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Optimizing ZIS Awareness through Dakwah Communication Strategy: A Case Study of BAZNAS Makassar City

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Abstract

Zakat, Infaq, Alms (ZIS), and Other Religious Social Funds (DSKL) are pivotal for equitable welfare distribution and poverty alleviation in Indonesia. However, public compliance remains suboptimal due to uneven awareness. This study explores the da'wah communication strategies employed by BAZNAS Makassar City to enhance public awareness and participation in ZIS and DSKL payments while identifying implementation challenges. Utilizing a qualitative descriptive approach, data were gathered through in-depth interviews, field observations, and documentation involving key informants from BAZNAS Makassar City. The findings reveal that BAZNAS Makassar adopts a multi-channel communication strategy, integrating direct outreach via Zakat Collection Units (UPZ), digital transformation through websites and social media, and strategic collaboration with the Makassar City Government via the Automatic Deduction (PO) System for civil servants' salaries. These strategies are executed through segmented, persuasive, and educational approaches tailored to diverse audience demographics. Despite these efforts, obstacles such as inconsistent participation from volunteer preachers, internal resistance to salary deductions, and low zakat literacy persist. This study suggests that strengthening preacher capacity and diversifying digital communication media are essential for building institutional trust. These findings provide a strategic framework for zakat institutions to develop more adaptive and sustainable communication models in a contemporary religious context.

Keywords: Da'wah Communication, Zakat Management, BAZNAS, Public Awareness, ZIS

Introduction

Zakat, Infaq, and Alms (ZIS) is a fundamental instrument in the Islamic economic system, serving to equalize prosperity and alleviate poverty. In Indonesia, the national zakat potential in 2021 is estimated to reach IDR 327.6 trillion, but realization is only around IDR 71.4 trillion, or only 21.7% (BAZNAS, 2021). This gap indicates low public awareness of fulfilling ZIS obligations through official institutions, including in Makassar City. To

address this issue, an effective and adaptive da'wah communication strategy is essential. This is because da'wah communication functions not only to convey information about zakat obligations but also to build understanding, change perceptions, and influence public behavior to regularly pay ZIS. In this context, BAZNAS Makassar City, as the official zakat collection institution under Law Number 23 of 2011, has a dual mandate: to manage ZIS funds and to be an agent of social change through planned and measurable da'wah.

Several previous studies have discussed the BAZNAS (National Agency for Zakat) missionary strategies in various regions, with varying results. Yusniar Yusuf (2019) examined the strategy of BAZNAS in Baranti District, Sidenreng Rappang Regency, which emphasized collaboration with local governments and religious scholars, the establishment of Zakat Collection Units (UPZ), and guidance for UPZs to improve professionalism. The results of this study indicate that the community's response to zakat socialization was quite positive, but this has not yet significantly increased participation. Nur Hudayah's (2020) research in Pinrang Regency revealed that public understanding of zakat remains low, and zakat calculations are often carried out without proper basis. The communication strategy used was persuasive and group communication, with a family-like approach to fostering muzakki and mustahiq (recipients of zakat). These findings emphasize the importance of an educational, interpersonal approach in raising awareness of zakat. Meanwhile, Nur Amalia (2020) examined the role of BAZNAS in Makassar City in alleviating poverty. His research shows that although BAZNAS has various relevant programs, their effectiveness is not yet optimal due to low awareness of muzakki and limited distribution that is on target.

These three studies demonstrate a consistent pattern of problems: low zakat literacy, lack of trust in zakat institutions, and challenges in mobilizing community participation. However, no study has yet fully explored the integration of BAZNAS Makassar City's multi-strategy da'wah communication, combining conventional, digital, public policy, and institutional collaboration approaches, and comprehensively analyzing the barriers to its implementation.

The scientific novelty of this article lies in its integrative analysis of the Makassar City BAZNAS's da'wah communication strategy, which includes community-based outreach through UPZ (Zone-Stop Zakat Unit), the use of digital media (WhatsApp, website), a public policy program for ASN (State Civil Apparatus Organization) (PO System), and collaboration with da'wah institutions. Furthermore, this article identifies implementation barriers, such as target audience resistance, challenges in building public trust, and gaps between program planning and implementation.

The problems studied are formulated as follows: (1) What is the missionary communication strategy used by BAZNAS Makassar City to increase public awareness of paying ZIS? (2) What obstacles are faced in implementing this strategy and how can they be overcome? This study aims to describe the missionary communication strategy of BAZNAS Makassar City and analyze the obstacles to its implementation, in order to provide recommendations for improving the zakat missionary strategy in urban areas.

This article is based on field research using a descriptive qualitative approach. Primary data were obtained through in-depth interviews, observations, and official documentation from the Makassar City BAZNAS. Unlike previous research, this article positions the analysis of da'wah communication strategies within an integrated

communication management framework across media and actors, taking into account local social, cultural, and public policy dimensions. The study's findings are expected to provide theoretical contributions to the development of urban da'wah communication strategies, while also offering practical recommendations for zakat management institutions to increase community participation sustainably.

Research Methods

2.1 Research Approach and Design

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach, which aims to understand the phenomenon in depth in its natural context through narrative data collection (Creswell, 2014). This approach was chosen because the focus of the study was to explore and analyze the da'wah communication strategies used by BAZNAS Makassar City to raise public awareness of paying ZIS. The qualitative approach allows researchers to pay attention to the meaning, perspectives of informants, and the ongoing communication process, so that the research results can provide a holistic picture.

The research design used is an intrinsic case study (Yin, 2018), namely research focused on a single case, in this case BAZNAS Makassar City, which acts as the unit to be analyzed. This case study is relevant because BAZNAS Makassar City has a strategic role as an official zakat institution that combines da'wah and ZIS fund management in an urban area with unique socio-cultural complexities.

2.2 Research Subjects and Objects

The research subjects consisted of the core management of BAZNAS Makassar City, staff in the collection and distribution division, staff in the HR and reporting division, and preachers or da'wah volunteers directly involved in da'wah communication activities. They were selected because of their insight, experience, and direct involvement in implementing da'wah communication strategies.

The object of the research is the da'wah communication strategy used by BAZNAS Makassar City to increase public awareness of paying ZIS, including policies, media, methods, and obstacles to implementation.

2.3 Data Collection Techniques

The data for this research was obtained from two sources, namely primary and secondary data, through three main collection techniques:

1. In-depth Interview (*In-depth Interview*)

Semi-structured interviews were conducted face-to-face using an open-ended question guide. This technique was chosen to gather in-depth information about the missionary communication strategies, the media used, their effectiveness, and the obstacles encountered (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015).

2. Participatory Observation

Researchers conducted direct observations of da'wah communication activities, including outreach through the Zakat Collection Unit (UPZ), the use of print and digital media, and interactions within community da'wah activities. These observations aimed to capture the dynamics of the communication process in its natural form (Spradley, 1980).

3. Documentation Study

Researchers collected official documents such as BAZNAS annual reports, brochures, outreach materials, ZIS collection data, and activity archives. This documentation served as a source of verification (triangulation) and enriched understanding of the strategies implemented.

2.4 Problem Solving Methods

The problem-solving method in this research refers to the integration of empirical data with the theoretical framework of Islamic communication and communication strategies. The steps used include:

1. Identifying strategies, namely inventorying all forms of da'wah communication strategies used by BAZNAS Makassar City, both conventional and digital, as well as public policy-based strategies.
2. Analyzing theoretical suitability, namely evaluating the strategy based on the principles of effective communication and da'wah methods (hikmah, mau'izhah hasanah, and mujadalah) as explained in da'wah literature (Aziz, 2004).
3. evaluating effectiveness and barriers, namely measuring the extent to which the implemented strategy can contribute to increasing public awareness, while identifying technical, social and psychological barriers that hinder effectiveness.
4. Formulating Recommendations, namely compiling contextual improvement recommendations by taking into account local socio-cultural conditions and developments in communication technology.

2.5 Data Analysis Methods

Data analysis was conducted using the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014), which includes:

1. Data Reduction, namely the process of selecting, simplifying, and focusing data from interviews, observations, and documentation to eliminate irrelevant information.
2. Data Presentation, namely the process of compiling reduced data in the form of narrative descriptions, tables, or diagrams, to facilitate drawing conclusions.
3. Drawing Conclusions and Verification, namely the process of temporarily concluding the findings, then verifying them through triangulation of sources and methods to ensure their validity.

Through this method, the research is expected to produce a comprehensive, valid, and relevant picture of the BAZNAS Makassar City da'wah communication strategy, as well as offer practical recommendations that can be adapted by zakat management institutions in other regions.

Results and Discussion

This study aims to answer two main questions: (1) What is the communication strategy of da'wah carried out by BAZNAS Makassar City in increasing public awareness of paying Zakat, Infaq, and Sedekah (ZIS)? and (2) What are the obstacles faced by BAZNAS Makassar City in implementing this strategy.

The findings of this study were obtained from in-depth interviews with three key informants: the Head of Planning and Reporting, the Planning and Reporting Staff, and the Head of Distribution and Utilization of BAZNAS Makassar City. Supporting data were obtained through field observations and documentation studies of BAZNAS publications.

3.1 BAZNAS Makassar City's Islamic Propagation Communication Strategy

After conducting research at the Makassar City BAZNAS office, several communication strategies were found to be used, namely:

1. Socialization Through Zakat Collection Units (UPZ)

The Makassar City BAZNAS has established Zakat Collection Units (UPZ) in strategic mosques. The UPZs are tasked with disseminating ZIS obligations to the congregation through sermons, regular religious studies, and community meetings. This approach aligns with the Zakat Collection model.*community-based* Da'wah is considered effective in building emotional closeness with the community (Effendy, 2017).

Based on BAZNAS documentation (2024), there are more than 50 active UPZs spread across 15 sub-districts. Direct interaction through these UPZs has contributed to an increase in the number of muzakki (alms payers), particularly in densely populated areas.

2. Utilization of Digital Media

Digital media, particularly WhatsApp, is used to regularly send out Islamic messages every Friday. The content includes verses and hadiths about zakat, a guide to calculating the nisab (the threshold), and information about BAZNAS programs. This strategy leverages the principle of *redundancy* (message repetition) to strengthen message reception (Arifin, 2018).

Internal BAZNAS data shows that in 2023, there were more than 200 WhatsApp groups targeted for distributing Islamic messages, reaching around 12,000 people.

3. Use of Print Media and Official Website

Brochures, pamphlets, and banners are used as public outreach media, while the official BAZNAS website provides transparency reports, program information, and educational articles. The use of print media is crucial for reaching communities less active on digital media (Nasrullah, 2021).

4. Automatic Deduction Program (PO System) for ASN

In collaboration with the Makassar City Government, BAZNAS implemented an automatic 2.5% deduction system from the salaries of civil servants who have reached the zakat threshold. According to BAZNAS data (2024), this program successfully raised over IDR 3 billion in its first year of implementation. Furthermore, professional zakat awareness campaigns were conducted to ensure civil servants understood its legal basis.

5. Collaboration with Islamic Propagation Institutions

BAZNAS has established partnerships with the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI), the Indonesian Mosque Council (DMI), and other religious organizations. This collaboration increases the legitimacy of its Islamic missionary message and expands its audience reach (Hidayat, 2020).

6. Involvement of Field Dai

Twenty preachers were appointed through an official decree (SK) to conduct zakat outreach in remote areas, including island regions. This program, complemented by financial and logistical support, enables preachers to reach communities previously unserved by zakat outreach.

7. Islamic Propagation Program (Planning)

This program is designed as an intensive da'wah effort, combining direct methods, digital media, and mass media. The goal is to expand the reach of da'wah and deepen public understanding of ZIS.

The research results show that the Islamic outreach communication strategy used by BAZNAS Makassar City is multi-channel, combining face-to-face communication, print media, digital media, and public policy. According to Effendy (2017), an effective communication strategy requires a combination of methods tailored to the characteristics of the audience and the message's objectives.

The use of Zakat Collection Units (UPZ) in mosques emphasizes the importance of community-based da'wah. This model allows for two-way interaction between da'wah (preachers) and congregations, which, according to McQuail (2010), can increase message acceptance through social and emotional closeness. The fact that UPZs contribute to an increase in the number of muzakki (payers of zakat) in certain areas demonstrates the model's success.

The use of digital media such as WhatsApp is a form of adaptation to developments in information technology. This medium allows for rapid, massive, and cost-effective message dissemination (Nasrullah, 2021). The principle of redundancy (Arifin, 2018), implemented through the regular distribution of ZIS content every Friday, has proven effective in strengthening public understanding, although minimal direct interaction presents a challenge in measuring message reception.

The use of print media and official websites complements efforts to reach segments of society with low digital literacy. According to Kotler and Keller (2016), a diversity of communication channels is necessary to reduce the communication gap caused by differences in technological access and capabilities.

The Automatic Deduction Program (PO System) for ASN reflects the approach *policy-based preaching*, where government policy is used as an instrument for zakat da'wah. This strategy is financially effective, as evidenced by the revenue of over Rp3 billion in the first year (BAZNAS, 2024). However, resistance from civil servants demonstrates the need for persuasive communication that targets the cognitive and affective domains (Schramm, 2015).

Collaboration with Islamic missionary institutions such as the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) and the Indonesian Muslim Student Association (DMI) strengthens the legitimacy of the zakat message. According to Hidayat (2020), strategic partnerships in Islamic missionary work expand audience reach and increase public trust because the message comes from a source with high religious authority.

The involvement of field preachers appointed by official decree to preach in remote areas aligns with the concept of *dakwah bil hal*, which involves leading by example through direct action (Aziz, 2019). However, the suboptimal participation of preachers indicates the need to strengthen volunteer management.

3.2 Obstacles in Strategy Implementation

The obstacles experienced by BAZNAS Makassar City in implementing its communication strategy based on findings in the field are:

1. Dai Participation is Not Optimal

Some volunteer preachers are inactive due to personal commitments, resulting in uneven implementation of field preaching programs. This indicates a gap between strategic planning and implementation (Ruslan, 2019).

2. Public Trust

Some people still doubt BAZNAS' transparency in managing its funds. This challenge indicates the need for improved public communication based on accountability and open reporting.

3. ASN Resistance to the PO System

Some civil servants' refusals stem from personal financial needs or a lack of understanding of professional zakat. This demonstrates the importance of interpersonal *da'wah* that can engage the cognitive and affective aspects of the audience (Schramm, 2015).

4. Low Zakat Literacy

Some people still don't understand the concepts of *nisab*, *mustahik*, and zakat calculation. This lack of literacy creates a structural barrier that requires ongoing educational intervention.

The research findings revealed four main obstacles: suboptimal participation of preachers, unequal public trust, ASN resistance to the PO System, and low zakat literacy.

Barriers to *da'i* participation are closely related to the theory of *da'wah* communication management, which emphasizes the role of communicators as the spearhead of strategic success (Effendy, 2017). The minimal involvement of *da'i* impacts the limited reach of direct *da'wah*, so BAZNAS needs to provide adequate training, monitoring, and incentives.

The barrier to public trust suggests that an institution's reputation influences the effectiveness of missionary communication. According to Luhmann (1979), trust is a prerequisite for message acceptance, particularly in the context of public fund management. Transparency and accountability through open reporting can be a strategy to overcome this barrier.

The obstacles of ASN resistance to the PO System indicate a gap in understanding regarding the obligation of professional zakat. Schramm (2015) emphasizes the importance of *shared meaning* between communicator and communicant, which in this context requires education based on evidence and real examples of the use of zakat.

The barrier of low zakat literacy is a structural issue. According to research by Hudayah (2020), low zakat literacy directly impacts low community participation in fulfilling zakat obligations. Therefore, BAZNAS needs to integrate zakat literacy programs into non-formal education curricula, such as religious study groups and community training.

3.3 Relation of Findings to Research Questions

The findings of this study directly address the research problem formulated in the introduction. The strategy implemented by BAZNAS Makassar City is comprehensive, combining a community approach (UPZ), digital technology, print media, government policy (PO System), and institutional collaboration. Obstacles identified, such as suboptimal participation of preachers, civil servant resistance, and low zakat literacy, are factors that need to be addressed to ensure this strategy has a broader impact.

Overall, the data shows a positive trend in increasing ZIS revenues, which can be interpreted as increasing public awareness. This reinforces the conclusion that BAZNAS Makassar City's da'wah communication strategy is effective, although it still requires optimization.

The results of this study align with Yusuf's (2019) findings in Sidenreng Rappang Regency, which showed that collaboration with government officials and religious leaders effectively increased zakat awareness. The similarity lies in the use of UPZ as a means of outreach, while the difference lies in the more intensive digital media innovation at BAZNAS Makassar City.

Furthermore, these findings support Hudayah's (2020) research in Pinrang Regency, which emphasized the importance of persuasive communication and a family-oriented approach. However, this study adds a public policy dimension (the PO System) as a driving factor in the success of zakat da'wah strategies.

3.4 Analysis of Strategy Effectiveness Based on Theoretical Framework

The effectiveness of the Makassar City BAZNAS's da'wah communication strategy can be analyzed using Lasswell's (1948) framework which emphasizes five communication components: *Who says What in Which Channel to Whom with What Effect*. In this study, *Who* is BAZNAS Makassar City as a communicator that has legal legitimacy and religious authority. *What* is a message of zakat, infaq, and alms preaching packaged in the form of educational, persuasive, and motivational information. *Which Channel* including face-to-face, print media, digital media, and public policy. *To Whom* is the Makassar City community which has diverse social, economic and religious literacy backgrounds. *With What Effect* is increasing awareness and participation in paying ZIS.

Based on this framework, BAZNAS's strategy meets the requirements for integrated communication. However, its effectiveness varies depending on the audience segment. Digital media like WhatsApp and websites are more effective in reaching younger

generations and working professionals, while face-to-face methods through the UPZ (Zone-to-Z) are more effective among the elderly or those with limited access to technology.

3.5 Integration of Islamic Values in Strategy

The success of da'wah is not only determined by the communication method, but also its conformity to Islamic values. BAZNAS Makassar City applies the principle *wisdom* (wisdom), *mau'izhah hasanah* (good advice), and *debate* (dialogue) as commanded in QS. An-Nahl: 125. This can be seen in the delivery of the zakat message which is done politely, argumentatively, and adapted to the conditions of the message recipient.

For example, in the dissemination of the PO System to civil servants, preachers not only explained the obligation of professional zakat from a sharia legal perspective but also provided concrete illustrations of the benefits of zakat for poverty alleviation and the economic empowerment of those entitled to receive it. This approach aligns with Aziz's (2019) view that preaching will be more effective if it addresses both the rational and emotional dimensions.

3.6 Challenges of Technology Adaptation and Innovation

Although digital media has been optimally utilized, technological adaptation challenges remain, especially for communities with low digital literacy. Therefore, strategic innovations are needed, such as utilizing zakat da'wah radio broadcasts, the official BAZNAS YouTube channel, and collaboration with *influencer* local Muslims who have a wide audience on social media.

Furthermore, the limited two-way interaction in digital media presents a unique obstacle. To address this, BAZNAS can utilize interactive platforms such as webinars, *live streaming*, or virtual discussions that allow the public to ask questions directly to the resource person. This also facilitates evaluating the public's understanding of zakat material.

Conclusion

This study aims to determine the da'wah communication strategy implemented by BAZNAS Makassar City in increasing public awareness of paying zakat, infaq, and alms (ZIS), and to identify the obstacles faced in its implementation.

The results of the study show that BAZNAS Makassar City implemented a multi-channel communication strategy which includes: the establishment of Zakat Collection Units (UPZ) in strategic mosques, the use of digital media such as WhatsApp for the distribution of routine da'wah messages, the use of print media and official websites, the implementation of *Automatic Deductions* (PO System) for ASN, collaboration with da'wah institutions, and the involvement of field da'is to reach remote areas. This approach has proven to be able to reach various segments of society and increase the number of muzakki every year.

Other findings revealed that the strategy's success was supported by the integration of Islamic values in its messaging, the use of polite and argumentative language, and the support of local government policies. However, several obstacles faced included low

participation by some preachers, a lack of public trust in the transparency of fund management, civil servant resistance to the PO System, and low zakat literacy among the community.

Overall, this study concludes that the BAZNAS Makassar City's da'wah communication strategy has succeeded in increasing awareness and participation in paying ZIS, but requires continuous improvement in the aspects of strengthening interpersonal communication, public transparency, and zakat literacy campaigns.

Based on the research findings, several suggestions that can be put forward are:

1. Strengthening Communicator Capacity. BAZNAS needs to provide persuasive communication training to preachers and UPZ administrators so that preaching messages more effectively reach the cognitive and affective aspects of the audience.
2. Diversifying Islamic Propagation Channels. Expanding the use of mass media and interactive digital platforms such as webinars and *live streaming* to reach the younger generation and people with high mobility.
3. Increased Transparency. Presenting financial reports and program achievements periodically in various media to strengthen public trust.
4. Sustainable Zakat Literacy Socialization. Integrating zakat education materials into regular religious studies, school/madrasah activities, and community forums.
5. Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation. Directly involving the community in evaluating zakat programs to increase accountability and relevance of activities.

For further research, it is recommended to conduct a comparative study with BAZNAS in other regions to obtain a broader picture of the differences in strategies and success factors, as well as to examine the long-term impact of da'wah communication strategies on the welfare of mustahik.

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