

Zakat and Community Empowerment: Synergizing Public Governance to Enhance Social Welfare

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the strategic integration of zakat within the framework of public administration to enhance community empowerment and improve social welfare in Indonesia. Employing a descriptive qualitative methodology, the research analyzes scholarly literature and policy documents, including national regulations and institutional practices related to zakat governance. The findings highlight that when managed transparently and aligned with good governance principles, zakat functions as more than a religious obligation—it serves as a potent tool for social justice, economic empowerment, and poverty alleviation. Institutional actors such as BAZNAS and LAZISMU exemplify how zakat management can incorporate participatory, accountable, and effective administrative practices to support national welfare agendas. The discussion underscores the importance of policy integration, supportive regulatory environments, and multi-stakeholder collaboration to amplify the impact of zakat-based programs. This synergy between zakat and public governance offers a conceptual and practical model for developing a sustainable, values-based social welfare system. The study concludes by identifying the need for further research into cross-sector collaboration models and the institutionalization of zakat within broader social policy frameworks.

1. Introduction

Zakat is one of the key instruments in Islamic economics, encompassing strong spiritual, social, and economic dimensions. In the context of community empowerment, zakat is not merely a ritual obligation but also serves as a wealth redistribution mechanism to foster social justice and strengthen economic solidarity among citizens¹. As Islam's third pillar, zakat is

¹ Sri Fadilah, Mey Maemunah, and Nopi Hernawati, 'Community Social Empowerment in Zakat Community Development (ZCD)', *MIMBAR : Jurnal Sosial Dan Pembangunan*, 35.2 (2019), doi:10.29313/mimbar.v35i2.5127; Muhamad Rudi Wijaya and Anas Habibi Ritonga, 'Improvement of Community Welfare through Productive Zakat Empowerment (Case Study in KUA, Batanghari District, East Lampung Regency)', *FITRAH: Jurnal Kajian Ilmu-Ilmu Keislaman*, 7.1 (2021), doi:10.24952/fitrah.v7i1.3399; Urwatul Wutsqah, 'Productive Zakat for Community Empowerment: An Indonesian Context', *Journal of Sharia Economics*, 3.1 (2021), doi:10.35896/jse.v3i1.179.

strategically positioned to build a sustainable social welfare system². Within the socio-economic landscape of Indonesia, characterized by high levels of poverty, unemployment, and income inequality, zakat has significant potential to function as an effective instrument for community empowerment.

According to data from Indonesia's Central Bureau of Statistics (Badan Pusat Statistik, BPS), the poverty rate in 2023 stood at 9.36 per cent of the total population, indicating that over 25 million people were living below the poverty line³. Furthermore, the Gini Index, which measures income inequality, recorded a value of 0.384, signalling that social disparity remains a critical issue. This situation demands charitable interventions and transformative approaches through well-planned and sustainable empowerment strategies. Within this context, zakat can be crucial in addressing socio-economic challenges through structured, measurable, and equity-oriented empowerment schemes⁴.

Conceptually, scholars, academics, and public policy practitioners have defined zakat in various ways. Terminologically, zakat implies purification or growth (*taḥkīyah*)⁵, and in practice, it refers to the obligatory act for every eligible Muslim to allocate a portion of their wealth to designated recipients⁶. From a religious standpoint, zakat represents obedience to divine commands and serves as a form of social worship⁷. Socially, zakat manifests solidarity and concern for fellow human beings, contributing to social balance. From a public administration perspective, zakat is increasingly viewed as a policy instrument that the state or public institutions can mobilize to advance welfare and social justice⁸.

Zakat management has undergone significant transformation in Indonesia, especially following the enactment of Law No. 23 of 2011 on Zakat Management. This legislation institutionalizes zakat within a more structured framework, granting the state a role in facilitating,

² Dahlawi Dahlawi, Ilham Akbar, and Saddam Rasanjani, 'Zakat and Social Welfare: Reviewing Zakat Management in Baitul Mal Aceh through a Good Governance Perspective', *Islam Realitas: Journal of Islamic and Social Studies*, 8.2 (2022), doi:10.30983/islam_realitas.v8i2.5223; Bella Jastacia, & Dinda, and Ismu Asyifa, 'The Role of Zakat in Increasing Social Welfare during Pandemic', *Indonesian Conference of Zakat - Proceedings*, 2021.

³ Badan Pusat Statistik Indonesia, 'Profil Kemiskinan Di Indonesia Maret 2023', *Badan Pusat Statistik*, no. 57 (2023).

⁴ Moch Chotib, Muhammad Fauzinudin Faiz, and Ikhsan Abdullah, 'Establishing a Zakat Culture Based on Good Zakat Governance and Good Zakat Empowerment in Indonesia', *Journal of Islamic Economics Perspectives*, 5.2 (2023), pp. 1–11, doi:10.35719/jiep.v5i2.121.

⁵ Sofyan Rizal and Nur Adibah, 'An Evaluation of the Impact of Zakah and Islamic Financial Instruments on Economic Growth', *Muqtasid: Jurnal Ekonomi Dan Perbankan Syariah*, 13.1 (2022), doi:10.18326/muqtasid.v13i1.31-46; Azman Mohd Noor and Muhamad Nasir Haron, 'Imposing Zakat on Legal Entities and Its Applications in Islamic Financial Institutions', *Arab Law Quarterly*, 27.1 (2013), doi:10.1163/15730255-12341249.

⁶ Diana Lestari, Dea Kusumawati, and Maya Panorama, 'The Correlation Between Advertisements Of Badan Amil Zakat And The Intention Of Muslim Community In Performing Zakat Obligation', *AL-WIJDĀN Journal of Islamic Education Studies*, 8.1 (2023), doi:10.58788/alwijdn.v8i1.1852.

⁷ St. Halimang, 'Islamic Philanthropy: Zakat Study Is the Tax Dimension Of Social Worship Perpektif Farid Masdar F Mas'udi And Its Relevance to Tax Policy in Indonesia', *Baltic Journal of Law & Politics*, 16.3 (2023); Sugeng Riyanto, Ratih Herningtyas, and Moh Nizar, 'Muslim's Philanthropy in Singapore and the Role of Government', *Sociologia y Tecnociencia*, 11.2 (2021), doi:10.24197/st.2.2021.194-214.

⁸ Yamuna Nurafifah, 'ZAKAT: Government Fiscal Policy Instruments in the Covid-19 Pandemic', *Munazzama: Journal of Islamic Management and Pilgrimage*, 1.2 (2021), doi:10.21580/mz.v1i2.9899; Afief El Ashfahany and others, 'How Zakat Affects Economic Growth In Three Islamic Countries', *Journal of Islamic Economic Laws*, 6.1 (2023), doi:10.23917/jisel.v6i1.21242.

regulating, and supervising zakat implementation through the National Zakat Agency (BAZNAS) at national and regional levels⁹. In addition to BAZNAS, non-governmental zakat organizations such as Dompot Dhuafa, Rumah Zakat, and LAZISMU actively develop community-based zakat programs. LAZISMU, an official zakat body under Muhammadiyah, is a notable example of a non-state actor contributing substantially to community empowerment and public affairs¹⁰. It performs collection and distribution functions for zakat, alms (*infak*), and donations (*sedekah*), and engages in policy formulation, social advocacy, and community-based development¹¹. Programs such as farmer empowerment, microenterprise development, educational assistance, and disaster response illustrate LAZISMU's role as a strategic partner in national and local welfare governance.

These empowerment practices demonstrate that zakat goes beyond providing short-term direct cash assistance. It also serves as a social and economic asset for vulnerable groups to independently enhance their quality of life¹². Community empowerment through zakat represents a novel approach that addresses immediate needs and provides long-term solutions through capacity building, skill development, and improved access to economic resources. When managed transparently and accountably, productive zakat can transform *mustahik* (recipients) into *muzakki* (contributors), turning beneficiaries into benefactors¹³.

Theoretically, community empowerment is a process of social transformation that aims to improve the capacity of individuals and communities to better manage their lives. The empowerment theory proposed by Wilkinson and Quarter identifies three key components: collective consciousness, empowerment activities, and supportive structures¹⁴. Collective consciousness fosters awareness of social position and potential; empowerment activities include training, education, and access to resources; and supportive structures consist of institutions or systems that sustain the empowerment process. All three components can be found in strategically managed zakat programs, particularly those focused on productive zakat.

As a form of state intervention in socio-economic life, public policy plays a significant role in supporting empowerment initiatives¹⁵. Pro-people and socially just policy designs can create

⁹ Nispul Khoiri, Ramadhan Syahmedi Srg, and Izhar Izhar, 'Implementation of Zakat Mal Management Based on Law Number 23 Year 2011 in Institution Amil Zakat Muhammadiyah, Medan City', *Budapest International Research and Critics Institute (BIRCI-Journal): Humanities and Social Sciences*, 4.1 (2021), doi:10.33258/birci.v4i1.1711; Haryani Santo Hartono, 'Indonesia's National Zakat Agency (BAZNAS): Digital Transformation in Managing Zakat, Infaq and Shadaqah (ZIS)', *Muslim Business and Economic Review*, 1.2 (2022), doi:10.56529/mber.v1i2.67.

¹⁰ Benny Prasetya and others, 'LAZISMU Philanthropy Potential in The Empowerment of Mustahiq's Economic and Welfare (A Case Study in Probolinggo, Jember, and Pasuruan)', *Afkaruna: Indonesian Interdisciplinary Journal of Islamic Studies*, 17.2 (2021), doi:10.18196/afkaruna.v17i2.10463.

¹¹ Sayyidatunisa and Fitri Nur Latifah, 'Analysis of Fundraising Strategies at the Zakat, Infaq and Shadaqah Muhammadiyahs Institute (Lazizmu) District Sidoarjo', *Academia Open*, 4 (2021), doi:10.21070/acopen.4.2021.2050.

¹² A L Bara and R Pradesyah, 'Analysis Of The Management Of Productive Zakat At The Muhammadiyah, City Of Medan', *Proceeding International Seminar of ...*, 1 (2020).

¹³ Khoiri, Srg, and Izhar, 'Implementation of Zakat Mal Management Based on Law Number 23 Year 2011 in Institution Amil Zakat Muhammadiyah, Medan City'.

¹⁴ Paul Wilkinson and Jack Quarter, 'A Theoretical Framework for Community-Based Development', *Economic and Industrial Democracy*, 16.4 (1995), doi:10.1177/0143831X95164003.

¹⁵ Mridula Goel and Nidhi Ravishankar, 'Impact of Public Policy and Legislation on Autonomy and Empowerment of Women in India', *Gender Issues*, 39.2 (2022), doi:10.1007/s12147-021-09282-7; Kurnia Muhamad Ramdhan, Budiman Rusli, and Rd. Ahmad Buchari, 'Public Engagement in The Policy of Arrangement

an enabling environment for zakat-based empowerment to thrive¹⁶. This includes regulatory frameworks supporting professional zakat collection and distribution¹⁷, incentives for muzakki, zakat institution certification, and integrating zakat programs with government poverty alleviation initiatives¹⁸. Through integrated policy approaches, zakat can become essential to a sustainable national social security system grounded in religious values.

Zakat management must adhere to good governance principles in public administration, including transparency, accountability, public participation, responsiveness, effectiveness, efficiency, and the rule of law¹⁹. Transparency is essential to build public trust; accountability ensures targeted and appropriate fund distribution; public participation allows community involvement in decision-making; and effectiveness and efficiency ensure that resources are used optimally to achieve desired outcomes. In practice, many zakat institutions in Indonesia have adopted these principles through digital systems, external audits, regular reporting, and multi-sectoral collaboration.

As a state institution, BAZNAS has implemented several innovations in zakat governance, such as the SIMBA (Zakat Management Information System)²⁰, digital zakat platforms, and the integration of zakat programs with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)²¹. Moreover, BAZNAS collaborates with ministries, government agencies, and civil society organizations to expand the outreach and impact of zakat-based empowerment programs. This collaborative model reflects an adaptive and synergistic approach to public administration, addressing complex social challenges.

From this perspective, zakat is not merely a personal religious obligation but also a public concern that must be managed systematically. Synergizing zakat with public administration is essential to harnessing its full potential to support national development goals, particularly in

and Empowerment for Street Vendors in Garut Kota Subdistrict', *Sosiohumaniora*, 22.2 (2020), doi:10.24198/sosiohumaniora.v22i2.25792.

¹⁶ Moh. Mufid. and Adamu Abubakar Muhammad, 'Islamic Philanthropy and Public Policy: A Study of Zakat Fatwas from the New Order Era to the Post-Reform Era', *Jurnal Hukum Islam*, 21.2 (2023), doi:10.28918/jhi_v21i2_01.

¹⁷ Afief El Ashfahany, Wulan Galuh Savitri, and Sheila Putri Anggraeni, 'Strategy Of Professional Zakat Fundraising In Zakat Management Institutions', *IQTISHADUNA: Jurnal Ilmiah Ekonomi Kita*, 12.1 (2023), doi:10.46367/iqtishaduna.v12i1.1042.

¹⁸ Safwan Kamal and others, 'How Do Muzakki Pay Professional Zakat? (The Qualitative Inquiries Using the Bloom Model)', *Journal of Islamic Marketing*, 15.3 (2024), doi:10.1108/JIMA-02-2022-0046; Misdawita Misdawita, Any Widayatsari, and Putri Asrina, 'The Effect of Income, the Role of the Government, and Cleric on the Decision to Pay Professional Zakat in Pekanbaru City', *Asean International Journal of Business*, 1.2 (2022), doi:10.54099/aijb.v1i2.184.

¹⁹ Chotib, Muhammad Fauzinudin Faiz, and Ikhsan Abdullah, 'Establishing a Zakat Culture Based on Good Zakat Governance and Good Zakat Empowerment in Indonesia'; Hani Tahliani, 'Contribution of Good Governance Principles to Strengthening Zakat Management in Indonesia: Confirmatory Factor Analysis', *International Journal of Zakat*, 3.3 (2018), doi:10.37706/ijaz.v3i3.94; Euis Amalia, 'Good Governance for Zakat Institutions in Indonesia: A Confirmatory Factor Analysis', *Pertanika Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities*, 27.3 (2019).

²⁰ Marliyah Marliyah and Fadilah Andriani, 'Optimizing the Application of Technology through the Application of the Baznas Information Management System (Simba) in Zakat Management at the Baznas of North Sumatra Province', *Jurnal Akuntansi, Manajemen Dan Bisnis Digital*, 1.2 (2022), doi:10.37676/jambd.v1i2.2251.

²¹ Mazro'atus Sa'adah and Uswatun Hasanah, 'The Common Goals of BAZNAS' Zakat and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) According to Maqasid Al-Sharia Perspective', *Al-Ihkam: Jurnal Hukum Dan Pranata Sosial*, 16.2 (2021), doi:10.19105/AL-LHKAM.V16I2.4990; Randi Swandaru, 'National Zakat Management Information System: E-Sercive Quality and Its Impact on National Zakat Collection', *International Conference of Zakat*, 2019, doi:10.37706/iconz.2019.145.

enhancing social welfare. Integrating zakat into public policy represents a strategic effort to bridge religious values with modern, rational governance systems.

The main research question of this article is: How can integrating zakat into public policy frameworks enhance community empowerment?. This article explores how zakat can be utilized within the framework of public administration as an instrument for community empowerment and social welfare improvement. Furthermore, this study aims to analyze institutional practices in zakat management that have successfully implemented good governance principles, and to assess the opportunities and challenges in mainstreaming zakat within public policy agendas.

2. Research Method

This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach to obtain an in-depth and comprehensive understanding of the dynamics of zakat management within the framework of public administration and its relevance to community empowerment efforts. This approach is selected because it enables the researcher to explore social realities comprehensively, interpretively, and contextually based on data derived from literature and policy documents.

Data collection techniques were conducted through two primary methods: literature review and policy document analysis²². The literature review includes examining journal articles, academic books, previous research findings, and scholarly publications relevant to zakat, community empowerment, and public administration. Meanwhile, the policy document analysis involves the examination of legal and regulatory instruments such as Law No. 23 of 2011 on Zakat Management, Government Regulation No. 14 of 2014, as well as technical guidelines and reports issued by zakat management institutions such as BAZNAS and LAZISMU.

The collected data were analyzed using qualitative data analysis techniques, consisting of three main stages: data reduction, data presentation, and interpretation²³. Data reduction was done to filter relevant information; data presentation aimed to organize the findings in a systematic narrative, while interpretation was performed to derive meaningful insights and an in-depth understanding of the phenomena under investigation. Through this methodological approach, the study is expected to make both conceptual and practical contributions to developing zakat governance oriented toward community empowerment and improving social welfare.

3. Results and Discussion

This study explores how Zakat, as a socio-religious instrument²⁴, can synergize with the principles of public administration to support the agenda of community empowerment and the enhancement of social welfare. The findings reveal that integrating Zakat within the framework of public administration enhances the effectiveness of zakat distribution and broadens its function within the domain of public policy and social services.

²² Kevin Grant, Ray Hackney, and David Edgar, 'Postgraduate Research Supervision : An "Agreed " Conceptual View of Good Practice through Derived Metaphors Literature Review & Policy Document Analysis', *International Journal of Doctoral Studies*, 9 (2014).

²³ Matthew B Miles and A. Michael Huberman, 'Miles and Huberman 1994.Pdf', *Qualitative Data Analysis: An Expanded Sourcebook*, 1994.

²⁴ Bilal Ahmad Malik, 'Philanthropy in Practice: Role of Zakat in the Realization of Justice and Economic Growth', *International Journal of Zakat*, 1.1 (2016), doi:10.37706/ijaz.v1i1.7.

3.1. Synergy Between Zakat And Public Administration Governance

Historically and normatively, Zakat represents a form of social responsibility managed within an institutional framework. In the context of public administration, Zakat is not merely an individual philanthropic act but a component of an organized system of social justice distribution. Public administration principles such as accountability, transparency, participation, and effectiveness can serve as foundational guidelines in zakat management to generate systemic impacts on social development²⁵.

The synergy between Zakat and public administration becomes strategically significant when zakat management aligns with the principles of Good Governance. Good Governance emphasizes the importance of participatory, transparent, accountable, and responsive systems oriented toward social justice. Within this framework, zakat institutions—whether state-managed like BAZNAS or non-governmental like LazizMu—are expected to serve as fund collectors and distributors and as social development agents that prioritize the welfare of the poor and vulnerable²⁶.

Zakat institutions have established partnerships with various government sectors through programs that promote local economic development, vocational training, and community institutional strengthening. These models demonstrate that the synergy extends beyond administrative functions and evolves into strategic partnerships between the public sector and civil society.

On the other hand, public policies that encourage inclusive and accountable zakat management play a crucial role. Through Law No. 23 of 2011 on Zakat Management, the Indonesian government has established a legal framework for professional and standardized zakat administration²⁷. This law mandates that zakat management be planned, coordinated, and accountable to the public.

However, the effectiveness of this policy heavily depends on cross-actor synergy. Local governments hold a strategic role in building a governance ecosystem conducive to zakat management. This includes the provision of accurate data on impoverished populations, facilitation of inter-institutional collaboration, and the promotion of community participation.

BAZNAS, as the official state institution, is mandated to coordinate the collection and distribution of Zakat at the national level. In contrast, LazizMu, as a non-governmental actor, has demonstrated institutional capacity and long-term commitment in supporting community empowerment through various community-based approaches. The collaboration between these two entities has created a more flexible and innovative policy space for mapping societal needs and distributing Zakat in a targeted and effective manner.

Public policy should not only be regulatory but also facilitative and collaborative. Thus, government support is necessary to establish coordinating forums among the government, zakat institutions, and civil society organizations to formulate sustainable poverty alleviation strategies.

²⁵ Katarzyna Lakoma, 'Public Governance Paradigms: Competing and Co-Existing', *Local Government Studies*, 46.6 (2020), doi:10.1080/03003930.2020.1847904; Muhammad Fajrus Shodiq and Eka Kurniawan Putra, 'Challenges of Regional Government in the Disruptive Era', 2020, doi:10.2991/aebmr.k.201116.019.

²⁶ Prasetya and others, 'LAZIZMU Philanthropy Potential in The Empowerment of Mustahiq's Economic and Welfare (A Case Study in Probolinggo, Jember, and Pasuruan)'; Fadilah, Maemunah, and Hernawati, 'Community Social Empowerment in Zakat Community Development (ZCD)'.

²⁷ Khoiri, Srg, and Izhar, 'Implementation of Zakat Mal Management Based on Law Number 23 Year 2011 in Institution Amil Zakat Muhammadiyah, Medan City'.

3.2. Zakat Institutions in Public Affairs: The Case of BAZNAS and LazizMu

In practice, the roles of BAZNAS and LazizMu demonstrate complementary approaches to zakat management. BAZNAS emphasizes centralization and governance system standardization based on government regulations, while LazizMu applies a grassroots approach grounded in dakwah values and direct community capacity building.

LazizMu, a zakat institution rooted in the Muhammadiyah civil society organization, has developed various community empowerment programs aligned with national and local development agendas²⁸. Initiatives such as Zakat for Economic Independence, Progressive Villages, and Cadre Scholarships exemplify how zakat funds are not limited to short-term consumption but are directed toward the long-term capacity building of beneficiaries.

Meanwhile, BAZNAS is central in standardizing governance practices, enhancing the national zakat information system, and coordinating across ministries and agencies to promote public accountability²⁹. With its capabilities, BAZNAS provides macro-level data on zakat collection and distribution, serving as a reference point in formulating data-driven zakat policies.

These two approaches illustrate the complementary roles of governmental and non-governmental actors. When managed according to the principles of Good Governance, zakat institutions can serve as bridging agents that address the gap between community needs and the limitations of government interventions.

3.3. Zakat as an Instrument for Community Empowerment

Productively managed Zakat can serve as a critical pillar in community empowerment. Within the participatory development paradigm, Zakat functions not merely as a mechanism for economic redistribution but also as a symbol of social justice imbued with spirituality and solidarity.

Productive zakat programs have evolved from consumptive models into empowerment-oriented economic initiatives. These include providing capital for micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs), entrepreneurship skill training, and sustainable business mentoring. This aligns with the community empowerment theory, which emphasizes enhancing individual and collective capacities to achieve self-reliance.

In this context, Zakat cannot be detached from development policy. It operates as a social instrument capable of supporting poverty alleviation strategies, reducing inequality, and promoting inclusive growth. Public administration plays a vital role in ensuring that zakat distribution adheres to principles of justice and responsiveness.

Zakat also functions as a tool of social consolidation, fostering a sense of shared responsibility among citizens in creating a just social system. Thus, community empowerment through Zakat is not solely about material distribution but also involves internalizing values and social transformation.

The findings of this study reinforce the growing body of literature that underscores the transformative potential of zakat in sustainably empowering communities. Prior research has emphasized that when zakat is managed systematically and transparently, it has the capacity to address not only immediate material needs but also long-term socioeconomic challenges.

²⁸ Sayyidatunisa and Latifah, 'Analysis of Fundraising Strategies at the Zakat, Infaq and Shadaqah Muhammadiyahs Institute (Lazizmu) District Sidoarjo'.

²⁹ Sa'adah and Hasanah, 'The Common Goals of BAZNAS' Zakat and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) According to Maqasid Al-Sharia Perspective'; Hartono, 'Indonesia's National Zakat Agency (BAZNAS): Digital Transformation in Managing Zakat, Infaq and Shadaqah (ZIS)'.

Scholars have argued that zakat, as an institutionalized mechanism of wealth redistribution rooted in Islamic social justice principles, holds the potential to eradicate structural poverty over time. This assertion is supported by empirical evidence indicating that zakat-based programs, particularly those with a productive and developmental focus, can lead to meaningful improvements in the livelihoods of the poor and vulnerable.

More recent studies have expanded on this understanding by demonstrating that zakat can also function as a reliable and flexible alternative source of social funding, especially during periods of fiscal austerity, economic crisis, or emergencies. In such contexts, where state resources may be limited or delayed, zakat offers a complementary financing mechanism that can be mobilized rapidly and distributed through established community networks. This flexibility makes zakat a strategic asset within broader public welfare systems, capable of bridging gaps in service delivery and supporting resilience in marginalized populations. Consequently, integrating zakat into national and local governance frameworks—especially through partnerships between public institutions and zakat organizations—emerges as a promising strategy for enhancing inclusive development and reducing socioeconomic disparities in a sustainable and culturally resonant manner.

Theoretically, this approach aligns with governance theory, which advocates for collaboration among public, private, and civil society sectors in addressing complex social issues. In the context of Zakat, multi-actor collaboration is necessary, reflecting the intricate dynamics of justice-based development governance.

4. Conclusion

This study underscores the importance of synergy between zakat and public administration in improving community welfare. In developing countries such as Indonesia, where poverty and social inequality remain persistent challenges, zakat is not merely a religious obligation but also holds strategic potential as a policy instrument for social development. When managed systematically, accountably, and participatorily, zakat can support community empowerment agendas and foster a more sustainable social justice ecosystem.

Several key findings emerged from this research. First, the analysis reveals that zakat can contribute to development objectives, particularly in poverty alleviation, economic empowerment of marginalized groups, and capacity building. When administered by public administration principles such as transparency, accountability, effectiveness, and inclusiveness, zakat can be transformed from a simple redistributive mechanism into a tool for social transformation.

Second, the synergy between zakat management institutions such as BAZNAS (a state body) and LazizMu (a civil society organization) demonstrates that collaboration between the public sector and civil society generates innovations more responsive to local needs. LazizMu, for instance, integrates zakat programs with community-based empowerment approaches rooted in Islamic values, connecting them to education, healthcare, and family- and community-based economic development. Third, public policies related to zakat particularly Law Number 23 of 2011 on Zakat Management provide a solid legal framework. However, regional implementation challenges include inter-agency coordination issues, limited beneficiary data, and low levels of public participation in the planning and monitoring zakat programs. Fourth, productive zakat approaches targeting microeconomic empowerment, skill development, and support for self-sustaining enterprises have proven effective in fostering economic self-reliance. These programs suggest that zakat can directly support poverty reduction policies while strengthening local economic structures.

This study opens up opportunities for further research, particularly in assessing the long-term effectiveness of zakat programs, exploring the integration of zakat with national social protection systems, and examining the potential of zakat in contributing to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Qualitative and quantitative inquiries into beneficiaries' experiences are essential for evaluating the socio-economic transformations driven by zakat interventions. In conclusion, zakat holds significant potential as a strategic instrument in public policy, especially within a development paradigm emphasizing social justice. When the synergy between zakat and public administration is optimally managed, enhancing community welfare becomes an ideal and achievable reality.

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