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Digital Marketing Transformation in Increasing Fundraising at Islamic Philanthropic Institutions

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Abstract

The use of digital marketing in Islamic philanthropic institutions, especially for the collection of Zakat, Infaq, and Shodaqoh (ZIS) funds, is a strategic innovation that increases the effectiveness of fundraising. This study using qualitative descriptive methods, data were obtained through observation, interviews, and digital media analysis. The Organisation utilizes various digital platforms such as websites, social media (Instagram, Facebook), and QR codes as the main tools for fundraising. The strategies implemented include the use of storytelling, educational content, and transparent financial reporting, which have been proven to significantly increase community involvement. The results of the study showed an increase in the number of donors by up to 40% and a change in donation behaviour, with more people choosing to donate online and regularly. However, challenges remain, such as limited digital marketing expertise, limited budget, and public scepticism towards the transparency of zakat funds. From an Islamic economic perspective, strategy is in line with sharia principles such as transparency, justice, and welfare. The study recommends increasing digital capacity, collaborating with Muslim influencers, and strengthening public trust through strong narratives and open reporting. A sustainable and sharia-compliant digital strategy can increase fundraising and wider social impact in society.

Keywords

Digital Marketing, Islamic Economics, Public Scepticism, Social Media

1. Introduction

Zakat, Infaq, and Shodaqoh (ZIS) are key Islamic economic instruments that contribute significantly to improving social and economic welfare. In Islam, zakat is not only a religious obligation but also a tool for wealth redistribution aimed at reducing economic inequality (Abdulai & Shamshiry, 2014). Proper management of ZIS funds can support community empowerment programs in areas such as education, healthcare, and microeconomic development (Memon et al., 2022). Studies have shown that optimizing ZIS collection has tangible benefits for underprivileged groups. Hasan (2020) found that effective zakat distribution enhances education access for poor children and lowers regional poverty rates. Additionally, Hasan (2020) emphasized that widespread ZIS fund utilization supports microeconomic growth by financing small and medium enterprises. However, challenges such as low public participation in zakat payments and limited awareness about trusted zakat institutions hinder optimal collection (Tartila, 2022).

As a zakat institution, Amil Zakat, Infaq, and Shadaqah Muhammadiyah Institution (*Lembaga Amil Zakat, Infaq, dan Shadaqah Muhammadiyah/LAZISMU*) faces significant challenges in fundraising. The low level of public awareness about the importance of ZIS and scepticism towards fund transparency limits donations. Yuswarni et al. (2023) pointed out that inadequate public education and outreach efforts contribute to this issue. Furthermore, previous misuse of zakat funds in Indonesia has eroded trust in zakat institutions, making transparency and accountability critical for restoring confidence. Another key challenge lies in the limited use of digital technologies for fundraising. Many zakat organizations still rely on conventional methods such as face-to-face solicitation and manual transfers, which are ineffective in engaging younger, tech-savvy donors (Humaidi et al., 2022). Digital marketing has emerged as a powerful strategy across sectors, including social fundraising. For zakat institutions, it increases outreach, enhances public awareness of zakat's religious and social role, and strengthens donor engagement (Abdullah et al., 2023).

Manara et al. (2018) demonstrated that social media and crowdfunding platforms can significantly boost public participation in ZIS payments. Storytelling-based digital campaigns build emotional connections with donors, while transparent fund reporting through digital platforms increases public trust. Countries like Malaysia have already integrated digital solutions, such as mobile apps for zakat payments and real-time reporting (Hassan & Noor, 2015), offering a model for institutions like LAZISMU. Despite its promise, the application of digital marketing in Indonesian zakat institutions remains under-researched. Existing studies tend to focus broadly on social media's impact on donations or on commercial digital strategies (Utami, 2019; Afandi et al., 2023), without addressing the local, institutional-level implementation in zakat organizations. There is a particular gap in understanding how institutions execute their digital strategies and the unique challenges they encounter.

This research addresses these gaps by investigating how LAZISMU implements digital marketing strategies to collect funds. It explores the platforms used, marketing techniques applied, and communication strategies developed. The study also identifies both internal challenges such as limited human resources skilled in digital marketing and external challenges like low digital literacy and lack of trust in online donations. Regulatory constraints regarding the use of digital platforms in zakat collection are also considered (Mulyono et al., 2022). The effectiveness of LAZISMU's digital marketing strategies is another central focus. Effectiveness will be measured using indicators such as the number of digital donors, changes in donation amounts post-implementation, and public engagement metrics on digital

platforms. Previous studies found that institutions employing digital tools see significantly higher donation levels (Mohamed et al., 2022).

Finally, the study offers an Islamic economic perspective on digital marketing. Marketing strategies must align with sharia principles like transparency, fairness, and avoidance of elements such as *gharar* (uncertainty) and *maysir* (speculation) (Farikhin & Mulyasari, 2022). The research examines whether Islamic philanthropic institutions digital marketing strategies meet these standards and how they can be improved to better reflect Islamic ethical values. This research aims to identify the digital marketing strategies used by Islamic philanthropic institutions, analyse the challenges in their application, measure their effectiveness in increasing ZIS funds, and develop recommendations based on best practices and Islamic principles. These recommendations are intended to guide LAZISMU and similar institutions toward more effective and sharia-compliant digital fundraising strategies, thereby enhancing the social impact of ZIS collection in beyond. The study aims to uncover critical patterns in LAZISMU Medan City's digital marketing efforts and deliver evidence-based recommendations to strengthen ZIS fundraising strategies

2. Literature Review

2.1. Digital Marketing in Islamic Philanthropy Institutions

Digital marketing is a marketing strategy that utilizes digital technology to promote products or services through various online platforms, including social media, websites, email marketing, and crowdfunding platforms (Sun, 2022; Qorib & Afandi, 2024). In the context of Islamic philanthropic organizations, digital marketing plays a vital role in increasing public awareness about the importance of Zakat, Infaq, and Shodaqoh (ZIS), as well as facilitating easier, faster, and more transparent donation processes. The advancement of information technology has significantly transformed the way philanthropic organizations raise funds. While traditional zakat fundraising was mostly conducted through mosques or direct collection by amil zakat institutions, digital marketing now enables broader and more efficient outreach via the internet.

Nonprofit organizations applying digital marketing strategies experienced a significant rise in community engagement and donation volume compared to those using traditional methods. One of the key advantages of digital marketing in Islamic philanthropy is increased transparency (Al-Bawwab, 2023). With websites and social media, zakat institutions can present real-time updates and financial reports on the use of ZIS funds, thus enhancing public trust (Abdullah et al., 2023). Furthermore, digital marketing allows for more personalized engagement through storytelling campaigns that evoke emotions and inspire higher donor participation.

Several other studies support the effectiveness of digital marketing for nonprofit fundraising. Hudaifah (2022) demonstrated that zakat institutions in Indonesia, such as National Amil Zakat Agency (*Badan Amil Zakat Nasional* /BAZNAS) saw improvements in public awareness and online donation transactions using social media. Campaigns that include videos and beneficiary testimonials proved particularly effective in capturing public attention (Amsari et al., 2023; Hudaifah et al., 2022). Additionally, Saputra (2023) highlighted that digital advertising and Google Ads helped increase donation conversions by targeting audiences actively seeking zakat-related content online. Overall, digital marketing has emerged as a powerful tool for expanding the reach and impact of Islamic philanthropic institutions (Yasin & Saputra, 2023).

2.2. Zakat, Infaq, and Shodaqoh (ZIS) in Islamic Economics

Zakat, Infaq, and Shodaqoh (ZIS) are key instruments in Islamic economics that aim to create social balance and reduce economic disparities (Jalili et al., 2022; Ilham et al., 2024). Zakat is an obligation for every well-off Muslim, while *infaq* and *shodaqoh* are voluntary but still have a significant social impact. A study by Syamsuri et al. (2022) shows that well-managed ZIS funds can improve the living standards of the poor through various economic empowerment programs, such as business capital assistance, skills training, and education scholarships. In addition, research by Qodiryani and Amelia (2022) confirms that effective distribution of zakat funds can help reduce poverty and improve access to health services for community groups in need.

In collecting and distributing ZIS funds, zakat institutions must adhere to sharia principles, such as transparency, fairness, and accountability (Bin-Nashwan et al., 2021). The principle of transparency requires zakat institutions to provide clear financial reports regarding the use of funds that have been received. The principle of justice requires that zakat funds be distributed to *mustahik* (zakat recipients) in accordance with the sharia provisions stipulated in the Qur'an, namely the eight groups of zakat recipients (Qodiryani & Amelia, 2022; Aini, 2023). In addition, the accountability aspect is an important concern in the management of zakat funds. According to research by Kudhori and Pandowo (2020), public trust in zakat institutions would increase if the funds managed are reported openly and accurately. Therefore, the use of digital marketing based on transparency can be an effective strategy in increasing donor trust and optimizing the collection of ZIS funds.

2.3. Digital Marketing Strategy to Optimize ZIS Fundraising

Social media has become a key digital marketing tool in ZIS fundraising, with platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok being used by zakat institutions to inform the public, educate about zakat's importance, and facilitate online donations (Sofiyawati, 2022). Additionally, websites are crucial in digital fundraising, acting not only as information hubs but also providing secure, sharia-based payment gateways for online donations (Utami, 2020). Some zakat institutions have further enhanced donation processes through mobile applications that offer real-time reports on zakat fund usage (Solihin & Latifah, 2022; Al-Bawwab, 2023). Sharia-based crowdfunding platforms, like BAZNAS Crowdfunding, also play a significant role in raising funds, with research by Zheh and Jiang (2022) showing that storytelling in crowdfunding campaigns can significantly boost donor participation, especially in urgent humanitarian causes.

The success of digital marketing strategies in ZIS fundraising depends on several factors. First, high-quality content is essential for attracting potential donors. Informative, engaging, and data-driven content increases social media engagement (Brkan, 2023). Additionally, selecting the right platform is vital for reaching a broad audience and ensuring a smooth donation process. Second, trust and transparency are critical. Studies by Yang et al. (2023) show that clear financial reports and beneficiary testimonials increase donor willingness (Yang & Sun, 2022). Moreover, using targeted marketing strategies, such as paid ads and influencer collaborations, can amplify the campaign's reach. Finally, data and analytics tools, like Google Analytics and Facebook Insights, help zakat institutions understand donor behaviour and refine strategies (AlShamali & AlMutairi, 2023). These factors, when properly implemented, offer innovative solutions for increasing ZIS funds while adhering to Islamic economic principles, making digital marketing a valuable tool for zakat institutions (Buana & Rijal, 2022; Ramadoni & Kurnia, 2023).

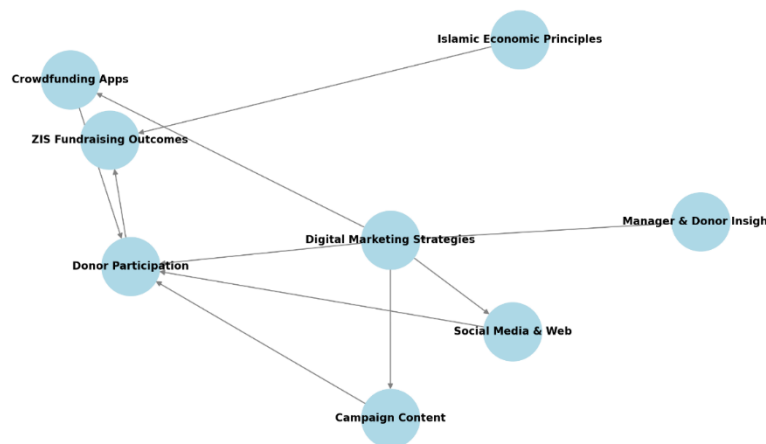


Figure 1. Research Framework

A research framework on Figure 1 integrates digital marketing and Islamic values, guiding data collection and analysis.

3. Method

This research uses a descriptive qualitative method to examine the implementation of digital marketing strategies in collecting ZIS, focusing on experiences, strategies, and challenges. This method enables in-depth analysis using data from managers, donors, documents, and digital content (Vicente-Ramos & Cano-Torres, 2022; Jackson, 2022). The study explores LAZISMU's use of social media, websites, and crowdfunding platforms to enhance donor participation and align with Islamic economic principles (Saputri et al., 2024). This study employed three main data collection techniques: observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. Two groups were involved, namely managers and donors. A total of 15 respondents participated 5 managers and 10 donors—ensuring a comprehensive view of both institutional and donor experiences. Documentation was also used to support findings from interviews and observations, involving the analysis digital materials, such as social media content, campaign videos, financial reports, and written strategies, to verify and strengthen the data. Data obtained from observations, interviews, and documentation will be analysed using the thematic analysis method, which helps identify patterns (themes) in qualitative data and uncover meaningful relationships in digital marketing strategy. The analysis process includes four key stages: Data Transcription and Coding, where transcripts and observational data are categorized and coded to capture essential elements of the strategy; Theme Identification, which groups similar findings related to strategy implementation, challenges, effectiveness, and Islamic economic perspectives; Analysis and Interpretation, where themes are examined to understand how digital marketing impacts ZIS fundraising and are compared with previous studies to assess relevance and contributions to the field; and data validation, which uses triangulation by comparing results from different sources to enhance the validity of findings.

4. Result

4.1. Digital Marketing Strategies for ZIS Fundraising

LAZISMU has strategically harnessed various digital platforms to effectively raise ZIS funds. The official website stands at the heart of their digital marketing efforts, offering user-friendly navigation that allows donors to easily find information, learn about ongoing campaigns, and make secure donations through an

integrated payment gateway. In addition to these features, the website incorporates transparency programs that provide clear reports on how the funds are being utilized, helping to establish trust with potential donors. This institution also uses social media platforms such as Instagram and Facebook to engage with a wider audience, sharing inspirational stories, campaign posters, and impactful videos. These platforms play a crucial role in reaching out to potential donors, spreading awareness about ZIS, and fostering a sense of community and involvement. By utilizing these platforms, institution can effectively communicate its mission and encourage greater participation in the giving process, which ultimately enhances its fundraising efforts and promotes the wider Islamic economic principle of social welfare.

WhatsApp serves as another critical communication tool, providing a direct and personal line for donors to inquire about campaigns, receive activity reports, and interact with the organization. The platform's real-time messaging feature enhances communication, allowing for quick responses and building stronger relationships with supporters. Additionally, institution has integrated mobile app technology and QR code systems to streamline the donation process, making it easier for donors to contribute both online and offline. These innovations allow for a seamless, secure, and fast donation experience, catering to the needs of today's tech-savvy and mobile-driven donor base. The strategic use of digital tools, including social media, websites, and mobile technologies, enables to optimize its ZIS fundraising efforts while maintaining transparency and fostering trust among its supporters (Safitri & Dzikrulloh, 2024). This multifaceted approach ensures that LAZISMU can effectively engage with donors, enhance participation, and uphold its commitment to the ethical principles of zakat management.

In implementing its digital marketing strategy, institution combines various techniques to effectively promote ZIS donations. The organization utilizes educational content to raise awareness about the importance of ZIS, aiming to inform the public, especially those unfamiliar with zakat and its social benefits. Storytelling is a central element of their approach, used to create an emotional connection with potential donors by sharing inspiring stories from zakat beneficiaries (Segarwati et al., 2023). Transparency plays a crucial role in building donor trust, with publishing financial reports and showing how funds are used. The design of visually appealing campaigns further helps capture the attention of the audience, while QR codes are integrated into the strategy to streamline the donation process, bridging the gap between offline and online donations. Interviews with managers emphasize that the combination of educational content, storytelling, and transparency has been particularly successful in boosting donations, although challenges such as limited human resources and technical issues persist (Wahyudi et al., 2024).

4.2. Alignment with Islamic Economic Principles and Challenges

The digital marketing strategy has proven highly effective in increasing both the number of donors and changing community participation patterns in ZIS donations. This institution experienced a remarkable 40% rise in online donations within a year of implementing the strategy. Key elements such as QR codes, social media platforms, and online donation features contributed significantly to this success by providing a convenient and accessible way for people to donate. The campaigns have not only led to a boost in recurring donations but have also increased engagement, particularly among younger audiences who are more familiar with digital platforms. Interviews with donors revealed that 70% were motivated to donate because of social media content, which played a crucial role in educating them about ZIS and encouraging them to contribute.

Digital marketing strategy exemplifies a strong adherence to Islamic economic principles, particularly in upholding transparency, justice, and the promotion of

community welfare. The alignment with sharia principles is evident in their commitment to providing clear and accountable information regarding the collection and distribution of zakat funds, thereby fostering trust among donors and stakeholders. Transparency is further emphasized through educational content disseminated via digital platforms, which not only explains the religious obligation of zakat but also educates the public on its socio-economic impact. This institution avoids elements prohibited in Islamic finance, such as *gharar* (uncertainty) and *maysir* (gambling), ensuring that marketing messages are free from misleading claims and focused on tangible community benefits. Their ethical communication strategy includes storytelling based on real-life beneficiaries, presented in a respectful and non-manipulative manner that maintains the dignity of those receiving assistance. Furthermore, the integration of secure digital payment systems, including QR codes and trusted gateways, enhances donor confidence by providing a safe and traceable donation process. This strategic approach not only complies with Islamic ethics but also strengthens public trust and engagement, contributing to more sustainable and impactful ZIS fundraising (Pusparini et al., 2023).

Despite the successes of digital marketing strategy, several challenges remain, particularly regarding the public's understanding of zakat transparency and concerns over the security of digital transactions. A significant portion of the population still lacks knowledge about how zakat funds are managed, and some harbour scepticism about the transparency of official zakat institutions. To overcome these challenges, institution must continue to prioritize public education on the role of official zakat institutions, ensuring that their operations are transparent and easily understood by providing clearer, more accessible financial reports and reinforcing the message of how donations are utilized for community welfare. Additionally, securing digital transactions is crucial to maintaining donor trust, as any concerns about data security could discourage potential contributions. Nevertheless, digital marketing strategy remains well-aligned with core Islamic values, emphasizing transparency, ethical communication, and community welfare. The strategy has proven successful in boosting donations, demonstrating that when implemented effectively, digital marketing can align with sharia principles to increase charitable giving while ensuring ethical standards in zakat management.

5. Discussion

Institution has effectively leveraged various digital platforms to enhance its fundraising efforts for ZIS (Asnawi et al., 2024). Through an integrated approach, which includes the official website, social media platforms like Instagram and Facebook, WhatsApp, mobile applications, and QR codes, institution has been able to foster a more efficient, transparent, and user-friendly donation process. The official website serves as the cornerstone of digital marketing efforts, offering secure payment gateways and a platform for transparent communication about the utilization of donations. This not only provides a clear and easy-to-navigate interface for potential donors but also builds trust through regular financial reporting and fund usage updates. Transparency is a critical aspect of Islamic fundraising, aligning with principles of shariah compliance, which emphasizes honesty and integrity in financial dealings (Fharadilla & Muhtadi 2023).

Social media platforms like Instagram and Facebook are crucial for institution in expanding outreach and sharing impactful stories of zakat beneficiaries. This storytelling approach fosters emotional connections that motivate donations, aligning with findings by Abdullah et al. (2023), and Abdulai and Shamsiry (2014), who emphasize emotional engagement as a key driver in charitable giving. Additionally, WhatsApp is used for real-time communication and activity reporting, strengthening relationships with donors by keeping them informed and involved.

This direct engagement builds trust and reinforces donor loyalty, which is vital for zakat institutions that depend on public confidence.

Furthermore, the integration of QR code technology and mobile applications streamlines the donation process. QR codes allow donors to quickly access the donation page from offline materials such as flyers or posters. This technological integration facilitates a seamless transition between offline and online experiences, making it easier for people to donate. Such digital innovations are not only efficient but also shariah-compliant, as they ensure transparency and ease in the donation process, aligning with the principles of justice and fairness in Islamic finance. In terms of marketing techniques, institution employs educational content to raise awareness about the importance of zakat. This content aims to educate the public on zakat's role in alleviating poverty and contributing to social welfare, echoing the views of Jalili et al. (2022), and Hassan and Noor (2015) on the educational potential of zakat. This educational strategy has proven effective, as it empowers donors with the knowledge needed to make informed decisions, thereby encouraging sustainable giving.

The success of institution digital marketing strategy is evident in the 40% increase in online donations over a year, as reported by the institution. This surge can largely be attributed to the combination of educational efforts, emotional storytelling, transparency, and the ease of donation through QR codes and mobile apps. Interviews with donors show that 70% of them were motivated by social media content, which reinforces the importance of digital platforms in modern fundraising. Despite the success, several challenges remain. Limited human resources and technical obstacles are ongoing concerns that hinder further optimization of digital tools. These challenges echo findings in previous studies, such as those by Sofiyawati (2022) and Mulyono et al. (2022), who identified resource constraints as a common issue in digital zakat management. Additionally, the public's limited understanding of zakat transparency poses a barrier to full trust in digital donation platforms. To address this, Institution must continue its educational efforts, focusing on enhancing public literacy regarding zakat fund management and the security of online transactions (Pierce et al., 2019).

6. Conclusion

This research highlights the significant role of digital marketing in increasing the collection of ZIS funds at LAZISMU. By leveraging platforms such as websites, social media, and QR codes, institution has successfully expanded its reach, facilitated a faster donation process, and increased community engagement through educational content, storytelling, and transparent reporting. However, challenges remain, including a lack of public education on ZIS, limited human resources in digital marketing, and a public stigma regarding the management of zakat funds by institutions. To improve the effectiveness of their digital marketing strategy, institution should invest in developing the digital marketing skills of its team through training and workshops, potentially in collaboration with educational institutions or marketing agencies. Partnering with Muslim influencers can also help increase the visibility of ZIS campaigns, particularly among younger audiences active on social media. Additionally, institution should focus on strengthening educational content to build awareness of ZIS's importance and enhance transparency with accessible financial reports and storytelling. Developing a mobile app for real-time donations and impact tracking could further streamline the donation process.

Increasing the digital marketing budget is essential for expanding reach, particularly through paid advertising on platforms like Facebook and Instagram. Improving the security of the donation system and fostering better communication with donors will help build trust and ensure continued engagement. This research

concludes that digital marketing strategy, when aligned with Islamic economic values such as transparency and justice, has the potential to significantly boost ZIS fundraising and foster public trust in zakat institutions.

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