



Faith-Based Transformational Leadership in the Digital Age: A Case Study of Social Media-Driven Educational Fundraising for Orphans in Indonesia

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Abstract

This study investigates the transformational leadership practices of the chairman of the Al-Mujahidin Cilacap Orphanage in leveraging social media for educational fundraising targeting underprivileged children. Employing a qualitative phenomenological approach, data were collected through in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and document analysis. The data were interpreted using the Miles and Huberman interactive model, encompassing data reduction, display, and conclusion drawing. This study aims to analyze the role of belief-based transformational leadership in deploying educational fundraising strategies for orphans, and to examine how the values of belief, transformative vision, and the influence of ideal leaders are constructed. The findings identify six strategic leadership actions that contribute to effective social media-based educational fundraising, among others: establishing a digital communication team, disseminating fundraising content across personal and institutional platforms, mobilizing internal educational leaders within the foundation's network, collaborating with community influencers, cultivating and maintaining donor relationships via social media, and diagnosing key enabling and constraining factors. This research provides improvements to belief-based digital leadership strategies, including the use of digital influence to mobilise educational philanthropy. It creates a framework for non-profit leaders and Islamic philanthropic institutions.

Keywords: Digital Influence; Faith-Based Organization; Orphan Education; Religious Leadership; Social Media Fundraising

Abstrak

Studi ini meneliti praktik kepemimpinan transformasional ketua Panti Asuhan Al-Mujahidin Cilacap dalam memanfaatkan media sosial untuk penggalangan dana pendidikan yang menargetkan anak-anak kurang mampu. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan fenomenologi kualitatif, data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara mendalam, observasi partisipatif, dan analisis dokumen. Data diinterpretasikan menggunakan model interaktif Miles dan Huberman, yang mencakup reduksi data, tampilan, dan penarikan kesimpulan. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis peran kepemimpinan transformasional berbasis keyakinan dalam mengerahkan strategi penggalangan dana pendidikan untuk anak yatim piatu, serta mengkaji bagaimana nilai keyakinan, visi transformatif, dan pengaruh ideal pemimpin dikonstruksikan. Temuan mengidentifikasi enam tindakan kepemimpinan strategis yang berkontribusi pada penggalangan dana pendidikan berbasis media sosial yang efektif, antara lain, membentuk tim komunikasi digital, menyebarluaskan konten penggalangan

dana di seluruh platform pribadi dan institusional, memobilisasi pemimpin pendidikan internal dalam jaringan yayasan, berkolaborasi dengan tokoh berpengaruh di masyarakat, membina dan memelihara hubungan dengan donatur melalui media sosial, dan mendiagnosis faktor-faktor pendukung dan penghambat utama. Penelitian ini memberikan peningkatan pada strategi kepemimpinan transformatif digital berbasis keyakinan, termasuk penggunaan pengaruh digital untuk memobilisasi filantropi pendidikan serta menciptakan kerangka kerja bagi para pemimpin nirlaba dan lembaga filantropi Islam.

Kata Kunci: Pengaruh Digital; Organisasi Keagamaan; Pendidikan Anak Yatim; Kepemimpinan Keagamaan; Penggalangan Dana Media Sosial.

INTRODUCTION

Access to education is a fundamental right guaranteed to every citizen, spanning from early childhood education to higher education levels (Faturoti, 2022; Fauzi et al., 2025; Indasari, 2026; Timidi & Okuro, 2024). In practice, this right is actualized through enrollment in educational institutions, both state-funded and privately managed. Upon enrollment, students are considered the foundational input within the educational process, undergoing structured learning experiences facilitated by professional educators and guided by the prevailing national curriculum (Gerrard & Farrell, 2014; Poulton & Mockler, 2024). The success and sustainability of this learning process are closely tied to multiple critical factors, including teacher professionalism, the adequacy of infrastructure, and the availability of sustainable financial resources (Liu et al., 2024; Parry & Metzger, 2023; Rohmadi et al., 2024).

Public schools benefit from state allocations that subsidize teacher salaries, facility maintenance, and operational expenses (Berman & DeFeo, 2024; Farmer & Weber, 2022). These institutions typically enjoy more predictable funding flows and infrastructural support. In contrast, private schools, which represent a significant proportion of educational institutions, particularly in developing countries, operate under considerably different financial conditions (Alkhwaldi, 2023; Budiartini et al., 2025; Jauhari et al., 2025). These schools are primarily community-run and must independently generate funds to sustain their operations, including remunerating teaching staff and maintaining basic infrastructure (Kim & Ryu, 2017).

This funding model often results in tuition-based access that limits educational opportunities for economically disadvantaged students, particularly orphans who face both the absence of parental support and financial hardship, thereby intensifying inequality and undermining their right to education (Harms & Garrett-Ruffin, 2023; Rofiqoh et al., 2025). In response, targeted community- and philanthropy-based initiatives are essential, as exemplified by the chairman of the Al-Mujahidin Orphanage in Cilacap, Indonesia, who utilizes a socially driven leadership approach and social media to mobilize educational funding; by the end of 2024, this effort had supported 31 orphans across various educational levels, including kindergarten, elementary, junior high, and external institutions.

The ability to secure such funding hinges significantly on the chairman's leadership capacity, particularly in communication and social competence. Effective communication remains a critical component in nonprofit fundraising efforts, especially when cultivating donor relationships and convincing prospective contributors of the organization's integrity and impact (Ngayo Fotso, 2021). In today's hyper-connected digital landscape, the traditional boundaries of leadership communication have expanded to include proficiency in online

networking and the strategic use of digital platforms (Agus et al., 2024; Deesongkram, 2025; Yakubu et al., 2025).

Modern leadership now encompasses digital fluency, specifically, the capability to build, maintain, and activate virtual communities that support organizational missions (Hussain & Ashcroft, 2022). This digital social competence empowers leaders not only to disseminate information but also to influence public opinion, mobilize collective action, and cultivate a sustainable donor base. Platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp have transformed from mere communication tools into strategic assets for civil society organizations (Shet & Pereira, 2021).

From this vantage point, leadership functions in the digital age are intrinsically tied to the principles of social influence and strategic communication. Leaders who adeptly assume the role of influencers are better positioned to gain visibility, build credibility, and galvanize public support (Borchers, 2021). For social institutions like orphanages, which frequently face resource constraints and public scrutiny, having a leader who functions as a digital influencer can significantly affect organizational sustainability.

The chairman of the Al-Mujahidin Orphanage exemplifies this modern leadership archetype. Recognizing the expansive reach and persuasive power of social media, he has assumed an active online presence to advocate for the educational needs of orphans under his care. His use of digital posters circulated through WhatsApp groups and other platforms serves both to inform and inspire prospective donors (Kupiek, 2021).. These visual messages, crafted with compelling narratives and visual clarity, have become effective tools for fostering empathy and motivating charitable contributions (Berg & Hicks, 2017).

Despite these successes, the process is far from effortless. The challenge of building donor trust solely through online communication is considerable, especially in societies where face-to-face interaction remains a benchmark of credibility. As such, the chairman's leadership must also address skepticism, navigate digital misinformation, and maintain ethical fundraising standards in a rapidly evolving technological environment (Banks et al., 2022).

Previous studies have highlighted the role of transformational leadership, but few studies have specifically focused on strategies and capabilities of leaders who are belief-based and promote digital efficiency in fundraising for orphaned children (Asnah, 2026; Hartinah et al., 2025; Hermawan et al., 2025; Prayogi et al., 2025). For example, although the transformational leadership model is widely used, it is still rarely found in the realm and focus of digital philanthropy, especially in relation to the functions and practices of leaders who are driven by values that can form the basis of moral motivation and social legitimacy.

Much literature discusses and focuses on transformational leadership in the digital age. However, international literature on belief-based transformational leadership in the digital age in social media-driven educational fundraising for orphans is still scarce, and this literacy produces consistent strategies in various contexts and environments that have proven to be effective. Another analysis shows that effective transformational leadership involves a combination of instructional, transformational, and managerial leadership behaviors (Grisom, 2021).

This study examines how the leadership of Rumah Yatim Al-Mujahidin Cilacap navigates the complexities of social media-based educational fundraising through a belief-based transformational leadership model. Using a qualitative phenomenological approach, it explores the chairman's role as a digital influencer who mobilizes resources for orphan education. The research highlights a significant gap in the literature on religious-based digital leadership, noting the absence of a strong theoretical framework that integrates leadership strategies with educational fundraising goals. By focusing on this unique case, the study uncovers how grassroots leadership, grounded in moral authority and religious values, can leverage digital platforms to support continuous improvement in educational access for underprivileged children.

The novelty of this research lies in its comprehensive analysis of psychological, material, and theological dimensions of leadership within a nonprofit context in the Global South. It contributes to the fields of educational leadership, nonprofit management, and digital philanthropy by illustrating how traditional caregiving institutions adapt to modern communication technologies. Additionally, the study explores donors' lived experiences and the factors influencing their contributions, offering both theoretical and practical implications. It emphasizes the importance of capacity-building for nonprofit leaders in digital fundraising and encourages support for hybrid leadership models that combine authenticity with innovation. Ultimately, the findings demonstrate how digitally empowered leadership can transform resource mobilization and redefine the role of social leaders as influential actors in the digital era.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative approach within a naturalistic-descriptive paradigm to explore the leadership dynamics of the head of the Al-Mujahidin Cilacap orphanage in orchestrating social media-based educational fundraising initiatives for orphans. The research was grounded in naturalistic inquiry, which assumes that reality is constructed by individuals as they interact with their social worlds. Accordingly, the researcher did not manipulate or engineer any aspect of the research setting. Instead, the study sought to understand the subject matter as it organically unfolds in its real-world context (Barona, 2023). The descriptive dimension of the study involved presenting the data in rich, detailed narratives that capture not only observable behavior but also participants' thoughts, motivations, and strategies. This was achieved through a deductive process, beginning with broader thematic categories and progressing to more specific patterns and interpretations relevant to the research objectives (Proudfoot, 2023).

In terms of design, the study adopted a phenomenological approach, which focuses on exploring how individuals perceive and experience a phenomenon. Phenomenology is particularly well-suited to unpacking the leadership style and social media engagement of the orphanage's head, as it enables the researcher to reveal the subjective meaning and essence of these lived experiences (Stolz, 2023). Through this lens, the study highlighted the distinctive and nuanced ways in which the orphanage leader assumes the role of an online influencer while navigating institutional, social, and technological landscapes (Salmona & Kaczynski, 2024).

Primary data was collected through interviews, participatory observation, and documentation. The research location was at the Al-Mujahidin Cilacap orphanage. In-depth interviews were conducted with the orphanage leadership, the poster IT team, and regular donors. The interviews were conducted using open-ended questions, allowing the interviewees to share their experiences and views freely and in detail. The interview questions covered various issues, such as leadership, strategies in practice, and future consistency in carrying out fundraising practices for orphans. Observations were made to observe the roles and strategies of the leaders of the Al-Mujahidin Cilacap orphanage. Meanwhile, documentation analysis was used to obtain valid supporting data.

The data was analyzed using an interactive model by Miles and Hubberman, which includes three stages: data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. In phenomenological data analysis, the process begins by identifying significant statements from informants that are directly related to their life experiences with the phenomenon being studied. These statements are then coded into units of meaning that become core themes. Data presentation is then formed into a narrative structure using deductive reasoning, which moves from general insights to specific insights.

To ensure the validity of the findings, triangulation of sources was used in interviews, observations, and documentary evidence. This rigorous and iterative process allowed researchers to achieve thematic saturation and draw valid and credible conclusions about belief-based transformational leadership in educational fundraising with the help of social media. Through this method, researchers were able to identify both common patterns and conflicting perspectives.

All participants were informed of the study's objectives and provided consent to participate. Anonymity and confidentiality were maintained throughout the research process. This study adopts a qualitative, phenomenological approach to investigate how the chairman of Al-Mujahidin Cilacap orphanage operationalizes leadership in the digital age to mobilize educational funds for orphans. By integrating multiple data sources and leveraging a robust analytical framework, the study offers deep insights into the intersection of leadership, social media engagement, and educational philanthropy. The methodological rigor ensures that the findings are not only contextually grounded but also theoretically significant and relevant to contemporary discourses on leadership and digital communication in non-profit education sectors.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Estabilishing A Digital Communication Team

Based on the research data collection, it can be seen that the leadership of the head of the Al-Mujahidin Cilacap orphanage, as an influencer in social media-based educational funding activities for orphans, is carried out through six leadership roles.

Given the current developments in digital technology, collection techniques and strategies are needed as a first step. Therefore, the leadership of the Al-Mujahidin Foundation has formed an IT team to create and disseminate content in including posters, campaigns, and videos, to support fundraising for the Al-Mujahidin Cilacap orphanage foundation.

Researchers discovered how the non-profit organisation Al-Mujahidin Cilacap Orphanage Foundation raised funds through personal platforms and social media by forming an IT team to create and disseminate content across various social media and personal platforms.

The first consistent strategy was to form an IT team for educational fundraising, recognizing that public interest in the potential of social media to support orphan or underprivileged children's educational fundraising was growing. He said:

“The existence of educational fundraising is a collective awareness and an urgent need to be present in the digital space. The team's formation began with informal conversations and reflective discussions among individuals, especially leaders who recognized the reality of children unable to attend school due to financial constraints. According to him, the essence of forming this team is the meeting of needs, awareness, and human relationships, which then become a more focused work structure. The poster creation application used was accessed through several websites, including Canva, which is easy and efficient to use. (Muhdir, 2025).

The head of the Al-Mujahidin orphanage in Cilacap, Muhdir, stated that the formation of an IT media team was motivated by the Covid-19 pandemic, which left many students without their fathers who had fallen victim to the pandemic. This situation had a significant impact on the children, causing many of them to drop out of school. To generate effective educational fundraising, it is necessary to form a team and develop communication skills using various techniques (Muhsin, 2004). Seeing the reality of the situation, the head of the Al-Mujahidin orphanage in Cilacap took the initiative to ensure that no child would be unable to attend school due to financial constraints, and so a digital team was formed to support educational fundraising.

In general, there are two types of traditional fundraising strategies: visiting donors door-to-door and using brochures, banners, posters, letters, and emails. These strategies are usually directive and short-term. Conversely, the strategy should adopt a market-oriented approach, targeting individuals and retailers to make regular, long-term donations (Gabriel, 2002). Muhdir, as the head of the Al-Mujahidin Cilacap orphanage, has used this strategy to raise funds for education. He emphasised that the cost of education for one year is 120,000,000, with 30 students receiving an allocation of 400,000 per child. The posters created to attract donors contain information about educational scholarships for orphans, abandoned children, and the poor. From these posters, the foundation can receive an average of 3,000,000-4,000,000 in donations each week from various donors.



Figure 1: Documentation of fundraising by the al-Mujahidin Orphanage Foundation in Cilacap

The head of the al-Mujahidin Cilacap orphanage realised that forming an IT team was a crucial step in attracting donors, and the IT team created posters with appeals for donations to cover the education costs of orphans and underprivileged children at the orphanage. According to him, the formation of this IT team must be well-designed and structured, both in terms of content and posters, so that fundraising for education through social media can be carried out effectively and efficiently. Therefore, the concept of giving in the form of zakat, for philanthropic purposes, and for the sake of Allah allows donors to engage emotionally; a mixture of enthusiasm and doubt marked this process. Enthusiasm arose from hopes for change, while doubt arose from a lack of experience and limited resources. However, it was precisely in this tension that a collective awareness emerged that digital communication teamwork was not just a technical matter, but rather about building commitment, a sense of belonging, and a shared vision.

Disseminating Fundraising Content Across Personal and Institutional Platforms

The second strategy is to distribute posters for fundraising to support the education of orphans and underprivileged children on both personal and institutional social media platforms. In addition to the content of the posters, which can attract donors to provide financial assistance for education, the influence of the leadership of the Al-Mujahidin orphanage foundation is also important, where the relationships, communication, and strategies of the leadership must also be able to attract donors to provide funds for the educational needs of orphans and underprivileged children. Muhsin, the head of the Al-Mujahidin orphanage in Cilacap, emphasised the nobility and value of donating personal funds for education, which is then distributed to orphans and underprivileged children.

The emphasis is also on consistency in the mechanisms and flow of poster distribution carried out on personal social media platforms or those of the al-Mujahidin Cilacap orphanage. The head of the al-Mujahidin Cilacap orphanage foundation emphasised that the key to success in the distribution and dissemination of posters for educational fundraising lies in three stages, saying:

“The process of disseminating content in raising funds for education scholarships and land acquisition. First, employees become marketers. Every employee is required to disseminate content on WhatsApp, Instagram, and Facebook, both personally and on behalf of the foundation. Second, employees disseminate content to donors who have successful businesses to encourage them to become regular donors, and they disseminate it once at the beginning of each month. Third, disseminate content to parents with an appeal for the WIS (waqf, infaq, and shodaqoh) programme, which is paid every Friday” (Muhsin,2025).

The emphasis is also on consistency in the mechanism and flow of poster distribution across personal social media platforms and the al-Mujahidin Cilacap orphanage. The leadership of the al-Mujahidin Cilacap orphanage foundation emphasised that the key to success in distributing and disseminating posters for educational fundraising is consistency in timing, moments, and major events.



Figure 2: Documentation of fundraising by the al-Mujahidin Orphanage Foundation in Cilacap

The head of the Al-Mujahidin orphanage in Cilacap confirmed that the distribution of posters for routine educational fundraising is carried out every Friday by taking advantage of the blessings of Friday in donating money for zakat, then at moments such as social activities held at the orphanage and outside the orphanage, as well as major events such as Eid al-Fitr, Islamic New Year, and other major Islamic holidays.

Given the development of media and technology, the distribution of posters for educational fundraising (Hossain, 2017) carried out by the leadership of the al-Mujahidin Cilacap orphanage uses multichannel fundraising. This strategy raises funds through various communication media. The leadership of the al-Mujahidin Cilacap orphanage conducts telefundraising to obtain and contact donors to continue their support through donations. The donors' contacts obtained by the Al-Mujahidin Cilacap orphanage are the result of consistent poster distribution and campaigns held on Fridays, major occasions, and large events.

Mobilizing Internal Educational Leader Within The Foundation's Network

The third strategy implemented by the leadership of the Al-Mujahidin Cilacap orphanage is the mobilisation of educational leaders within the foundation's organization network to raise funds for the education of orphans and underprivileged children. This ongoing effort is intended to improve social relations with educational leaders and the wider network in order to attract donors. The orphanage leadership emphasises:

“In this endeavour, I personally, as the leader, experienced quite strong emotional dynamics, ranging from doubt and hesitation to fear of rejection. However, as the leader here, I tried to be the first person to get involved in this endeavour because of my deep concern for the educational conditions of foster children, which should be a primary concern. What I do is maintain integrity as a leader in managing this institution, transparency in managing daily income and expenditure, accountability reported to the muhsin in general, and reporting to the Indonesian Waqf Board every six months” (Muhdir, 2025).

The orphanage director was the first person to encourage educational leaders to join the foundation's organization network. Seeing the gaps and concerns in education, he was motivated to fight for increased funding for orphans and underprivileged children. In the early stages, the leaders did not act as motivators but rather positioned themselves as listeners, seeking to understand the daily realities of the educational leaders and educators involved. From this perspective, the leaders of the Al-Mujahidin Cilacap orphanage felt a heavy burden of responsibility and a leadership style oriented towards meeting children's basic needs rather than developing a long-term educational vision.

As someone who runs social networks in the educational environment, the head of the Al-Mujahidin orphanage in Cilacap has certainly experienced a variety of social reactions. He said:

“Through intense interaction and open dialogue, trust is gradually built. I try to use a persuasive, empathetic approach, which is more acceptable than an instructive one. This starts with informal conversations and small discussions, and progresses to direct involvement in daily activities” (Muhdir, 2025).

In the above statement, the foundation's leadership attempts to foster a reflective awareness that bringing educational leaders into the orphanage foundation's organisation is not merely about providing ideas, programmes and benefits, but also about building a shared understanding of the importance of education as an instrument for the liberation and empowerment of foster children.

Therefore, the role of foundation leaders in motivating educational leaders is not limited to vision and mission alone, but also includes building social connections, empathy, and reflective awareness together. Leaders must be able to convince fundraisers that they must be able to act as leaders every day when talking to each donor, confidently explaining answers to questions such as, "Why are we this kind of organisation, who do we want to be as an organisation, and what needs exist in the community that could be met if only more funds were available (Tempel, 2016).

Key factors for success include the commitment of the board of trustees, university leaders, and their leadership, a board structure that supports fundraising functions, a strong

management team, philanthropic fundraising functions supported by adequate resources, fundraising strategies that are in line with the realities of the philanthropic market, and the ability to demonstrate benefits to society (O'Connor & Millar, 2012). In addition, leadership's role in motivating educational leaders is a key to success in fundraising for the education of orphans and underprivileged children.

Collaborating With Community Influencers

In the digital era, the role of leaders in expanding social networks is essential, especially in securing donors for educational fundraising. One appropriate strategy is collaboration with community influencers, who are not directly involved in ongoing educational activities but are needed as relations, public actors, messengers, and trusted by a wide and diverse audience. In educational fundraising efforts, collaboration between the leaders of the al-Mujahidin orphanage and influencers is a viable strategy to bridge the gap between children's educational needs and public participation. The orphanage leaders emphasise that:

“For me, this collaboration is a form of ongoing effort to reduce the reality of educational inequality. When I invited influencers to collaborate, I emphasised that this collaboration was not about creating a campaign or showing off, but about building trust and a sense of moral responsibility, so that my involvement and that of the influencers was not limited to formal cooperation, but also involved our emotional and reflective awareness together” (Muhdir, 2025).

It is understandable that the leadership of the al-Mujahidin orphanage uses an interpersonal approach that utilises emotional and empathetic skills, along with an understanding of collective consciousness, to collaborate with influencers. In addition, in-depth communication is also important when inviting influencers to collaborate. This stage is one of the most important steps because collaboration planning must begin with the conviction of every member of the organisation (Kotler & Lee, 2006).

The principle of communication is to inform or obtain information, and to influence attitudes and actions. The purpose of communication can also be the basis for ensuring that the message to be conveyed is understood. Determining the purpose of communication within an organisation carried out by the leadership of the Al-Mujahidin Cilacap orphanage is fundamental. This can influence others to do something. The selection of a fundraising programme for the education of orphans and underprivileged children is not without purpose, but is based on empathy and sympathy in response to the reality of educational inequality (Muhdir, 2025).

According to the head of the al-Mujahidin orphanage in Cilacap, fundraising for education is now a familiar practice in the community. Many people already understand and realise the importance of educational fundraising, which is considered to have many benefits. This shows that the strategy of collaborating with influencers in the community to raise funds for orphans and underprivileged children has succeeded in implementing the principle of programme effectiveness, namely informing and obtaining information, influencing attitudes and influencing the actions of influencers and donors in a persuasive manner (Pace & Faules, 2013).

Diagnosing Key Enabling and Constraining Factors

There are several supporting and inhibiting factors in the fundraising activities carried out by the Al-Mujahidin orphanage in Cilacap. According to Muhdir, the head of the Al-Mujahidin orphanage in Cilacap, the supporting factors in raising educational funds include: well-organised foundation management, good database management, a foundation office in a strategic location, good utilisation of zakat funds, varied institutional programmes, and institutional legality.

The head of the Al-Mujahidin orphanage in Cilacap emphasised that, in addition to the supporting factors mentioned above, there is a shared set of values among the foundation, managers, donors, and heads of educational institutions. When everyone interprets the vision of education as a shared humanitarian mission, the process of fundraising becomes easier because it is built on trust and sincere concern. Additionally, he stated that a strong team commitment and the ability to build empathetic communication, both in person and through digital media, are crucial.

The main perceived obstacles at the Al-Mujahidin Cilacap orphanage foundation are limited human resources and managerial capacity, which often pose major challenges. According to Muhdir, the director, the perceived obstacle is that fundraising remains voluntary and professional in nature, as he believes it is very emotionally draining and not commensurate with the existing team's capacity. Low digital literacy also hinders the optimisation of technology-based fundraising strategies.

In addition, according to him, another hindering factor is public and donor scepticism, arising from people's negative experiences with cases of misuse of funds by other institutions. This situation means that building trust takes longer and requires a more cautious approach. Reflecting on this experience, I realise that fundraising for education in non-profit foundations faces not only technical challenges, but also challenges in terms of meaning and social trust.

Based on the researcher's observations of the five leadership strategies of the Al-Mujahidin Cilacap orphanage foundation in raising funds for the education of orphans and underprivileged children, the researcher grouped each of these strategies into a table based on the results of research at the Al-Mujahidin Cilacap Orphanage, to make it easier to understand the findings in the field:

Table 1: Faith-Based Transformational Leadership In The Digital Age: A Case Study of Social Media-Driven Educational Fundraising for Orphans in Indonesia

No	Strategy Aspect	Strategy Explanation
1.	Estabilishing a digital communication team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Request digital content - Create digital poster - Insert content into poster template - Request validation from the orphanage management - Print approved posters
2.	Fundraishing content across personal and institusional platform	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Consistency in term of timming, moments, and major events

3.	Mobilizing internal educational leader within the foundation's network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Social media, instagram, whats 'up and facebook - Private chat with the social contacts - Becoming the main driving force in attracting educational leaders within the orphanage organisation network - Fostering reflective awareness among educational officials and joint donors - Providing and understanding of education as a tool for the liberation and empowerment of foster children
4.	Collaborating with community influencers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Interpersonal approach with influencers - Conducting in-depth communication to influence attitudes, behaviours, and actions - Conveying messages and objectives as well as openness of information in the programme
5.	Diagnosing key enabling and constraining factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Well organized foundation management, good database management, a foundation office in a strategic location, effective utilisation of zakat funds, varied institutional programmes, and legal status - Limited human resources and managerial capacity, public and donor scepticism, fundraising is still voluntary

Discussion

First, the head formed an IT team to create and publish posters for educational funding for orphans. This was done because the head of the Al-Mujahidin Cilacap orphanage was aware that making a poster containing an invitation to donate to orphans was not easy. Posters must be designed with applications such as Canva which require patience and skill. Canva offers various menus for poster designers to create logos, patterns, images, place photos and others. Although quite complicated, Canva is considered relevant for use in business and education matters (Hsu et al., 2023). Due to the complexity of creating posters in Canva, the head of the Al-Mujahidin Cilacap orphanage then created an IT team to produce digital posters. The posters are made once a week. The posters contain sentences inviting donations from the head of the Al-Mujahidin Cilacap orphanage. Then the IT team put it into a poster designed with patterned images.

The IT team revealed that they made the digital poster through the following procedures: (1) requesting the editorial content of the poster from the head of the al-Mujahidin orphanage; (2) making a picture pattern for the poster template; (3) inserting the editorial content of the poster into the poster template that had been made; (4) asking the head of the al-Mujahidin orphanage in Cilacap to review and validate the poster; (5) after the

poster was validated, the poster was printed and then approved by the head of the al-Mujahidin orphanage.

In today's digital era, posters are seen not only as a medium for publication and promotion in companies, but also as very suitable for publishing or promoting various programs implemented by a social community. This can be done by publishing posters on digital social media platforms such as WhatsApp and Instagram. Many people who do not have time to take part in social activities will be greatly helped when they find various activities promoted on WhatsApp and Instagram (Jerrentrup, 2024). That is what was then used as an opportunity by the head of the Al-Mujahidin Cilacap orphanage. It can be said that the digitalization of posters is a social innovation that can be used as an alternative to promote activities in an organization (Caridà et al., 2022; Maiolini et al., 2025; Manegold et al., 2020).

The head of the Al-Mujahidin Cilacap orphanage revealed that most parties who wanted to donate started by seeing a poster posted on their What's Up status. The poster contained an invitation to give alms with the concept of blessing management. In this concept, there is an invitation to: (1) give to each other by giving alms; and (2) give to each other with value because of Allah SWT.

The use of posters published via digital social media is an effort with a low risk (Etoori et al., 2023). Using posters and digital social media also makes it possible to reach clients without regional boundaries (Dowin Kennedy et al., 2022; Kaskinen & Ranta, 2023). So the chairman of the Al-Mujahidin Cilacap orphanage can expand its marketing to attract donors not only from Cilacap district but also from other districts and provinces, and even from other countries. Of course, it is necessary to use an international language so that people in other countries can access the published posters.

Second, the chairman distributes posters on social media to raise funds for education for orphans. After the poster is finished, it is checked by the chairman of the Al-Mujahidin Cilacap orphanage. After it is deemed worthy of publication as an advertisement, the chairman of the Al-Mujahidin Cilacap orphanage updates the poster's status on WhatsApp so his colleagues can read it. The poster is posted every Friday, capitalizing on the momentum of blessed Friday in the community's daily lives.

The head of the Al-Mujahidin Cilacap orphanage revealed that, based on the published posters, funds amounting to approximately Rp. 5,000,000 per month were obtained from donors. Then, from the donors who saw the posters through their What's Up status, zakat mal of approximately Rp. 50,000,000 was also obtained per year. This makes posters an effective and efficient means in raising funds from donors to support orphan education at the Al-Mujahidin Cilacap orphanage.

The efforts of the chairman of the al-Mujahidin orphanage in distributing fundraising posters for orphans via social media have led in a social digital marketing strategy. The social digital marketing strategy is considered effective and efficient in achieving the targets set by an organization. However, the weakness of using a social digital marketing strategy is the creation of public opinion that views the social organization as too commercial (Maulidiyanti et al., 2023).

In studies of digital philanthropy that focus on engagement metrics (Saxton & Wang, 2014; Shier & Handy, 2019), the value of belief is transformed into social trust. Belief-based transformational leadership can operate effectively in a fluid and open digital ecosystem. This also emphasizes that spiritual values and beliefs have strong social mobilization power in the context of collective action and philanthropy (Fry, 2003; & Sendjaya, 2015).

This should not be left alone; the head of the al-Mujahidin orphanage must be able to convince their donors that their organization is not a commercial one but a true social organization. This can be done by using social media to closely monitor the use of funds provided by donors (Kadir & Shaikh, 2023). When that can be done, then the report on the use of funds will be accessible to anyone including people who are not donors. They may later become donors for the al-Mujahidin Cilacap orphanage.

Third, the chairman instructed the principals of the al-Mujahidin Cilacap foundation to distribute posters on social media to raise funds for education for orphans. The chairman of the al-Mujahidin Cilacap orphanage also sent posters inviting donations to the principals and teachers working at the al-Mujahidin Cilacap foundation. They posted the donation posters that had been shared by the orphanage's chairman on their WhatsApp status.

The head of the Al-Mujahidin Cilacap orphanage revealed that he collaborated with the Al-Mujahidin foundation in publishing posters inviting donations for orphans. The head of the Al-Mujahidin foundation involved the public relations unit at the foundation's kindergartens, elementary schools, and junior high schools in publishing posters on social media such as What's Up, Instagram, and Facebook. The results of the publication were that several guardians were willing to become donors and each school received donations of approximately Rp. 1,000,000 per month for the educational needs of orphans.

Fourth, the chairman asked community leaders in Cilacap district to help distribute posters via social media to raise funds for education for orphans. The community leaders who were asked for help included: (1) Ustadz Wakhid, he is an Islamic religious figure in Cilacap district; (2) Ustadz Hasan Makarim, he is a cleric at the Nusa Kambangan correctional institution; and (3) Ustadz Juhartono, he is the manager of PT Solusi Bangun Mandiri Indonesia.

Transformational leadership is effective when it is able to articulate a vision that is meaningful and valuable to the wider community, especially in social and educational contexts (Bass & Riggio, 2006). Transformational leadership in collaborating with influencers must also be able to demonstrate the dimensions of idealized influence and inspirational motivation when leaders integrate them into their collaboration strategies with influencers. A leader's influence does not only come from charismatic capacity, but also from the consistency of values displayed publicly. Thus, belief-based leadership strengthens the ethical foundation of transformational leadership in the digital context (Shier, M, L., & Handy, F, 2019).

Fifth, the chairman establishes relationships with donors to secure educational funds through social media. Potential donors are those who respond to the poster published by the chairman of the al-Mujahidin orphanage via WhatsApp status. The response is in the form of giving "likes" and giving comments. Based on that response, the chairman of the al-Mujahidin Cilacap orphanage contacts them via what's up chat. This is done by expressing gratitude for the response that has been given. Then the chairman of the al-Mujahidin Cilacap orphanage

sends them a video file of the orphans' activities at the orphanage and at school. This is intended to convince them that if they become donors, the funds given will definitely be right on target. Next, the chairman of the al-Mujahidin Cilacap orphanage invites them to ask questions about donations for orphans at the al-Mujahidin orphanage. After that, he invites potential donors to donate via the al-Mujahidin Cilacap orphanage account.

The head of the al-Mujahidin Cilacap orphanage also invited donors who had donated to attend the pengajian activities he conducted. In the pengajian activities, in addition to delivering religious lectures, he also reported on the use of funds that he had obtained from donors. He explained to the donors that the funds provided were 100% dedicated to the education needs of orphans at the al-Mujahidin Cilacap orphanage. According to him, this effort could turn donors into permanent supporters of the al-Mujahidin Cilacap orphanage.

Currently, with donor funds, the Al-Mujahidin Cilacap Orphanage has also established a business unit in the form of a gallon water depot. The business unit's results are used to finance the orphans' educational and daily needs. The head of the Al-Mujahidin Cilacap Orphanage said that he is also trying to build another business unit in the form of a canteen for local residents. The results will later be managed for the educational interests of the orphans. The business unit at the Al-Mujahidin Cilacap Orphanage can grow and become a source of financing or operational costs for the organization when it is managed accountably and transparently, with the entrepreneurial competence of its leaders (Azmat et al., 2023).

Digital philanthropy reminds us of the risk of excessive victimization framing in digital social campaigns (Chouliaraki, 2013). However, belief-based transformational leadership can lead to empowerment through educational fundraising aimed at underprivileged or orphaned children as subjects of education and the future of the nation. The leadership of al-Mujahidin Cilacap integrates values, technology, and ethics, which are important foundations for the development of a model of educational leadership and philanthropy that is oriented towards values and social sustainability.

The leader of the Al-Mujahidin Cilacap orphanage can also invite other business organizations to establish a social corporation, where the business's profits can be used to finance orphans' educational needs, and in the future, orphans can be involved as workers in the social corporation. Other parties will certainly be interested in establishing a business with a social corporation system when the leader of the Al-Mujahidin Cilacap orphanage can convince them that he is fully responsible for the social business. However, like other businesses, social businesses must also be based on an attitude of mutual trust (S. et al., 2024).

In the context of digital philanthropy, social media has proven to function not only as a communication tool, but also as a leadership tool. Digital fundraising tends to focus on technical aspects such as engagement, content visualization, and platform algorithms (Khastgir & Shalini, 2024). Belief-based transformational leadership also emphasizes the effectiveness of campaigns, which are greatly influenced by how leaders can utilize social media to build relationships based on values and trust, rather than simply attracting momentary attention (Agazu et al., 2025; Greimel et al., 2023).

Sixth, the chairman identifies the supporting and inhibiting factors in implementing fundraising activities for educational funding for orphans through social media. There are six supporting factors in the implementation of fundraising activities for educational funding for

orphans through social media, namely: (1) posters can be designed in an attractive and communicative manner so that it is easy for the chairman of the orphanage to communicate with parties who respond to poster posts on what's up status; (2) the contents of the poster have a message of da'wah, namely inviting people to be fond of donating so that people who read the poster through what's up status are easily moved to become donors; (3) the principals at the al-Mujahidin foundation and their teachers voluntarily become parties who participate in posting posters on their what's up status to get donors for orphans; (4) the cost of making posters and posting posters on what's up status is cheaper so that it can be done intensively to get donors; (5) the chairman of the orphanage has a wide social network and community organization network so that many potential donors can be reached.

From a leadership perspective, this study criticizes the tendency in the literature to separate leadership from technology. Social media is not merely a neutral tool; belief-based transformational leadership in the digital age must be reflective and capable of utilizing social media strategically (Marion & Gonzales, 2023; Sodiq et al., 2024).

Then the inhibiting factors in the implementation of fundraising activities for educational funding for orphans through social media include: (1) the advertising time with what's up status media is too short so it must always be updated once a day; (2) not all potential donors who are targeted like to see what's up status; (3) income from donors is uncertain because the use of posters as advertising cannot bind donors to become permanent donors; and (4) posters that are socialized via social media are sometimes only read briefly so they must be followed up through intensive communication between the head of the orphanage and potential donors, of course this will take a long time.

Other research results reveal that digital posters are effective for use in conveying a message. This is because poster makers and poster publishers can distribute digital posters they have created for specific purposes. However, the downside is that from an ethical perspective, social requests should be made directly with the client (Ching-Yi Tien, 2024). Of course, as a person in need, a digital poster publisher also needs to meet his clients. This means that every poster publication must be followed up with a meeting, especially with potential donors.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the leadership of the head of the Al-Mujahidin Cilacap orphanage has effectively embodied the role of a social media influencer in mobilizing educational fundraising for orphans through six strategic leadership functions. These include (1) the formation of an IT team for poster creation, (2) strategic digital dissemination of fundraising materials, (3) institutional collaboration with internal educational units, (4) engagement with respected community leaders, (5) relationship-building with prospective donors through digital interaction and accountability, and (6) diagnostic evaluations of supporting and inhibiting factors in the fundraising process.

The findings demonstrate that social media, particularly WhatsApp serves as a low-cost, wide-reaching platform for promoting charitable educational causes when supported by compelling visual content, religious narratives, and consistent updates. The integration of religious values, especially Islamic principles of *sadaqah* and *barakah*, further enhances the

emotional and spiritual appeal of these campaigns. The involvement of educational staff and community leaders amplifies the reach, trust, and legitimacy of the fundraising efforts.

Moreover, the study reveals that while social media-based fundraising offers efficiency, scalability, and flexibility, it also requires strong follow-up mechanisms, personal engagement, and clear ethical standards to build trust and donor retention. Ethical concerns about digital solicitations must be mitigated through transparency, personal meetings, and impact reporting to ensure alignment with social expectations and values of sincerity. The case of Al-Mujahidin Cilacap orphanage illustrates a viable model of *digital religious philanthropy* where leadership, technology, and spirituality intersect to address educational inequalities. This model offers valuable insights for nonprofit leaders, religious institutions, and social entrepreneurs aiming to leverage digital platforms for sustainable, accountable, and value-driven fundraising in both local and transnational contexts.

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