

Online Shop Business Owners' Perception Toward Zakat in Langsa City

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Abstract

In the perspective of Islamic law, ideally, every income that has reached the threshold should be subject to a certain amount of zakat. In reality, many online entrepreneurs in Kota Langsa are indifferent to this matter, causing academic concern behind the lack of awareness in paying zakat. This article falls under field research with a qualitative approach. The methodology used is descriptive analysis study. Primary data sources include in-depth interviews with online business operators in Kota Langsa. Secondary data sources comprise scholarly articles published within the last five years. The research concludes that the lack of awareness stems from confusion among the public regarding the amount and procedures of zakat in online trade that must be fulfilled. Therefore, governmental socialization efforts are needed to stimulate public interest in its distribution.

Keyword: Zakat Online, Ecommerce, Income Zakat

Abstrak

Dalam perspektif hukum Islam, idealnya setiap penghasilan yang sudah sampai hisabnya, maka dibebankan zakat dengan jumlah tertentu. Kenyataannya, masih banyak pengusaha online Kota Langsa yang cuek dengan hal tersebut, sehingga menimbulkan kegelisahan akademis dibalik

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minimnya kesadaran membayar zakat. Artikel ini tergolong dalam penelitian lapangan dengan pendekatan kualitatif. Metodologi yang digunakan adalah studi analisis deskriptif. Sumber data primer adalah hasil wawancara mendalam terhadap pelaku usaha online Kota Langsa. Sumber data sekunder adalah artikel ilmiah terbitan 5 tahun terakhir. Hasil penelitian menyimpulkan bahwa minimnya kesadaran diakibatkan kebingungan masyarakat terkait nominal dan prosedur zakat perdagangan online yang harus dilakukan. Maka dari itu, dibutuhkan sosialisasi oleh pemerintah sehingga memantik minat masyarakat untuk mendistribusikannya.

Kata Kunci: Zakat Online, Ecommerce, Zakat Penghasilan

Introduction

In the increasingly evolving digital era, e-commerce has become an integral part of daily life. Advances in information technology have transformed the way we shop, shifting from conventional methods to more practical and efficient online transactions. The rapid growth of e-commerce reflects society's adaptation to modern technology, where online shopping has become an undeniable trend. Consumer trust and comfort in online shopping are steadily increasing, significantly impacting product sales patterns across various sectors. As human life advances with sophisticated technology, Islamic law also adapts to these changes, known as contemporary fiqh. For instance, modern entrepreneurs leverage all available platforms, including e-commerce sites (such as websites, Shopee, Lazada, Tokopedia, Bilibli, LakuLaku, JD.id, and others) and social media (such as Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, Twitter, WhatsApp Business, Telegram, and Line). Sales can be conducted using just a computer or gadget, often generating higher income than traditional methods (Asnita, 2022).

Ideally, zakat is a mandatory practice for Muslims and one of the pillars of Islam. Muslims who possess wealth that reaches the nisab (minimum threshold) and has been held for a lunar year (haul) are obligated to pay zakat according to Islamic guidelines. The basis for the obligation of zakat is found in Surah At-Tawbah, Verse 103, and the hadith of the Prophet. Based on these teachings, zakat should be paid in advance before its due time to purify the soul from the trait of miserliness and replace it with the quality of compassion. In reality, the awareness of the people of Langsa City to pay zakat is still very low (Solihin, 2022). Traditional traders, whose income has drastically decreased, are still obliged to pay zakat. In contrast, online business owners, who earn significantly more than traditional traders with margins reaching tens of millions per month, do not have to pay for shop rent and other administrative costs. However, there is no clear legal ruling regarding their obligation to pay zakat.

Moreover, there is no fatwa from the National Sharia Council (DSN) regarding the amount of zakat for online businesses. The form of zakat for online entrepreneurs was never exemplified during the time of Prophet Muhammad, making this phenomenon increasingly uncontrollable amid the proliferation of online businesses across various regions. Likewise, contemporary scholars in Aceh have not performed ijtihad (independent reasoning) about e-commerce zakat, thus creating a need for new legal rulings to address the doubts, especially among the

people of Langsa City. In Qanun Aceh Number 10 of 2007 concerning Baitul Mal, it is stated that in the implementation of Sharia law and the optimization of zakat, waqf, and religious assets as economic potentials for the Muslim community, these need to be managed optimally and effectively by a professional and responsible institution. However, in reality, the management has not yet been optimal. Article 18 states that the zakat that must be paid consists of zakat fitrah, zakat maal, and zakat on income. The types of assets that must be given zakat include trade and business assets (Qanun Aceh, 2007).

Based on an initial survey conducted with Baitul Mal, it was found that no online business owners have paid their zakat to the Baitul Mal institution in Langsa City (Safwan Kamal, 2022). Similarly, an initial survey from Shopee, an e-commerce platform, indicates that no online business owners have distributed their zakat through this platform (Admin Shopee, 2022). The role of zakat is crucial in contributing to the country's efforts to reduce poverty, as its proper distribution targets individuals who are less fortunate and in need of material assistance. However, in practice, e-commerce zakat has not yet been adopted by online business owners in Langsa City (Agustinar et al., 2022).

In fact, zakat is not only understood as a form of worship that is obligatory for every Muslim who meets the requirements, but more than that, it is a system for distributing wealth among Muslims, from the rich to the poor. Thus, zakat has the ability to eliminate socio-economic disparities within the community (Solihin, 2022). Ideally, online entrepreneurs who have met the requirements of haul and nisab should pay their zakat to help reduce economic inequality. However, in practice, many of them do not understand this obligation or lack clear guidance on the amount of zakat they should pay and how to pay it. This indicates that there is an issue worth addressing and studying in order to formulate a solution.

Literature review

In the Masharif al-Syariah Journal: Journal of Islamic Economics and Banking, authors Isnaetul Mutiya Rohmah et al., present a study titled; *"Analysis of the Effectiveness of Zakat Payment through Online Services at the Zakat Collection Agency Rumah Zakat."* Their research indicates that Rumah Zakat is a viable alternative for online zakat payments. It is economical and efficient, and the use of Rumah Zakat LAZ offers a more practical and straightforward approach, which simplifies the zakat payment process for the public and effectively motivates zakat practice (Rohmah et al., 2021). This study focuses on assessing the effectiveness of online zakat payments at LAZ Rumah Zakat Indonesia. In contrast, the current research aims to explore the perceptions of the people of Langsa City regarding zakat for online traders.

A scientific journal of Islamic Economics by Andi Hidayat and Mukhlisin, titled; *"Analysis of Zakat Growth on the Dompot Dhuafa Online Zakat Application,"* discusses that many online platforms now offer zakat payment options for muzakki (zakat payers). Based on data obtained from the national amil zakat agency, the zakat potential in 2019 was around Rp. 233.8 trillion, which was divided into five zakat objects, while the zakat income in 2016 and 2017 was only around Rp. 6 trillion. Due to the high zakat potential in Indonesia, practitioners and

zakat collection agencies must find solutions to maximize zakat collection and help alleviate poverty in Indonesia. Dompot Dhuafa, as an amil zakat, implements an online application system for zakat payments, both based on Android and web, with the aim of making it easier for muzakki to pay zakat online and improving service quality. It is hoped that with this online service, zakat potential can be absorbed despite distance and time constraints (Hidayat & Mukhlisin, 2020). This research, in general, aims to increase the development and growth of zakat through online collection. Specifically, it aims to facilitate muzakki in distributing zakat. Employing a qualitative research method known as the naturalistic research method, which is conducted in natural settings, the study utilizes both primary and secondary data sources. The findings indicate that zakat growth is consistently improving year after year.

Eldiana and Ahmad, in their journal titled; *"Millennial Intention to Pay Zakat: The Effect of Religiosity and Attitudes,"* investigate the significant influence of religiosity on zakat payments and the motivational attitudes towards paying zakat. This study surveyed 100 respondents through questionnaires distributed based on predetermined respondent characteristics. The research reveals that religiosity and positive attitudes greatly impact millennials' intentions to pay zakat. Additionally, it shows that attitudes mediate the relationship between religiosity and the intention to pay zakat among millennials. The study implies that zakat institutions should better understand the importance of religiosity and attitudes in encouraging millennial Muslims to pay zakat and the crucial role millennials play in alleviating poverty in Indonesia (Purwadani & Ridlwan, 2022). The similarity between this study and the one I am examining lies in their focus on zakat, although the subjects differ. The previous research aims to observe the influence of religiosity and attitudes on paying zakat, whereas this paper discusses the perceptions of online merchants about paying zakat.

In the journal titled; *"Redistribusi Zakat Melalui Pendekatan Diyani dan Qadhai Dalam Hukum Islam"* written by Aden Rosadi, it is explained that the diyani approach, which is inherently qadhai, introduces a new reasoning in the process of zakat redistribution. This is because both are legal characteristics inherent in Islamic identity. The management of zakat in the modern era has transformed from consumptive zakat to productive zakat, along with new interpretations of revelation texts about zakat. Moreover, scholars and Muslim governments are beginning to see zakat as a tool to enhance economic welfare (Aden Rosadi, 2014).

Muhammad Daniyal Al-Athar and Al-Arif state in their journal titled; *"The Intention Generation in Paying Zakat Through Digital Payments,"* that zakat management organizations (OPZ) are currently innovating to keep up with technological advancements, making it easier to pay zakat through digital payments. One of the groups using digital payments is the millennial generation, known for their preference for convenience and technology. This study aims to analyze how millennials intend to pay zakat through digital payments. The research shows that trust, perception, and convenience variables significantly influence millennials' intention to pay zakat through digital payments, while knowledge and motivation have an insignificant effect. The findings imply that OPZ should create user-friendly applications for millennials to facilitate digital zakat payments (Al Athar & Al Arif, 2021). Based on previous journals, the researcher

concludes that there are both similarities and differences with the current research. The similarity is that both discuss zakat, while the difference is that previous journals focus on zakat payments through digital applications, whereas this paper focuses on the perceptions of online merchants regarding the obligation to pay zakat. This stems from the fact that many online merchants in Langsa City do not pay zakat despite reaching the nisab and haul thresholds. This indicates that this article has originality and novelty.

Research method

This article falls into the category of literature research with a qualitative approach. The methodology used is descriptive analysis study. The primary sources in this research are the arguments of online business owners in Langsa City. The secondary sources are scientific journals published in the last 5 years that are relevant to the author's study. Data collection techniques include observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. The process of data validation and filtering is conducted deductively (specific to general), although the narrative is presented inductively (general to specific). The deductive format is used to ensure that broad and extensive data can be packaged and condensed into a limited journal draft (not exceeding 8,000 words). Therefore, to ensure that the data in the journal is accurate and targeted, the author performs data triangulation to avoid overlapping narratives within the text. Additionally, this approach ensures that the data presented in the journal draft is truly realistic and addresses the research problem.

The History of Online Business

The emergence and development of online business have been integral to the global economy over the past few decades. This transformation did not happen overnight but through a series of technological innovations and social changes from the late 20th century to the present. The history of online business traces back to the 1960s with the introduction of computer technology and networks. However, modern e-commerce as we know it began in the early 1990s with the growth of the internet. The World Wide Web, created by Tim Berners-Lee in 1989, laid the foundation for online commerce by enabling users to access information and services through a global computer network (F. H. Nasution, 2019). By the early 1990s, the internet started gaining traction among the general public. In 1991, the National Science Foundation lifted its commercial restrictions on the internet, opening doors for online business activities.

Subsequently, in 1994, Netscape released Navigator, a web browser that made it easier for users to access and navigate the web. That same year, Amazon.com was founded by Jeff Bezos as an online bookstore. Amazon quickly grew into one of the largest e-commerce giants globally, offering a wide range of products from books to electronics and clothing. Alongside Amazon, eBay emerged as another pioneer in online business. Founded by Pierre Omidyar in 1995, eBay provided an online auction platform where individuals could buy and sell goods. The success of Amazon and eBay demonstrated the immense potential of online

trade and inspired many entrepreneurs to enter this market. In the late 1990s and early 2000s, many companies began adopting online business models (Hizbandyah et al., 2023). The dot-com bubble phenomenon occurred between 1997 and 2000, during which the stock values of technology companies, especially those based on the internet, skyrocketed. Although this bubble burst in 2000, leading to many dot-com companies going bankrupt, this era underscored the importance of the internet in business and reshaped how companies operated.

Entering the 21st century, technology continued to advance rapidly. The rise of social media platforms such as Facebook (2004), YouTube (2005), and Twitter (2006) provided new avenues for businesses to interact with consumers. Additionally, advancements in mobile technology and smartphones, starting with the launch of the iPhone by Apple in 2007, enabled users to access the internet and shop online anytime and anywhere. Advancements in payment technology also played a crucial role in driving the growth of online business. Services like PayPal, founded in 1998, provided a secure and easy payment method for online transactions (Sari & Paramita, 2022). Over time, mobile and digital payment methods such as Apple Pay, Google Wallet, and various digital wallets further streamlined the online transaction process.

Today, online business encompasses various sectors, from retail and services to education and healthcare. The COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 significantly accelerated the adoption of online business when many traditional businesses shifted to digital platforms to survive. Consumers also became increasingly comfortable with online shopping, as reflected in a sharp increase in e-commerce sales during the pandemic. Furthermore, the emergence of new technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI), big data, and the Internet of Things (IoT) continues to transform the landscape of online business. AI and big data enable better personalization and consumer behavior analysis, while IoT connects various devices and systems, creating more integrated and efficient shopping experiences (Lukita et al., 2023).

In the context of Indonesia, online business has also experienced rapid growth. Platforms like Tokopedia, Bukalapak, and Shopee have become major players in the Indonesian e-commerce market, offering a wide range of products and services to millions of consumers nationwide. Government support and improvements in digital infrastructure have also helped accelerate the growth of online business in Indonesia. Overall, the history of online business reflects the evolution of technology and changes in consumer behavior (Sudaryono et al., 2020). From humble beginnings to becoming a pillar of the global economy, online business continues to innovate and expand, opening new opportunities and creating new challenges for entrepreneurs worldwide.

Online Business from an Islamic Perspective

In recent years, the rapid growth of online business has transformed the global economic landscape, including within Islamic communities. The concept of online business, or e-commerce, aligns well with the principles of trade and commerce in Islam, provided it adheres to the ethical guidelines and legal requirements set forth by Islamic law, or Sharia. From an Islamic perspective,

business and trade are highly encouraged activities. The Prophet Muhammad Saw himself engaged in trade and emphasized honesty, transparency, and fairness in all business dealings. These principles are crucial in ensuring that all parties involved in a transaction are treated justly, and these same principles apply to online business (Pujiyanti & Wahdi, 2020). In the context of e-commerce, this means that online businesses must ensure clarity and honesty in product descriptions, pricing, and terms of service to avoid any form of deception or fraud.

One of the key aspects of online business in Islam is the concept of halal and haram. Muslim entrepreneurs must ensure that their products and services comply with halal standards, meaning they are permissible under Islamic law. This extends beyond just food and beverages to include financial products, clothing, and other goods and services. Online businesses must avoid selling or promoting items that are considered haram, such as alcohol, pork products, and any form of gambling (Nurdin, 2019). Additionally, the methods of marketing and advertising should be free from any form of exploitation or unethical persuasion.

The practice of zakat, or almsgiving, is another critical element that intersects with online business in Islam. Zakat is one of the Five Pillars of Islam and requires Muslims to donate a portion of their wealth to those in need. For online businesses, calculating and paying zakat on business income is a vital aspect of maintaining religious and social responsibilities. This involves determining the nisab (the minimum amount of wealth one must have before they are liable to pay zakat) and the haul (the completion of one lunar year) to accurately calculate the zakat due. Moreover, the concept of *riba* (interest) is strictly prohibited in Islam. Online business transactions should be free from any form of interest-based financing (Jahar, 2019). Instead, alternative financing methods such as profit-sharing, venture capital, and Islamic banking products that comply with Sharia principles should be utilized. These methods ensure that business transactions are fair and equitable, benefiting both the entrepreneur and the investors without the burden of interest.

The ethical treatment of employees and customers is also paramount in an Islamic business framework. Online businesses must ensure fair wages, ethical labor practices, and respect for workers' rights. Customer service should be conducted with integrity, ensuring that all customer grievances are addressed promptly and fairly. This creates a trustworthy business environment and aligns with the Islamic principle of *ihsan* (excellence in conduct). The rapid technological advancements and the shift towards digital platforms provide a unique opportunity for Muslim entrepreneurs to innovate and expand their businesses while adhering to Islamic principles (Suparto et al., 2022). Utilizing technology to enhance transparency, improve customer experience, and streamline operations can help build a robust and ethical online business model.

In conclusion, the integration of Islamic principles in online business practices is essential for Muslim entrepreneurs. By ensuring that their businesses comply with the ethical guidelines of Islam, such as honesty, transparency, fairness, and the prohibition of haram activities and *riba*, online business owners can create a positive impact on their communities and uphold their religious obligations. Additionally, embracing modern technology and innovative business

models within the framework of Sharia can lead to sustainable and successful business ventures that contribute to the overall welfare of society.

Zakat for Online Business in Islamic Law

Zakat in Islam is a fundamental obligation and one of the five pillars of Islam. The word 'zakat' itself derives from Arabic, meaning 'purification,' 'growth,' and 'blessing.' This illustrates zakat as a form of purifying wealth to achieve blessing and spiritual growth. Zakat not only holds spiritual dimensions but also strong social and economic implications, binding Muslims to distribute wealth equitably among those in need. Legally, zakat is mandated for every eligible Muslim regarding their ownership of wealth. The Quran and the Hadith of Prophet Muhammad provide a robust legal basis for zakat implementation (Elvi et al., 2024). The Quran in Surah Al-Baqarah, verse 267 instructs Muslims to spend from the good things they earn for the benefit of the community, underscoring zakat as not just a charitable deed but an integral part of worship demonstrating obedience and commitment to social justice principles.

In the context of online business and the digital era, zakat faces new challenges. Online transactions and wealth in digital forms pose new questions in zakat calculation and implementation. Nonetheless, zakat principles remain applicable, requiring every online trader reaching the nisab and haul thresholds to pay 2.5% of their wealth. This encompasses digital assets such as account balances, online investments, and income from online sales. The primary challenge in online zakat implementation is the awareness and understanding among online traders of their zakat obligations (Suparto et al., 2022). Many still require better socialization and education on how to calculate and pay zakat on their online earnings. Solutions to enhance online zakat implementation include more intensive socialization, education, and facilitation of zakat collection through secure and reliable digital platforms.

The significance of zakat in online business extends beyond legal aspects, playing a strategic role in sustainable economic development. Zakat not only reduces social and economic disparities but also promotes justice in wealth distribution. With better understanding and coordinated support from various stakeholders, online zakat holds substantial potential to support sustainable economic development while upholding the values of social justice in Islam. As e-commerce grows and digital technology adoption expands, it is crucial for countries with large Muslim populations like Indonesia to increase awareness and implementation of online zakat. This effort will not only optimize zakat's potential as a public funding source but also strengthen commitment to Islamic values that promote social inclusion and economic justice.

The phenomenon of online zakat presents its own challenges in the digital era, where despite increased ease and transparency in managing zakat, many individuals are caught in the behavior of pretending to forget to pay it. This irony persists given that zakat is a religious obligation for every capable Muslim. Pretending to forget zakat can occur for various reasons. One of these is a lack of awareness of the importance of zakat as a regular obligation. In the digital context, using zakat applications can easily allow someone to postpone or even neglect

their obligation, citing busyness or avoiding financial responsibilities. Furthermore, the openness offered by digital zakat platforms can provide opportunities for some individuals to misuse them dishonestly. They may seek loopholes to avoid paying zakat, such as hiding income or delaying the use of zakat applications (Triantoro et al., 2021). The behavior of pretending to forget zakat can also be influenced by a low level of education or understanding of zakat itself. Some people may not fully grasp the criteria or nisab that must be met to fulfill zakat obligations, hence neglecting or postponing this duty.

Certainly, internal factors also influence this behavior, such as individual attitudes and habits towards finance and religious obligations. For example, greed or a lack of strong spiritual awareness can influence someone to evade zakat obligations, even though they are nominally capable of paying. Addressing this phenomenon requires a holistic approach, including education, supervision, and greater societal awareness of the importance of zakat as a fundamental pillar of Islamic finance (Jahar, 2019). Governments, religious institutions, and communities need to collaborate to enhance understanding and effective implementation of zakat, both in conventional and digital formats. This will ensure that the values of religious obligations and social justice are well realized in an increasingly digitally connected society.

Zakat for Online Business; Online Entrepreneurs Perspective

Zakat understanding involves changing the attitudes and behaviors of a muzakki (zakat payer) to mature them through education and training. Awareness of zakat regulations, whether through formal or informal education, significantly enhances a muzakki's consciousness to pay zakat (Waluyo, 2016). Mardiasmo (2016) states that increasing a person's knowledge about zakat will lead to higher compliance in paying it. A muzakki who comprehends their rights and duties will recognize their obligations. As a muzakki's understanding of zakat increases, so does their compliance in fulfilling zakat payments.

In brief, while the rapid expansion of e-commerce in Indonesia boosts national income, it has not yet proportionately increased zakat revenue, despite government regulations on digital transactions. This discrepancy arises from the low awareness among digital traders and service providers about zakat obligations and the government's difficulty in identifying these entities due to the lack of physical stores. Greater awareness of zakat's importance among these digital traders and service providers would significantly benefit Indonesia's economy, as zakat contributes to national development and community welfare. Effective government regulations on digital transactions, coupled with increased zakat awareness, can elevate tax revenue in Indonesia (Ayuningtias, 2021).

Several online sellers interviewed by the researcher already understood that online traders are obliged to pay zakat, just like offline traders. Ummul explained: "Income zakat must be paid by traders who meet the criteria. It can be done monthly or annually, and the amount is the same as for offline trading; the only difference is the marketing method, but the obligation is the same." Trade zakat is obligatory for anyone whose wealth from trading goods over a year reaches the nisab threshold. This is supported by the Quran, which states:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَنْفِقُوا مِنْ طَيِّبَاتِ مَا كَسَبْتُمْ وَمِمَّا أَخْرَجْنَا لَكُمْ مِنَ الْأَرْضِ وَلَا تَيَمَّمُوا الْخَبِيثَ مِنْهُ تُنْفِقُونَ وَلَسْتُمْ بِآخِذِيهِ إِلَّا أَنْ تُغْمِضُوا فِيهِ ۚ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ غَنِيٌّ حَمِيدٌ

"O believers, spend from the good things you have earned and from what We have produced for you from the earth. Do not choose to give what is bad while you would not take it yourself except with closed eyes. And know that Allah is Self-sufficient and Praiseworthy." (QS. Al-Baqarah: 267)

Trade zakat is an obligation that must be fulfilled by every trader, including online traders. However, many online traders are still confused about how to calculate and pay trade zakat. Basically, online trade zakat is the same as offline trade zakat, where every trader who has wealth from trading goods for a year and reaches the nisab must pay zakat of 2.5% of that wealth. Nisab is the minimum wealth threshold that must be reached for zakat to be obligatory, and haul is the one-year period of owning that wealth. The wealth in question for trade zakat includes initial capital, profits, receivables, and remaining stock of merchandise. Although these rules are clear, many online traders do not understand them well. They often only have basic knowledge about nisab and still guess how to calculate it correctly. Rimmi, an online trader, stated that the zakat from online trading income is an obligatory charity that must be given at 2.5% of net income. This lack of understanding results in many online traders not paying zakat according to the existing provisions (Rimmi, 2023).

Siti Maisyarah, another trader, also admitted that she does not fully understand how to calculate zakat, even though she has been paying it based on her own calculation of 2.5% (Maisarah, 2023). She realizes the need for more intensive socialization about zakat payments for online traders. Socialization and education about trade zakat, especially for online traders, are very important to increase their awareness and compliance in fulfilling zakat obligations. With better understanding, online traders will be more obedient in paying zakat and help reduce social and economic inequality in society. This problem is also influenced by the low level of awareness among online traders about the importance of zakat as a religious obligation.

Many of them feel that because they trade online, they do not need to pay zakat. In Islam, there is no difference between online and offline trade regarding zakat obligations. Different marketing strategies do not change the zakat obligation that must be fulfilled by every able trader. Azhari, another online trader, understands that the zakat for online traders has the same nisab and haul as trade zakat. He calculates the total amount of goods, capital, and debts; if it reaches the nisab, the zakat must be given (Azhari, 2023). Another challenge is how the government can identify and monitor these online traders. Since they do not have physical stores, it is often difficult to supervise and ensure that they fulfill their zakat obligations.

The government needs to collaborate with various parties, including e-commerce platforms and Islamic financial institutions, to increase awareness and compliance with zakat among online traders. Azhari also emphasized that there is

no difference in the amount of zakat for online and offline traders; the only difference is the sales strategy (Azhari, 2023). Another obstacle is the calculation of zakat, which is still considered complicated by many online traders. Many of them do not yet know exactly how much the nisab of trade zakat is and how to calculate it. They often rely on personal calculations without clear guidelines. This, of course, affects their compliance in paying zakat.

It requires joint efforts from various parties to overcome this problem. The government, Islamic financial institutions, and the online trader community need to work together to improve understanding and compliance with zakat obligations. With more intensive socialization and proper education, it is hoped that online traders will be more aware of their zakat obligations and more compliant in paying them. In the context of a growing economy and increasing digitalization, zakat has a strategic role in sustainable economic development. With high compliance with zakat obligations, it is expected that there will be a fairer distribution of wealth and an improvement in community welfare. Therefore, it is important for online traders to understand and fulfill their zakat obligations to contribute to economic development and social welfare.

Factors Affecting Online Entrepreneurs' Understanding

Based on interview findings, it is evident that many online traders in Langsa City are not fully aware of or do not understand the nisab, which is the threshold of wealth for zakat obligations. For example, Ummul typically does not allocate zakat based on a specific percentage but instead divides it into three parts: additional capital, daily necessities, and charity. This indicates a misunderstanding between charity and obligatory zakat (Suriyanti, 2023). Suriyanti, who has paid zakat twice, demonstrates a slightly better understanding by stating that she pays zakat because it has reached the nisab and haul. However, Suriyanti does not specify the required nisab amount, indicating a lack of detailed knowledge about nisa (Suriyanti, 2023).

On the other hand, Azhari, a trader who has paid zakat three times, fully supports zakat implementation because he believes that zakat purifies wealth and brings blessings. Azhari mentions that he will pay zakat if the capital and goods in his store reach 80 million rupiahs annually. This view shows that some entrepreneurs are beginning to understand the importance of zakat, although there is still confusion about the exact calculation of nisab (Azhari, 2023). From a legal perspective, understanding online income zakat is seen as an obligation imposed by laws or regulations, requiring people to allocate a portion of their income to the mustahik. The government has the authority to enforce this obligation, and zakat funds must be used to improve the welfare of the mustahik. However, the compliance rate for zakat obligations in Langsa City is still relatively low, even though the number of online businesses continues to increase each year.

This study indicates that understanding online income zakat significantly influences the willingness of online business owners to pay zakat. To boost this willingness, greater efforts are needed to enhance the understanding of muzakki regarding online income zakat and e-commerce zakat. Improved understanding will help them recognize the critical role of zakat in financing public expenditures

and achieving development goals that promote public welfare. Better knowledge of income zakat will have a positive impact not only on muzakki but also on mustahik, who will directly benefit from zakat funds. Therefore, increasing awareness and understanding of zakat among online entrepreneurs in Langsa City is crucial to ensuring better compliance and significant contributions to societal welfare.

Despite ongoing efforts to increase understanding of online income zakat, many online merchants in Langsa City remain confused about the mechanisms of business zakat. This lack of clarity leads them to adopt various suboptimal options in dealing with zakat obligations. *First*, some merchants choose to ignore their zakat obligations altogether. They feel underinformed and unsure about how to calculate and pay zakat, making it easier for them to avoid it entirely. *Second*, some follow the patterns or mechanisms of non-online zakat. Due to the lack of specific understanding of zakat for online businesses, they tend to use traditional methods they are familiar with. This is evident from Ummul's approach, who allocates zakat not based on a specific percentage but divides it for additional capital, daily necessities, and charity (Ummul, 2023)

Third, a portion of merchants prefer to wait until clear regulations are issued by the government or relevant authorities before they start paying zakat. They feel more comfortable waiting for official guidance that can provide clarity on the timing, nisab amount, calculation methods, and correct distribution processes. As Azhari mentioned, although he understands the importance of zakat, he still relies on his own knowledge without clear guidelines regarding the nisab (Azhari, 2023). This situation shows that, while some online business owners have started paying zakat, like Surianti, who pays zakat because her income has reached the nisab and haul (Surianti, 2023), the majority still need further guidance. This uncertainty hampers the effective distribution of online income zakat and necessitates the development of more concrete fatwas and regulations.

Therefore, it is crucial for the government and zakat management institutions to provide more intensive education and outreach about online income zakat. This can be done through seminars, online outreach programs, and clear regulatory publications. With increased understanding, online merchants in Langsa City are expected to better fulfill their zakat obligations, ultimately contributing to the overall welfare of the community.

The Importance of Government Socialization

Zakat is one of the key pillars in Islam, serving as a tool for wealth redistribution to improve the welfare of the ummah. However, in the modern context, especially with the rise of online businesses, the understanding and practice of zakat often do not align with sharia principles. This is where the government's role becomes crucial in socializing online income zakat to the community, particularly online entrepreneurs (Suradi & Bustami, 2022). *First*, the government has the authority and broad reach to engage various segments of society. With regulatory power and the capacity to organize outreach programs, the government can ensure that information about online income zakat is widely disseminated and received by all demographics. Effective socialization can take

various forms, such as seminars, workshops, social media campaigns, and the publication of easy-to-understand guides.

Second, the government can collaborate with zakat management institutions to develop clear and straightforward guidelines on calculating online income zakat. For instance, many online entrepreneurs are still confused about the concept of nisab and how to calculate the zakat they owe. By providing detailed and easy-to-understand information, the government can help reduce this confusion. These guidelines should include explanations of what nisab is, how to calculate net income, and how to differentiate between income zakat and trade zakat (Basuki & Triputro, 2022). Additionally, the government can play a role in developing a transparent and accountable reporting and monitoring system. Transparency in zakat management is vital for building trust among muzakki (zakat payers). If online entrepreneurs are confident that the zakat they pay is well-managed and used for the right purposes, they will be more motivated to pay zakat consistently. The government can implement a digital reporting system that allows muzakki to monitor the use of zakat funds in real-time.

The government's role is also crucial in overcoming practical challenges that hinder the payment of online income zakat. For instance, the lack of effective monitoring mechanisms for online business activities can be addressed through the development of more advanced technology to track transactions and income from online businesses. The government can also conduct training and outreach to enhance the capacity of zakat management institutions in handling zakat from the e-commerce sector. Furthermore, the government should actively issue clear regulations and fatwas regarding online income zakat (Anwar & Septyan, 2019). These fatwas should provide legal certainty for online entrepreneurs about their zakat obligations. Clear and firm regulations will help reduce ambiguity and increase compliance among online entrepreneurs in paying zakat.

Finally, public education and awareness-raising should also be a primary focus for the government. Many people still consider zakat as mere charity that can be given at any time and in any amount. This misconception needs to be corrected so that the public understands that zakat is an obligation with specific rules and requirements. With the correct understanding, it is hoped that the community, especially online entrepreneurs, will be more responsible in fulfilling their zakat obligations (E. Y. Nasution, 2017). Overall, the government's role in socializing online income zakat is extremely important. By taking proactive and strategic steps, the government can help create an environment conducive to better and more effective zakat practices, thus improving the overall welfare of the community and contributing to sustainable development goals.

However, to ensure that online income zakat is truly optimized and implemented comprehensively, there must be clear sanctions for those who do not fulfill their zakat obligations. Without clear and consistently enforced sanctions, many online entrepreneurs might neglect their zakat duties. The government should establish regulations that not only mandate zakat payment but also include legal consequences for non-compliance. This will create a deterrent effect and encourage higher compliance. Effective sanctions could include fines, restrictions on access to public facilities, or even more serious legal actions depending on the level of violation. With such sanctions, online entrepreneurs will take their zakat

obligations more seriously. This not only increases zakat revenues that can be used for public welfare but also ensures that the principle of justice in Islam is upheld properly. The government must ensure that the enforcement of these sanctions is fair and transparent, so as not to create a sense of injustice among the public.

Besides sanctions, the government also needs to leverage technology to facilitate the payment of online income zakat. One effective solution is the development of a digital reminder application. This application can be integrated with financial and e-commerce systems, automatically notifying online entrepreneurs when their income reaches the nisab threshold. With such notifications, online entrepreneurs can be more vigilant and evaluative in calculating the zakat they owe (Nurdin, 2019). The digital reminder application not only helps with timing reminders for zakat payments but also provides accurate calculation guidance. Users can input their income data, and the application will calculate the zakat amount that needs to be paid according to sharia rules. This way, online entrepreneurs do not have to worry about miscalculations or uncertainties in determining nisab. Implementing this technology will make the zakat payment process easier, more transparent, and accurate, increasing compliance and awareness among online entrepreneurs about their zakat obligations.

Conclusion

The majority of online business operators in Langsa City have low awareness and understanding of the obligation of online income zakat. Many of them do not grasp the concept of nisab and other requirements for zakat, leading to a significant lack of awareness about this obligation. Improving understanding of online income zakat and e-commerce zakat is crucial. A better knowledge of the role of zakat in supporting government expenditures for societal welfare will encourage online business operators to be more willing and accurate in paying zakat. The primary challenges in distributing online income zakat include insufficient understanding of zakat, inadequate monitoring mechanisms, vague outreach efforts, confusion about timing, nisab amounts, calculation methods, and distribution processes.

Difficulty in detecting online business activities also poses a significant barrier. Greater efforts are needed to enhance the understanding and awareness of online business operators in Langsa City regarding the obligation of online income zakat. Furthermore, improving zakat distribution systems and procedures is crucial to ensure that zakat funds reach deserving recipients. Overall, achieving better compliance and making a significant contribution to community welfare requires strategic and targeted educational measures for online business operators in Langsa City.

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