

Sociopreneurship and Spiritual Fundraising in Islamic Economics: A Case Study of Bubur Sedekah in Surakarta

Ade Yuliar^{1*}, Agus Wahyu Triatmo², Supandi³, Dita Andraeny⁴

UIN Raden Mas Said Surakarta*^{1, 2, 3, 4}

^{*1}email: adeyuliar2107@gmail.com

²email: Agus.wahyutriatmo@staff.uinsaid.ac.id

³email: supandi@staff.uinsaid.ac.id

⁴email: andrayanti88@gmail.com

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Abstract: The phenomenon of Bubur Sedekah conducted by micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in Surakarta shows a close relationship between economic activities and social values. This study aims to examine whether the practice of sharing food in the form of Bubur Sedekah is a form of donation or an emotionally designed fundraising strategy to build a positive image and public loyalty. Using a qualitative approach and case studies of several businesses in urban and semi-urban areas, data were collected through in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and digital documentation. The results show that Bubur Sedekah is not only seen as a religious charity or donation intention, but also functions as soft marketing that is able to touch people's empathy, increase trust, and encourage participation in socio-economic activities. These findings strengthen the concept of sociopreneurship as a business model that combines humanitarian values and charitable sustainability through

Abstrak: Fenomena “Bubur Sedekah” yang dilakukan oleh pelaku usaha mikro, kecil dan menengah (UMKM) di Surakarta menunjukkan keterkaitan yang erat antara aktivitas ekonomi dan nilai-nilai sosial. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji apakah praktik berbagi makanan berupa bubur sedekah merupakan bentuk donasi semata atau strategi penggalangan dana yang dirancang secara emosional untuk membangun citra positif dan loyalitas publik. Dengan pendekatan kualitatif dan studi kasus pada beberapa pelaku usaha di wilayah urban dan semi-urban, data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara mendalam, observasi partisipatif, dan dokumentasi digital. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa bubur sedekah tidak hanya dipandang sebagai amal ibadah atau niat berdonasi saja, tetapi juga berfungsi sebagai soft marketing yang mampu menyentuh empati masyarakat, meningkatkan kepercayaan, dan mendorong partisipasi

fundraising. This research recommends the need to develop ethical communication strategies so that the value of sincerity is maintained amid the potential commercialisation of social action.

Keywords: Bubur Sedekah; Sociopreneurship; Spiritual Fundraising; Charitable Behaviour.

dalam kegiatan sosial-ekonomi. Temuan ini memperkuat konsep kewirausahaan sosial (sociopreneurship) sebagai model bisnis yang menggabungkan nilai kemanusiaan dan keberlanjutan amal melalui fundraising. Penelitian ini merekomendasikan perlunya pengembangan strategi komunikasi yang etis agar nilai keikhlasan tetap terjaga di tengah potensi komersialisasi aksi sosial.

Kata Kunci: Bubur Sedekah; Sociopreneurship; Spiritual Fundraising; Perilaku Beramal.

A. Introduction

The reality of zakat collection in Indonesia is currently well below the national target (Kemenag RI, 2025). Interestingly, this low realization of zakat achievement occurs at the same time as the growing consumer culture among Indonesian, especially online shopping (Temasek et al., 2023). The dynamics of Indonesian consumer behavior are unique and sometimes seem contradictory. On the one hand, many people understand that Indonesians are very consumptive, especially in the current technological era (Harisandi & Wiyarno, 2023). Tangible examples of consumptive behavior are the rapid increase in online shopping, hedonistic lifestyle trends in cities, and the "bandwagon" culture of buying branded or viral items. Massive discounts, such as Harbolnas, are always welcomed with enthusiasm, showing people's strong urge to buy something (Herna et al., 2019; Rohmah et al., 2024; Sartika et al., 2024).

On the other hand, Indonesia is considered one of the most generous countries. According to the World Giving Index, released by the Charities Aid Foundation in recent years, Indonesians have consistently ranked at the top in terms of giving (CAF, 2024). The spirit of mutual help, sharing, and social care remains strong, both through conventional mechanisms such as infaq, sadaqah, and zakat, as well as through digital

platforms such as social crowdfunding and online donations (Ma'ruf et al., 2025; Rohim, 2019).

This paradox does not directly indicate a contradiction; rather, it shows how complex social and cultural values are in Indonesian society. The value in society is that donating to others brings happiness and satisfaction to the giver (Nuryitmawan & Maesaroh, 2023). Although people can spend money impulsively on personal needs, many consumers also do not hesitate to set aside part of their income to help others through charitable institutions, especially during disasters, the month of Ramadan, or Eid al-Fitr (Hidayat et al., 2025; Kasri, 2013). The following data shows the Indonesian people's enthusiasm for donating.

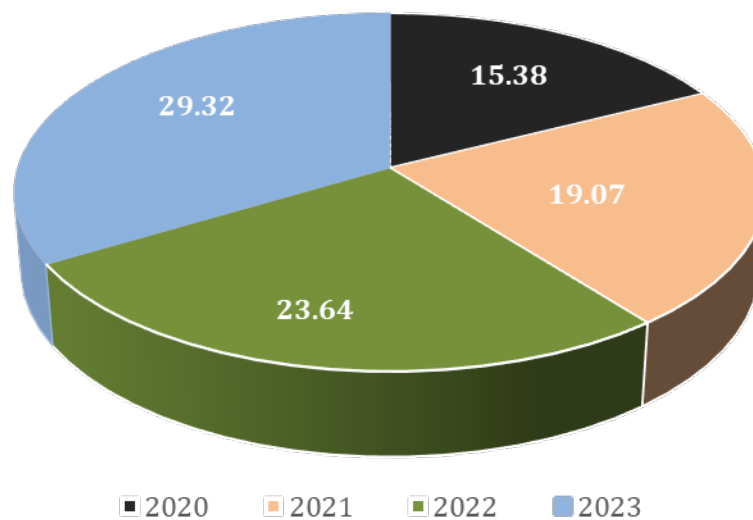


Figure 1: Percentage of religious community participation in giving zakat
Source: Baznas and Ministry of Religious Affairs reports

Based on the data, the percentage of religious communities participating in zakat has increased each year. The data is integrated with the zakat obligatory identification

number and with data that is not recorded in institutions such as mosques, orphanages, and others.

Thus, the trend of businesses deliberately donating to shoppers is an interesting phenomenon, which arises amid changing consumption patterns, global crises, and growing social awareness (Dou & Xu, 2024; Okutayeva et al., 2021). These bonuses take various forms, such as special discounts, free products, or extra services not typically included in regular transactions (Prahalad & Hammond, 2002).

This phenomenon cannot be fully understood solely from a marketing or promotional strategy perspective. Emotional, social, and even spiritual factors contribute to businesses' decision to "give" beyond business obligations (Triatmo et al., 2023). Many businesses, especially in the micro, small, and medium enterprise (MSME) sector, say that this is due to gratitude, empathy, and a desire to maintain relationships with consumers in a more humane manner (Zahra et al., 2009). Then the right term is sociopreneurship, which means not pursuing financial gain but having social goals such as helping the community and donating. In practice, sociopreneurship will involve the community, and a portion of sales proceeds can be donated to social activities or channeled through philanthropic institutions (Praszkier et al., 2009).

At the same time, these actions exemplify the changing entrepreneurial paradigm. Where the previous model prioritized profit, the current approach emphasizes value and inclusivity. This illustrates a larger analytical trend: businesses increasingly build solidarity, foster trust, and make direct social contributions, reaching even those historically considered the "beneficiaries" of transactions (Austin et al., 2012).

In addition, this social entrepreneurship supports the idea that the relationship between entrepreneurs and consumers becomes more cohesive and mutually supportive in crisis-affected societies, as it did during the Covid-19 pandemic (Yuliar, 2021). Businesses are no longer just about selling; entrepreneurs are community members who listen to and address their buyers' needs.

Therefore, when businesses donate to shoppers, they highlight the difference between philanthropy and business. Businesses introduce entrepreneurial models that value people and social solidarity alongside profits. These approaches form part of marketing management (Kotler & Lee, 2005).

An interesting social entrepreneurship finding is in *Bubur Sedekah*. This activity involves buying and selling alms porridge. It is supported by the alms porridge community in Kestalan Village, Banjarsari Subdistrict, Surakarta. Porridge sellers, as business actors who donate, can be categorized as MSMEs. The surrounding urban community comprises many educated residents, making donation organization easier. According to Latief (2018), the educated and professional Muslim middle class plays a key role in developing new forms of Islamic humanitarian activism. They are not only donors, but also mobilizers, volunteers, and managers of philanthropic institutions.

Bubur Sedekah (alms porridge) has been running since 2015. The strategic location is close to the market and to the emergence of social problems, namely poverty, where people have difficulty meeting their basic needs. This became the basis for *Bubur Sedekah* to be intensified. In practice, *Bubur Sedekah* operates on a "buy one, give one" model, combining sales and donations.

This model establishes emotional connections with donors and consumers, aligning with the analysis of social enterprise fundraising—an approach rooted in empathy and participation. Thus, the transaction is positioned as an emotional experience that reinforces caring and engagement (Zhang et al., 2023).

This raises an analytical question: Is *Bubur Sedekah* organized by businesses an act of pure generosity for donors, or a fundraising activity that actively engages public participation in charitable giving? From an analytical perspective, it is important to investigate whether *Bubur Sedekah* can evolve into an effective cultural and spirituality-based fundraising strategy rather than remain a symbolic ritual or promotional tool. This

also prompts an analysis of how *Bubur Sedekah* attracts consumers or donors, and how donor behavior shapes charitable choices through *Bubur Sedekah*.

The novelty of this study lies in its focus on donation behavior in a business context. This research analyzes *Bubur Sedekah* in two frameworks: understanding donation behavior and using it as a fundraising strategy. This study also provides business actors and social communities with insights for more impactful sharing practices.

B. Research Method

This is qualitative research with a case study approach. The case is the *Bubur Sedekah* buying and selling activities carried out by the *Bubur Sedekah* community in Kestalan Village, Banjarsari Subdistrict, Surakarta. As *field research*, this data is in the form of words, sentences, and language narratives that empirically describe social phenomena in the field.

From the interview with the founder of *Bubur Sedekah*, data were obtained on the initiative's idea, purpose, and development plan for its activities. Other data include motivation, purpose, and experience as an alms-giver at *Bubur Sedekah*. Informant data were obtained from Mr. Sutanto (S), the originator of the idea and supervisor of the *Bubur Sedekah* community. Then three people gave alms, namely Mr. Lilik Setiawan (LS), Mrs. Diana (D), and Mr. Sri Widadi (SW). Other data from the interviews were obtained from Mr. Kohar (K), as a porridge seller, namely his feelings as a small business actor who was helped by the *Bubur Sedekah* program. Then the consumers of *Bubur Sedekah* and the beneficiaries of the donations.

In addition, observation techniques were also used. Observation was conducted by directly and in detail examining the processes of buying and selling, as well as the distribution of alms in *Bubur Sedekah*. The researcher visited the *Bubur Sedekah* sales location several times and was also directly involved in distributing alms porridge to

people in need. Through participatory observation, we gained insight into how people feel when they are a little embarrassed to accept alms, as well as the joy they feel on the other side after receiving alms porridge. Data will also be collected using documentation techniques. Among the documents needed are various zakat distribution reports posted on the *Bubur Sedekah* community's social media.

The data of this research is validated using triangulation and *member check* techniques. These two techniques are combined to ensure that the data obtained is truly valid and objective, so it can serve as a basis for relevant and factual conclusions. The data analysis technique used in this research is qualitative. This qualitative technique will be used throughout the research. This qualitative data analysis technique includes: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing with verification (Sugiyono, 2017).

C. Results and Discussion

1. *Bubur Sedekah*: Profile and Selling Concept

Bubur Sedekah is located in Stabelan Village, Banjarsari, Surakarta, just east of Pasar Legi Surakarta. After Pasar Legi burned down in 2018, Stabelan became a temporary market area for traders. This transformation created a bustling, disorderly, market-like atmosphere, providing *Bubur Sedekah* with a vibrant setting.

In the middle of the market-like atmosphere of Setabelan village, the *Bubur Sedekah* trading location is located at Jalan Lumban Tobing No. 2, Setabelan, Banjarsari District, Surakarta City. The location was chosen not only for strategic reasons but also because the idea of *Bubur Sedekah* originated there.

Bubur Sedekah is managed by Café Librairie and made by Mas Kohar, originally from Tasikmalaya. Previously called Ayam Nusa Sari, Mas Kohar sold porridge around Pasar Legi for three years before joining Café Librairie in mid-2015.

The idea for *Bubur Sedekah* came from a discussion among students studying at Café Librairie under the guidance of Mr Sutanto. Café Librairie itself is located in one of the front rooms of Mr Sutanto's house. He is a lecturer from Sebelas Maret University Surakarta. So, in front of Café Librairie, *Bubur Sedekah* Nusa Sari Mas Kohar sells angkringan, and food stalls are on the right and left. Mas Kohar is always ready with his chicken porridge cart and neat dining tables and chairs every morning. With the words "Bread for Charity", a banner was displayed in front of the chicken porridge booth.

Bubur Sedekah is a type of social laboratory in education. There, students learn to solve community problems by participating. At *Bubur Sedekah*, students can study various subjects, including social science, entrepreneurship, religion, and maths. Café Librairie is a model of education that puts social problems at the center of knowledge development. Academics and universities do not prevent the community from gaining scientific knowledge.

However, Café Librairie, with its Alms Porridge, serves as a model of thought development in a social context, producing innovations on old ideas about entrepreneurship and almsgiving. If almsgiving is only considered a ritual with myriad rewards that are not clearly normative, then, with the concept of alms porridge, almsgiving becomes one of the social religious phenomena with real empirical benefits. In the past, almsgiving was just giving some of the wealth to the poor, so it was passive.

In contrast to *Bubur Sedekah* Café Librairie, the concept of alms becomes more dynamic. Each charity has a unique effect; the beneficiaries do not end at one point; instead, there is a domino effect. In the case of *Bubur Sedekah*, the domino effect is the porridge vendor expanding his business and the community in need of help.

2. The Transformation of Consumer Behavior From Purchasing to Charitable Participation

Bubur Sedekah has loyal customers thanks to its location in the market and its savoury, delicious taste. As a merchant with a unique alms programme, *Bubur Sedekah* has a diverse customer base because of its commitment to alms porridge. The presence of many alms-giving customers is strongly influenced by the incessant publicising of the *Bubur Sedekah* activities through social media.

During the pandemic, some customers admitted they didn't understand the "buy one, pay two or more" concept, likely because the information wasn't readily available.

Based on observations and interviews with customers, some characteristics of donors are exposed to donor behaviour, as follows. "Regular" customers, loyal customers of *Bubur Sedekah*, are porridge buyers who come almost every day. These customers are unaware of the *Bubur Sedekah* programme. In terms of numbers, this customer category is the largest. The professions of regular customers are students, traders, and people in the neighbourhood. Regular customers come from various religious backgrounds.

There are also charitable customers who buy *Bubur Sedekah* frequently, almost as often as regular customers. In general, this category of customers knows about the concept of *Bubur Sedekah*, but they only donate bubur through *Bubur Sedekah* occasionally. Alms-giving customers donate by putting money into the alms box prepared by the porridge seller, Mr Kohar. Everyone can see the alms box made of clear glass and see how much money is inside.

Furthermore, there are regular donors. These are donors who regularly make donations through *Bubur Sedekah*, so they are called regular donors. Most of these donors do not live in Solo, so they are not regulars of *Bubur Sedekah*. Others live in Solo and visit *Bubur Sedekah* often, but not every day. These donors donate money to the *Bubur Sedekah* team.

In general, regular donors have a strong economic background, with some of them working as entrepreneurs and others as government employees (ASN). And the donors

also have a higher education background. The characteristic of these donors is their extensive knowledge, especially of the value of generosity. The donors understand the benefits of alms in terms of religious, socio-economic, humanitarian, and even metarational benefits, such as the miracle of alms. However, one of the regular donors is not Muslim; he even stated that he is agnostic, meaning that all religions are true.

Higher social classes are often in social networks that uphold the values of generosity from a social perspective. In neighbourhoods, donations are maintained and reinforced by the business community, religious groups, and the media (Lee, 2024). Thus, charitable giving has emphasised the importance of socio-economic status in explaining an individual's decision to donate (Elis et al., 2024). Furthermore, higher levels of education increase preferences for fairness and awareness of social security issues, which, in turn, enhance understanding of the social benefits of donations (Wang & Zhao, 2025).

One type of tangible social contribution is charitable giving behaviour, which demonstrates altruistic values, empathy and social responsibility. The Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB), developed by Ajzen (1991), provides a complete theoretical basis for understanding one's motivation to perform charitable acts. According to TPB, three main components influence a person's desire to perform a behaviour, including donating. They are attitudes towards the behaviour, subjective norm, and perceived behavioural control. Firstly, attitude towards donation indicates how favourably a person views donation as good, beneficial and important. Positive attitudes towards donation usually arise from individuals who believe that donation has significant social effects and can help others (Stollar et al., 2024).

Second, subjective norms refer to social pressure or expectations from one's social environment, such as family, friends or religious leaders, that influence their decision to donate. Third, perceived behavioural control refers to how easy or difficult a person finds it to donate, such as whether they have the funds, can access the donation

platform, or have trust in the managing institution. Smith & McSweeney's study (2007) found that TPB can significantly predict donation intensity, especially when individuals have positive attitudes, social support, and feel they have control over their actions. In addition, van der Linden study (2011), found that religiosity and empathy factors can also influence TPB elements in the context of charitable donations.

Moreover, various motivations drive them to become *Bubur Sedekah* donors. First, religious motivation. Some donors continue to participate in the *Bubur Sedekah* programme for religious reasons. They have strong religious beliefs. As we know, almsgiving is a religious commandment. In Islam, almsgiving is part of the religion's main message (QS. Al Maun: 2-3 about religious liars who do not support orphans and the poor; QS. Al Humazah: 1-9, about accidents for those who count their wealth; Al Munafiqun 9-11, about losses for those who are reluctant to give alms. Giving alms will get abundant rewards (QS. Al Baqarah: 261). The study by (Carkoglu et al., 2017) found that higher levels of religiosity increase the likelihood of donating.

Second, humanitarian social motivation. Social motivations lead some donors to continue supporting the *Bubur Sedekah* programme. The programme provides direct assistance to meet basic human needs, such as food. In addition, *Bubur Sedekah* is considered a programme that takes human values into account. Since begging dehumanises people, it should not happen to them. *Bubur Sedekah* will hopefully stop begging.

During the Covid-19 recovery period, *Bubur Sedekah* was proven to facilitate food-sharing activities for people in need, at a time when economic conditions had not yet recovered. This is a testament to *Bubur Sedekah*'s donation values that stem from the meaning of life (Mofawaz, 2024; Sabah & Oflazoğlu, 2024).

Third, socioeconomic motivations. Some donors are also motivated to join the *Bubur Sedekah* programme due to socio-economic factors (Chugunova et al., 2025; Weisz & Cikara, 2025). According to the donors, *Bubur Sedekah* has an effective

mechanism. An additional socio-economic motivation is the long domino effect of the alms porridge, which makes the donor feel like they can help people in need. It helps the porridge vendors run their businesses and even supports the farmers at the Rojo Lele Centre in Delanggu, who provide the rice for *Bubur Sedekah*. The motivation for charity makes a donor also feel happiness when giving alms (Aknin et al., 2013). Among the feelings of happiness donors experience is a sense of usefulness to others. Donors believe that helping others is a basic human need, and by helping others, they feel that their existence is recognized (self-actualization) in society (K. Smith, 2024).

Furthermore, there are many benefits associated with charity porridge. It is not only the recipients of charity who benefit, but also the porridge vendors and farmers who supply rice for the porridge, who are currently facing difficulties in marketing their agricultural products.

Finally, donors feel that they gain convenience in various matters related to religion (Huang et al., 2024). Some regular donors reported receiving benefits in the form of religious experiences. Others felt more at ease in completing their various tasks, ranging from work issues to family matters. Even without human knowledge, God is felt to be present to solve all their affairs. Thus, the donors' motivation and feelings of happiness are reflected in their charitable giving through *Bubur Sedekah*.

3. Reframing Bubur Sedekah: Charity Fundraising as a Faith-Based Sociopreneurship Strategy

Charity porridge sellers essentially internalize the principle of da'wah into their business, particularly through charitable fundraising methods that encourage voluntary donations. This practice shows that da'wah can be carried out not only in ritual and verbal spaces but also in ethical, socially meaningful business strategies.

In this case, fundraising activities framed by the value of charity invite goodness (da'wah bil hal) and can influence consumers' spiritual dimensions. Therefore, charity

porridge sellers do not merely seek to generate financial profits. Instead, they strive to develop a spiritual marketing strategy, a marketing approach that emphasizes sincerity, social empathy, and community benefit as the main attractions for encouraging public participation and loyalty.

Bubur Sedekah is an economic innovation, especially in marketing, namely spiritual marketing. The concept of spiritual marketing is a component of a marketing strategy that considers the customer as a whole person. In other words, a marketing strategy that uses the language of the heart upholds the principles of honesty, fairness and ethics without disturbing all parties involved in marketing (Brennan & Brady, 1999; Massi et al., 2025).

Fundraising in the digital age, as seen in the promotion of *bubur sedekah*, does not only focus on logical and technical approaches. It also pays increasing attention to spiritual aspects to influence donors' emotional and religious feelings (Saxton & Wang, 2014). Spiritual marketing is an emerging approach to marketing that incorporates spiritual, moral, and ethical values to build relationships with society, especially through charity. In this case, spiritual marketing not only gets people to donate but also helps them understand that giving charity is part of actualising Islamic values and worship (Hasan, 2020). This approach has proven effective in encouraging public participation in various charitable activities, such as zakat, infaq, sadaqah, and waqf, within religious societies in Indonesia (Kamal et al., 2024).

Both conventional and contemporary spiritually based fundraising also communicate the importance of having a genuine connection and blessing when giving (Mukhyiddin, 2021). They not only serve as recipients of funds but also as links between kindness and the meaning of life. is considered as part of a spiritual journey that strengthens social ties and human values rather than a transactional act (Pitchay et al., 2025).

Charity fundraising is clearly described through the Alms Porridge. Alms givers who give more are rewarded in the form of a greater sense of fulfilment (Chattoe, 2000; Sarabdeen et al., 2025). Field findings show that *Bubur Sedekah* is not only seen as an act of worship or donation, but also functions as soft marketing that can arouse public empathy, increase trust, and encourage participation in socio-economic activities. *Bubur Sedekah* marketing is a philanthropic medium that connects donors with people who need to eat, thereby encouraging customers to buy (Rostiani et al., 2014).

The *Bubur Sedekah* programme can continue to grow and spread thanks to the support of the information technology team at Café Librairie. Many *Bubur Sedekah* customers learn about the programme and want to join via social media such as Facebook. The role of social media is to help promote the programme and attract more donors through messages (Bhati & McDonnell, 2024; Chan et al., 2025). The *Bubur Sedekah* operator team also reported how distribution is done through social media. The role of social media is important for philanthropy and effective donor connectivity in today's digital era (Hoque, 2024; Mansur et al., 2025; Thanetnit & Potipairatana, 2025).

Thus, there are at least two contributions from the information technology team in supporting and successfully implementing the *Bubur Sedekah* programme. Firstly, social media serves as a source of information for many people. Through social media, the *Bubur Sedekah* programme by Café Librairie is widely known, and people, especially those who give alms, are interested in joining. The second function is to report to donors on how the distribution programme is run.

Another finding, noted by the *Bubur Sedekah* sellers in managing their business and at the same time inviting charity, is to recapitulate the daily alms so that customers can see how much alms quota remains to be distributed to those in need. On the wall of the porridge dining room is an information board that records the daily quota for porridge alms. However, in recent years, the invitation to give alms sheets and the notice board about the porridge alms quota have disappeared. In front of porridge carts,

a fixed banner that is not too big is the only information for benefactors. As a result, most customers were unaware of the *Bubur Sedekah* programme at the time of this study. Of course, people's tendency to donate or give alms is influenced by factors such as informative charity information (Evers & Gesthuizen, 2011).

D. Conclusion

Based on the data collected and the discussion in the previous chapters, it is concluded that *Bubur Sedekah* demonstrates the concepts of selling and giving alms. This conclusion is supported by the data that *Bubur Sedekah* is run with a commitment to ethical, moral, and religious values. This commitment is carried out primarily through practice, not formally or legally, so that the existence of *Bubur Sedekah* is supported and trusted by various parties across religions. This is why donors from various social statuses continue to support this program. In addition, *Bubur Sedekah* also upholds human dignity and is managed professionally and ethically as a sustainable charity fundraising effort.

From the research findings, the weak points of *Bubur Sedekah* were also identified during its journey over about six years (from the year of the research). One that stands out is the lack of administration in the form of up-to-date information about the alms recapitulation, which is readily accessible to customers. In addition, there is a lack of narratives about alms that persuade customers, so some customers do not know that *Bubur Sedekah* is ready to distribute porridge alms to those in need. Therefore, it is suggested that the *Bubur Sedekah* management team not grow tired of persuading customers through alms narratives, using ethical communication, to maintain the sincerity of donors.

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