative & Storytelling	Emotion-driven, beneficiary-centric storytelling utilizing high-quality audiovisual content.	Formal, institutional, and report-oriented; prioritizes procedural compliance over emotional connection.	Qishash (Prophetic Narration): Effective storytelling mirrors the Prophetic tradition of using narratives to convey wisdom and build empathy, making abstract religious duties tangible and compelling.	Luo et al. (2024); Pursuit (2017); Ulfahadi (2023)
Transparency Mechanism	Real-time impact updates, interactive	Periodic, static publication of standardized	<i>Amanah</i> (Trust): Proactive, accessible	Yasmin & Haniffa (2017);

	donation trackers, and “live” financial reporting.	annual reports (typically in PDF format).	transparency is a direct enactment of <i>Amanah</i> , building verifiable trust. Retrospective reporting meets a basic obligation but misses the deeper, trust-building potential of real-time accountability.	Abdullah et al. (2023); Narulitasari et al. (2023)
Community Engagement	High interactivity via polls, Q&A sessions, and fostering user-generated content.	Low to moderate; primarily functions as a one-way channel for broadcasting information.	Shura (Consultation) & Ukhuwah (Brotherhood): Interactive engagement embodies the spirit of <i>Shura</i> and strengthens digital <i>Ukhuwah</i> , fostering a sense of shared ownership and collective responsibility in philanthropic action.	Gómez et al. (2019); Ulfahadi (2023); Lee (2023)
Influencer & Partnership Strategy	Proactive collaboration with micro-influencers and credible religious scholars/figures ( <i>da'i</i> ).	Limited, often restricted to formal partnerships with government officials or agencies.	Ta'awun (Cooperation): Strategic collaboration exemplifies <i>Ta'awun 'alal Birri</i> (cooperation in righteousness), extending institutional reach and credibility through trusted community nodes and social capital.	

Source: Develop by authors, 2025.

As synthesized in Table 1, the superiority of private institutions is not monolithic but stems from a coherent integration of strategy and values across interconnected domains. The following discussion delves into each dimension, critically examining how private institutions leverage these strategies to foster public trust and engagement. Concurrently, it analyzes how the constraints faced by state-owned institutions often create a misalignment with the very Islamic values they aim to serve, ultimately hindering their digital resonance and impact. This detailed analysis begins with the foundational dimension of organizational agility and its conceptualization as *Ihsan* in the digital realm.

This superiority can be attributed to several factors, including agility in communication, the ability to craft compelling narratives, and deeper engagement with their audiences. A synthesis of recent literature highlights the key aspects that contribute to the effectiveness of private institutions in

leveraging social media for branding purposes.<sup>26</sup> discuss the impact of corporate philanthropy on the evolution of brand communities within social media, showing that private institutions can build dynamic online communities that drive engagement and donor loyalty. By using social media platforms to share their philanthropic initiatives, private organizations are able to create strong and relevant brand identities that resonate with their audiences. This ability to cultivate communities around their brands is a major advantage, one that state-run institutions often lack due to bureaucratic limitations and slower communication structures.<sup>27</sup> explored the use of social media across professional sectors, including philanthropy, and found that private institutions are generally more adept at utilizing social media to communicate their missions and values effectively. Their proactive approach to branding enables them to establish a robust online presence, thereby enhancing visibility and credibility within the philanthropic landscape. Conversely, state-run institutions often struggle to achieve similar levels of engagement because of their inherent association with governmental functions, which may foster public skepticism.<sup>28</sup> emphasizes the potential crises that corporate philanthropy can face on social media and argues that private institutions are better equipped to respond swiftly to public concerns and crises. Their agility in communication allows them to maintain brand image and public trust through proactive and transparent responses, while state institutions, bound by bureaucratic delays, often fail to manage public perception effectively.<sup>29</sup> highlight the critical role of social media in shaping public perception of organizations, noting that private institutions can leverage digital platforms to craft emotionally engaging narratives that enhance their brand image.

The ability to tell impactful stories about their philanthropic efforts enables these organizations to connect emotionally with supporters, strengthening loyalty and trust. In contrast, state-owned organizations often find it difficult to communicate similar narratives due to their more formal and rigid communication styles.<sup>30</sup> examined how large organizations use social media to promote philanthropic work and found that private institutions effectively showcase their initiatives and achievements online, thereby improving public

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<sup>26</sup> Luo, Hao, and Ma, "The Impact of Corporate Philanthropy on the Evolution of Social Media Brand Community – Based on the Case of ERKE."

<sup>27</sup> Hasenin Al-khersan et al., "Social Media in Ophthalmology: An Analysis of Use in the Professional Sphere," *Health Informatics Journal* 26, no. 4 (December 2020): 2967–75, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1460458220954610>.

<sup>28</sup> Persuit, "The Potential for Paracrisis in Corporate Philanthropy and Social Media," March 2017.

<sup>29</sup> Juliana De Paula Matos et al., "A Scoping Review of Observational Studies on Food and Beverage Advertising on Social Media: A Public Health Perspective," *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* 20, no. 4 (February 2023): 3615, <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph20043615>.

<sup>30</sup> Walby and Gumieny, "Public Police's Philanthropy and Twitter Communications in Canada."

perception and legitimacy. Similarly, Ulfahadi<sup>31</sup> explored the role of social media in youth volunteer movements, emphasizing that private philanthropic organizations use digital platforms to mobilize support and raise awareness for their charitable initiatives. This ability to connect with younger audiences through relatable content and interactive campaigns enables private institutions to foster a culture of giving and civic participation, a significant advantage over state-run institutions, which often struggle to engage youth audiences. Overall, the literature reveals that the success of private philanthropic institutions in social media branding lies in their flexibility, creativity, and responsiveness. These qualities allow them to communicate values authentically, adapt to emerging trends, and foster meaningful relationships with their audiences, factors that ultimately strengthen both their public image and their philanthropic impact.

### **Digital Communication Strategies of Private Philanthropic Institutions: Capturing Attention and Building Public Trust**

Private philanthropic institutions are increasingly leveraging social media as a powerful tool for branding, engagement, and building public trust. Their strategies often capitalize on the unique characteristics of social media platforms, allowing them to connect with audiences in ways that are often difficult for state-owned organizations to replicate. A synthesis of recent literature highlights several key aspects of how private institutions design digital communication strategies that attract attention and foster trust.<sup>32</sup> discuss the shifting dynamics of branding in social media environments, where consumers have become co-authors of brand stories. This transition allows private philanthropic organizations to engage their audiences more interactively, fostering a sense of community and shared purpose. By encouraging user-generated content and participation, these institutions can enhance their brand image and build trust among supporters, as stakeholders feel more involved in the philanthropic narrative.<sup>33</sup> Highlights the growing role of social media in youth volunteer movements, showing how private institutions utilize platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube to promote their initiatives. These platforms not only facilitate communication but also allow organizations to showcase their impact, thus attracting attention and cultivating a culture of sharing. Such proactive engagement is crucial for building public trust, as transparency and visibility are essential components of effective branding. Similarly, Mar Gómez et al.<sup>34</sup> propose an integrated model of social media brand engagement, revealing that consumers who actively interact with a brand's online presence are more

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<sup>31</sup> Ulfahadi, "Islamic Philanthropy on Social Media in Youth Volunteering Movements."

<sup>32</sup> Sonja Gensler et al., "Managing Brands in the Social Media Environment," *Journal of Interactive Marketing* 27, no. 4 (November 2013): 242-56, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.intmar.2013.09.004>.

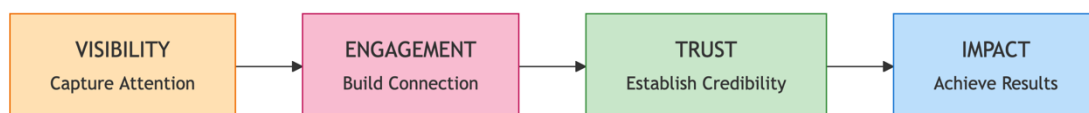
<sup>33</sup> Ulfahadi, "Islamic Philanthropy on Social Media in Youth Volunteering Movements."

<sup>34</sup> Mar Gómez, Carmen Lopez, and Arturo Molina, "An Integrated Model of Social Media Brand Engagement," *Computers in Human Behavior* 96 (July 2019): 196-206, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2019.01.026>.

likely to develop positive attitudes toward it. This insight is particularly relevant for private philanthropic institutions, as active engagement fosters stronger relationships with audiences and reinforces their commitment to social causes. Through consistent and meaningful interaction on social media, these organizations can strengthen both credibility and trust.<sup>35</sup> Examined the role of social media marketing in building brand love and centrality among local fashion brands targeting millennials.

Private philanthropic institutions employ a sophisticated yet streamlined approach to digital communication that systematically builds public trust. Their strategy follows a deliberate four-phase cycle that transforms casual observers into committed supporters. As illustrated in Figure 1, this process begins with tactical visibility, evolves through emotional connection and trust reinforcement, and culminates in community activation, creating a self-sustaining cycle of engagement and impact.

**Figure 1. The 4-Phase Cyclical Framework of Digital Communication Strategy in Private Islamic Philanthropy”**



Source: Developed by the author based on literature synthesis, 2025.

This cyclical framework reveals why private institutions excel at digital communication: they understand that trust-building is not a linear process but a continuous cycle where each phase reinforces the others. The Capture phase utilizes platform-specific tactics to gain initial visibility, which then enables Engagement through authentic storytelling and interaction. This emotional connection is solidified in the Trust phase through consistent transparency, which in turn empowers Activation where supporters become advocates. The resulting loyalty and sustained trust then inform and refine new visibility strategies, creating a virtuous cycle of continuous improvement. This integrated approach explains how private institutions maintain relevance and credibility in rapidly evolving digital landscapes.

The study emphasizes the importance of creating meaningful interactions with consumers, which can enhance brand loyalty and trust. Private philanthropic institutions can adopt similar strategies focused on relationship-building and community engagement to elevate their branding and improve public perception. Moreover, Suariedewi et al.<sup>36</sup> investigate the influence of social media quality and brand awareness on consumer decision-making, noting that a

<sup>35</sup> Iin Mayasari et al., “Examining the Role of Social Media Marketing on Brand Love and Its Impact on Brand Centrality: The Study of Local Fashion Brands for the Millennials,” *Journal of Indonesian Economy and Business* 38, no. 2 (May 2023), <https://doi.org/10.22146/jieb.v38i2.5364>.

<sup>36</sup> I Gusti Agung Ayu Mas Suariedewi and I Gusti Ayu Athina Wulandari, “Impact of Social Media Quality and Brand Awareness on Purchase Decision Mediated by Role of Brand Image,” *TIJAB (The International Journal of Applied Business)* 7, no. 2 (October 2023): 217–30, <https://doi.org/10.20473/tijab.v7.I2.2023.46718>.

strong brand image positively affects consumer behavior. This finding is highly relevant for philanthropic institutions: a well-established brand identity can enhance public trust and increase donation intent. By prioritizing high-quality content and effective social media communication strategies, private institutions can strengthen brand equity and foster long-term supporter loyalty. <sup>37</sup> explore the effectiveness of Facebook advertising in enhancing consumer purchase intention, noting that social media ads provide unique opportunities for interactive marketing. Private philanthropic organizations can harness this interactivity to promote their initiatives and build public trust, as users are more inclined to support organizations that actively engage with them online. Similarly, Manoj Sharma<sup>38</sup> emphasize the influence of social media activity on brand-customer relationships, highlighting trust as a vital component. Their findings suggest that private philanthropic institutions can cultivate trust by promoting transparency and open communication through social media. By consistently sharing their impact stories, engaging directly with followers, and demonstrating accountability, these organizations foster loyalty and commitment among supporters. Ultimately, digital communication strategies that prioritize authenticity, responsiveness, and transparency enable private philanthropic institutions to not only attract public attention but also to sustain meaningful, trust-based relationships with their communities.

### **Lessons State-Owned Philanthropic Institutions Can Learn from Private Philanthropic Organizations' Approaches on Social Media**

State-owned philanthropic institutions can learn a great deal from the approaches adopted by private philanthropic organizations in leveraging social media to enhance communication, engagement, and brand image. The success of private organizations in using digital platforms to build strong relationships with their audiences demonstrates the importance of communication strategies that are transparent, interactive, and adaptive to digital trends. Several key aspects can be adopted by state-owned philanthropic organizations to improve their effectiveness in the realm of social media. One of the main strengths of private philanthropic organizations lies in their transparency in presenting activity reports and financial accountability openly. They often use social media to publish financial reports, program updates, and success stories, which helps increase public trust.<sup>39</sup> Highlight that zakat institutions adopting transparency through social media tend to be more trusted by society. State-owned philanthropic organizations can implement a similar approach by regularly

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<sup>37</sup> Milad Dehghani and Mustafa Tumer, "A Research on Effectiveness of Facebook Advertising on Enhancing Purchase Intention of Consumers," *Computers in Human Behavior* 49 (August 2015): 597–600, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2015.03.051>.

<sup>38</sup> Manoj Sharma, "A Study: How AI Is Incorporated in the Middle East Banking," *Journal for Research in Applied Sciences and Biotechnology* 2, no. 3 (July 2023): 202–8, <https://doi.org/10.55544/jrasb.2.3.27>.

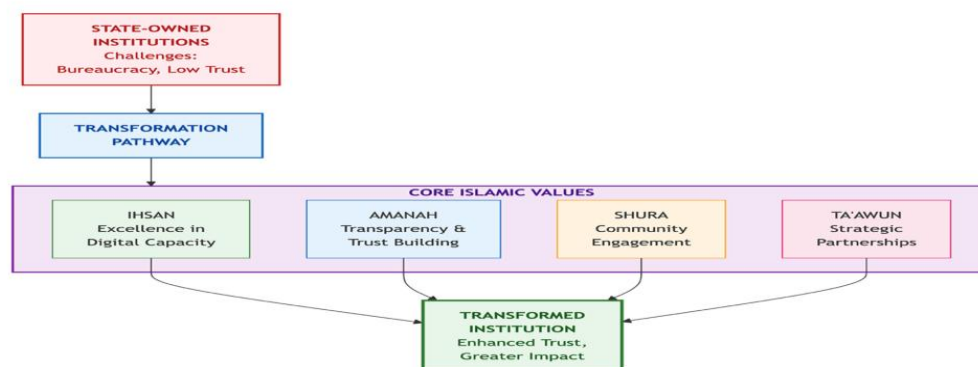
<sup>39</sup> Abdullah et al., "Zakat Institutions' Adoption of Social Media."

sharing their reports and achievements openly.<sup>40</sup> This practice not only builds credibility but also encourages broader public engagement, as people feel they have direct access to information. Private organizations often use powerful storytelling techniques to create emotional connections with their audiences. Through touching stories about the social impact of their philanthropic activities, these organizations succeed in building deeper relationships with the public. According to Pursuit<sup>41</sup>, storytelling is not only effective in conveying an organization's mission but also helps the audience feel more connected to its goals. State-owned philanthropic institutions can use social media as a platform to share stories about the individuals they help or the narratives behind their programs. In this way, they can humanize their philanthropic missions, making them more relatable and understandable to the wider public.

To bridge the digital divide and enhance their social media efficacy, state-owned Islamic philanthropic institutions must undertake a fundamental transformation that moves beyond superficial imitation of private sector tactics. This transformation requires a reconceptualization of digital strategy as an embodiment of core Islamic values, rather than merely a technical or promotional endeavor. The challenge lies not in replicating specific campaigns, but in internalizing the ethical principles that make private institutions' communications resonate authentically with Muslim communities.

This transformative process can be systematically guided by a value-centric framework that aligns digital practices with Islamic ethics. As illustrated in Figure 1, the pathway from bureaucratic constraints to digital trustworthiness is navigated by centering four interconnected Islamic values in strategic decision-making. This framework posits that digital transformation is ultimately a process of ethical realignment, where technological adoption serves to amplify and operationalize timeless religious principles in the contemporary public sphere.

**Figure 2. Islamic Value-Driven Digital Transformation Framework for State Owned Philanthropic Institutions**



Source: Conceptual by authors, 2025.

<sup>40</sup> Muhammad Deni Putra et al., "When the State Plays 'Philanthropist': Social Aid as an Instrument of Power Legitimacy," *An-Nida'* 49, no. 2 (December 2025): 221, <https://doi.org/10.24014/an-nida.v49i2.38327>.

<sup>41</sup> Pursuit, "The Potential for Paracrisis in Corporate Philanthropy and Social Media," March 2017.

As visualized in Figure 2, the transformation begins with recognizing current institutional constraints, primarily bureaucratic inertia and diminished public trust, as the starting point. The pathway forward is navigated by embedding four pivotal Islamic values into the digital strategy fabric: *Ihsan* (pursuit of excellence) guides investments in digital capacity and agile methodologies; *Amanah* (trustworthiness) mandates transparent communication and accountable reporting; *Shura* (consultation) necessitates interactive, community-centric engagement; and *Ta'awun* (cooperation) directs strategic partnerships with credible societal actors. The convergence of these value-driven initiatives cultivates a transformed institution characterized by enhanced digital trust and greater social impact. The following sections elaborate on practical implementations of each value dimension, drawing concrete lessons from private institutions while adapting them to the unique mandate and scale of state-owned entities.

One of the strengths of private philanthropic institutions is their ability to build interactive communities on social media, where supporters and volunteers can actively participate in dialogues, provide feedback, or simply share their perspectives. Putra et al. emphasizes the importance of building interactive brand communities, as this creates a sense of ownership and engagement among supporters.<sup>42</sup> State-owned philanthropic institutions can enhance their social media presence by adopting interactive strategies, such as hosting Q&A sessions, conducting online surveys, or inviting the public to share experiences related to supported programs. By creating open dialogue spaces, these institutions can strengthen their relationships with the public and foster a stronger sense of community. Private philanthropic organizations often collaborate with influencers or public figures to expand their reach and increase the visibility of their philanthropic programs. Reveal that leveraging social capital or relationships with influential public figures can enhance credibility and public trust. State-owned philanthropic organizations can learn from this approach by collaborating with public figures, celebrities, or influencers whose values align with those of the organization.<sup>43</sup> Such collaborations not only increase the visibility of their programs but also help reshape public perceptions and build stronger trust. The success of private philanthropic institutions is often driven by their agility in adapting to the latest technologies and digital trends. They actively engage with emerging social media platforms and digital innovations to remain relevant in the eyes of their audiences. According to Hamdani et al<sup>44</sup>, adapting to digital trends is crucial for building trust in the modern era. State-owned

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<sup>42</sup> Gómez, Lopez, and Molina, "An Integrated Model of Social Media Brand Engagement."

<sup>43</sup> Muhammad Deni Putra, Aliyu Bello Ahmad, and Sirajuddin Shaikh, "Mediated Compassion: The Role of Influencers and Digital Celebrities in Promoting a Culture of Philanthropy in Indonesia," *Asian Journal of Media and Culture* 2, no. 1 (January 2026): 1-22, <https://doi.org/10.63919/ajmc.v2i1.69>; Muhammad Mansur et al., "Islamic Philanthropy in the Digital Era: The Role of Media and Culture in Spreading the Teachings of Generosity," *Asian Journal of Media and Culture* 1, no. 1 (January 2025): 74-92, <https://doi.org/10.63919/ajmc.v1i1.20>.

<sup>44</sup> Hamdani and Aziz, "Digitalization of Islamic Philanthropy."

philanthropic organizations need to improve the digital literacy of their staff and invest in the latest technologies so they can quickly adapt to changes in the social media landscape. This approach will help them stay connected with younger, more digitally savvy audiences.

Private institutions often launch campaigns that encourage a culture of sharing and giving through social media. They use these platforms to promote their philanthropic initiatives and engage the broader community in social movements. Young-joo Lee emphasizes the importance of nonprofit organizations in creating social norms that promote solidarity and collective responsibility.<sup>45</sup> State-owned philanthropic institutions can learn to use social media as a tool to inspire greater public involvement in philanthropic activities, whether through donation campaigns or volunteer programs. By doing so, they can help foster a stronger culture of solidarity within society. Data analytics has become an essential tool in the social media communication strategies of private philanthropic organizations. The importance of using data analytics to understand consumer behavior on social media<sup>46</sup>. By leveraging these tools, state-owned organizations can monitor audience engagement levels, understand their preferences, and design more targeted strategies to enhance communication effectiveness. Data-driven insights help institutions better understand their audiences, create relevant content, and maximize public interaction. Note “Data-driven insights inform communication strategies, enhancing audience connection and engagement.”<sup>47</sup> By adopting data-driven approaches, state-owned philanthropic institutions can tailor their messages to meet the needs and expectations of society. This also helps evaluate the impact of social media campaigns, allowing institutions to make adjustments that increase engagement and achieve desired outcomes.

Private philanthropic organizations often engage in partnerships and collaborations with other organizations to amplify their philanthropic impact. Underline that collaboration enhances public trust in organizations.<sup>48</sup> By using social media to promote collaborative initiatives, state-owned philanthropic institutions can strengthen both engagement and credibility in the eyes of the public. Transparent and communicative collaborations help demonstrate the institution’s commitment to shared goals and values upheld by society. Private institutions frequently share educational content that explains their mission and the impact of their work to audiences via social media. Moon Young Kang et al.

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<sup>45</sup> Young-joo Lee, “Over the Rainbow: Sexual Minorities’ Bonding and Bridging Social Capital and Civic Engagement,” *Nonprofit Management and Leadership* 33, no. 3 (March 2023): 585–607, <https://doi.org/10.1002/nml.21535>.

<sup>46</sup> Michal Mičik, Mikuláš Gangur, and Ludvík Eger, “Modelling Trust Dimensions on Social Media,” *Journal of Business Economics and Management* 23, no. 4 (August 2022): 937–56, <https://doi.org/10.3846/jbem.2022.17387>.

<sup>47</sup> Mičik. Modelling Trust Dimensions...

<sup>48</sup> Walby and Gumieny, “Public Police’s Philanthropy and Twitter Communications in Canada.”

explain that educational content helps build public trust.<sup>49</sup> State-owned institutions can adopt this strategy by providing educational materials about their philanthropic initiatives and explaining how individuals can participate in these social activities. This not only informs but also motivates the public to engage more actively. Private philanthropic institutions often exhibit greater agility in responding to public issues or concerns on social media. Such quick responses enable them to maintain their image and public trust. emphasize the importance of prompt responses to public concerns in maintaining reputation. State-owned institutions can learn from this responsiveness by addressing public issues more swiftly on social media to safeguard their credibility and public trust. Through the adoption of these strategies, state-owned philanthropic institutions can more effectively harness the potential of social media to build closer relationships with the public, enhance transparency, and strengthen their brand image in the digital era.

### Conclusions

This study concludes that the disparity in social media branding effectiveness between private and state-owned Islamic philanthropic institutions stems from their differing alignment with core Islamic ethical principles. The most significant finding reveals that private institutions excel by operationalizing the principles of amanah through digital transparency and ihsan through innovative engagement, thereby building robust trust in the digital era. In contrast, state-owned institutions are often constrained by bureaucratic structures that diminish agility and narrative authenticity, potentially weakening their connection with younger generations. This finding addresses the fundamental social fact that the mission of distributing zakat, sadaqah, and waqf for communal welfare is now critically dependent on digital competence and accountability. The primary scholarly contribution of this research is the theoretical integration of Islamic ethical philosophy with contemporary communication and branding theory. It enriches Islamic economics by introducing the concept of spiritually-infused digital capital, positioning public trust not merely as a performance indicator but as a religious imperative. However, this study has limitations due to its qualitative, literature-based nature, rendering the findings interpretive and not yet empirically-quantitatively tested. Therefore, further research is essential. Empirical mixed-methods studies are required to directly measure the correlation between specific digital branding strategies and increased donations. Comparative cross-country research would also reveal the influence of varying socio-cultural contexts. Finally, developing practical frameworks such as “Digital Amanah Guidelines” for state philanthropic institutions is a crucial topic requiring exploration, ensuring digital transformation progresses in harmony with the preservation of Islamic values.

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<sup>49</sup> Moon Young Kang and Byungho Park, “Sustainable Corporate Social Media Marketing Based on Message Structural Features: Firm Size Plays a Significant Role as a Moderator,” *Sustainability* 10, no. 4 (April 2018): 1167, <https://doi.org/10.3390/su10041167>.

### Author's Contribution

Muhammad Deni Putra, Aziz Muslim: Contribute to formulating research ideas, collecting data, processing data, and interpreting data

Mukhamad Yazid Afandi, Holilur Rahman: Contributing to writing systematics and research methods

Abdullah Sahroni: Contributing to analyzing interpretation results

Muhammad Kamil Husain: Contributing to collecting data

Sari Utami: Contribute to compiling a literature review and to language proofreading.

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The author declares that there is no conflict of interest.

### Ethical Approval

Ethical approval No patient-identifying parts in this paper were used or known to the authors. Therefore, no ethical approval was requested.

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