



PROFESSIONAL ZAKAT IN PEKANBARU CITY : AN ANALYSIS OF PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS TOWARD THE BAZNAS PROGRAM

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ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui persepsi masyarakat terhadap zakat profesi di Badan Amil Zakat Nasional (BAZNAS) Kota Pekanbaru serta faktor-faktor yang mendukung dan menghambatnya. Metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah pendekatan deskriptif kuantitatif dengan teknik pengumpulan data melalui observasi, wawancara, dan dokumentasi terhadap masyarakat muslim di Kota Pekanbaru. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa sebagian masyarakat masih memiliki pemahaman yang rendah mengenai kewajiban zakat profesi, disebabkan oleh kurangnya sosialisasi dari BAZNAS dan minimnya pemahaman tentang cara perhitungan zakat profesi. Namun demikian, terdapat peningkatan kesadaran masyarakat terhadap pentingnya menunaikan zakat profesi seiring dengan meningkatnya peran BAZNAS dalam edukasi dan pengelolaan zakat yang lebih profesional. Disarankan agar BAZNAS meningkatkan kegiatan sosialisasi, edukasi, dan transparansi dalam pengelolaan zakat profesi guna memperkuat kepercayaan dan partisipasi masyarakat.

Kata Kunci : Zakat Profesi, Persepsi Masyarakat, BAZNAS.

ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze public perception toward professional zakat (zakat profession) in the National Amil Zakat Agency (BAZNAS) of Pekanbaru City, as well as the supporting and inhibiting factors. The research employed a quantitative descriptive approach with data collected through observation, interviews, and documentation among Muslim communities in Pekanbaru City. The findings indicate that a portion of society still lacks sufficient understanding of the obligation of professional zakat, mainly due to limited outreach and education from BAZNAS, as well as inadequate knowledge of zakat calculation methods. Nevertheless, public awareness regarding the importance of paying professional zakat has increased along with the growing role of BAZNAS in conducting socialization and managing zakat professionally. It is recommended that BAZNAS enhance educational programs, transparency, and socialization activities to strengthen public trust and participation in zakat management.

Keywords : Professional Zakat, Public Perception, BAZNAS.

INTRODUCTION

Zakat is one of the fundamental pillars of Islam, serving not only as a ritual act of worship but also as a powerful institutional mechanism for wealth purification, social solidarity, and the alleviation of poverty. Islamic jurisprudence positions zakat as a mandatory obligation for those who have reached the *nisab* (threshold of wealth) and have held it for at least one lunar year (Hidayat et al, 2024). Apart from its spiritual dimension, zakat functions as a tool for redistributing wealth from the relatively affluent to the needful, thereby reducing economic inequality and strengthening social welfare. Indonesia, as the world's largest Muslim-majority country, has recognized this potential and institutionalized zakat management through the creation of the Badan Amil Zakat Nasional (BAZNAS) and local zakat management institutions (Zakat Management Organizations or ZMOs). For instance, BAZNAS's 2023–2024 data indicate the agency has broadened its operational frame to integrate digital modalities and empowerment programmes to increase the impact of zakat on poverty alleviation. (Alwi et al, 2023).

In the city of Pekanbaru, the provincial capital of Riau Province, the local branch of BAZNAS plays a central role in the promotion, collection and distribution of zakat, *infaq* and *sedekah* (ZIS). Among the various categories of zakat, the concept of professional zakat (zakat on professional income) has in recent years drawn increasing attention. Professional zakat typically applies to salaried employees or professionals such as civil servants, doctors, lawyers, entrepreneurs who derive income from their work or expertise. While traditional zakat categories (such as zakat *fitriah*, zakat *maal* on wealth) are widely recognized, professional zakat remains less understood among many members of the Muslim community. Research suggests that many income-earners do not realize the obligation may apply to them, or they are uncertain how

to calculate the amount, and may harbour doubts regarding procedural aspects or institutional legitimacy (Wahyu et al, 2020). For example, a study in Jakarta found that zakat literacy, income level and altruistic motivation each positively affected the decision to pay professional zakat via zakat institutions, moderated by perceptions of transparency (Oktaviani & Fatah, 2022).

Despite the potential of professional zakat to enlarge the base of contributors (*muzakki*) and thereby increase resources available for redistribution, practical uptake remains modest. In Indonesia, the overall potential of zakat has been estimated at hundreds of trillions of rupiah annually, yet the actual collection remains a small percentage of that potential (Cahyani, 2020). The gap is even larger when it comes to professional zakat specifically, where misunderstandings, weak socialization and institutional trust deficits serve as barriers. For instance, a recent sentiment-analysis study found that only 32% of expert-written literature on professional zakat carried positive sentiment, 27% negative, and the remaining were neutral indicating conceptual ambivalence remains in some circles. (Assalafiyah & Rusydiana, 2023)

Preliminary observations in the context of Pekanbaru City suggest the following issues: (1) public awareness and compliance in paying professional zakat are relatively low; many professional income-earners may not recognise themselves as *wajib zakat* (obligated to pay) in the professional category; (2) public understanding of how to calculate professional zakat, and to which institution they should remit it, is inadequate; (3) the socialization efforts by BAZNAS Pekanbaru appear insufficient or not optimally tailored to the target group of professional income-earners; (4) factors such as institutional transparency, ease of payment, trust in zakat institutions, and digital service options may influence the perception and participation of potential *muzakki* (Hakim et al, 2020).

Given this context, this study seeks to examine how the Muslim community in Pekanbaru perceives professional zakat managed by BAZNAS, to identify supporting and inhibiting factors in its implementation, and to explore strategies to enhance participation. Specifically, the study will address the following research questions:

1. What is the level of awareness, understanding and attitude of the professional income-earners (and the general Muslim community) in Pekanbaru toward professional zakat?
2. What are the main factors (such as zakat literacy, income level, altruism, institutional trust, transparency, digital service availability, etc.) that support or hinder the payment of professional zakat via BAZNAS?
3. How can BAZNAS Pekanbaru improve its outreach, education, transparency, and service delivery to increase professional zakat participation and thereby optimise the role of zakat in socio-economic welfare?

The rationale for focusing on professional zakat is multifold. First, the professional category represents a growing segment of the workforce in urban centres like Pekanbaru, where economic development, public service expansion and entrepreneurship open up new sources of income beyond conventional forms of wealth. Capturing this category can significantly expand the zakat base. Second, urban contexts present specific challenges for zakat management, including diverse socio-economic backgrounds, higher levels of autonomy and alternative philanthropic options, which require targeted communication strategies. For example, studies in city-level mapping of zakat potential find that urban areas often require tailored strategies for optimisation (Zaenal et al., 2022), professional zakat by nature intersects with both religious obligation and

financial/administrative processes (income calculation, deduction of expenses, choice of institution)—which means it demands higher levels of literacy, clarity and institutional facilitation than more familiar zakat categories.

From the institutional perspective, BAZNAS has made significant strides in recent years in digital transformation, transparency initiatives, and empowerment programmes. For instance, BAZNAS's index of management performance improved to 0.52 in 2024 from 0.46 in 2023, according to its national report, indicating evolving institutional maturity. However, local implementations may face different terrain: local public trust, region-specific socio-cultural factors, and resource constraints might limit the translation of national reforms into concrete increases in professional zakat participation.

Therefore, this study is important for several reasons. It contributes to the empirical literature on zakat in Indonesia by focusing on the professional zakat category and public perception in a city context (Pekanbaru) which has been less widely studied to date. It provides practical insights for BAZNAS and local zakat management institutions about how to tailor socialization and service strategies for professional income-earners. And it advances the normative agenda of zakat as a tool not only for ritual compliance, but for substantive social welfare and economic equity in an urban Indonesian setting.

In sum, this research frames professional zakat in Pekanbaru within a broader theoretical and institutional landscape of zakat as a socio-economic instrument, identifies perceptual and operational barriers at the community level, and seeks to propose recommendations to strengthen the role of BAZNAS in facilitating professional zakat. In doing so, it aspires to support two intertwined goals: enhancing individual fulfilment of religious obligation, and enhancing the capacity of

zakat institutions to mobilize resources for the common good.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Public Perception

Public perception plays a decisive role in determining how zakat, especially modern categories like professional zakat, is viewed and acted upon by communities. Perception may be defined as the process through which individuals interpret sensory information, assign meaning to external stimuli, and subsequently form attitudes and behaviours. In the context of zakat, perception determines how society understands the obligation, recognizes its relevance, and chooses to engage (e.g., pay zakat through an institution). Recent empirical studies in Indonesia show that perception of zakat-management institutions (such as transparency, accountability, service quality) significantly influences willingness to pay. For example, a 2023 sentiment-analysis study of tweets regarding amil-zakat institutions found that while the dominant sentiment was neutral ($\approx 93.5\%$), trust issues and communication gaps were still notable (Rejab et al, 2023). Another 2024 article identifies public trust in digital zakat platforms being shaped by factors such as digital security, usability, and transparency of reporting (Purnamasari, 2024).

Moreover, higher levels of zakat literacy and awareness correlate positively with increased zakat collection in Indonesian cities: a study in Prabumulih City found that public awareness, zakat literacy, and welfare had significant positive effects on collection. These findings suggest that perception is not only a matter of religious obligation but also institutional confidence, perceived ease of payment, and clarity of process. In urban settings, professional zakat may face additional perceptual barriers: income earners may question whether their income qualifies, how to calculate the liability, and which institution to use. If these questions are not addressed clearly, perception may

lean toward scepticism or inertia. Consequently, understanding public perception is indispensable for institutions like the Badan Amil Zakat Nasional (BAZNAS) and other local zakat-management organisations (Makhrus et al, 2024).

Society and Urban Context

Urban environments present distinctive socio-economic and cultural dynamics that influence zakat engagement. The city of Pekanbaru exemplifies a heterogeneous society: a mix of civil servants, professionals, entrepreneurs, and informal workers, with varied educational backgrounds and income levels. In such a context, multiple challenges emerge for zakat programmes.

First, urban professional income-earners often prioritise efficiency, clarity, and convenience thus institutional mechanisms for paying zakat must be tailored accordingly. Communication strategies that work in traditional or rural communities may not suffice in urban settings where time constraints and diverse information sources prevail. Second, the pluralism and exposure to alternative philanthropic platforms can lead professionals to compare zakat institutions with other giving options, thereby raising the bar for institutional accountability and service quality (Fatchurrahman et al, 2024) . Third, intra-urban inequality and fast-paced lifestyle may diminish the salience of obligations perceived as religious if they are not well integrated into daily routines or workplace culture (Sugianto, 2024). Scholars underscore the need for “good zakat governance” and empowerment frameworks in Indonesia, arguing that an urbanised zakat culture relies on transparency, digitalisation, and institutional responsiveness to the professional class. Thus examining the urban context of Pekanbaru is essential: it shapes not only the target population for professional zakat but also the operational demands placed on zakat-management institutions.

Professional Zakat

Professional zakat refers to the zakat obligation applied to income derived from professional services or employment (rather than solely to wealth holdings). Historically less familiar in many Muslim-majority societies, this category has gained attention in recent years as formal employment and services expand. Literature reviews show that research output on professional zakat has increased significantly; one 2023 meta-analysis found that among 71 reviewed papers, 32% carried positive sentiment about professional zakat, 27% negative, and 41% neutral signalling conceptual divergence and nascent understanding.

In Indonesia, while legal frameworks and regional regulations exist (for example, some regional regulations in Riau Province reference zakat al-maal and professional income), public understanding remains limited. The calculation of professional zakat often poses questions: which expenses may be deducted, how to define 'net income', and how to integrate with institutional payment channels (Zunaidi et al, 2024). Professional income-earners may thus feel uncertain whether their income is zakatable or whether they are fulfilling the obligation correctly. This uncertainty influences perception and participation.

Moreover, in a city like Pekanbaru where the economic base is increasingly diversified (public service, private sector, entrepreneurship), professional zakat offers a potentially large but under-tapped reservoir of zakat funds. Mobilising this requires not only institutional capability but public awareness, simplified procedures, and trust in the distribution of funds. Empirical evidence from Indonesia supports this view: for instance, research indicates that when institutions are perceived as credible and services are accessible, the intention to pay professional zakat increases; conversely, lack of clarity and socialisation hinder uptake (Ramlee et al, 2023).

BAZNAS as Zakat Institution

The National Amil Zakat Agency (BAZNAS) is the primary governmental institution for zakat management in Indonesia, including collection, distribution, supervision, and regulation of zakat, infaq, and sedekah (ZIS). The success of BAZNAS and local Zakat Management Organisations (ZMOs) depends critically on organisational professionalism, transparency, accountability, innovation, and public trust (Hayatika et al, 2021). Recent studies emphasise that good zakat governance is a key determinant of zakat culture; one 2023 study found that building a zakat culture in Indonesia depends on institutional elements such as transparency, community participation, empowerment programmes, and digital tools. Specific empirical evidence indicates that perceptions of the institution's reputation, satisfaction with distribution outcomes, service quality and disclosure practices all influence payers' trust and willingness to pay (Hakim et al, 2023). In essence, when BAZNAS or local branches are viewed as reliable agents of zakat management, participation improves. Conversely, breakdowns in transparency or poor communication reduce public confidence and deter engagement. In the context of professional zakat, BAZNAS's role becomes even more critical: providing clear information about professional zakat obligations, offering user-friendly payment channels (including digital platforms), enabling calculation tools, and demonstrating credible distribution outcomes enhance both awareness and compliance (Damanik et al, 2023). Furthermore, as urban professional populations are more demanding of institutional service standards, BAZNAS and its local branches must adapt accordingly.

Therefore, literature supports the view that the interplay of public perception, urban socio-economic context, clarity of professional zakat, and institutional effectiveness of BAZNAS are central to understanding how professional zakat can be expanded in cities like Pekanbaru.

Synthesis of Conceptual Framework

Drawing on the four dimensions above, a conceptual framework emerges for this study: Public perception (awareness, trust, attitudes) is influenced by socioeconomic and urban context (education, income level, professional status, urban dynamics). Professional zakat constitutes the specific object of perception, with its own complexity (calculation, obligation, institutional channel). Institutional performance (BAZNAS: transparency, service quality, digitalization, socialization) acts as a mediator/moderator between context/perception and actual participation. In sum, understanding professional zakat participation in Pekanbaru requires examining how these elements interact in the local context.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study applied a quantitative descriptive research design to examine public perception of professional zakat managed by BAZNAS in Pekanbaru City. The descriptive approach was chosen to systematically depict community attitudes and awareness without testing causal hypotheses. The research focused on three main variables: perceptions of professional zakat, institutional credibility and socialization by BAZNAS, and respondents' socio-economic characteristics such as income, education, and profession. Data were collected cross-sectionally from a purposive sample of 100 Muslim professionals representing diverse occupations across Pekanbaru.

Multiple data collection methods were used to ensure valid and rich data. These included direct observation of BAZNAS socialization activities, structured interviews with selected professionals and BAZNAS officials, and questionnaires featuring Likert-scale items measuring awareness, trust, and satisfaction with zakat management. Secondary data such as annual reports and regional zakat regulations were also analyzed. The questionnaire was

developed based on established theoretical constructs, validated through expert review and pilot testing, showing high reliability (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.84$).

Data analysis employed descriptive statistics to identify patterns in respondents' perceptions and trust toward professional zakat. Sociodemographic factors were cross-tabulated and correlated with zakat awareness to understand differences among occupational groups. Qualitative insights from interviews helped explain underlying reasons for limited understanding or mistrust, enriching the quantitative findings through data triangulation. Ethical research standards were upheld by ensuring voluntary participation, informed consent, and respondent confidentiality in line with Islamic principles of trust and justice.

The research followed a stepwise procedure starting with preparation, including literature review and instrument design, followed by field data collection, coding and statistical analysis, interpretation with theoretical integration, and final reporting with practical recommendations for BAZNAS and policymakers. This methodological rigor supports credible conclusions about the challenges and facilitators of professional zakat compliance in Pekanbaru.

Overall, this approach provides a comprehensive, reliable picture of public perception dynamics regarding zakat profession, laying a strong foundation for enhancing zakat education, institutional outreach, and digital payment innovations to improve compliance and social welfare impact.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Overview of Findings

The findings of this study reveal that public perception toward professional zakat (zakat on income) in Pekanbaru City remains varied, with a general pattern of moderate understanding and partial participation. Although many respondents acknowledged

zakat as an Islamic obligation and understood its importance in reducing poverty and promoting social equity, most still associated zakat only with zakat fitrah (given during Ramadan) or zakat al-maal (zakat on wealth and assets). The specific understanding of professional zakat—its legal basis, calculation, and obligation—remained relatively low among the urban Muslim population.

This section discusses the results in detail, structured into four main themes: (1) level of understanding, (2) the role and performance of BAZNAS Pekanbaru, (3) supporting factors that enhance awareness and compliance, and (4) inhibiting factors that limit participation in professional zakat. The discussion also integrates theoretical perspectives from previous research and current literature to provide a comprehensive interpretation.

Level of Understanding of Professional Zakat

The quantitative results from the questionnaire indicate that only a small proportion of respondents approximately 25% demonstrated an accurate understanding of professional zakat, including its concept, calculation (*nisab*, rate of 2.5%), and intended beneficiaries (*mustahiq*). Around 60% of respondents admitted that they had heard of professional zakat but were unsure of the detailed rules or how to pay it properly, while the remaining 15% were unaware of this obligation entirely.

This finding aligns with the earlier assumption that zakat literacy among urban Muslims in Pekanbaru remains limited. Many respondents confused professional zakat with income tax or viewed it as voluntary charity rather than a religious obligation. Interviews with several civil servants revealed that while they often paid zakat fitrah annually, they were unaware that their monthly salary also met the criteria for zakat payment. This indicates a significant gap between religious knowledge and

practical compliance, suggesting the need for more effective educational outreach.

This result is consistent with research by (Oktaviani & Fatah, 2022) in Jakarta, who reported that low zakat literacy and weak understanding of calculation mechanisms significantly affect people's intention to pay professional zakat. Similarly, the 2024 BAZNAS Report found that while awareness of zakat institutions increased nationally, understanding of zakat types (especially zakat on income) lagged behind.

Thus, the level of understanding of professional zakat in Pekanbaru reflects both cognitive and behavioral gaps. Cognitively, many individuals do not fully grasp that income earned through lawful professional work is subject to zakat once it exceeds the *nisab*. Behaviorally, even among those who are aware, few consistently allocate and pay 2.5% of their income through formal institutions such as BAZNAS.

The Role of BAZNAS Pekanbaru in Zakat Management

Institutionally, BAZNAS Pekanbaru has demonstrated notable progress in terms of improving organizational systems, accountability, and transparency. Annual reports (2022–2024) show that zakat collection in Pekanbaru has increased gradually, with digital payment systems and community-based empowerment programs introduced to strengthen public trust. (Setiawan et al, 2024) However, the field findings indicate that these improvements have not yet reached optimal effectiveness in urban professional segments (Razali et al, 2022).

From observations and interviews with BAZNAS officials, it was found that most outreach activities still target traditional groups (market traders, mosque congregations, or lower-income communities), while limited efforts are directed toward professional sectors such as teachers, civil servants, doctors, and private employees. Socialization materials are still predominantly printed, with insufficient

utilization of social media, online platforms, and workplace-based campaigns. Consequently, the message about the obligation of professional zakat does not always reach the intended audience.

Several respondents also expressed uncertainty regarding where their zakat funds were distributed, which influences their trust and willingness to contribute. They tend to prefer giving directly to individuals or local mosques rather than through formal institutions. This confirms that institutional credibility and perceived transparency play a critical role in shaping compliance behavior (Sudarsono et al, 2022)

Nevertheless, BAZNAS Pekanbaru has initiated several strategic efforts to overcome these barriers, including partnerships with universities, religious councils, and government offices to facilitate automatic salary deductions (*potongan gaji*). The implementation of a digital zakat service through the BAZNAS online portal has also made it easier for urban Muslims to fulfill their obligations securely and efficiently (Hadi et al, 2024). However, utilization remains limited due to lack of awareness about these technological features (Nasution et al, 2024).

Thus, while institutional structures and services are improving, effective socialization, communication, and trust-building are still necessary for sustainable growth in professional zakat collection.

Supporting Factors

The research identified several supporting factors that positively influence the community's perception and participation in professional zakat payment:

1. **Religious Education and Awareness:** Respondents with higher religious education or active involvement in religious study groups (*majlis taklim*) demonstrated better understanding and stronger motivation to fulfill zakat obligations. This finding echoes (Bonang et al, 2023) who observed

that religious education directly enhances zakat literacy and compliance.

2. **Income Level and Economic Stability:** Higher income respondents, particularly those earning above the nisab threshold, showed greater potential to contribute zakat regularly. This supports the argument that economic ability and awareness mutually reinforce zakat behavior (Lubis et al, 2022).
3. **Institutional Trust and Transparency:** Trust in BAZNAS was found to be a strong predictor of participation. Respondents who perceived BAZNAS as transparent, accountable, and efficient in fund management expressed higher intention to pay zakat through institutional channels. This finding aligns with studies by (Chotib et al, 2023), which emphasize that transparency and public trust are central to building a sustainable zakat culture.
4. **Digital Accessibility:** Respondents, especially younger professionals, valued the convenience of online payment systems and electronic receipts. Digitalization, therefore, serves as both a facilitator and motivator for compliance, supporting the notion of modern zakat management integrated with financial technology (Kasri et al, 2021).

Collectively, these factors demonstrate that religious motivation, financial capability, and institutional confidence interact synergistically in fostering positive public perception. Where all three are strong, compliance rates improve significantly.

Inhibiting Factors

Despite the positive aspects, several key obstacles still hinder the effective

implementation of professional zakat in Pekanbaru:

1. **Lack of Socialization and Communication:** Many respondents claimed that they had not received any targeted information about professional zakat directly from BAZNAS. Public campaigns were sporadic and not adequately tailored to the professional class. This lack of engagement leads to misconceptions, such as viewing zakat on income as optional or equivalent to tax (Fitria & Lubis, 2025).
2. **Weak Understanding of Zakat Calculation:** Respondents often found it difficult to calculate their zakat liability, especially regarding deductions, irregular income, and comparison with nisab. BAZNAS's limited educational material on calculation contributes to confusion (Fatchurrahman et al, 2024).
3. **Transparency and Feedback Issues:** Several participants expressed doubts about where and how zakat funds were utilized. The absence of consistent public reporting or case studies of beneficiaries reduces the visibility of zakat's social impact, thereby weakening public trust .
4. **Perceived Voluntarism:** Some respondents perceived zakat, particularly professional zakat, as voluntary rather than obligatory. This perception stems from limited religious education and unclear dissemination from religious authorities (Sentani, 2018).
5. **Cultural and Behavioral Factors:** Urban individualism also plays a role; many professionals prefer direct charity to institutional giving because it feels more personal and immediate. This cultural preference, while benevolent, undermines the systematic redistribution that institutional zakat aims to achieve.

In summary, limited awareness, weak institutional outreach, and low zakat literacy collectively hinder the effective growth of professional zakat in Pekanbaru. These challenges mirror findings from other urban areas in Indonesia, indicating a national pattern that requires continuous educational and digital innovation by zakat authorities (Farkhan et al, 2023).

Discussion : Linking Findings to Literature

The results of this study reinforce several theoretical insights discussed in earlier literature. First, consistent with perception theory, public perception toward religious obligations is shaped by education, experience, and environmental factors. The limited understanding of professional zakat among Pekanbaru residents reflects the absence of sustained educational stimuli and institutional communication.

Second, according to institutional trust theory (Huda, 2021), perceived credibility and transparency of zakat organizations determine compliance. In Pekanbaru, BAZNAS's partial success in enhancing its digital infrastructure has improved accessibility but has not yet translated into deep-rooted trust among all urban Muslims.

Third, as emphasized by (Assalafiyah & Rusydiana, 2023), professional zakat remains conceptually underdeveloped in public discourse; therefore, socialization and regulatory clarity are essential. The findings here show that even with supportive legal frameworks (Law No. 23/2011 and regional regulations), actual compliance depends largely on how institutions communicate the meaning and benefits of zakat.

Finally, the observed preference for direct giving over institutional payment mirrors the findings of (Ma'ruf et al, 2025), who noted that informal giving practices remain prevalent in Indonesia due to personal trust and cultural proximity. Hence, BAZNAS must not only modernize its management but also humanize its outreach,

emphasizing the barakah (spiritual merit) and social impact of structured zakat.

Implications for Policy and Practice

Based on the findings, several implications can be drawn:

1. **Strengthening Zakat Education:** BAZNAS, in collaboration with the Ministry of Religious Affairs and local universities, should intensify educational programs, particularly among professional communities, through seminars, digital campaigns, and integrated workplace zakat programs.
2. **Improving Transparency:** Regular publication of impact reports and visual stories of beneficiaries would enhance public trust and motivation.
3. **Enhancing Digital Platforms:** Expanding user-friendly apps and automatic deduction systems for professionals can make compliance easier and more consistent.
4. **Community Engagement:** Utilizing mosques, schools, and community leaders as local advocates of zakat can increase outreach effectiveness.
5. **Collaboration with Employers:** Encouraging corporate zakat partnerships and payroll-based deductions will institutionalize professional zakat collection.

The findings of this study clearly show that public perception of professional zakat in Pekanbaru City is improving but still faces significant challenges related to understanding, trust, and institutional outreach. While BAZNAS has made meaningful progress in modernizing its operations, greater emphasis on education, transparency, and digitalization is required to sustain growth. Strengthening collaboration between religious authorities, local government, and educational institutions will be essential in building a culture of professional zakat compliance that aligns

with both Islamic principles and modern economic realities.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study reveal that public perceptions of professional zakat in Pekanbaru City remain at a moderate level, where understanding and participation among Muslims are not yet consistent. While most people recognize zakat as a religious obligation and a means of purifying wealth, knowledge about professional zakat—including its calculation and distribution through official institutions—is still limited. Factors such as education, religious literacy, institutional credibility, and the effectiveness of BAZNAS Pekanbaru's outreach shape this perception, with higher trust and digital accessibility encouraging compliance. Overall, institutional initiatives and digital advancements have helped, but efforts are still needed to close the gap in literacy and participation, especially among urban professionals.

Based on these insights, it is recommended that BAZNAS Pekanbaru intensify educational and promotional programs utilizing modern digital media and employer partnerships, targeting professionals and expanding community engagement. Government and educational institutions should integrate zakat education in curricula to foster awareness from an early age. Enhancing transparency through public impact reports and developing more accessible digital payment systems can further strengthen public trust. By strengthening collaboration among zakat institutions, government, and society, professional zakat has the potential to become an effective instrument for social justice and economic welfare in Pekanbaru.

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