



Issue Management of the LAZISNU Philanthropic Institution in Strengthening Public Trust in NU-Care Jakarta

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ABSTRACT

NU Care-LAZISNU is one of the largest philanthropic institutions in Indonesia, holding a strategic role in the collection and management of zakat, infaq, and alms funds to support programs in education, health, economic empowerment, environmental initiatives, and religious outreach (dakwah). The issue of inconsistencies in zakat collection data appearing in NU Care-LAZISNU reports can be understood as part of an organizational communication issue that requires serious attention. This study aims to examine how issue management within the LAZISNU philanthropic. The organization demonstrates consistency in its efforts and applies broader socialization strategies, which enhance public understanding of NU-Care programs.

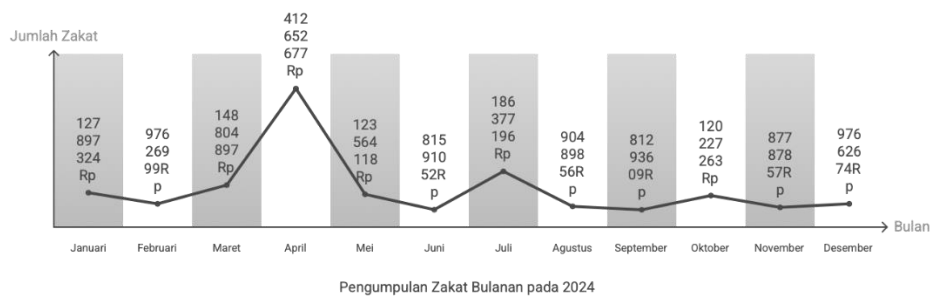
INTRODUCTION

In Indonesia, the issue of public trust (Andhika, 2021) has become increasingly prominent in philanthropic institutions that manage zakat, infaq, and alms. Transparency, accountability, and consistency in reporting are key factors determining the success of these institutions in maintaining their credibility. Lubis (2021) states that the more open an institution is in managing public funds, the greater the opportunity for the public to participate in channeling donations or zakat through that institution.

NU Care-LAZISNU is one of the largest philanthropic institutions in Indonesia, holding a strategic role in collecting and managing zakat, infaq, and alms funds to support programs in education, health, economic empowerment, environmental initiatives, and religious outreach (dakwah). The existence of this institution is not only important for community empowerment but also serves as a benchmark for public trust in the management of community funds. However, behind the reported achievements, a phenomenon has emerged concerning discrepancies in zakat collection data published through different channels. For example, the NU Online Super App recorded collections of IDR 1.6 billion throughout 2024, while the official central NU Care-LAZISNU report stated a figure of IDR 105.8 billion for the same period. This data discrepancy raises questions regarding the institution's transparency and communication consistency, which, if not properly managed, could lead to declining public trust (Pangestika, 2022).

This phenomenon becomes even more noteworthy when linked to the researcher's observational findings at NU-Care Jakarta, where inconsistencies in monthly reports for 2024 showed significant fluctuations in the amount of zakat collected. The highest peak occurred in April at IDR 412 million, followed by a sharp decline in May to only IDR 123 million. The following illustrates the monthly zakat data identified by the researcher:

Figure 1. LAZISNU Fund



Source: NU Care Jakarta, 2025

Figure 1 shows that the monthly zakat collection graph in 2024 experienced sharp fluctuations, with spikes in certain months such as April, August, and December, and significant declines in May and October. If this pattern is not accompanied by open explanations from NU-Care, it may create negative perceptions regarding reporting transparency and weaken public trust in the institution, even though the public strongly expects clarity and consistency in the management of zakat funds.

The issue of inconsistencies in zakat collection data appearing in NU Care-LAZISNU reports can be understood as part of an organizational communication issue requiring serious attention. From an issue management perspective, these data discrepancies are not merely technical problems but indicate gaps in transparency systems and inter-unit coordination. If left unresolved, this issue has the potential to develop into a crisis that damages the institution's reputation and reduces public trust (Prayudi, 2020).

Moreover, from the perspective of trends in philanthropic communication in Indonesia, public trust in zakat institutions is increasingly determined by the extent to which institutions maintain information openness and financial accountability. Global trends show that the public is becoming more critical in assessing institutional transparency, especially in the digital era, when access to information is fast and widespread (Wahid, 2023). This requires philanthropic institutions, including NU Care-LAZISNU, not only to focus on fundraising but also to ensure data consistency, clear reporting, and effective public communication.

This study aligns with Pangestika (2020), who argues that public trust in philanthropic institutions can be strengthened through tangible outcomes of implemented programs. Khairimah (2023) shows that community empowerment increases when people have high trust in zakat management institutions. Lubis (2021) emphasizes that positive public perception is key to increasing participation. Makmun and Sadat (2022) note that program success not only benefits recipients but also strengthens legitimacy and public trust in LAZISNU. Umam (2022) demonstrates that a positive institutional image strongly influences public trust levels.

METHODS

Research Approach

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach with participatory field research methods. The type of research is narrative descriptive, meaning it relies on written or spoken words from individuals and observable behavior. In this study, the narrative descriptive method is used to describe:

1. Issue management strategies implemented by LAZISNU in building and strengthening public trust in philanthropic programs, and
2. Challenges faced by LAZISNU in managing issues that influence public perception and their impact on the sustainability of social enterprise activities.

The findings are expected to provide valuable insights for LAZISNU in building public trust and addressing issues that influence public perception.

Informant Selection Technique

According to Sugiyono (2018), informants in research are individuals who provide information about the background situation and conditions of the study and possess deep understanding of the issues examined. Researchers must select individuals with expertise or broad knowledge related to the research problem, especially when determining key informants who can facilitate the data collection process.

Data Collection Techniques

This study consists of four main stages: data collection, data presentation, data analysis, and conclusion drawing. Observation is a systematic effort to collect data through standardized procedures. Interviews are conducted through face-to-face verbal question-and-answer sessions to obtain direct information.

Research informants consisted of:

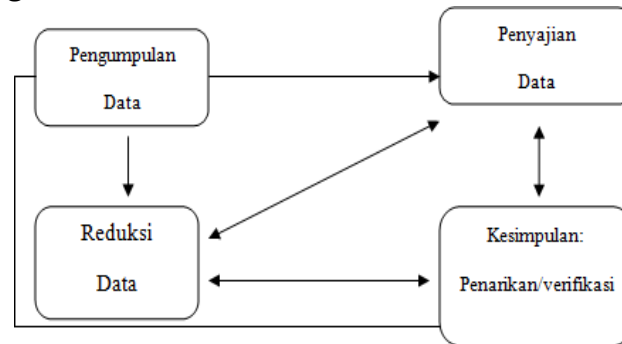
- **Key Informants:** LAZISNU Leaders (3 people)
 - **Main Informants:** LAZISNU Volunteers (7 people)
 - **Additional Informants:** Representatives from Majelis, Baznas, and NU Care (5 people)
- Total: 15 informants**

Data Analysis Technique

Data analysis in qualitative research is conducted before entering the field, during fieldwork, and after fieldwork. According to Nasution in Miles et al. (2020), data analysis guides researchers and may eventually contribute to theory development. Moleong (2020) defines data analysis as “the process of organizing data sequences, structuring them into patterns, categories, and basic descriptions.”

Based on the diagram, the flow components are explained through the following stages:

Figure 3.1. Miles & Huberman Model of Analysis



Creswell and Poth (2019) state that data validity can be maintained through four main criteria: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. These four criteria serve as guidelines to ensure that research findings are scientifically accountable. Miles et al. (2020) emphasize that one of the most frequently used strategies to enhance data validity is triangulation. Nowell et al. (2021) add that triangulation also supports thematic analysis by validating findings through cross-checking data. **Source triangulation** was applied in this study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study finds that issue management plays a central role in strengthening public trust in NU Care-LAZISNU Jakarta. Based on interviews with 15 informants (leaders, volunteers, and representatives from related institutions), three main issues were identified as influencing public trust: (1) transparency in fund management, (2) negative stigma toward philanthropic institutions, and (3) limited public participation.

The findings show that LAZISNU implements a structured issue management process consisting of issue identification, issue analysis, and impact evaluation.

First, issue identification is conducted through public perception surveys, internal evaluations, and environmental monitoring. The institution actively collects feedback from stakeholders to understand expectations, concerns, and levels of trust. Transparency in this identification stage increases community engagement and fosters a sense of shared ownership of philanthropic programs. Second, issue analysis involves mapping stakeholder perspectives and prioritizing urgent issues. LAZISNU emphasizes inclusive discussions involving leaders, volunteers, and supervisory elements. This collaborative approach ensures that decision-making reflects diverse viewpoints and minimizes blind spots in problem-solving. Third, impact evaluation focuses on assessing the operational, financial, and reputational consequences of emerging issues. The organization conducts routine evaluations and mitigation planning to prevent

escalation into larger crises. This continuous cycle reflects adaptive management in responding to dynamic public expectations.

In practice, LAZISNU applies three major mechanisms to strengthen trust:

1. **Financial transparency and independent audits**, ensuring accountability in managing zakat, infaq, and alms funds.
2. **External supervision**, involving councils and related stakeholders in overseeing fundraising and distribution processes.
3. **Information openness**, utilizing digital platforms (official website, social media, and NU-Care application) alongside face-to-face forums such as religious gatherings and community deliberations.

The results confirm that public trust in philanthropic institutions is multidimensional and closely linked to transparency, competence, consistency, and public-interest orientation. In the case of LAZISNU, trust is not solely built through open reporting but through integrated issue management and strategic communication.

From a theoretical perspective, the findings align with issue management theory, which emphasizes early identification, stakeholder engagement, and strategic response to emerging public concerns. LAZISNU's practices demonstrate that issue management functions as a legitimacy-maintaining mechanism. By institutionalizing transparency (through audits and reports), the organization strengthens moral and procedural accountability.

Moreover, communication emerges as a strategic instrument rather than merely a technical function. The integration of digital and face-to-face communication reflects a hybrid model adapted to contemporary philanthropic trends in Indonesia. Digital platforms reduce information gaps and increase accessibility, while direct engagement builds emotional closeness and cultural legitimacy within the Nahdlatul Ulama community context.

The study also expands previous research that primarily focused on accountability and transparency by connecting these elements with communication strategy and perception management. Public trust is shown to be dynamic, requiring continuous dialogue and adaptive responses. LAZISNU's approach demonstrates that effective issue management can transform potential reputational threats into opportunities to reinforce institutional credibility.

In addition, stakeholder involvement in surveys, supervision, and program verification strengthens participatory legitimacy. When communities feel involved in both planning and evaluation, trust becomes relational rather than transactional. This supports the argument that dialogic and responsive communication enhances organizational sustainability.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the research findings and discussion regarding issue management and LAZISNU's communication in building and strengthening public trust in NU-Care philanthropic programs, several conclusions can be drawn. LAZISNU's issue management has successfully fostered public trust through practices that emphasize transparency, accountability, and the involvement of both internal and external oversight. Measures such as openly presented financial reports, independent audits, routine evaluations, and the participation of supervisory councils demonstrate the institution's commitment to maintaining integrity and credibility in managing public charitable funds. LAZISNU integrates digital communication (official website, social media, and the NU-Care application) with face-to-face communication (religious forums, recitations, and local deliberations) as key instruments in strengthening its legitimacy. Open and responsive communication has proven effective in reducing the escalation of negative issues while enhancing emotional closeness with the community.

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