

## **Employee Adaptation Patterns in Utilizing Digital Fundraising Channels during the Covid-19 Pandemic**

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### **Abstract**

*This research was conducted to examine employees' adaptation patterns using digital fundraising channels at LAZ IZI Central Java. The research type used in this study was qualitative, using a phenomenological approach. The primary data was obtained from observations and interviews with LAZ IZI Central Java employees, and the secondary data were taken from books, articles, and journals. This study found that the adaptation pattern of LAZ IZI Central Java employees in the New Normal period did not experience any significant obstacles because digital fundraising had become part of their activities before the COVID-19 pandemic. However, digital fundraising competence was still improved through training and workshops carried out internally and externally.*

Keywords: Digital fundraising, Employee Adaptation, IZI COVID-19 Pandemic

### **Abstrak**

Penelitian ini dilakukan untuk meneliti pola adaptasi pegawai dalam pemanfaatan kanal digital *fundraising* di LAZ IZI Jateng. Jenis penelitian ini adalah kualitatif, dengan menggunakan pendekatan fenomenologis. Adapun data primer yang digunakan berupa observasi dan wawancara terhadap pegawai LAZ IZI Jateng, dan data sekundernya adalah data-data yang diambil dari buku, artikel, serta jurnal. Penelitian ini menghasilkan temuan bahwa pola adaptasi pegawai LAZ IZI Jateng di masa *New Normal* tidak mengalami hambatan yang berarti, karena digital fundraising telah menjadi bagian kegiatan sebelum adanya pandemic covid-19. Meskipun begitu kompetensi digital fundraising tetap ditingkatkan dalam bentuk pelatihan dan workshop yang dilaksanakan secara internal, maupun eksternal.

Kata Kunci: Digital fundraising, Adaptasi Pegawai, IZI, Pandemi COVID-19

### **Introduction**

The emergence of Covid-19 has changed the world order. Covid-19 has spread throughout most of the world, including Indonesia. It resulted in the weakening of the country's economy. The policy of social distancing (social restrictions) has changed the economic conditions of a country. Various macroeconomic problems

have emerged, such as unemployment due to layoffs and poverty. The percentage of poverty rate in March 2021 was 10.14%, which increased by 0.36 points from the percentage in the previous year, which was only 9.78%. It was accompanied by health problems, the government's main focus.

The Covid-19 pandemic has had a major influence on the behavior, lifestyle, and way of working of employees and entrepreneurs, including employees at the Amil Zakat Institute (LAZ) of the Indonesian Zakat Initiative (IZI) Central Java branch. They must prepare and adapt to the changes in the new life pattern (New Normal Life) so that employees' performance remains under control and the planned program can be properly implemented (Wardana et al., 2021).

Fundraising activities are one of the adjustment activities that IZI Central Java employees must carry out. Before the Covid-19 pandemic came, fundraising activities at LAZ IZI Central Java were mainly conducted offline, with face-to-face services for donors who came to the office and employees who visited donors. Since the Covid-19 pandemic, fundraising activities at LAZ IZI Central Java were more optimized to be carried out online. Hence, LAZ IZI Central Java employees had to adapt to these activities. Although online fundraising (digital fundraising) at LAZ IZI has been running since before the pandemic through the institution's website, its use has not been optimal. Hence, employees are required to be able to maximize the use of digital channel platforms in collecting *ziswaf* funds from donors during this pandemic. Digital fundraising is collecting funds and other resources to create program synergies for community empowerment which is carried out online by utilizing existing digital channel platforms (Ghofur, 2018).

To maximize the acquisition of Zakat, Infaq, Alms, and Waqf (ZISWAF) funds from digital fundraising, LAZ IZI Central Java provides facilities for its employees to participate in various digital fundraising training activities, from being organized by the Zakat Organization Forum (FOZ) through the Indonesian Amil School (SAI) to training organized by internal institutions. The Indonesian Amil School (SAI) is a zakat educational institution that is part of the national zakat forum incorporated in the Zakat Organization Forum (FOZ) and is independent. SAI plays a role in developing the world of zakat in Indonesia by providing the facilities needed by the Amil Zakat Institution (LAZ) and non-governmental organizations to increase the capacity and quality of human resources in these institutions. SAI and internal institutions organize the activities, including training, webinars, and online workshops. These activities raised interesting themes around Zakat, Infaq, Alms,

and Waqf (ZISWAF), such as digital fundraising, management of utilization programs, etc.

### **Literature Review**

Several studies have touched on the use of digitization in the collection of ZIS funds, including; Prastiani and Fasa (2020), Maghfirah (2021), and Herman (2017), who talk about optimizing ZIS collection through digital. Other research on fundraising only discusses the effectiveness and strategy of institutions in using e-commerce platforms to facilitate public transactions and increase the institutional fund income, such as research by Kinanti et al. (2021), Siregar, et al. (2019), Nurhajizah (2017), and Aditya (2019). By observing these studies, it is concluded that there has been no research on employee adaptation patterns in digital fundraising activities. Therefore, the authors are interested in conducting this research at LAZ IZI, Central Java.

### **Research Methods**

This study used a qualitative method. The research was in the form of field research. Field research is a direct observation of the object under study to obtain data relevant to qualitative research methods (Hasbi & Sumarni, 2020). Qualitative research intends to understand the phenomena experienced by research subjects and clearly describe them in words and language in a special natural context by utilizing various scientific methods (Anggito & Setiawan, 2018). This research focused on the ziswaf digital fundraising strategy during the Covid-19 pandemic with primary data as a data source. Primary data was obtained directly by researchers from the data source (Siyoto, 2015). The researcher obtained the data by digging up information directly from several employees of LAZ IZI Central Java.

### **Results and Discussion**

#### **A. Fundraising Definition**

The term fundraising is known by some humanitarian volunteers, especially activists of *zakat* institutions, as the ability of a person, organization, or company to invite and influence other people to raise awareness and concern and motivate them to carry out what is offered in these activities (Ruhama, 2021).

Fundraising can be interpreted as an activity to collect or raise *zakat*, *infaq*, and *shadaqah* funds and other community resources (individuals, communities,

organizations, and companies), which will be distributed and utilized for *mustahik* (Sani, 2010).

A fundraising strategy requires a social institution to maximize the targeted results. The institution must have the right strategy, approach, and consideration to determine the next step. Without a robust fundraising strategy, achieving the expected results will not be optimal.

In more detail, it is explained that fundraising activities are the process of influencing the community, both individuals or representatives of the community or institutions, to channel their funds to an organization or institution. The word "affecting society" has several meanings as follows (Purwanto, 2009):

Influencing can be interpreted to inform the public about the ins and outs of the institution's existence.

Influencing can also mean reminding and awakening. It means reminding donors to be aware that their assets and possessions are not entirely by their efforts. Humans are not born as individual beings but function as social beings. The institution expects this kind of awareness in reminding donors and *muzaki*. Hence, awareness by continuously reminding makes individuals and communities affected by the programs and community activities they carry out.

They are influencing in the sense of encouraging the community, institution, or society to submit donations of funds in the form of *zakat*, *infaq*, *shadaqah*, and others to organizations or institutions. Institutions in conducting fundraising also encourage social awareness by paying attention to the work performance of the annual report to potential donors so that there is trust from potential donors after considering everything.

## **B. Laznas IZI Profile**

The Indonesian Zakat Initiative Foundation (IZI) is a social institution rebranded from the Pos Keadilan Peduli Ummat Foundation (PKPU). With the change, IZI is expected to be able to focus more on encouraging the great potential of zakat to become a real force and a solid pillar supporting the glory and welfare of the people through a clear positioning of institutions, excellent service, high program effectiveness, efficient and modern business processes, and 100% shariah compliance following sharia *ashnaf* and *maqashid* targets (goals) (Admin, 2018).

### C. LAZNAS IZI Employees Adaptation Pattern to Digital Fundraising

Digital fundraising activities at LAZ IZI have been running since before the pandemic; even from the beginning, LAZ IZI has implemented digital fundraising. Hence, the employees have no objections to digital fundraising activities during the pandemic. In other words, employees only need to optimize the use of digital channel platforms as fundraising media (Interview, 2021).

In their research, Setiawan and Fritianto (2021) state that employees during Covid-19 feel they do not have the same freedom to work as they work in an office. Work From Home (WFH) is considered less effective because the employees depend on their work on company machines; hence, the employees experience obstacles in their performance, and their work cannot be completed quickly.

This view does not apply to LAZ IZI, because LAZ IZI considers digital fundraising activities easy and can be carried out by all LAZ IZI employees, even though the employee is outside the office. It is because the process of inputting and reporting incoming funds from donors can be done from each employee's device and does not depend too much on the tools and facilities provided by the institution (Interview, 2021).

LAZ IZI Central Java provides full support to employees through facilities from institutions to participate in various kinds of training activities related to digital fundraising. The training activities are organized from the Zakat Organization Forum (FOZ) through the Indonesian Amil School (SAI) to training organized by the institution's internals. The education and training aim to improve the competence and performance of Central Java LAZ IZI employees (Employee A Interview, 2021). It is LAZ IZI's commitment to improving employees. In the research of Wirataman and Sintaasih (2013), it is proven that education and training significantly affect the competence and performance of employees in a company.

Although from the beginning, LAZ IZI Central Java has implemented digital fundraising, and all employees have no objections if they have to adapt again due to the impact of the pandemic. The institution continues to provide educational facilities and knowledge development training to upgrade employees' potential and skills to increase job satisfaction and service to donors, which in this case, collaborates with SAI.

The Indonesian Amil School (SAI) is a zakat educational institution that is part of the National Zakat Forum, namely the Zakat Organization Forum (FOZ)

and is independent. SAI plays a role in developing the world of zakat in Indonesia by providing the facilities needed by LAZ and non-governmental organizations to increase the capacity and quality of human resources at these institutions (Admin, n.d.). The activities organized by SAI and internal institutions include training, webinars, and online workshops. These activities contain interesting themes about Zakat, Infaq, Alms, and Waqf (ZISWAF), such as digital fundraising, management of utilization programs, etc.

People from various circles increasingly feel the rapid development of technology. In its development, the internet provides great benefits and can be directly felt by its users, especially in using social media as a means of communication. The Zakat Management Organization (OPZ), an Islamic philanthropic institution with a fundraising function, participates in developing increasingly sophisticated technology.

LAZ IZI Central Java has implemented the use of digital channels as a means of fundraising since the institution's inception. Digital fundraising at LAZ IZI is purely the founders' idea, not because of the impact of the pandemic. If accumulated, 80-85% of donation income to institutions comes from digital fundraising because it is considered more effortless, more effective, and efficient (Interview, 2021).

It is in line with the statement from Deloitte in the digital workplace report, which show that institutions implementing strong online social networks are proven to be 7% more productive than those which do not, especially during the pandemic, where most community activities are carried out from their homes due to the implementation of PSBB (Large-Scale Social Restrictions) to the implementation of PPKM (Implementation of Community Activity Restrictions). Hence, institutions must optimize digital technology as a medium for digital fundraising. It proves that Covid-19 is not only a pandemic but also an accelerator of modernization and digitalization (Public Relations, 2020). Institutions must continue to innovate in providing facilities that support community services, including the Islamic philanthropic social institution LAZ IZI Central Java. The use of digital channels has also proven to be easier, more effective, and efficient to use in the fundraising process.

Digital fundraising at LAZ IZI, Central Java, started with creating a website platform [zakatpedia.com](http://zakatpedia.com) which aimed to spread da'wah about zakat and facilitate people interested in zakat. After that, it was followed by social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, and other social media,

managed by a special team of digital marketing and marketing communication at IZI's central office. In addition to the above objectives, various LAZ IZI platforms also contain educational content related to zakat, institutional work programs, and institutional activities in the management and distribution of zakat. It is a means to attract the attention of potential donors, thereby increasing their level of trust in the credibility of the institution in managing incoming funds (Employee Interview A, 2021). The statement is in line with Husniati's study, which revealed that digital technology could provide transparency in the distribution of funds collected by zakat management organizations. In addition, social media could also be used as an educational tool and a tool for fundraising ZISWAF funds (Husniati, 2020). It is undeniable that social media will have a positive impact when used wisely. In addition, social media can also be used to earn religious rewards and obtain information. It is what LAZ IZI does by utilizing social media such as Website, Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and others to provide information and education related to zakat to the public. LAZ IZI also uses social media as a means of raising funds.

Digital fundraising at LAZ IZI branch offices only uses personal social media accounts of employees, such as Instagram, Facebook, and WhatsApp. The strategies used by employees in digital fundraising are different. However, in essence, fundraising is done by the closest people, starting from family, friends in organizations, communities, and even groups on unknown social media accounts. At first, employees started a chat by introducing themselves, providing partnership education, conveying information regarding the obligation to pay zakat, and offering work programs at the institution. Suppose potential donors are interested in making donations. In that case, employees will provide three payment options: transferring to an institution's account, visiting the office, or using a zakat pick-up service (Interview, 2021). It is different from the digital fundraising concept carried out at LAZNAS Yatim Mandiri Kudus Branch, where the social media used for fundraising promotions to potential donors are accounts belonging to institutions, such as Instagram and Facebook, not the employees' account. It will undoubtedly increase the confidence of potential donors to donate (Saifu, 2021).

From the two digital fundraising models, it can be concluded that to attract interest and increase donors' trust, digital fundraising should be done using an official account belonging to the institution. The employees' account can be used



if the prospective donor makes a payment. It is also helpful to prevent the rise of fraud cases using the institution's name in the community.

Prospective donors who wish to make donations via transfer will be given an institutional account number and only need to make a payment transaction to the institution's account that the employee has sent. Then the donor confirms with the employee. Next, the employee inputs the data related to the contract and its distribution. After that, the employee will process the transaction and provide proof of receipt to the donor. The donor will also automatically receive a notification from LAZNAS IZI via SMS in the form of prayer and gratitude, as well as information that the institution has received the funds. Prospective donors can donate by visiting the office during the institution's working hours. Meanwhile, payment with a pick-up service can be made by prospective donors with prior confirmation to the administrator of the institution, either via WhatsApp chat, office telephone, etc. (Interview, 2021).

#### **D. Digital Fundraising Challenges and Obstacles**

Every institution or company must have different obstacles in each of its activities, including LAZNAS IZI. These obstacles challenge each employee, especially in digital fundraising activities.

One of the challenges in digital fundraising activities is building donors' trust. People prefer to make donations directly to people they already know. Hence, the institutions need supporting media that can be used for their fundraising activities. Supporting media in offline fundraising can be in the form of distributing banners or brochures containing the institution's work program. Besides that, it can also be done by making presentations to companies or offices around the institution. Meanwhile, online fundraising requires more supporting media, such as websites and social media accounts, which promote the institution's work programs. Unfortunately, LAZNAS IZI Central Java does not have its own social media account because the management of digital marketing and marketing communication is only carried out at the Central LAZNAS IZI ( Interview, 2021).

Digital fundraising at LAZNAS IZI Central Java only uses employees' WhatsApp Selling and personal Phone Selling, not using the institution's official social media account.

It does not rule out the possibility of social media accounts misuse by some people using the institution's name, thereby reducing the level of trust of potential donors. It is not a rare situation when the prospective donors ignore



the messages sent by employees. Some even immediately give statements of refusal to make donations or pay zakat at IZI Central Java (Interview, 2021).

## Conclusion

During the Covid-19 pandemic, digital fundraising activities for LAZ IZI were not new. However, the employees' adaptation process was still carried out by providing digital fundraising training facilities and strengthening the Zakatpedia.com channel, which is the platform used by LAZ IZI for educational facilities about zakat and other Islamic philanthropy. Even so, offline fundraising activities, such as making brochures and banners to maintain donors' trust, are still being carried out.

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