

COMMUNICATION MANAGEMENT OF THE MINISTRY OF RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS OF THE REPUBLIC OF INDONESIA IN ADDRESSING THE CHALLENGES OF HAJJ 2026

Nurul Fadhila

Faculty of Da'wah and Islamic Communication
Institut Ummul Quro Al-Islami Bogor, Indonesia
nurul.fadhila@iuqibogor.ac.id

ABSTRAK

Studi ini mengkaji manajemen komunikasi strategis Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia dalam menangani tantangan komunikasi seputar Haji 2026. Musim Haji merupakan transisi kelembagaan penting setelah peralihan administrasi Haji ke Kementerian Haji dan Umrah. Transisi ini menciptakan tantangan terkait otoritas kelembagaan, informasi publik, koordinasi antar-lembaga, komunikasi krisis, dan kepercayaan publik. Studi ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif menggunakan metode studi literatur. Data diperoleh dari regulasi pemerintah, publikasi resmi, dokumen evaluasi Haji, artikel akademik, dan literatur komunikasi terkait. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa komunikasi Haji yang efektif memerlukan manajemen transisi institusional, pesan terkoordinasi, komunikasi publik multisaluran, manajemen informasi digital, keterlibatan pemangku kepentingan, dan respons krisis. Studi ini mengusulkan model Manajemen Komunikasi Haji Strategis Islam yang didasarkan pada *shiddiq*, *amanah*, *tabligh*, dan *fathanah*. Model ini menekankan komunikasi yang transparan, dialogis, etis, dan berpusat pada jamaah untuk memperkuat kepercayaan publik dan kualitas layanan.

Kata kunci: komunikasi strategis, Haji 2026, Kementerian Urusan Agama, da'wah, komunikasi Islam.

ABSTRACT

This study examines the strategic communication management of the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia in addressing communication challenges surrounding Hajj 2026. Hajj season represents an important institutional transition following the transfer of Hajj administration to the Ministry of Hajj and Umrah. This transition creates challenges related to institutional authority, public information, inter-institutional coordination, crisis communication, and public trust. This study employs a qualitative approach using a literature study method. Data were obtained from government regulations,

Nurul Fadhila

official publications, Hajj evaluation documents, academic articles, and relevant communication literature. The findings indicate that effective Hajj communication requires institutional transition management, coordinated messaging, multichannel public communication, digital information management, stakeholder engagement, and crisis response. The study proposes an Islamic Strategic Hajj Communication Management model based on shiddiq, amanah, tabligh, and fathanah. The model emphasizes transparent, dialogical, ethical, and pilgrim-centered communication to strengthen public trust and service quality.

Keywords: *strategic communication, Hajj 2026, Ministry of Religious Affairs, da'wah, Islamic communication.*

INTRODUCTION

Hajj is one of the most significant religious practices in Islam and simultaneously represents a major public-service responsibility for the Indonesian government. Indonesia has one of the world's largest Muslim populations and consequently sends a very large number of pilgrims to Saudi Arabia every year. The complexity of Indonesian Hajj administration derives not only from the number of pilgrims but also from the geographical, demographic, institutional, health, financial, technological, and religious dimensions of the pilgrimage. The state has a constitutional and legal responsibility to facilitate religious practice. Law No. 8 of 2019 concerning the Organization of Hajj and Umrah establishes the principles of guidance, services, and protection for Indonesian pilgrims. The legislation emphasizes that Hajj administration should provide safe, comfortable, orderly, and Sharia-compliant services. (BPK Regulations). Consequently, Hajj administration cannot be understood merely as a technical or logistical process. It is also a communication process. Information concerning registration, departure schedules, visa requirements, health requirements, transportation, accommodation, consumption, worship guidance, financial issues, and emergency procedures must be communicated accurately and continuously to pilgrims. Communication becomes even more important when the organization faces uncertainty or institutional transformation. In such circumstances, public communication functions not only to transmit information but also to construct certainty, reduce anxiety, manage expectations, coordinate stakeholders, and maintain public trust.

The 2026 Hajj season constitutes an important case in this regard. Indonesia entered a new institutional arrangement in which Hajj administration was transferred from the Ministry of Religious Affairs to

the Ministry of Hajj and Umrah. The Ministry of Religious Affairs officially acknowledged in January 2026 that Hajj administration had fully moved to the Ministry of Hajj and that its own priority programs were consequently being adjusted. (Kementerian Agama). The institutional transformation was not merely symbolic. It also involved human-resource restructuring. In February 2026, the Ministry of Religious Affairs reported that 3,528 civil servants had been transferred to the Ministry of Hajj and Umrah as part of the government's effort to support the successful implementation of Hajj 2026. (Sumbar Kemenag).

This transformation created an important communication problem. For decades, Indonesian society had associated the Ministry of Religious Affairs with Hajj administration. The emergence of a new ministry therefore required a process of public reorientation. Pilgrims and prospective pilgrims needed to understand which institution was responsible for which services, where official information could be obtained, how complaints should be submitted, and how coordination between institutions would function. From a communication-management perspective, institutional transition may generate what can be called an authority-information gap. This occurs when the formal distribution of authority changes faster than public understanding of that distribution. When such a gap occurs, misinformation, rumors, speculation, and contradictory messages may emerge. The problem is intensified by the contemporary digital communication environment. Hajj information no longer circulates exclusively through official government announcements. Information travels through WhatsApp groups, Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, online news portals, religious communities, KBIHU, local religious leaders, and informal networks.

The Ministry of Religious Affairs therefore continues to possess strategic communication resources even though it is no longer the primary operator of Hajj. Its regional offices, religious counselors, KUA networks, educational institutions, Islamic organizations, and relationships with religious leaders provide important channels through which religious and public information can be communicated. This situation requires a distinction between operational authority and communication capacity. The Ministry of Hajj and Umrah may possess primary operational authority, but the Ministry of Religious Affairs continues to have substantial communication capital within Indonesia's religious and social ecosystem. The importance of coordination is also reflected in Government Regulation No. 8 of 2022, which regulates coordination in Hajj

Nurul Fadhila

administration across ministries, central institutions, provincial and local governments, and Indonesian representatives in Saudi Arabia. The regulation covers transportation, accommodation, food, health, travel documents, administration, guidance, and protection. (BPK Regulations)

The experience of Hajj 2025 also provides important lessons. The Ministry of Religious Affairs' national evaluation identified recommendations concerning Hajj guidance, the management of *dam*, recruitment and training of Hajj officers, visa management, transportation, health services, and coordination among stakeholders. The evaluation emphasized that coordination and cooperation among stakeholders were important factors in dealing with challenges and maintaining service quality. (Kementerian Agama). The 2026 evaluation further demonstrated that Hajj administration requires continuous institutional learning. The National Evaluation Meeting for Hajj 1447 H/2026 M included discussions concerning examination findings, worship guidance, service problems, critical service points, government policy, and recommendations for subsequent Hajj seasons. (Rakernas Evaluasi PIH 2026). The Indonesian Parliament also reported that the 2026 Hajj administration had generally improved compared with 2025 but still required improvements in food services, accommodation, transportation, and the quality of Hajj officers. (JDIH DPR). These developments demonstrate that Hajj problems are not limited to operational shortcomings. They also involve how problems are communicated, interpreted, and responded to by institutions and the public.

In this context, communication management becomes a form of public service management. The government must communicate not only successes but also limitations, risks, corrections, and institutional responsibilities. From the perspective of *da'wah*, this communication has an additional ethical dimension. Hajj is not simply a government program but an act of worship. Communication concerning Hajj therefore needs to embody Islamic values of truthfulness, trustworthiness, wisdom, responsibility, compassion, and public benefit. The principles of *shiddiq* (truthfulness), *amanah* (trustworthiness), *tabligh* (responsible transmission), and *fathanah* (wisdom and intelligence) provide a normative foundation for governmental communication. Similarly, Qur'anic communication principles such as *qaulan sadidan* (truthful speech), *qaulan ma'rufan* (appropriate speech), *qaulan balighan* (effective speech), and *qaulan layyinan* (gentle speech) are highly relevant to communication with pilgrims. The contemporary Hajj communication environment therefore requires the integration of three dimensions: strategic management, public communication, and Islamic ethics. This

study addresses the following research question are how can the strategic communication management of the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia address the communication challenges surrounding Hajj 2026 from the perspective of da'wah and Islamic communication? The study has four objectives to identify the major communication challenges surrounding Hajj 2026, to analyze the strategic communication role of the Ministry of Religious Affairs during the institutional transition, to examine the relevance of strategic communication, public relations, and crisis communication theories to Hajj administration and to formulate an Islamic strategic communication model for strengthening public trust and Hajj-related information management.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Strategic Communication Management

Strategic communication refers to the deliberate use of communication by an organization to accomplish its institutional objectives. It involves the integration of organizational goals, audiences, messages, channels, timing, stakeholder relationships, and evaluation. Strategic communication differs from routine information dissemination because it begins with organizational objectives and environmental analysis. Communication is therefore positioned as part of management rather than merely as a technical public-relations activity.

In government institutions, strategic communication has at least four functions: informing citizens, coordinating institutions, managing public expectations, and building legitimacy. For Hajj administration, these functions become particularly important because pilgrims require reliable information before, during, and after the pilgrimage. Strategic communication can therefore be conceptualized as:

Environmental Analysis → Strategic Planning → Message Design →
Channel Selection → Implementation → Feedback → Evaluation

The model is cyclical rather than linear because public communication continuously generates feedback that must be incorporated into subsequent planning.

Strategic Management

Strategic management involves environmental scanning, strategy formulation, implementation, and evaluation. Pearce and Robinson emphasize that strategic management connects organizational objectives with decisions and actions required to achieve them. In the context of Hajj

Nurul Fadhila

communication, environmental scanning includes identifying institutional changes, regulatory developments, public expectations, media narratives, misinformation, complaints, health concerns, geopolitical risks, technological developments, and stakeholder relationships. Strategy formulation then determines the appropriate communication response. Implementation requires the integration of central and regional communication structures. Finally, evaluation measures whether the communication has achieved understanding, trust, satisfaction, and behavioral outcomes.

Excellence Theory

Excellence Theory, developed principally by James E. Grunig and colleagues, places public relations within the strategic management function of organizations. One of its central contributions is the emphasis on two-way communication and the importance of organizational responsiveness to stakeholders. A purely one-way communication model assumes that the government knows what the public needs and simply transmits information. A two-way model recognizes that the public possesses knowledge, experiences, concerns, and expectations that should influence organizational decisions. This principle is highly relevant to Hajj administration.

Pilgrims are not merely recipients of government messages. They are experienced users of public services whose experiences can provide important information for institutional improvement. Therefore, complaint mechanisms, satisfaction surveys, public forums, social media monitoring, KBIHU feedback, and pilgrim evaluations should be integrated into communication management. The role of communication consequently shifts from “Tell the public what the government has done” to “Understand what the public experiences, explain what the government is doing, and use public feedback to improve the service.”

Situational Crisis Communication Theory

Coombs' Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT) explains how organizations should respond to crises according to the type of crisis and the degree of responsibility attributed to the organization. SCCT is relevant to Hajj because service disruptions can rapidly become communication crises. Examples include transportation delays, accommodation problems, health emergencies, lost pilgrims, visa problems, food service complaints, financial controversies, changes in departure schedules, geopolitical threats and misinformation. A crisis does not necessarily begin as a communication problem. It may begin as an

operational problem and become a communication crisis when the public does not receive adequate information. The communication response should therefore include rapid verification, clear explanation, empathy, corrective action, and continuous updates.

Islamic Communication and Da'wah

Da'wah communication is fundamentally concerned with communicating Islamic values in ways that promote understanding and social benefit. Islamic communication does not justify manipulation, deception, or the deliberate withholding of information that affects public welfare. The principle of *shiddiq* requires truthfulness. *Shiddiq* means that public communication should be based on verified facts. Government officials should avoid exaggerated claims, misleading statistics, or selective narratives designed merely to protect institutional image. *Amanah* requires responsibility. Government officials entrusted with Hajj-related communication must recognize that information affects people's worship, finances, safety, and emotional well-being. *Tabligh* requires responsible transmission. Information must not simply exist within bureaucratic documents; it must reach pilgrims in accessible forms. *Fathanah* requires wisdom and intelligence. Communication professionals must understand different audiences, technologies, cultural contexts, and crisis dynamics. These four principles provide an ethical framework for strategic communication.

Qur'anic Communication Principles

Several Qur'anic communication principles are particularly relevant. *Qaulan sadidan* emphasizes truthful and appropriate speech. In government communication, this means factual accuracy, transparency, and avoidance of misinformation. *Qaulan ma'rufan* refers to good, appropriate, and socially acceptable speech. This principle requires public officials to communicate respectfully, especially when responding to criticism. *Qaulan balighan* emphasizes communication that reaches the intended audience effectively. Information must therefore be understandable and relevant. *Qaulan layyinan* emphasizes gentle communication. This is particularly important when dealing with anxious pilgrims or families during emergencies. *Qaulan kariman* emphasizes dignified communication. Pilgrims should not be treated merely as administrative numbers but as citizens and worshippers deserving dignity.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach using a literature study method. A literature study is appropriate because the research focuses on interpreting existing documents, regulations, government publications, academic literature, and theoretical frameworks rather than collecting primary interview or survey data.

Data Sources

The data consist of four major categories. First, Legal and Regulatory Documents. The principal legal documents include Law No. 8 of 2019 concerning Hajj and Umrah Administration and Government Regulation No. 8 of 2022 concerning Coordination of Hajj Administration. Law No. 8 of 2019 establishes the legal framework for pilgrim guidance, service, protection, coordination, and participation. (BPK Regulations). Government Regulation No. 8 of 2022 specifically regulates coordination involving central government institutions, regional governments, and Indonesian representatives in Saudi Arabia. (BPK Regulations). Second, Government Documents. The study examines official publications from the Ministry of Religious Affairs, the Ministry of Hajj and Umrah, the Ministry of Health, the State Secretariat, and other government institutions. The analysis includes Hajj evaluation documents from 2025 and 2026 because they provide evidence regarding institutional challenges and service priorities. Third, Academic Literature, includes books and journal articles concerning strategic communication, strategic management, public relations, excellence theory, crisis communication, islamic communication, da'wah communication, digital communication and public-service communication. Fourth, Supporting Literature additional sources include media studies, institutional reports, and relevant scholarly publications concerning digital Hajj communication and public trust.

A recent study concerning the role of media in Hajj fund transparency found that the Ministry of Religious Affairs had used a multichannel communication strategy involving conventional media, social media, and digital platforms. The study also identified challenges associated with complex financial information, digital literacy, and misinformation. (Jurnal UIBBC)

Data Collection

Data were collected through documentary analysis. Relevant documents were identified according to the following criteria relevance to Indonesian Hajj administration, relevance to communication, official or scholarly credibility, temporal relevance to the 2025–2026 transition, theoretical relevance and accessibility for verification.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed thematically through five stages are identification, classification, interpretation, comparison, synthesis. First, relevant information was identified. Second, information was classified into major themes institutional transition service communication, stakeholder coordination, crisis communication, digital communication, Islamic communication ethics. Third, each theme was interpreted through the theoretical framework. Fourth, government practices were compared with the principles of strategic communication, Excellence Theory, SCCT, and Islamic communication. Finally, the findings were synthesized into a proposed strategic communication model.

Data Validity

Data validity was strengthened through source and theoretical triangulation. Source triangulation was conducted by comparing government regulations, official government publications, academic articles, and institutional reports. Theoretical triangulation was conducted by comparing strategic management, public relations, crisis communication, and Islamic communication perspectives. The study does not claim to measure actual public perceptions statistically. Its findings are conceptual and interpretive, based on documentary and scholarly evidence.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Hajj 2026 as an Institutional Communication Challenge

The most distinctive communication challenge of Hajj 2026 is institutional transformation. The transfer of Hajj administration to the Ministry of Hajj and Umrah represents a structural change in Indonesian religious governance. The Ministry of Religious Affairs explicitly stated that Hajj administration had moved entirely to the new ministry and that its own priority programs had consequently been adjusted. (Kementertian Agama). The transformation creates a communication challenge because institutional memory within society does not automatically change when organizational structures change. For many years, the public associated Hajj with the Ministry of Religious Affairs. Therefore, the institutional transition requires what may be called public institutional reorientation.

Public institutional reorientation involves communicating the new division of authority, clarifying institutional responsibilities, identifying official communication channels, explaining service procedures, preventing contradictory messages and preserving public confidence. The transfer of 3,528 ASN from the Ministry of Religious Affairs to the

Nurul Fadhila

Ministry of Hajj and Umrah further demonstrates that the transition involves substantial organizational restructuring. (Sumber Kemenag). The communication lesson is clear, organizational change must be accompanied by communication change. Without communication, structural reform may create confusion rather than efficiency.

Communication Gap and Public Uncertainty

An institutional transition creates the possibility of a communication gap. The communication gap occurs when institutional change to public understanding. When this happens, citizens may rely on unofficial information sources. For Hajj, this is particularly dangerous because misinformation can influence financial decisions, travel preparation, health preparation, and religious practice. The Ministry of Religious Affairs therefore needs to communicate its continuing role clearly while avoiding institutional ambiguity. A suitable message architecture should distinguish operational hajj authority to ministry of hajj and umrah, religious guidance and wider religious ecosystem to ministry of religious affairs and relevant partners. This division must be communicated consistently.

Strategic Communication as Public-Service Management

The study finds that communication should be treated as part of Hajj service management. Communication is not merely an external function. It influences service expectations, complaint levels, public satisfaction, institutional trust, crisis escalation, stakeholder cooperation, and policy acceptance. A technically successful service can still be perceived as unsuccessful if communication is poor. Conversely, transparent communication can reduce the negative consequences of unavoidable problems.

For example, transportation delays may be operationally unavoidable under certain circumstances. However, if pilgrims receive timely explanations, alternative arrangements, and continuous updates, their perception of the problem may be substantially different from a situation in which no information is provided.

Inter-Institutional Coordination

Hajj administration requires a large institutional ecosystem. Actors may include:

- Ministry of Hajj and Umrah;

- Ministry of Religious Affairs;
- Ministry of Health;
- Ministry of Transportation;
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs;
- Indonesian representatives in Saudi Arabia;
- local governments;
- airlines;
- accommodation providers;
- catering providers;
- KBIHU;
- religious leaders;
- health workers;
- media; and
- community organizations.

Government Regulation No. 8 of 2022 confirms the importance of coordination across government institutions and regional administrations. (BPK Regulations). From a communication perspective, coordination requires more than meetings. It requires message synchronization. Different institutions may possess different data, authorities, and perspectives. If they communicate without synchronization, the public may receive conflicting information. Therefore, a Single Source of Truth principle should be developed. This does not mean that only one institution is allowed to communicate. Rather, it means that all institutions communicate from the same verified factual base. The proposed mechanism is: Data Verification → Message Approval → Institutional Distribution → Multichannel Dissemination

Communication with KBIHU and Religious Leaders

KBIHU and religious leaders possess an important communication advantage: proximity. Government institutions may have authority, but local religious communicators often have stronger interpersonal relationships with pilgrims. The Ministry of Religious Affairs can therefore function as a bridge between national policy and local religious communication. This communication ecosystem can reduce information gaps. It also strengthens the da'wah dimension of Hajj administration. A recent study on digital transformation in Hajj and Umrah da'wah institutions emphasizes that digital transformation is increasingly important in improving pilgrim services and religious communication. (Abdurrauf Institute Journal)

Digital Communication and Information Disorder

The contemporary Hajj information environment is characterized by speed. Information can become viral within minutes. This creates three major challenges: Misinformation, False or inaccurate information circulated without deliberate intent to deceive. Disinformation, False information deliberately created or distributed. Malinformation, Authentic information used in misleading or harmful ways. Government communication should therefore develop an integrated monitoring system. The response should correspond to the level of risk. Low-risk questions can be answered through FAQ content. Moderate misinformation requires official clarification. High-risk misinformation requires rapid intervention by an authorized spokesperson. Crisis-level misinformation requires coordinated communication across institutions.

Crisis Communication and the Hajj 2026 Experience

Hajj 2026 also demonstrated the relevance of crisis communication in the context of geopolitical uncertainty. During the preparation period, regional tensions generated public questions regarding the continuity of Hajj travel. Public reporting in March 2026 showed that the government had considered possible scenarios concerning Hajj travel amid regional conflict before subsequently communicating that departures would proceed according to schedule. The lesson from this episode is that crisis communication must distinguish between possibility, scenario, decision, and implementation. If these categories are not clearly distinguished, the public may interpret a contingency plan as an official decision.

A crisis communication message should therefore state what is happening, what is being monitored, what scenarios are being prepared, what decision has actually been taken, what pilgrims should do; and when the next update will be provided. This creates what can be called predictable uncertainty. The government cannot always eliminate uncertainty, but it can make the management of uncertainty predictable.

Lessons from Hajj 2025 for Hajj 2026

The Ministry of Religious Affairs' 2025 national evaluation produced recommendations involving Hajj guidance, *dam* management, officer recruitment, visa management, transportation, and health. The evaluation also emphasized stakeholder coordination as a key factor in service delivery. (Kementerian Agama) These findings demonstrate that communication problems are interconnected with operational problems.

Communication Ethics and Public Trust

Public trust is one of the most important outcomes of Hajj communication. Trust cannot be created solely through positive publicity. It develops through consistent institutional behavior. Three dimensions are particularly important transparency, the government communicates relevant information openly. Consistency, messages do not contradict each other across institutions. Accountability, the institution acknowledges problems and explains corrective measures. These three dimensions correspond closely to Islamic communication ethics. *Shiddiq* supports transparency. *Amanah* supports accountability. *Tabligh* supports information accessibility. *Fathanah* supports strategic and intelligent communication. The combination produces what can be called ethical strategic communication.

The “One Voice, Multiple Channels” Strategy

A key finding of this study is the need for a One Voice, Multiple Channels communication strategy. “One voice” means one verified factual base, consistent institutional explanations, synchronized terminology, clear responsibility, unified crisis narratives. “Multiple channels” means official websites, social media, television, radio, online news, WhatsApp, YouTube, TikTok, KUA, KBIHU, religious counselors, community organizations. The same message cannot necessarily be delivered in the same format. For older pilgrims, direct face-to-face communication may be more effective. For younger family members, social media may be more effective. For journalists, press briefings and data sheets may be more appropriate. Therefore: One Message ≠ One Format. The content should remain consistent while the presentation is adapted to audience characteristics.

Public Relations and Hajj Transparency

A recent study of Ministry of Religious Affairs media relations concerning Hajj funds found that media function strategically in constructing transparency and public communication. The study identified a shift toward multichannel and proactive communication while also identifying challenges related to financial complexity and misinformation. (Jurnal UIBBC). This finding has broader implications. Hajj communication should not merely promote government achievements. It should also explain complex matters such as Hajj financing, service

Nurul Fadhila

standards, procurement accommodation, transportation, health, quotas, waiting periods, and institutional responsibilities. Complex information should be translated into public language. For example, instead of merely publishing a regulation, the communication team should create: “What This Means for Pilgrims” content. This is a critical form of public-service journalism.

The Islamic Strategic Hajj Communication Management Model

Based on the literature analysis, this study proposes an Islamic Strategic Hajj Communication Management (ISHCM) model. The model contains seven stages.

Stage 1: Environmental Scanning

Identify:

- public concerns;
- regulatory changes;
- institutional changes;
- media trends;
- misinformation;
- service problems;
- geopolitical risks.

Stage 2: Strategic Planning

Define:

- communication objectives;
- target audiences;
- key messages;
- communicators;
- channels;
- timing;
- evaluation indicators.

Stage 3: Message Alignment

All relevant institutions coordinate their factual information.

The principle is:

Verified Data → Unified Message → Institutional Adaptation

Stage 4: Multichannel Communication

Messages are disseminated through appropriate channels.

The channels should include both digital and community-based communication.

Stage 5: Stakeholder Engagement

Communication should involve pilgrims, families, KBIHU, religious leaders, journalists, health institutions, local governments, civil society.

Stage 6: Crisis Response

The proposed crisis process is Detect → Verify → Respond → Explain → Correct → Evaluate.

Stage 7: Evaluation

Communication performance should be evaluated through information reach, public understanding, response speed, complaint resolution, misinformation reduction, satisfaction, trust, stakeholder feedback.

Integrating Da'wah and Strategic Communication

The central contribution of this study is the integration of strategic communication with da'wah. Conventional strategic communication often emphasizes organizational objectives. Da'wah communication emphasizes moral responsibility and public benefit. The integration produces : Strategic Effectiveness + Islamic Ethics + Public Service. This means that communication should be, effective but not manipulative, transparent but not reckless, persuasive but not deceptive, fast but not careless. Technological but still humane. This balance is essential in Hajj communication because the audience is not simply a group of service consumers. Pilgrims are people undertaking a sacred religious journey.

Communication as Khidmah

The concept of *khidmah* or service provides an important philosophical foundation. Government communication in the Hajj context can be understood as a form of service to the Muslim community. Communication is therefore not merely about institutional reputation. Its ultimate purpose is to help pilgrims understand their obligations, prepare adequately, access services, avoid misinformation, remain safe, respond appropriately to emergencies, and perform their worship properly. This changes the orientation of communication from institution centered communication to pilgrim centered communication. The distinction is fundamental.

Strategic Recommendations

Based on the analysis, several strategic recommendations can be formulated. First, establish an integrated Hajj communication protocol. The protocol should define who communicates what, through which channel, and under what circumstances. Second, create a shared information architecture. Relevant institutions should operate from synchronized data. Third, strengthen digital monitoring. Social media

Nurul Fadhila

should be monitored continuously to identify emerging issues. Fourth, develop religious communication ambassadors. Religious counselors, KBIHU leaders, and trusted religious figures can help translate complex policy into understandable religious guidance. Fifth, develop crisis communication simulations. Institutions should conduct simulations for transportation disruption, health emergencies, geopolitical escalation, lost pilgrims, and misinformation. Sixth, institutionalize two-way communication. Public feedback should be systematically incorporated into policy evaluation. Seventh, adopt Islamic communication ethics as a formal communication standard. Communication should explicitly embody *shiddiq*, *amanah*, *tabligh*, and *fathanah*.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that Hajj 2026 represents a critical moment in Indonesian religious governance because the administration of Hajj has undergone significant institutional transformation. The transfer of Hajj administration from the Ministry of Religious Affairs to the Ministry of Hajj and Umrah has changed the institutional landscape and generated new communication requirements. The central communication challenge is not simply the dissemination of information. It is the management of institutional transition, public expectations, inter-institutional coordination, crisis communication, digital information, and public trust. Although the Ministry of Religious Affairs is no longer the primary operator of Hajj in 2026, it remains strategically significant because of its extensive religious and regional communication networks. Its regional offices, KUA institutions, religious counselors, educational networks, and relationships with Islamic communities provide important communication infrastructure.

The literature analysis shows that Hajj communication should integrate strategic management, public relations, crisis communication, and Islamic communication. From the perspective of strategic management, communication should begin with environmental scanning and strategic planning. From the perspective of Excellence Theory, communication should become more dialogical and responsive to pilgrims. From the perspective of Situational Crisis Communication Theory, crisis communication should be rapid, accurate, empathetic, and oriented toward corrective action. From the perspective of da'wah and Islamic communication, communication should embody *shiddiq*, *amanah*, *tabligh*, and *fathanah*, as well as Qur'anic principles such as *qaulan sadidan*, *qaulan ma'rufan*, *qaulan balighan*, and *qaulan layyin*.

The study proposes the Islamic Strategic Hajj Communication Management (ISHCM) model consisting of seven stages: environmental scanning, strategic planning, message alignment, multichannel communication, stakeholder engagement, crisis response, and evaluation. The model emphasizes the principle of One Voice, Multiple Channels, in which government institutions communicate consistent verified information while adapting the format to different audiences and communication platforms. The fundamental shift proposed by this study is a movement from institution-centered communication toward pilgrim-centered communication. In institution-centered communication, the primary objective is to communicate government activities. In pilgrim-centered communication, the primary objective is to ensure that pilgrims receive accurate, timely, accessible, ethical, and useful information. This distinction is particularly important from the perspective of da'wah. Communication related to Hajj is not merely administrative communication; it is part of a broader religious service to society.

The success of Hajj communication should therefore not be measured solely by the number of publications, media appearances, or social media engagements. More meaningful indicators include public understanding, information accessibility, complaint resolution, trust, transparency, stakeholder satisfaction, and the ability of pilgrims to make informed decisions.

Ultimately, strategic communication in Hajj should serve three interconnected objectives accurate information, trustworthy governance, and dignified religious service. The findings also suggest that future research should conduct empirical studies involving pilgrims, KBIHU, religious counselors, journalists, government communication officers, and social media audiences. Such research would allow the proposed ISHCM model to be tested and refined through field evidence.

REFERENCES

- Bakti, A. F. (2004). *Communication and Da'wah: Religious Communication in Contemporary Indonesia*. Jakarta: Logos.
- Bakti, A. F. (2012). *Islam and Communication: Media, Religion and the Public Sphere*. Jakarta: Prenada Media.
- Cangara, H. (2017). *Perencanaan dan Strategi Komunikasi*. Jakarta: Rajawali Pers.
- Coombs, W. T. (2007). Protecting organization reputations during a crisis: The development and application of Situational Crisis

Nurul Fadhila

- Communication Theory. *Corporate Reputation Review*, 10(3), 163–176.
- Coombs, W. T. (2015). *Ongoing Crisis Communication: Planning, Managing, and Responding*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.
- Cutlip, S. M., Center, A. H., & Broom, G. M. (2006). *Effective Public Relations*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.
- Effendy, O. U. (2003). *Ilmu, Teori dan Filsafat Komunikasi*. Bandung: Citra Aditya Bakti.
- Fathan, F., & Saifuddin, A. (2020). Da'wah and the improvement of Islamic higher education institution's image with communication strategy of public relations. *Ilmu Dakwah: Academic Journal for Homiletic Studies*, 13(2).
- Grunig, J. E., & Hunt, T. (1984). *Managing Public Relations*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.
- Grunig, J. E. (2008). Excellence theory in public relations. In W. Donsbach (Ed.), *The International Encyclopedia of Communication*. Wiley.
- Gutomo, T. C., & Harliantara. (2024). Human interest feature as public communication strategy Hajj pilgrimage 2024. *Representamen*, 11(1).
- Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia. (2025). *Rakernas Evaluasi Haji 2025 Hasilkan Lima Rekomendasi*. Jakarta: Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia. ([Kementerian Agama](#))
- Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia. (2026). *Pasca Pengalihan Haji, Pemberdayaan Rumah Ibadah Masuk Asta Protas Kemenag*. Jakarta: Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia. ([Kementerian Agama](#))
- Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia. (2026). *Alihkan 3.528 ASN ke Kemenhaj, Kemenag Dukung Sukses Haji*. Jakarta: Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia. ([Sumbar Kemenag](#))
- Ministry of Health of the Republic of Indonesia. (2025). *Evaluation of Hajj Health Services 2025: Momentum for Policy Improvement 2026*. Jakarta: Ministry of Health.
- Pearce, J. A., & Robinson, R. B. (2013). *Strategic Management: Planning for Domestic & Global Competition*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Republic of Indonesia. (2019). *Law Number 8 of 2019 concerning the Organization of Hajj and Umrah*. Jakarta: Government of the Republic of Indonesia. ([BPK Regulations](#))
- Republic of Indonesia. (2022). *Government Regulation Number 8 of 2022 concerning Coordination of Hajj Administration*. Jakarta: Government of the Republic of Indonesia. ([BPK Regulations](#))

- Sandika, A. (2026). Transformasi digital lembaga dakwah haji dan umrah dalam pelayanan jamaah di era digital. *Indonesian Journal of Dakwah and Communication*, 1(1), 29–44. (Abdurrauf Institute Journal)
- Seitel, F. P. (2017). *The Practice of Public Relations*. New York: Pearson.
- Siagian, S. P. (2012). *Manajemen Strategik*. Jakarta: Bumi Aksara.
- Smith, R. D. (2017). *Strategic Planning for Public Relations*. New York: Routledge.
- Rambe, R. F., Hidayat, R. P., & Harahap, M. S. (2025). The role of media in promoting transparency of Hajj funds: A public relations strategy analysis of the Ministry of Religious Affairs in constructing public communication. *Communicative: Jurnal Komunikasi dan Penyiaran Islam*.
- State Secretariat of the Republic of Indonesia. (2026). *President Prabowo Appreciates Hajj 2026 Implementation, Encourages Service Improvement and Shorter Waiting Periods*. Jakarta: State Secretariat of the Republic of Indonesia. (Setneg)
- Ministry of Hajj and Umrah of the Republic of Indonesia. (2026). *National Evaluation Meeting of Hajj Administration 1447 H/2026 M*. Jakarta: Ministry of Hajj and Umrah. (Rakernas Evaluasi PIH 2026)