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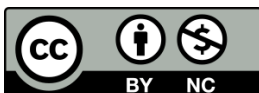
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From Digital Philanthropy to Sustainable Empowerment: Dompet Dhuafa Riau's Mechanisms in Fundraising and Trust Building

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ABSTRACT

Dompot Dhuafa Riau's transition to digital philanthropic management has significantly increased voluntary donations, addressing the concerns of digital philanthropy scholars about the impact of technology on philanthropic interactions. This research aims to uncover the practical mechanisms employed by Dompot Dhuafa Riau in transforming into a digital media-utilizing philanthropic institution. Using a qualitative method with a phenomenological approach, the study reveals a well-established transition pattern that integrates elements of traditional philanthropy into digital activities. Digital media serves as a tool to facilitate voluntary donations from donors, effectively addressing trust issues commonly associated with transitioning to online platforms by ensuring fund allocation emphasizes sustainability. Service, mentoring, and training mechanisms further enhance Dompot Dhuafa Riau's credibility as a reliable philanthropic institution, strengthening donor confidence and encouraging continued donations. This shift demonstrates that incorporating media into the management of philanthropic organizations creates a complex relationship between philanthropic institutions and the public, mediated by the unique dynamics of digital platforms.

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Introduction

Dompot Dhuafa Riau has effectively adopted technological developments that impact the management practices of fundraising institutions by utilizing online media, which are considered to have the potential to change various practices (Qi et al., 2021; Retsikas, 2014). The effectiveness of fund management by Dompot Dhuafa Riau, as a joint fundraising institution for the independence and empowerment of the poor, is evident in the results of raising funds from private donors. Data shows that in 2022, funds raised from volunteers amounted to 1 billion out of a total of 3.1 billion, ranking second in Dompot Dhuafa Riau's sources of funds, just below revenue from the Zakat sector

(Dhuafa, 2021). Significant fundraising from volunteers donating their wealth indicates that changes in giving practices through online mechanisms have not negatively impacted the fundraising process at Dompot Dhuafa Riau. Concerns about the media distorting aspects of social practice and reducing public trust (Strömbäck et al., 2020) did not materialize for Dompot Dhuafa Riau.

This reality demonstrates that Dompot Dhuafa's efforts to transition from conventional to online systems are proceeding robustly. The process of transitioning philanthropic institution management to digital systems, which operates under its own logic, has often been overlooked by researchers. Various studies tend to examine online fundraising through three trends. The first trend focuses on the subjectivity of donors in their decision to channel donations. Li et al. (2022) and Chen et al. (2021) concluded that donors' moral and rational norms shape their choice to donate. Meanwhile, Ba et al. (2020) found that rationality based on knowledge of fund allocation is the main factor for donors. The second trend highlights media accessibility that facilitates the donation process. Shang (2022) proved that media contributions, which lower barriers for donors, are key to increasing the number of donations. This technical factor positively impacts donor trust in donating (D.-H. Kim & Kim, 2021). The ease of use makes personal preferences less critical as a reason for the increase in donations on digital philanthropy platforms (van Teunenbroek & Hasanefendic, 2023). The third trend is oriented towards changes in the form of philanthropy influenced by the media (Piliyanti et al., 2022; Song et al., 2023).

This research aims to identify the key factors behind Dompot Dhuafa Riau's effective management practices in building an institutional image that successfully attracts voluntary private donors. To achieve this goal, the study focuses on analyzing these factors through three main aspects. The first aspect examines the concepts applied in Dompot Dhuafa Riau's transition to online-based management, identifying any significant changes in digital management practices. The second aspect explores the patterns of media utilization as a crucial element of technology use in social activities. The third aspect outlines Dompot Dhuafa's specific activities in fund distribution. Together, these aspects provide a comprehensive view of the dynamics involved in transitioning to digital-based management.

This research is based on the argument that transitioning social activities from traditional to digital platforms introduces a series of complex changes that require careful management to maintain stability. Philanthropic activities, which focus on the distribution of welfare through giving (Sakai, 2012), rely on a sense of social concern and religious values. Without this sense, individuals are unlikely to donate their property to an institution to be distributed to unknown and unrelated recipients (Martin, 1994). Familiarity and trust in an institution are essential to persuade individuals to donate a portion of their wealth. This challenge is even more pronounced in a virtual context. The indirect relationship between the organization and the donor, mediated only by the internet, necessitates a series of successful activities to inspire donors to contribute.

Literature Review

Philanthropy: A Concept and idea

Philanthropy encompasses any voluntary act (Daly, 2012), whether it involves giving money and goods or offering time through voluntary services (Azis, 2018; Triantoro, 2020). Payton and Moody (2008, p. 28) also include voluntary associations as part of philanthropy, highlighting the instruments used in giving and service. Voluntary service includes providing training (Najib, 2016; Tyuse, 2003), education (Nasution, 2022), and community guidance (Irham, 2020). These volunteer actions aim to achieve public goals, emphasizing that philanthropy is about tangible actions, not just intentions or visions of public good (Pevnaya et al., 2020). The public good and interest can be measured by two indicators: alleviating the suffering of those without formal responsibilities and improving community quality of life (Martin, 1994). Achieving these indicators relies on intervention mechanisms, including both giving and service. Philanthropy often refers to voluntary actions aimed at achieving societal welfare goals. This term is sometimes interchanged with the voluntary sector, non-profit sector, third sector, and independent sector, and is occasionally called charity. Philanthropic organizations are also known as non-profit organizations, non-profits, or non-governmental organizations (NGOs) (Payton & Moody, 2008, p. 29).

The variety of terms used to describe voluntary actions to help others often leads to confusion between "philanthropy" and "charity." Payton and Moody (2008, p. 38) clarify this distinction. They describe philanthropy as an umbrella term encompassing the entire spectrum of voluntary activities for the public good, while charity, once a general term for this field, is now used more narrowly. Philanthropy refers to actions aimed at improving quality of life, whereas charity focuses on alleviating suffering (H. Kim et al., 2017). Internationally, "charity" often denotes humanitarian aid, while "philanthropy" is associated with development aid. Philanthropy involves voluntary interventions in the lives of others for their benefit, making these actions moral by nature, as they are intended for others and carried out voluntarily.

Volunteerism in Charitable Giving: Effective Fund Management in Philanthropy

Fundraising driven by volunteerism involves voluntary individual contributions aimed at alleviating the burden on the poor and addressing urgent needs. This form of giving encompasses three main activities: voluntary giving, voluntary service, and voluntary organization, all dedicated to public benevolence (Munawar, 2018). Motivations for these actions can vary, often influenced by social concerns and religious beliefs (M. I. Han, 2021). Benthall (1999) describes donation driven by a religious impulse as financial worship. Conversely, social motives arise from recognizing social problems that prompt individuals to care about others' welfare (Jakaria, 2020). This concern for the social environment has led to the establishment of various trusted fundraising institutions that effectively channel donations. Confidence in proper fund management significantly

boosts community participation in donations. Yang et al. (2020) found that the sustainability of voluntary giving is influenced by the strong relationship between charities and donors' families, which hinges on donors' trust in the credibility of fund management institutions (Wiepking et al., 2021). An institution's credibility can be gauged by its effective fund distribution to deserving recipients, further fostering donors' trust and encouraging continued charitable contributions (Peterson et al., 2021). Fund management institutions, which may employ unique methods and mechanisms, play a crucial role in this process (Stötzer et al., 2020). However, deliberate donations by community elites can perpetuate inequality (Maclean et al., 2021) and potentially normalize power dynamics (Fuentenebro, 2020).

Utilization of technology in philanthropic fundraising

Changes in fundraising trends within philanthropic organizations are driven by the increasing use of technology (Albarri, 2023). As society embraces technological advances, many philanthropic organizations are leveraging internet-based platforms for fundraising efforts. This shift has given rise to digital philanthropy (Nurhadi et al., 2020), where notifications, reminders, and donation encouragement are conducted through online media (Muhsin, 2012). This transition has significantly altered traditional charity concepts (Retsikas, 2014) and presents fundamental challenges in moving from offline to online philanthropic activities (Qi et al., 2021). Shang (2022) highlights these challenges, emphasizing the need to address them to prevent the negative impacts of media openness from undermining key aspects of philanthropy. Banerjee (2021) illustrates the real consequences of failing to reconceptualize this transition, noting issues with inclusiveness in online fundraising spaces.

The transition to online philanthropic activities has significantly eased the donation process and expanded opportunities for everyone to contribute (Popova, 2021). Zhang and Xie (2022) highlight the high effectiveness of online philanthropy due to its easy access. Additionally, online platforms have increased youth participation (Sooter & Ugazio, 2023) and enabled grassroots organizations in rural areas to broaden their reach (L. Han et al., 2023). The effectiveness of digital philanthropy fundraising is driven by two key factors: institutional reputation and donor experience management (Wymer & Čačija, 2023). Bin-Nashwan and al-Daihani (2021) also note that technological features and religiosity are crucial drivers of online philanthropy. Beyond facilitating donations, the use of internet-based technology for philanthropy strengthens the relationships between the state, businesses, and society (Song et al., 2023).

Method

This research employs qualitative methods based on field research. Qualitative research is chosen for its ability to provide evidence that informs practice without relying on quantification (Maxwell, 2021). Data collection involved observation and interview

techniques. Interviews were conducted with individuals involved in fundraising activities and fund distribution. This approach aligns with Northcott's view, cited by Cannolly (2016), that investigations can rely on observations and interviews. Additionally, the research analyzes the media behavior employed by Dompot Dhuafa Riau in its philanthropic activities, following Kozinets and Gambetti's (2021) recommendations for media behavior research. A phenomenological approach is used to minimize the researcher's subjectivity, allowing the research subjects to reveal their experiences more authentically (Connolly, 2010).

Result

Voluntary Action for the Public Good: Understanding the Meaning of “Derma” at Dompot Dhuafa Riau

The socio-community activities conducted by the Amil Zakat Institution Dompot Dhuafa Riau are funded through charitable donations. Hendi Merdika, head of the Dompot Dhuafa Riau branch, emphasizes that charity is the core identity of Dompot Dhuafa Riau, rooted in generosity, sharing, and helping others based on religious and social values. This principle is upheld by both donors and staff. For donors, volunteerism reflects an awareness to contribute part of their wealth, motivated by social and religious concerns. The spirit of volunteerism in Riau is evident in the funds raised, amounting to one billion out of Dompot Dhuafa Riau's total funds of 3.1 billion from various sources (Dhuafa, 2021). For the staff, volunteerism means the willingness to collect, manage, and distribute funds to those in need without any bias.

The essence of volunteerism, which is the foundational value of Dompot Dhuafa Riau's activities, is directed towards enhancing public welfare through three main programs. The first program is direct assistance, which supports public welfare by aiding agents who contribute to the community's economic and spiritual well-being. This program manifests in the provision of basic necessities, cash, clothing, and other essentials to support Quranic teachers' empowerment activities (see figure 1.a).



Figure 1. (a) Sharing Happiness Activity for Ngaji Teachers; (b) Spreading Happiness through Shopping with Orphans at Living Wold Pekanbaru. *Source:* Annual Performance Report, Annual Report 2022.

These teachers, recognized as key contributors to early childhood religious education, often face economic hardships and are thus the focus of efforts to achieve the voluntary goal of public welfare.

Second, *Sharing Happiness*. This initiative focuses on providing joy to those who face limitations in achieving the same happiness as others. It involves supplying Ramadan and Hari Raya necessities to orphans who might otherwise not experience the same joy during these celebrations (see Figure 1.b). The children are given the opportunity to shop for Hari Raya clothes of their choice, funded by voluntary donations collected through Dompot Dhuafa Riau. Third, *Social Services*. This activity involves the voluntary donation of energy, thoughts, and time for social causes. It includes two main activities: social engagement in nursing homes and services for the general public.



Figure 2. Elderly Care Activities by Dompot Dhuafa Volunteer (DDV) Riau. *Source*: Annual Performance Report, Annual Report.

The nursing home activities aim to instill a sense of well-being in the elderly, particularly at the Khusnul Khotimah Tresna Werdha Social Home (PSTW), making them feel cared for by their community (see Figure 2).



Figure 3. Direct Service Activities for Inland Communities. *Source*: Annual Performance Report, Annual Report 2022.

Meanwhile, social services at Madrasah Diniyah Awaliyah (MDA) Nurul Huda in Indragiri Hilir, a rural area with limited access, aim to facilitate the community's pursuit of religious education. Sending Da'i (Islamic preachers) is a practical step towards achieving this goal (see Figure 3).

Boosting Private Donations Online: Unlocking New Opportunities for “Derma” at Dompét Dhuafa Riau

Dompét Dhuafa Riau has successfully increased funds from the private sector by initiating online or digital charity practices through technological devices. They have leveraged digital media in their philanthropic activities, particularly for the collection and management of social funds from the community, aiming to streamline these processes. Hendi Merdika stated;

“Yes [it is], in the early days, we raised funds from the community in traditional ways. Donors would come directly to the office to make donations based on their chosen type and program. We also had a pick-up service where our fundraising team collected donations from the community at their addresses. Additionally, we provided donation counters in malls across Pekanbaru and the region. Later, we began accepting donations via bank transfer. As technology advanced and online media became more widespread, we initiated online charity practices. Now, donors can contribute from the comfort of their homes using just their smartphones. Our online charity platforms, including digital fundraising, donation portals, and charity websites, represent our modernization efforts in philanthropy. These innovations offer convenience and benefits for both our philanthropic institution and the community as donors.”

The expansion of opportunities for the community to donate through an online system aims to facilitate giving in a more effective and efficient manner using advanced technology. Online charity practices offer a new, modern approach to philanthropy, making it easier and more flexible, reaching all segments of society and emphasizing time efficiency.

The convenience provided by utilizing digital technology is achieved through three mechanisms. First, digital fundraising serves as a platform for all types of charitable practices, including donations, zakat, sadaqah, waqf, and qurbani. Its goal is to raise funds from the community by offering a menu of services tailored to each type of charity. This digital fundraising can be accessed through the link <https://digital.dompstdhuafa.org/> (see figure 4).

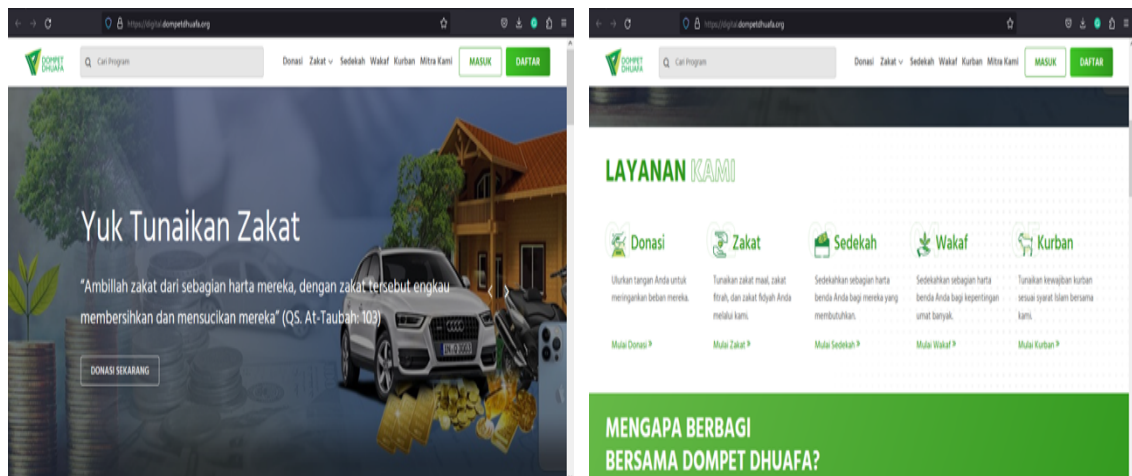


Figure 4. Digital Fundraising Dompot Dhuafa Riau.
source:<https://digital.dompetdhuafa.org/>

Hendi Merdika explained that the Digital Fundraising Dompot Dhuafa Riau was created to address the challenges donors face with traditional giving methods, which require them to visit offices, donation counters, or other locations. Digital fundraising allows donors to contribute from various places and at any time using their electronic devices.

Second, the Dompot Dhuafa Riau Donation Portal. This portal can be accessed through the link <https://donasi.ddriau.org/> (see figure 5).

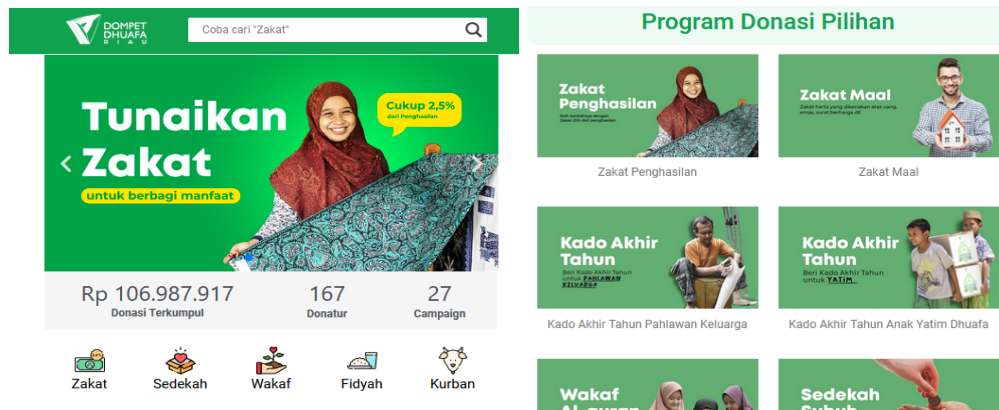


Figure 5. Dompot Dhuafa Riau Donation Portal is an online fundraising site. *Source:* <https://donasi.ddriau.org/>.

The Donation Portal specifically showcases various programs initiated by Dompot Dhuafa Riau, making it easy for donors to select and contribute to specific initiatives. Donors simply choose the type of program they wish to support and complete their donation online. Andrika stated:

“The Dompot Dhuafa Riau Donation Portal aims to streamline the process of raising social charity funds online and facilitate donations. It features a dedicated menu of donation programs initiated by our organization. All our planned programs are listed there, allowing donors to easily select which initiative they wish to support by following the outlined procedures on the portal. This approach ensures flexibility and convenience, with donations directly credited to Dompot Dhuafa Riau's account and managed for their designated purposes.”

Furthermore, the Dompot Dhuafa Riau Donation Portal features a menu highlighting the organization's four primary pillars of empowerment: Health, Education, Economy, and Social & Da'wah. Under each pillar, several impactful programs aim to empower the disadvantaged and underprivileged. Donors can easily select their preferred pillars and programs to make online social charity transactions. Thirdly, Dompot Dhuafa Riau's Official Website serves as a platform to raise online charity funds from donors. This website focuses on fundraising for various social activities, programs, and direct services aimed at assisting those in need. It can be accessed through the page <https://ddriau.org/> (see Figure 6).

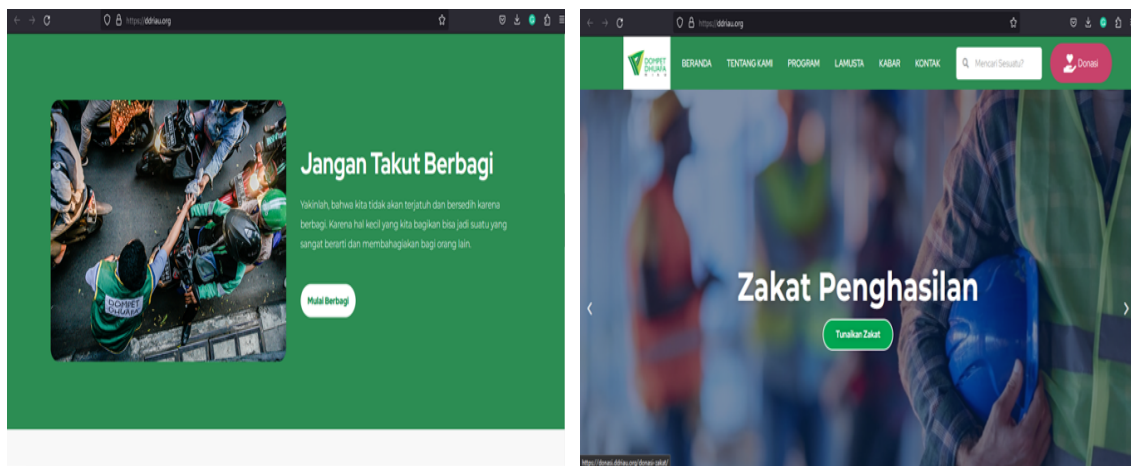


Figure 6. The Practice of Online Charity through the Dompot Dhuafa Riau Website.
Source: <https://ddriau.org/>.

Hendi Merdika stated,

“The website now serves as a widely accessed online social media platform where people learn about Dompot Dhuafa Riau and its programs. Recognizing this, we have integrated our website as a hub for collecting online charity funds. Upon visiting the DD Riau website, visitors immediately encounter a donation section or our online donation wallet, prominently displayed with options like 'Start Sharing' or 'Donation Wallet' in purple. Donors can simply click on these prompts on the homepage of the Dompot Dhuafa Riau website. It's easy and flexible—just using a smartphone, donations are swiftly collected and prepared for distribution to those in need.”

The advent of digital philanthropy, leveraging technological advancements and operating within digital spaces, represents a novel approach to charitable giving. This new form of philanthropic practice fosters the cultivation of giving habits that diverge from traditional patterns of donation.

Building Sustainable Funding: Turning Donations into Thriving Businesses

Dompét Dhuafa's efforts to transform donations into sustainable community empowerment involve developing funds to support home industry businesses. Specifically, they target rural housewives by empowering them through economic activities like the Alampanjang Mushroom House, a household business located in Alam Panjang Village, Rumbio District, Kampar Regency, Riau Province.

“Yes, I've gained new knowledge about oyster mushroom cultivation that I've never had before. In our village, there are plenty of oyster mushrooms, especially in the nearby forest. Previously, we didn't know how to process or cultivate them, so they had no economic value. It turns out mushrooms have great potential. Through this program, we received valuable assistance—from making mushroom baglogs, breeding, caring for and watering, harvesting, processing mushrooms into various foods, packaging for a good presentation, to sales. I've learned so much. I've gained skills (Dahnir, 2019).

“With the Mushroom House Program, there are activities for us elderly women who previously had no work opportunities. This program encourages us to be productive. Mushroom cultivation is manageable; we water and harvest in the morning and water again in the afternoon, every day. This program has increased our income, helping us meet our daily needs. I'm grateful that DD Riau, through facilitators, supports us by teaching mushroom cultivation, something we never imagined before (Dahnir, 2019).”

The initiative to convert funds began in 2019 to support capital-deficient home-based businesses. This program focuses on enabling housewives in rural areas to benefit from philanthropic funds such as zakat, infaq, sadaqah, and other social donations. These funds, especially those gathered through online charity practices, are directed towards empowering communities. Hendi Mardika stated:

“Yes, we've noticed that many housewives in rural areas, especially elderly ones, stay at home without work. However, due to economic pressures, they still need income to meet their needs. They often feel uncertain about what to do, particularly because they lack capital. That's why we initiated the Mushroom House Program to empower these women in agriculture. Our focus is on elderly rural mothers and widows who require support to sustain themselves. Through this program, we aim to utilize philanthropic funds, particularly social charity like infaq and sadaqah from donors, to benefit them. Essentially, the goal is to ensure that charity funds reach and support diverse beneficiaries, recognizing that housewives also deserve care and attention.”

The transformation of funds into business development aims to broaden benefits and create business opportunities for housewives to enhance their productivity. The Alampanjang Mushroom House program focuses on cultivating oyster mushrooms (see Figure 7).



Figure 7. Oyster mushrooms as the main ingredient of DD Riau's Alampanjang Mushroom House Empowerment Program and Mushroom House as a forum for program implementation. *Source:* <https://www.dompetdhuafa.org/wanita-tangguh-roemah-jamur-alam-panjang/>

This program is implemented through three primary activities: mentoring, coaching, and empowerment or development. Initially, Dompot Dhuafa Riau dispatched an assistant to provide training and guidance in oyster mushroom cultivation. Mrs. Erma, who served as the mentor, mentioned that the training began by introducing various planting media and imparting knowledge on planting techniques, care practices, harvesting methods, and the sales process.

“At the outset, I formed a group of mushroom farmers comprising three selected women who are beneficiaries of the program. I guided them through the process of cultivating oyster mushrooms, from making mushroom baglogs or seedlings, to caring for them, watering, harvesting, processing, and selling. They receive assistance at the mushroom house facilitated by DD Riau, where they gather daily, and I provide continuous support. The mushroom seeds, provided by DD Riau, are sourced and cultivated at the Alampanjang Mushroom House.”

The primary goal of community support is to aid individuals and groups by enhancing their capacity through training (including awareness, knowledge, and skills) necessary to improve their quality of life. In the subsequent phase, empowerment progresses through

coaching sessions designed to foster sustainable business practices, enabling managers to become self-reliant and proficient in mushroom cultivation (see Figure 8). According to Erma,

“In early 2019, the group of mushroom farmers consisted of three elderly women. To ensure continuity in mushroom cultivation knowledge and skills, we provide ongoing guidance and mentoring to the next generation, particularly the families of these women. Additionally, we offer open training sessions to the local community on mushroom cultivation, empowering them to independently grow mushrooms at home. This includes teaching them how to prepare various processed foods using mushrooms. Alampanjang Village is rich in oyster mushrooms that were previously underutilized due to a lack of understanding about their cultivation and processing.”

Through the cadre process, the number of women knowledgeable in mushroom cultivation has grown, now totaling approximately 24 individuals across 6 households who manage the Alam Panjang Mushroom House. Building on this success, similar businesses have been established in the Rokan Hulu Regency area. This initiative has demonstrably enhanced community self-sufficiency in fulfilling their daily needs.



Figure 8. Mushroom cultivation coaching in DD Riau's Alampanjang Mushroom House Program. Source: <https://www.dompethuafa.org/wanita-tangguh-roemah-jamur-alam-panjang/>

In the third stage, the focus shifted to business development through empowerment and developmental activities aimed at strengthening the community's economy. These efforts involved transforming oyster mushrooms into valuable commodities. The mushrooms were processed into various food products such as crispy mushrooms, mushroom crackers, mushroom rendang, and other processed foods, thereby enhancing household incomes (see Figure 9).

“Yes, this program has been incredibly beneficial for me. Selling fresh mushrooms or processed mushroom products brings in around Rp. 300,000 to Rp. 500,000 per week. This income significantly supports my household expenses, providing additional income every week and month. Although it's not substantial, it's very helpful. The work is easy and doesn't require much time or energy, making it a relaxing yet profitable endeavor. I truly appreciate the opportunities provided by Dompot Dhuafa Riau and the assistance in oyster mushroom cultivation, which has empowered us, especially elderly housewives, economically. Previously, we didn't have this opportunity, but now we do, thanks to Dompot Dhuafa Riau.”

The business capital assistance program aimed at economic empowerment has successfully boosted income, thereby enhancing the economic status of the participants. In this regard, Erna emphasized,

“Through the Alampanjang Mushroom House Program, aimed at empowering these housewives economically, they now earn an average of Rp. 300,000 per week from oyster mushroom cultivation. As managers of the Alampanjang Mushroom House, we aspire for the oyster mushroom business to thrive and for impoverished residents around Alampanjang to adopt these developed businesses, thereby gradually alleviating poverty. Empowering women, who are the backbone of their families, fosters independence and strengthens families in meeting their daily needs.”

Erna mentioned that fresh oyster mushrooms are sold at IDR 25,000 per kilogram. Additionally, crispy mushrooms, packaged in 80-gram portions with six flavors, are priced at IDR 15,000 per package. Their products are now available in Kampar Regency, Pekanbaru City, and have expanded to Padang and other areas through online trading. These sales have provided the women with newfound economic benefits that were previously inaccessible to them.



Figure 9. Alampanjang Mushroom House; Center for Mushroom Cultivation and Sale of Mushroom Cultivation Products. Source: <https://www.dompetdhuafa.org/wanita-tangguh-roemah-jamur-alam-panjang/>

The Alampanjang Mushroom House Program relies on fundraising efforts to gather community funds, which are then utilized to support the program's initiatives.

Discussion

The transition from conventional fundraising systems to online-based management at Dompét Dhuafa Riau adheres to the ethical framework of philanthropy while maximizing technological features to enhance fundraising effectiveness. This transition has significantly increased private sector donations, supporting direct assistance and community services. Dompét Dhuafa Riau's effective use of digital platforms for volunteering fundraising is bolstered by its credible institutional branding in fund distribution. This credibility is underscored by the success of initiatives like the Alampanjang Mushroom House, which has economically empowered communities sustainably. The management of funds from a broad donor base validates Dompét Dhuafa Riau's successful transition to a digital-based philanthropic institution.

The increase in voluntary private donations to the Dhuafa Riau wallet is driven by leveraging technological features and establishing credibility in fund distribution. Similar findings by Wymer & Čačija (2023) highlight the effectiveness of digital philanthropy. Dompét Dhuafa Riau's success in raising voluntary funds is significantly influenced by the conceptual alignment of digital philanthropy with traditional practices, which enhances donors' confidence in entrusting their funds for management and distribution. According to Retsikas (2014) and Qi et al. (2021), this alignment with traditional philanthropy shapes donors' comfort and trust in contributing their resources. This comfort is crucial, as noted by Wiepking et al. (2021), in fostering strong relationships between donors and philanthropic organizations.

The shift in fundraising media within philanthropic activities undertaken by Dompét Dhuafa Riau underscores the pivotal role of donor confidence in achieving effective and efficient management. Adopting digital methods while maximizing technological infrastructure and establishing institutional credibility through sustainable distribution mechanisms are integral to cultivating donor trust. This transformation is evident in the transition from conventional face-to-face interactions to virtual interactions, necessitating a high level of trust (Strömbäck et al., 2020). Structural changes, as highlighted by Shang (2022), pose challenges for philanthropic institutions in adapting to digital philanthropy models. Embracing digital media for fundraising must prioritize building trust among current and potential donors to ensure smooth operational processes.

The impact of media in digital philanthropy management, while enhancing convenience, also complicates philanthropic institutions' efforts to foster donor confidence. Existing research highlights media convenience (Chen et al., 2021; Li et al., 2022) but overlooks the intricate dynamics among media, donors, and philanthropic institutions that mutually influence each other. Media influence is often narrowly focused on its transformative role in philanthropic activities (Piliyanti et al., 2022; Song et al., 2023), yet donors' interactions with media and institutions can significantly shape trust-related beliefs and perceptions. Demonstrating consistent management practices akin to conventional philanthropy and providing evidence of sustainable fund distribution are foundational in building public trust and encouraging voluntary contributions. These

aspects constitute the cornerstone of Dompét Dhuafa Riau's efforts to instill public confidence and foster voluntary funding through online platforms.

The role of digital media in transforming philanthropic management not only simplifies the donation process but also necessitates increased transparency and accountability from philanthropic organizations to build donor trust. Digital platforms provide donors with easy access to contribute financially anytime and anywhere, underscoring the importance for organizations to uphold trust through transparent practices. Transparency in digital philanthropy involves clear communication about fund utilization, accessible financial reports, and regular updates on program impacts. Philanthropic entities should leverage digital media to provide verifiable evidence of fund disbursement and program outcomes, such as annual reports, videos, and beneficiary testimonials available online. Accountability demands organizations to be audit-ready and accountable for their activities, ensuring they can justify their actions when scrutinized by donors or authorities. Utilizing digital media facilitates real-time audits, enhancing transparency and bolstering donor confidence in philanthropic endeavors.

Conclusions

Media tools that connect philanthropic organizations with donors through virtual relationships, which are often considered to pose a high risk of trust issues leading to decreased donations, demonstrate a different outcome in this study. Instead, the study reveals an increase in the amount of funds generated from voluntary donations at Dompét Dhuafa Riau. This success stems from the well-established transition process undertaken by Dompét Dhuafa Riau managers in converting conventional to virtual philanthropic practices while maintaining traditional philanthropic elements and concepts. This traditionalist approach is reinforced by providing an easy donation pathway through maximizing media infrastructure for seamless contributions. Additionally, these efforts are supported by sustainability-focused activities in the distribution of donor funds. Together, these steps enhance public perception and confidence, which are pivotal in encouraging donations to Dompét Dhuafa Riau.

This study uncovered the mechanism of fostering trust through a series of activities conducted by Dompét Dhuafa Riau using a phenomenological research model. This model enables researchers to observe factual reality, allowing data to manifest its own truth. However, the validation of donor trust was not a primary focus in this research, presenting a limitation. This gap offers an opportunity for future researchers to explore donor motivations and their trust levels in influencing donation behaviors. Such investigations could provide new insights to either support or critique the findings of this study.

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Author's declaration

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Availability of data and materials

All data are available from the authors.

Competing interests

The authors declare no competing interest.

Additional information

Write additional information related to this research if any.

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