

CSR Strategy through *Kemaslahatan Umat* Programs in Building Public Trust

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ABSTRACT

Keywords

Government CSR; BPKH Indonesia; Kemaslahatan Umat Programs; Public Trust; RACE Model; Strategic Communication

This study examines the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) strategy of the Indonesian Hajj Financial Management Agency (BPKH) through its *Kemaslahatan Umat* programs in mitigating negative public sentiment and rebuilding public trust. The research adopts a descriptive qualitative approach. Data were collected through observation, document analysis, and digital trace analysis related to BPKH's CSR activities. The findings reveal that BPKH's public benefit programs, implemented within the RACE framework (Research, Action, Communication, Evaluation), have proven to be effective as a CSR strategy in fostering public trust in the management of Hajj funds. Public trust is not merely constructed through institutional claims; rather, it emerges from the consistency of tangible actions supported by data-driven research, program implementation that directly addresses societal needs, transparent and empathetic communication, and evaluation processes that are independently verifiable. The novelty of this study lies in demonstrating that the characteristics of Strategic CSR within governmental institutions not only create shared value but also function as a reputational defense mechanism within a sensitive public ecosystem.

1. Introduction

Public trust constitutes a fundamental pillar in the successful governance of public financial institutions, particularly when such institutions manage religious funds entrusted by the community. In the Indonesian context, the management of Hajj funds represents a strategic issue that directly affects a large segment of the Muslim population. The Indonesian Hajj Financial Management Agency (BPKH) is the institution mandated to manage Hajj finances with the expectation of enhancing transparency, accountability, and maximizing benefits for the ummah. However, in recent years, public trust in Hajj fund management has declined due to emerging issues and allegations of mismanagement.

According to a report published by Media Indonesia (August 12, 2025), the Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK) elevated the alleged corruption case concerning the 2024 Hajj quota to the investigation stage. The case involves irregularities in the allocation of additional Hajj quotas that allegedly violated existing regulations, with preliminary estimates indicating state losses exceeding IDR 1 trillion. This was not the first case associated with Hajj administration. Earlier reports by Liputan6 (February 7, 2019) documented corruption involving the Endowment Fund (Dana Abadi Umat) and Hajj Implementation Funds (BPIH) amounting to IDR 4.5 billion, derived from various unofficial financial components such as allowances and incentives. Furthermore, Tempo (July 3, 2025) reported suspected abuse of authority in the utilization of remaining Hajj quotas, facilities, and procurement processes for catering and accommodation, with estimated losses reaching IDR 1 trillion during 2012–2013.

These recurring corruption cases demonstrate that governance issues in Hajj fund management have direct implications for the social legitimacy of managing institutions and extend beyond mere administrative concerns. The misuse of Hajj-related funds attracts widespread public attention due to their sacred nature in Islamic belief. Such actions are perceived as violations of fundamental values of honesty and justice, further exacerbating public distrust.

The organization of Hajj pilgrimage and the management of Hajj finances are intrinsically interconnected within Indonesia's integrated Hajj system. While the Ministry of Religious Affairs is responsible for the operational aspects of Hajj implementation, BPKH oversees financial management. Consequently, any issues arising in Hajj administration may significantly impact financial governance due to the close interdependence between these two domains.

As stipulated in Law Number 34 of 2014 on Hajj Financial Management, particularly Article 3(c), one of the primary objectives of Hajj fund management is to generate optimal value for the benefit (*Kemaslahatan Umat*) of the Muslim community. This mandate was further operationalized through Government Regulation Number 5 of 2018, which formalized the establishment and organizational structure of BPKH. Within this framework, the *Kemaslahatan Umat* Division serves as a strategic unit responsible for managing and distributing the benefits derived from the Endowment Fund into programs that directly enhance societal welfare. This division ensures that Hajj fund management extends beyond pilgrimage administration and actively contributes to sustainable social and religious development.

According to the official BPKH website (accessed March 26, 2026), the *Kemaslahatan Umat* Program aims to channel the benefits generated from the Endowment Fund into initiatives covering Hajj services, healthcare, education and da'wah, religious infrastructure, disaster response, economic empowerment, and socio-religious development. Through these programs, BPKH seeks to restore the public image of Hajj fund management as a trustworthy mandate that delivers tangible social impact rather than merely functioning as a financial reserve. From a communication perspective, such initiatives can be conceptualized as a form of CSR strategy that shapes institutional image, strengthens reputation, and rebuilds public trust.

As a public fund management institution, BPKH operates in a highly sensitive environment where issues of fund misuse are particularly critical. Although BPKH has consistently received unqualified audit opinions (WTP), negative sentiment continues to emerge in public discourse, particularly through social media narratives surrounding Hajj fund management. These negative perceptions are often driven by information asymmetry and historical trauma, which collectively contribute to persistent public skepticism. In response, BPKH employs CSR-oriented social initiatives—specifically through the *Kemaslahatan Umat* Program—as a form of social accountability for the trust placed by prospective pilgrims. Although BPKH is not a commercial entity, its approach to utilizing the returns from endowment funds reflects the characteristics of strategic CSR aimed at creating shared value between the institution and its stakeholders.

Nugraheni (2022) argues that CSR is essential for both ethical and strategic reasons. Ethically, CSR represents an organization's moral responsibility toward society, particularly in its use of resources and social environments. Strategically, CSR contributes to reputation building and maintenance. Organizations that actively implement CSR programs are more likely to gain positive public perception as responsible entities. CSR thus serves as a long-term strategy for fostering trust-based relationships and enhancing societal acceptance.

The contemporary discourse on CSR has expanded beyond the private sector, with government institutions increasingly adopting CSR-like functions to improve public service delivery. Njama (2025) emphasizes that governments hold social responsibilities manifested through public services, social policies, and welfare programs. In this regard, the government acts as regulator, facilitator, partner, and implementer of social responsibility. CSR, therefore, evolves into an integral component of good governance, emphasizing transparency, accountability, and societal welfare.

For government institutions, CSR also functions as a strategic communication tool in delivering public services and fulfilling their mandate to society. It enables institutions to build effective public communication and demonstrate good governance practices. High-quality public service delivery

contributes to a positive institutional image and reinforces the perception of government as a reliable public servant.

A review of recent academic literature on BPKH governance reveals a fragmented body of research. Fathoni (2020), in *Jurnal Ekonomi Syariah Teori dan Terapan*, provides a strong foundation by examining the *Kemaslahatan Umat* Program through the lens of Maqashid Shariah. However, the study remains largely normative and theological, focusing on compliance with Islamic principles without assessing its perceptual impact in the public sphere.

At the international level, Abimanyu and Hidayat (2020), in the *International Journal of Islamic Economics and Finance*, highlight financial accountability and investment transparency as key determinants of BPKH's sustainability. Nevertheless, a significant research gap persists, as technical investment aspects and CSR distribution have not been linked to crisis communication strategies. In particular, there is a lack of research examining how the *Kemaslahatan Umat* Program functions as a reputational risk mitigation instrument through the RACE model (Research, Action, Communication, Evaluation).

From a communication and CSR perspective, this gap becomes even more apparent. Meilani and Arifin (2022) demonstrate that CSR in Islamic banking enhances reputation; however, their study is limited to statistical relationships between variables. Similarly, Srisusilawati et al. (2023) analyze the governance of BPKH's *Kemaslahatan Umat* fund distribution but focus primarily on internal management and regulatory compliance. Consequently, analyzing the strategic dimension of the *Kemaslahatan Umat* Program becomes crucial, as it represents a critical arena where public trust is negotiated. Unlike private sector entities, BPKH's brand identity is deeply rooted in Sharia values and accountability. Therefore, this study addresses the existing gap by evaluating how communication strategies and program execution bridge governmental objectives without undermining the trust of Hajj pilgrims as primary stakeholders.

Based on this review, this study occupies a distinctive position within the existing literature. While prior research has predominantly examined the *Kemaslahatan Umat* Program from legal-administrative and normative-religious perspectives, this study situates the discussion within the domain of strategic management. Its primary novelty lies in the application of the RACE framework as an analytical tool to examine how CSR programs are transformed into instruments of reputational communication. Accordingly, this research moves beyond evaluating program outputs and instead analyzes the cyclical process through which public trust is reconstructed amid scepticism surrounding the management of religious funds. This constitutes an original contribution to the discourse on corporate communication within public institutions managing Hajj funds in Indonesia.

2. Method

This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach. Such an approach aims to describe, elaborate, and analyze phenomena in depth through data collection methods including observation, document analysis, and digital trace analysis. The study provides a comprehensive and detailed account of the CSR strategy implemented by the Indonesian Hajj Financial Management Agency (BPKH) through its *Kemaslahatan Umat* programs. In this research, the RACE model (Research, Action, Communication, Evaluation) is utilized as an analytical framework to examine the process of determining the effectiveness and societal impact of fund distribution. The first stage, Research, explores how BPKH conducts preliminary assessments to ensure that CSR programs are accurately targeted and capable of generating sustainable positive impacts. The second stage, Action, examines how the distribution of funds is implemented in practice. The third stage, Communication, analyzes how information regarding the programs is disseminated to the public. Finally, the Evaluation stage assesses how the communicated information and implemented programs are received by the public and whether they achieve the intended outcomes effectively.

3. Result and Discussion

The public relations strategy implemented by BPKH in executing its *Kemaslahatan Umat* programs is grounded in the RACE model, emphasizing a systematic process that begins with data

identification and analysis within the research phase, followed by strategic planning and communication implementation through relevant media channels, and culminating in evaluation to measure communication effectiveness (Natalia & Ummanah, 2026). Accordingly, the communication developed is not merely oriented toward information dissemination but also incorporates educational and persuasive elements designed to strengthen relationships and sustainably enhance public trust (Pahlevi, 2024).

3.1 Presenting the Results

3.1.1 Research Stage of BPKH's *Kemaslahatan Umat* Program in Enhancing Public Trust

The research stage represents the initial phase in the implementation of CSR strategy. In the context of BPKH's *Kemaslahatan Umat* program, research serves as a critical element to ensure that initiatives are properly targeted, generate sustainable positive impacts, and comply with prevailing regulations. This underscores that the *Kemaslahatan Umat* program is not merely a short-term philanthropic activity but a strategic intervention aimed at addressing root social problems (Nopriyanto, 2024).

The research conducted by BPKH in implementing its CSR strategy is divided into six categories: (1) regulatory research, (2) social needs research, (3) financial capacity research of the *Dana Abadi Umat* (DAU), (4) *Kemaslahatan Umat* partner research, (5) historical evaluation research, and (6) situational response research.

Regulatory analysis is a fundamental aspect of the research stage. Without an accurate understanding of regulations related to program legality, the risks would be significantly high. The regulations governing BPKH in implementing the *Kemaslahatan Umat* Program are an important binding aspect and become part of the technical research process, referred to as regulatory research. In accordance with Law No. 34 of 2014 on Hajj Financial Management, particularly Article 24, it is explicitly mandated that Hajj funds may be used for the benefit of the ummah. This is further strengthened by BPKH Regulation No. 3 of 2023, which outlines priority programs, including Hajj and public infrastructure, healthcare, education and da'wah, socio-religious activities, economic empowerment, and disaster response. The output of CSR strategic decisions in this regulatory research aspect is the establishment of legal boundaries, which in public communication management is known as regulatory anchoring, which not only increases message accuracy but also significantly enhances credibility and trustworthiness of communication in the eyes of an increasingly critical public.

In addition to regulatory aspects, social needs research is also conducted by BPKH in determining the implementation of the *Kemaslahatan Umat* Program. This research is carried out through mapping across 34 provinces, identifying 3T regions (frontier, outermost, and disadvantaged areas), and analyzing needs based on BPKH's priority sectors. From a public relations perspective, this social needs research has a dual strategic function. First, it generates data that demonstrates that BPKH's *Kemaslahatan Umat* Program is a response to real needs in the field. Second, regional mapping serves as an instrument for constructing a narrative of distributive justice that can counter public perceptions that programs are concentrated only in central or already developed regions. The significance of public trust based on social needs research is substantial. Freire (2022) found that perceptions of distributive justice are predictors of public trust in philanthropic institutions. When BPKH can demonstrate through mapping data that its programs reach 3T regions, the communication narrative produced becomes more effective in building cross-demographic public trust.

The next research conducted examines the financial capacity of the Dana Abadi Umat (DAU). The funding source of the *Kemaslahatan Umat* Program is derived from the returns of the DAU, which prior to the enactment of Law No. 34 of 2014 were obtained from DAU development results and/or remaining operational costs of Hajj implementation as well as other lawful and non-binding sources as stipulated by law (Fitryiani et al., 2023). Financial capacity research includes analysis of BPKH financial reports, audit results from the Supreme Audit Agency (BPK), and projections of benefit values, producing very concrete PR decision outputs. This becomes a primary variable in public trust, namely financial transparency (Broom & Sha, 2013). However, this formal obligation does not automatically generate public trust if communicated only in overly technical formats. Therefore, financial capacity in this PR context is not only about understanding the numerical data

in financial reports but also about identifying the best way to translate them into honest, accurate narratives that can be understood by the general public (Cutlip et al., 2006).

The *Kemaslahatan Umat* Program is not implemented independently by BPKH but is carried out in collaboration with *Kemaslahatan Umat* partners who possess technical capacity and networks in their respective fields. BPKH has authority as a fund manager rather than a technical executor of social programs (PKBP 8/2023). Therefore, BPKH conducts partner feasibility research to determine eligible partners, including verification of legality, assessment of technical capacity, and track record evaluation. These partners include BAZNAS, Dompot Dhuafa, Rumah Zakat, Lazismu, and LazisNU. From a PR perspective, partner feasibility research has significant reputational implications. The reputation of *Kemaslahatan Umat* partners influences BPKH's reputation as the parent institution. The principle of guilt by association applies bidirectionally: partners with legal, financial, or ethical issues can damage BPKH's reputation, while reputable and trusted partners strengthen BPKH's credibility through the halo effect (Grunig & Hunt, 1984; Seitel, 2017). This reputational spillover phenomenon has been confirmed in various studies on institutional alliances (Rhee & Haunschild, 2006).

Historical evaluation research positions the *Kemaslahatan Umat* Program within a temporal perspective, enabling trend-based decision-making and institutional learning. Analysis of program realization data from 2018–2023, cross-sector mapping, and impact evaluation produces practical outputs in the form of adjustments to allocation and program priorities. From a public trust perspective, the historical evaluation dimension has significant communication value. When BPKH openly demonstrates institutional learning processes—acknowledging programs that are less optimal, explaining the causes, and showing how adjustments are made—this significantly increases public trust. Kohring and Matthes (2007) found that acknowledging shortcomings accompanied by a commitment to improvement has a stronger trust-building effect than unrealistic claims of perfection. This aligns with Rawlins' (2009) concept of organizational transparency, which emphasizes openness about imperfections as a key predictor of stakeholder trust. Historical realization data (2018–2023) also becomes a strong narrative asset in demonstrating consistency and sustainability (BPKH, 2023; BPK RI, 2023). Positive trends reflect commitment, while identifying underserved sectors demonstrates institutional responsiveness.

Finally, situational response research represents the most dynamic and responsive dimension. Monitoring social conditions, disasters, and urgent needs in real-time produces adaptive program decisions that cannot be fully anticipated in regular planning (BNPB, 2023; BPS, 2023). The ability to respond quickly and appropriately to emergencies is a key factor in building public trust. Coombs (2014), through Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT), emphasizes that speed, accuracy, and empathy in crisis response directly determine long-term public trust. Operationally, this requires integrated monitoring systems, fast-track funding mechanisms, and crisis communication protocols. These capacities are not only operational necessities but also long-term PR investments.

3.1.2 Action Stage of BPKH's *Kemaslahatan Umat* Program in Enhancing Public Trust

The action stage in the implementation of BPKH's *Kemaslahatan Umat* Program represents a critical phase that demonstrates how previously formulated policies are translated into tangible programs directly experienced by society. In the context of Hajj fund management, public trust occupies a highly fundamental position, as it relates to the moral and social legitimacy of the managing institution, namely BPKH. Previous studies indicate that public trust in religious financial institutions is strongly influenced by transparency, accountability, and the tangible benefits perceived by society (Huda et al., 2014; Husnasari, et al., 2025). This highlights that BPKH's strength in building public trust lies not merely in regulatory frameworks or planning processes, but in the consistent implementation of programs that generate broad and sustainable impacts.

The implementation of BPKH's *Kemaslahatan Umat* Program reflects a multidimensional approach targeting various aspects of societal life, including education, da'wah and religious services, economic empowerment, religious infrastructure, healthcare, and socio-religious assistance. In the field of education, programs extend beyond financial assistance such as scholarships to strengthening the educational ecosystem through infrastructure development, including the construction and renovation of da'wah centers, halls, gazebos, and facilities for Islamic

organizations, as well as support for educational institutions. Suryadarma and Suryahadi (2013) emphasize that investment in education significantly contributes to social welfare and mobility. Similarly, Akhyar (2026) finds that education assistance programs funded through religious social funds can enhance public trust, as they are perceived to deliver sustainable benefits. Within the RACE framework, these initiatives represent strategic actions designed to address societal needs and generate long-term institutional reputation. This aligns with Mayer et al. (1995), who argue that trust is built upon perceptions of competence, integrity, and benevolence—all of which are simultaneously reinforced through these educational programs.

Simultaneously, programs in the domains of da'wah and religious services highlight the spiritual dimension of Hajj fund management. These programs aim to enhance services for pilgrims before, during, and after the Hajj pilgrimage, including the provision of infrastructure and service facilities both domestically and internationally. Examples include the construction and renovation of Integrated Hajj and Umrah Service Centers (PLHUT), provision of service vehicles for pilgrims, mobile Hajj registration services, development of Hajj dormitories, and distribution of pilgrimage-related materials. Support for da'wah activities, preacher training, and worship facilities indicates that BPKH is not solely economically oriented but also committed to strengthening religious values. In the context of public trust, alignment between institutional values and societal values plays a crucial role. Therefore, these programs significantly contribute to fostering emotional closeness between the public and the institution.

In Indonesia's predominantly religious society, value congruence between institutions and the public is a key determinant of trust (Hafner, 2005). Nurhaidah, et. al. (2025) further demonstrates that da'wah programs supported by public institutions can enhance social legitimacy when their benefits are directly experienced by the community. From the RACE perspective, these initiatives not only function as action but also overlap with the communication stage, as da'wah inherently involves value-based communication. Consequently, the boundary between action and communication becomes fluid, where actions themselves simultaneously serve as communicative messages. This reinforces the argument that the effectiveness of public communication is highly dependent on the quality of actions undertaken.

Furthermore, economic empowerment constitutes a central pillar of the *Kemaslahatan Umat* Program. These initiatives aim to strengthen the national economy based on principles of Islamic economics, inclusivity, and equitable efficiency. Programs include entrepreneurship training, capacity building, the BPKH Santripreneur initiative, support for micro and small enterprises, community development projects such as "Kampung Haji," Haji-Mart programs, provision of agricultural and fisheries equipment, development of halal tourism and products, livestock distribution, and support for small-scale economic activities. Through these efforts, BPKH channels *Kemaslahatan Umat* funds to support productive and sustainable economic activities. The impact extends beyond direct income generation to creating multiplier effects within local economies. The success of these programs serves as concrete evidence that Hajj funds can provide broad societal benefits, thereby enhancing public trust.

Ascarya and Yumanita (2018) highlight that strengthening the Islamic economic sector has significant potential to improve financial inclusion and societal welfare. Moreover, transparent and accountable economic empowerment programs increase public trust in Islamic financial institutions. In this context, BPKH's economic programs can be categorized as high-impact actions that deliver measurable outcomes. Strategic communication literature suggests that actions producing tangible benefits exert stronger influence on public perception than symbolic communication (Kim & Ferguson, 2018). This indicates that the success of the action stage largely depends on how effectively programs address real societal needs.

In addition, the construction and renovation of religious infrastructure represent the most visible form of program implementation. Facilities such as mosques and prayer rooms serve not only as places of worship but also as centers of social and religious activities. Program visibility plays a crucial role in shaping public perception. Grimmelikhuijsen and Meijer (2014) argue that visibility positively correlates with public trust, as communities can directly observe the outcomes of fund management. Therefore, community-based infrastructure projects enhance trust when they provide

direct benefits and involve public participation. Visible outputs thus serve as tangible evidence of institutional performance.

Healthcare programs further strengthen the public service dimension of Hajj fund management. Initiatives such as medical assistance, provision of healthcare facilities, and health services for pilgrims demonstrate institutional commitment to fundamental welfare aspects. In public service theory, healthcare access is a key indicator of institutional quality (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1988). Ananda, et. al. (2023) finds that improvements in healthcare services supported by transparent financial management enhance public satisfaction and trust.

Meanwhile, socio-religious programs, including disaster relief and social assistance, reflect institutional responsiveness to dynamic societal needs. From a social perspective, trust is built through interactions that demonstrate care and solidarity (Putnam, 1993). Lubis, et.al. (2026) shows that rapid governmental responses to disasters significantly increase public trust. Further, BPKH's active involvement in such initiatives strengthens emotional bonds with society and reinforces collective trust.

For instance, as reported by Media Indonesia (February 11, 2026), BPKH organized the "*Balik Kerja Bareng BPKH 2026*" program, an annual initiative aimed at facilitating safe and comfortable return travel for migrant workers after holidays. The program involved collaboration with several partner organizations, including Baitulmaal Muamalat, Rumah Zakat, Solo Peduli, and LAZUQ, serving approximately 2,700 participants using 60 executive buses. Such initiatives demonstrate BPKH's responsiveness to practical community needs and contribute to strengthening public perception.

Research by Tobing and Setyawan (2023) indicates that crises of trust in institutions often arise from a lack of transparency, environmental exploitation, or perceived social neglect. In this context, BPKH's *Kemaslahatan Umat* programs function as a CSR strategy capable of restoring public trust and enhancing institutional reputation. Empirical studies consistently show that well-implemented CSR initiatives positively influence public trust and institutional loyalty, particularly when supported by transparent and effective communication.

From a theoretical perspective, CSR functions as a mechanism to bridge the trust gap between institutions and society. Consistent demonstration of social responsibility fosters perceptions of integrity, care, and commitment, thereby strengthening emotional bonds and promoting harmonious relationships with the public. In the contemporary era of information openness, CSR is no longer optional but a strategic necessity for navigating increasingly complex social dynamics. Elsi et al. (2025) further argue that sustainable CSR practices serve not only as expressions of social responsibility but also as long-term investments in building public trust and institutional reputation.

Beyond program implementation, the mechanism for distributing *Kemaslahatan Umat* funds is equally crucial in building public trust. Public governance emphasizes the importance of transparency and accountability at every stage of financial management (Mardiasmo, 2009). In this regard, BPKH implements a systematic process involving planning, partner selection, proposal verification, and phased fund disbursement, reflecting strong internal control and adherence to prudential principles.

BPKH collaborates with 15 official *Kemaslahatan Umat* partners across Indonesia, including governmental and non-governmental organizations such as DJPHU SETJEN, Indonesian Waqf Board, BAZNAS, NU CARE-LAZISNU, Dewan Masjid Indonesia, Lazismu, Dompot Dhuafa, Rumah Zakat, and others. These partnerships enable effective program execution while extending institutional reach. Regarding beneficiaries, BPKH establishes clear eligibility criteria for both organizations and individuals. The proposal process involves submission, administrative verification, feasibility assessment, and approval by the executive board, typically within a 2–3 month review period. Once approved, beneficiaries are formally designated.

The implementation process consists of five stages: pre-implementation, execution, handover, reporting, and evaluation. Following proposal approval and contractual agreement, funds are disbursed according to agreed terms. Program activities are conducted with continuous monitoring, followed by formal handover and submission of accountability reports (LPJ). Program audits are

conducted through evaluation of these reports, and final evaluations are submitted to the executive body for approval. Continuous monitoring and evaluation demonstrate that program implementation does not end with fund disbursement but is sustained to ensure effectiveness and efficiency. Transparency in reporting, both through annual reports and digital platforms, serves as a critical medium for public communication. Grimmelikhuijsen and Meijer (2014) emphasize that transparency enhances public trust when information is relevant, accessible, and of high quality.

3.1.3 Communication Stage of BPKH's *Kemaslahatan Umat* Program in Enhancing Public Trust

The next strategic step within the RACE model is communication, defined as a systematic and targeted process of delivering information to the public. BPKH ensures that information related to the *Kemaslahatan Umat* Program is communicated effectively and received positively by the public (Broom & Sha, 2013). To achieve this, BPKH has developed a digital-based communication strategy by utilizing multiple platforms, including: (1) the official BPKH website, (2) social media channels, (3) formal working meetings, and (4) the network of *Kemaslahatan Umat* partners.

First, the official BPKH website ([www.bpkh.go.id](http://bpkh.go.id)) functions as a central digital repository that provides comprehensive documentation, including detailed information on the *Kemaslahatan Umat* Program.



Figure 1. BPKH Website (<http://bpkh.go.id>)

Through this platform, BPKH ensures transparency in program implementation by consistently publishing reports and updates. From a public relations perspective, the website serves as an anchor platform, providing legitimacy and depth of information for all other communication channels. Information disseminated through social media or digital publications often requires verification, leading the public to refer to the official website as an authoritative source. Consequently, the accuracy and accessibility of website content are critical, as any shortcomings may directly undermine public trust across the entire communication ecosystem.

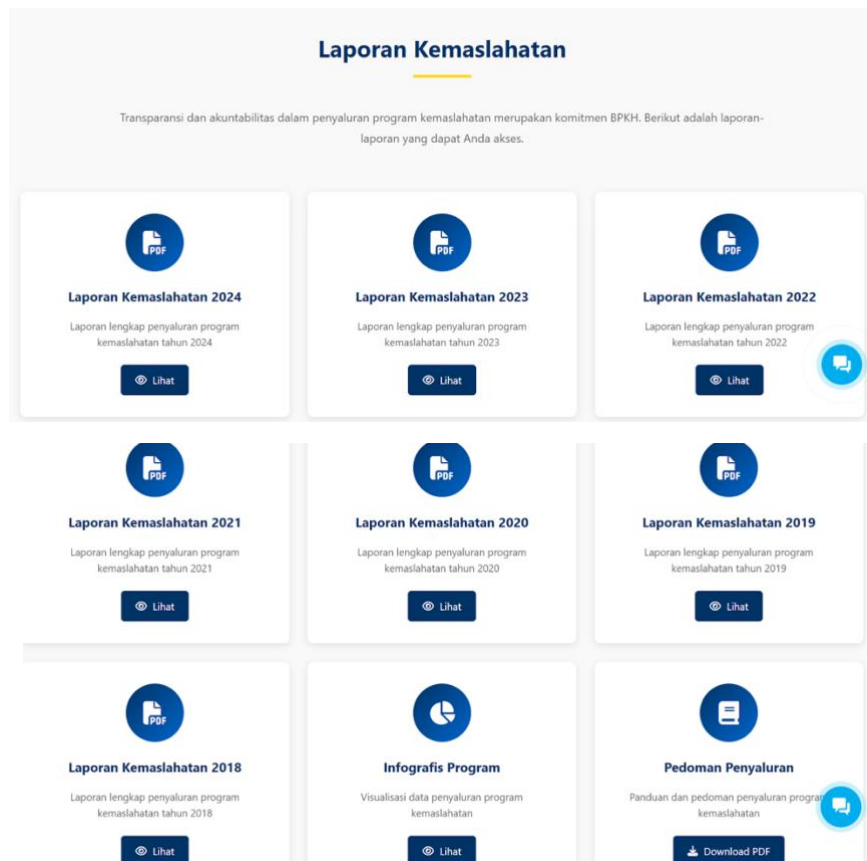


Figure 2 & 3. Reporting on BPKH *Kemaslahatan Umat* Program

Second, BPKH utilizes social media platforms to deliver content tailored for rapid digital consumption. These include infographics, educational content on Islamic finance, and visually engaging formats such as short videos, reels, and stories related to the *Kemaslahatan Umat* Program. The content is designed to be accessible, relatable, and human-centered, aiming to build emotional connections with the public, particularly prospective Hajj pilgrims. Through such communication, BPKH not only promotes a positive institutional image but also highlights its role in addressing broader societal issues.

The official Instagram account (@bpkhri), with a substantial number of followers, primarily engages younger Muslim audiences who represent an important segment in shaping public opinion. However, despite the availability of interactive features such as comments, likes, and shares, engagement levels remain uneven across posts, indicating ongoing challenges in fostering active public interaction.

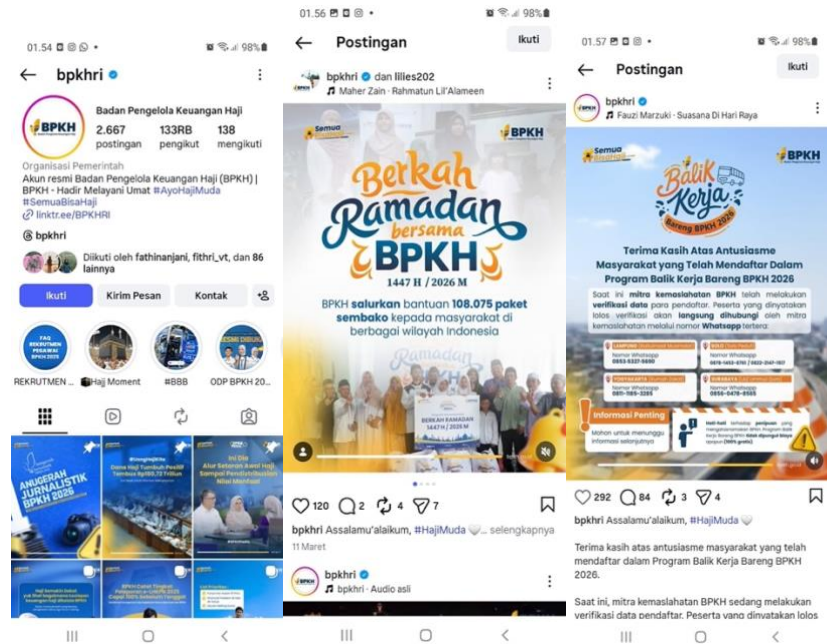


Figure 4, 5, 6. BPKH Instagram (<http://instagram.com/bpkhri>)

In addition to Instagram, BPKH also utilizes platforms such as TikTok and YouTube. TikTok content mirrors Instagram in its use of visual storytelling and infographics to enhance accessibility and engagement. For example, recent content highlights the “*Balik Kerja Bareng BPKH 2026*” program, an initiative designed to facilitate safe and comfortable travel for individuals returning to their workplaces after the Eid holiday. Implemented in collaboration with partner organizations such as Baitulmaal Muamalat, Rumah Zakat, Solo Peduli, and LAZUQ, the program served approximately 2,700 participants. As a recurring annual initiative, it demonstrates BPKH’s consistency in addressing practical societal needs (Valencia, 2026).

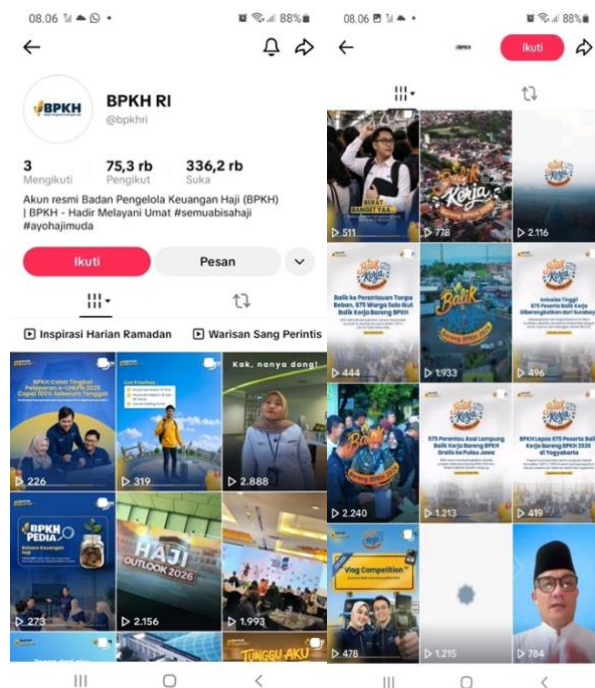


Figure 7 & 8. BPKH Tiktok (Tiktok: @bpkhri)

Meanwhile, YouTube serves as a platform for more in-depth and diverse content, including program highlights, financial literacy materials, motion graphics, podcasts, and documentary-style

videos. These documentaries often feature beneficiary testimonials and visual representations of program impact, including before-and-after conditions. This approach reflects a storytelling strategy that integrates factual evidence with emotional appeal. Such narrative-based communication has been shown to enhance emotional engagement, thereby strengthening public trust in institutions (Kotler & Keller, 2016).

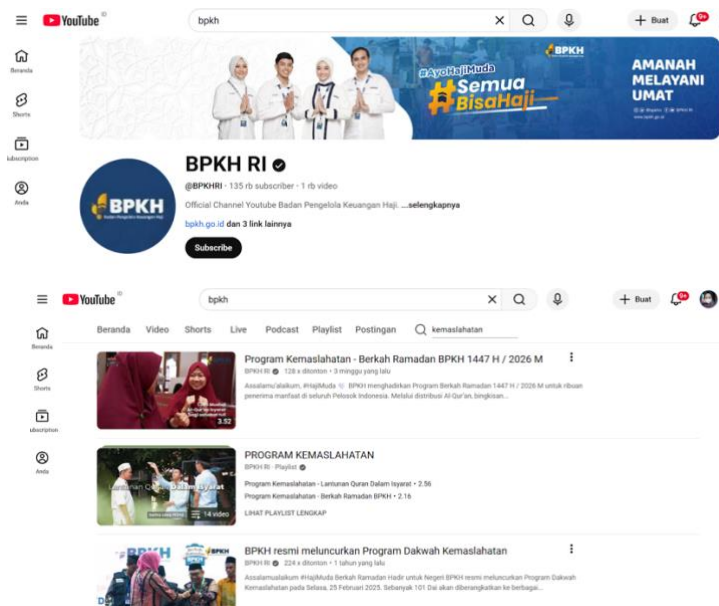


Figure 9 & 10. BPKH Youtube (<http://youtube.com/bpkhri>)

Third, communication through formal working meetings with the House of Representatives (DPR) Commission VIII and the President represents a channel of democratic accountability, as mandated by Law No. 34 of 2014. In these forums, BPKH presents performance achievements and annual work plans, including *Kemaslahatan Umat* programs. This process constitutes a form of communicative action in the public sphere, as it involves not only information dissemination but also dialogue, clarification, and response to policy-related inquiries. Such interactions demonstrate transparency and reinforce institutional accountability, thereby contributing to public trust.

Fourth, BPKH employs a network of *Kemaslahatan Umat* partners as part of a multi-platform communication framework. This approach reflects a lateral communication mechanism, where messages are conveyed indirectly through trusted partner organizations that already maintain strong relationships with grassroots communities. This strategy aligns with the two-step flow of communication theory (Rogers, 2003), which posits that mass communication is more effective when mediated through trusted opinion leaders rather than delivered directly to the broader public. In the Indonesian context, where trust in religious organizations remains relatively high, these partner networks enable deeper penetration into grassroots communities. However, this approach also entails reputational risks that must be strategically managed.

The effectiveness of BPKH's communication strategy is further evidenced by several achievements, including the Public Information Disclosure Award (2025) by the Information Commission, the Public Relations Indonesia Award (PRIA) 2025 for online and social media excellence, and the Gold Winner award in the YouTube social media category at the Indonesian Public Relations Awards (AHI) 2023. These recognitions indicate strong institutional performance in communication practices.

Overall, the communication strategy implemented by BPKH—across traditional, digital, and social media platforms—aims to inform and educate the public about the *Kemaslahatan Umat* Program as part of a broader effort to build public trust. From a public relations perspective, its effectiveness lies in the ability to establish emotional connections with the audience, which cannot be achieved solely through formal financial reports. For instance, a one-minute video featuring a beneficiary of the *Kemaslahatan Umat* Program can generate a stronger emotional impact than extensive written reports. Supporting this, Saxton and Waters (2014) found that storytelling-based

content featuring real beneficiaries achieves engagement rates approximately 3.7 times higher than purely informational or statistical content.

3.1.4 Evaluation Stage of BPKH in the Implementation of the *Kemaslahatan Umat* Program in Enhancing Public Trust

The evaluation phase, based on the RACE model, represents the fourth stage that functions not only as the end of the cycle but also as the starting point for the subsequent cycle. In the context of a public financial institution managing Hajj funds, the evaluation conducted by BPKH faces more complex challenges compared to corporate institutions in general. One such challenge is that public trust, as the primary outcome of public relations, is multidimensional in nature and requires valid and reliable measurement. In addition, the dimension of sharia compliance must also be communicated, as mandated by law that Hajj financial management must be conducted based on sharia principles and public accountability, both of which must be transparently communicated to the public. The findings of the evaluation study on the implementation of the *Kemaslahatan Umat* Program by BPKH consist of three types of reports: (1) Financial Reports, (2) Annual Reports, and (3) *Kemaslahatan Umat* Reports.

First, the financial reports presented by BPKH through its official website (www.bpkh.go.id) indicate that the management of *Kemaslahatan Umat* funds has fulfilled the principles of transparency and accountability. The allocation of funds for the *Kemaslahatan Umat* Program is derived from the returns on Hajj fund management, which are distributed across various sectors such as education, healthcare, socio-religious activities, and economic empowerment of the ummah (BPKH 3/2019). These financial reports are prepared in accordance with Financial Accounting Standards (SAK) and audited by the Supreme Audit Agency (BPK) to ensure compliance with sharia principles and good governance. The reports consist of balance sheets, operational reports, changes in net assets, and cash flow statements, which are required to be reported every six months (BPKH, 2020). This reporting framework ensures adherence to both sharia principles and good governance practices.

Empirically, the financial reports demonstrate BPKH's consistency in managing Hajj funds, which also contributes to enhancing the welfare of the ummah each year. This becomes an important indicator in the evaluation aspect, as financial transparency, according to Mayer (1995), directly contributes to increasing public trust. Furthermore, the evaluation conducted by BPK has consistently resulted in an Unqualified Opinion (*Wajar Tanpa Pengecualian* – WTP) for eight consecutive years up to 2025. The WTP opinion, issued by BPK as an external auditor, represents the highest level of audit opinion granted to government institutions in financial reporting (Yulianto & Sari, 2025). This serves as evidence that financial reporting and Hajj fund management have been conducted in accordance with accounting principles. Therefore, the WTP opinion awarded to BPKH significantly contributes to enhancing public trust.

Second, the BPKH Annual Report is prepared in accordance with Law No. 14 of 2008 on Public Information Disclosure, which requires public institutions to provide access to information for the public. BPKH itself is a public body established under Law No. 34 of 2014 on Hajj Financial Management, and its reports can be accessed and downloaded from its official website (www.bpkh.go.id). The annual report includes financial performance statements, activity projections, and policy strategies related to all aspects of Hajj fund management, including the *Kemaslahatan Umat* Program. The evaluation of the *Kemaslahatan Umat* Program is presented in a general yet clear manner, focusing not only on financial aspects but also on annual program achievements (BPKH Annual Report, 2024).

Third, the BPKH *Kemaslahatan Umat* Report is a document prepared and published by the *Kemaslahatan Umat* Division of BPKH as a form of accountability for the distribution of the Dana Abadi Umat (DAU). This document presents various policies, programs, and performance achievements over one calendar year, reflecting the strategic role of the *Kemaslahatan Umat* Division in supporting the realization of public welfare as part of its commitment to sustainable reporting practices. In addition, the *Kemaslahatan Umat* Report includes documentation of activities and testimonials from beneficiaries, which implicitly function as qualitative evaluation instruments. This approach strengthens the communication dimension in CSR practices, where the use of

storytelling supported by empirical evidence from the field can enhance emotional trust toward the institution (Fombrun, 1996).

The implementation of the *Kemaslahatan Umat* Program has covered all 38 provinces in Indonesia, with a proportional distribution mechanism of benefit values. This scheme is designed by considering the number of Hajj pilgrims in each region, ensuring that the allocation reflects the actual needs of the local community. In this regard, the provinces of West Java, Central Java, and East Java are recorded as receiving the largest benefits, in line with the high number of Hajj pilgrims on the waiting list in these regions. Through this approach, the implementation of the program is expected to ensure that the utilization of the *Dana Abadi Umat* (DAU) is more targeted and provides tangible impacts on the welfare of the Muslim community. The evaluation results indicate that the *Kemaslahatan Umat* Program has a direct impact on community welfare. This is evidenced by program sustainability, increasing public participation, and the continuous growth in the distribution of benefit values each year.

Overall, the integration of these three evaluation aspects forms a comprehensive evaluation mechanism that encompasses the dimensions of input (financial), process (program performance), and output as well as outcome (social impact). This combination becomes a key factor in enhancing public trust, as it addresses the public's information needs comprehensively in terms of transparency, performance, and benefits. Thus, it can be affirmed that the success of BPKH's CSR strategy in enhancing public trust is not solely determined by program implementation but also by the quality of the evaluation conducted. The more integrated and transparent the evaluation process, the higher the level of public trust in the institution managing Hajj funds.

3.2 Create a Discussion

The findings of this study reveal that the Indonesian Hajj Financial Management Agency (BPKH), in designing and implementing the *Kemaslahatan Umat* Program, does not merely rely on managerial intuition, but rather follows a process that is substantively aligned with the Research, Action, Communication, Evaluation (RACE) model. The RACE model represents a formula in public relations practice that is systematic, structured, flexible, adaptable, and cyclical in nature, enabling continuous improvement in PR quality (Sa'adah, 2023). The relevance of the RACE model to BPKH's operational pattern becomes evident when each stage is analyzed in depth and confronted with the empirical realities identified in this study.

The initial stage in the RACE model is research, which serves as the fundamental foundation before any communication or social program is executed. Ardianto (2014) emphasizes that data and facts derived from research function as the basis for subsequent steps, where comprehensive research contributes significantly to the success of CSR activities. In the context of BPKH, the findings indicate that the institution conducts six types of research prior to determining its *Kemaslahatan Umat* Program, namely: (1) regulatory research, (2) social needs research, (3) financial capacity research of the Dana Abadi Umat (DAU), (4) *Kemaslahatan Umat* partner research, (5) historical evaluation research, and (6) situational response research.

The existence of these six research dimensions reflects BPKH's deep understanding of the core principle underlying the first stage of the RACE model, namely that CSR activities must always be grounded in valid data and facts. Regulatory research ensures that each *Kemaslahatan Umat* Program operates within the applicable legal framework; social needs research enables BPKH to accurately identify target beneficiaries; while financial capacity research of the DAU ensures that program planning does not exceed available financial resources. Meanwhile, historical evaluation research plays a strategic role as comparative data supporting continuous PR improvement, a function that aligns with the normative framework presented in the literature. Thus, BPKH's research practices not only fulfill procedural requirements but also reflect the substantive spirit of the first stage of the RACE model.

The depth and breadth of research conducted by BPKH prior to formulating the *Kemaslahatan Umat* Program constitute a fundamental strategy in building public trust. When a public institution is able to demonstrate that each programmatic decision is rooted in valid data—ranging from social needs mapping to measurable financial capacity—the public has a rational basis to trust that Hajj fund management is conducted responsibly. Therefore, transparency in the research process is not

merely a technical instrument but also an institutional signal that actively shapes positive perceptions and strengthens BPKH's legitimacy in the eyes of the public, particularly prospective Hajj pilgrims and relevant stakeholders.

The second stage in the RACE model is strategic planning (*act*), which involves formulating strategies and programs based on research findings. Erlistyarini (2018: 3) explains that planning is a crucial stage for determining clear and directed communication objectives based on prior analysis, where strategies and tactics are developed in accordance with established conditions and goals. The findings show that BPKH operationalizes this stage through the establishment of seven program objectives within the *Kemaslahatan Umat* Program, along with the design of a systematic fund distribution mechanism.

The determination of these seven program objectives represents a concrete manifestation of data-driven planning, which constitutes the essence of the *act* stage. The structured distribution mechanism further reflects BPKH's effort to ensure that PR activities are directed and systematic, in line with the principles emphasized by Erlistyarini (2018). Furthermore, the clarity of program objectives enables BPKH to establish measurable indicators of success, which subsequently serve as the basis for the evaluation stage. The linkage between the *act* and *evaluation* stages indicates that BPKH does not design programs incidentally, but rather within a comprehensive and continuous management cycle.

The clearly defined program objectives and structured distribution mechanisms serve as institutional communication strategies that directly contribute to enhancing public trust. The clarity of program direction conveys to the public that BPKH operates within a framework of planned accountability rather than reactive decision-making. For the public entrusting their Hajj funds to BPKH, the assurance that the institution has a clear and socially prioritized distribution plan constitutes a critical factor in strengthening trust. Well-planned programs also minimize the potential for negative perceptions regarding fund management, thereby maintaining BPKH's image as a trustworthy institution.

The third stage is communication, which represents the implementation of the planned strategies. Anggraeni (2026) states that the communication stage functions to build relationships with both specific target publics and the broader public, where communication activities are expected to shape positive opinions and institutional image, ultimately determining the success of the strategy. The findings indicate that BPKH utilizes four primary communication channels to disseminate information regarding the *Kemaslahatan Umat* Program, namely: (1) official website, (2) social media, (3) working meetings, and (4) the *Kemaslahatan Umat* partner network.

This strategy reflects BPKH's awareness of societal heterogeneity and the need to deliver messages effectively and consistently across various public segments. The use of websites and social media represents BPKH's adaptation to the rapidly evolving digital communication ecosystem, while working meetings and partner networks demonstrate its commitment to structured institutional communication. The combination of digital and conventional channels indicates that BPKH understands that communication effectiveness is determined not only by message content but also by the appropriateness of the medium. This reality aligns with the principles of the RACE model, which emphasize the importance of selecting appropriate communication channels to build public understanding and trust. The balance between broad digital communication and in-depth institutional communication enables BPKH not only to disseminate information but also to actively build a trust ecosystem involving various stakeholders inclusively, thereby strengthening public trust across different societal layers.

The final stage in the RACE model is evaluation, which involves assessing the effectiveness of the implemented programs. Zahara (2018) explains that the evaluation stage includes measuring the achievement of communication objectives, assessing program impact on audiences, and providing recommendations for future improvements. The findings indicate that BPKH conducts evaluation through three main instruments: (1) financial reports, (2) annual reports, and (3) *Kemaslahatan Umat* reports.

These three evaluation instruments collectively form a comprehensive accountability system. Financial report evaluation ensures that the distribution of *Kemaslahatan Umat* funds is conducted

transparently and in accordance with regulations; the annual report provides a holistic overview of institutional performance to the public and stakeholders; while the *Kemaslahatan Umat* report specifically documents program achievements and their impacts on beneficiaries. This layered evaluation structure goes beyond measuring outputs, as it implicitly encompasses outcome and impact dimensions, which represent the highest standards in CSR effectiveness measurement. Moreover, systematically documented evaluation results serve as a critical resource for the next RACE cycle, particularly in enriching the research database for subsequent planning—a cyclical characteristic identified by Sa’adah (2023: 10) as a key strength of the RACE model in fostering continuous improvement.

The evaluation conducted through these three instruments also represents the most direct form of accountability in relation to public trust. In the context of a public fund management institution based on trust (*amanah*) such as BPKH, trust cannot be built solely through claims or narratives but must be supported by verifiable written evidence. The periodic and transparent publication of reports demonstrates that BPKH is not only focused on program implementation but also on accountability for every fund managed. This institutional stance significantly strengthens long-term trust, as the public has access to tangible evidence of program impact rather than mere promises, thereby establishing a relationship between BPKH and society grounded in transparency and integrity.

Overall, the analysis of BPKH’s practices in managing the *Kemaslahatan Umat* Program demonstrates strong coherence with the RACE model, both sequentially and substantively. The four stages—research, planning, communication, and evaluation—are not implemented in isolation but are interconnected within a logical chain that mutually reinforces one another. Comprehensive research leads to well-directed planning; structured planning produces effective communication; and systematic evaluation renews the knowledge base for the next research cycle. This circular pattern not only indicates that BPKH has adopted sound communication management principles but also confirms the relevance of the RACE model as a valid analytical framework for understanding institutional communication governance in public sector organizations in Indonesia, particularly in the context of trust-based financial institutions such as BPKH.

4. Conclusion

This study demonstrates that the *Kemaslahatan Umat* Program implemented by the Indonesian Hajj Financial Management Agency (BPKH), through the framework of the Research, Action, Communication, Evaluation (RACE) model, has proven to be effective as a Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) strategy in building public trust in the management of Hajj funds. Public trust does not emerge merely from institutional claims, but rather from the consistency of tangible actions supported by data-driven research, program implementation that directly addresses community needs, transparent and empathetic communication, and evaluation processes that can be independently verified. This study contributes to the development of strategic communication by affirming that the RACE model is not only relevant for private corporate institutions but can also be effectively applied to public financial institutions grounded in religious values. These findings address a significant gap in the literature, which has predominantly examined BPKH’s *Kemaslahatan Umat* Program from legal-administrative and normative-sharia perspectives, without adequately exploring the dimensions of reputation management and the communicative reconstruction of public trust. For future research, it is recommended that studies adopt a quantitative approach to empirically measure the level of public trust before and after the implementation of the *Kemaslahatan Umat* Program. Such an approach would enable a more robust examination of the causal relationship between CSR strategies and public trust, allowing for more measurable and generalizable findings.

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