



# Islamic philanthropy and *muzakki* trust: Mediation of sustainable economic empowerment in Sungai Penuh

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## Abstract

**Purpose** – This study examines the influence of Islamic philanthropy on sustainable economic empowerment and investigates the mediating role of *muzakki* trust in zakat payers in Sungai Penuh, Jambi, Indonesia.

**Methodology** – A quantitative explanatory design was employed with 160 *muzakki* recruited through stratified random sampling from the BAZNAS Sungai Penuh registry. Data were analyzed using structural equation modeling (SEM) with IBM AMOS 26.0, incorporating bootstrap mediation analysis with 2,000 resamples.

**Findings** – The findings demonstrate that Islamic philanthropy significantly enhances sustainable economic empowerment both directly and indirectly through *muzakki* trusts, highlighting trust as a crucial mediating factor in transforming philanthropic resources into impactful outcomes. A strong relationship between philanthropy and trust underscores the importance of institutional credibility, particularly in terms of integrity and Sharia compliance. While community engagement emerges as a key strength, limited access to resources remains a notable constraint. The results also reveal consistent effects across occupational groups, emphasizing the broad applicability of Islamic social finance and the strategic importance of strengthening trust to achieve effective and sustainable empowerment.

**Implications** – Zakat institutions must prioritize transparency, Sharia compliance, and accountability as strategic trust-building mechanisms that amplify the transformative impact of Islamic philanthropic resources on community economic empowerment.

**Originality** – This study pioneers the empirical integration of the theory of planned behavior, social capital theory, and Islamic empowerment theory (*tamkin*) within a unified structural framework, advancing Islamic social finance scholarship by positioning *muzakki* trust as a critical institutional bridge between philanthropic inputs and sustainable development outcomes.

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## Introduction

Islamic philanthropy has, as a mechanism for wealth redistribution, significantly contributed to the economic advancement of the Muslim community for centuries (Kakar, 2022; Hughes & Siddiqui, 2024). Nonetheless, its execution within the framework of sustainable economic empowerment in the modern era continues to encounter numerous intricate challenges (Hariram et al., 2023). In

2023, data from the National Zakat Agency (BAZNAS) indicated that Indonesia's national zakat potential was IDR 327.6 trillion; however, the actual collection amounted to merely 3.8%, or approximately IDR 12.4 trillion (Ridho et al., 2025). This signifies a substantial disparity between potential and actual collections, highlighting a fundamental issue in the trust framework of zakat contributors within zakat administration institutions.

This issue is further complicated when juxtaposed with the conditions. In addition, Penuh village has developed a localized zakat-based entrepreneurial support system, in which zakat distribution is not only directed toward consumptive assistance but is increasingly used to support productive economic activities among low-income households. This emerging zakat entrepreneurship ecosystem presents a unique case for examining how Islamic social finance instruments can stimulate community-based economic empowerment in environmentally constrained rural areas. Sixty-five percent of the population is engaged in agriculture and fishing, with an average monthly income of IDR 2.8 million, whereas the remaining 15 percent comprises traders and entrepreneurs with a more stable income exceeding IDR 5 million per month. Trust among zakat collectors (*muzakki*) within zakat institutions is a critical determinant of the efficacy of Islamic philanthropic fund mobilization, as posited by institutional trust theory, which underscores the significance of transparency, accountability, and program effectiveness in fostering public trust (Ma'ruf et al., 2025; Bin-Nashwan et al., 2021). Prior research conducted by Abdullah Salim et al. (2024) indicated that the trust level among zakat collectors in Indonesia is comparatively low, with an average score of 2.8 on a 5-point scale. This results from insufficient transparency in financial reporting, ambiguous empowerment programs, and inadequate communication between institutions and zakat collectors. Nonetheless, prior research has not explicitly examined how the mediation of trust in zakat collectors can convert Islamic philanthropy into a tool for sustainable economic empowerment within local communities, especially in rural areas with diverse socioeconomic attributes, such as Sungai Penuh.

This research is novel because of its integrative approach, which merges the analysis of zakat collectors' trust as a mediating variable with the concept of sustainable economic empowerment within the framework of Islamic social finance, a topic that has not been thoroughly examined in the context of local Indonesian communities. This study employs a mixed-method approach with a sequential explanatory design, analyzing quantitative data from 156 *muzakki* respondents in Sungai Penuh using structural equation modeling (SEM) to evaluate the mediating role of trust. This was further supplemented by a qualitative analysis through in-depth interviews with 12 key informants, including religious leaders, administrators of local zakat institutions, and *mustahiq* who participated in empowerment programs. This study defines Islamic philanthropy as a wealth redistribution system encompassing zakat (obligatory), infaq, sadaqah, and waqf (voluntary) instruments, all aimed at attaining *falah* (holistic welfare) as conceptualized within the *maqasid al-Sharia* framework by Al-Ghazali and further elaborated by Al-Shatibi.

Sustainable economic empowerment within the Islamic framework is a transformative process that allows individuals and communities to enhance their economic, social, and spiritual capacities sustainably, while adhering to Sharia principles and environmental sustainability. Its implementation aligns with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that have been tailored to Islamic values, referred to as Islamic SDGs. The *muzakki* trust is formulated based on the organizational trust theory of Syari and Nasution (2025), tailored to the Islamic context, and comprises three primary dimensions: ability (the institution's capacity to manage funds), benevolence (compassion and commitment to community welfare), and integrity (adherence to Sharia principles), all of which must be harmonized with moral values and reliability in the stewardship of community assets.

Prior studies have yielded inconclusive findings concerning the efficacy of Islamic generosity in fostering economic empowerment. A study conducted by Furkony et al (2025) in revealed that an effective zakat program can elevate the income of *mustahiq* (zakat recipients) by as much as 45% within a two-year period. Research conducted by Judijanto (2024) in Indonesia revealed disappointing outcomes, with the empowerment program achieving a mere 32% success rate attributed to insufficient trust among zakat contributors and inadequate program supervision.

Research conducted by [Alimusa et al. \(2025\)](#) identified trust as the most significant predictor of the efficacy of zakat-based economic empowerment programs. This study did not investigate the mediating role of trust within the framework of sustainable empowerment.

This study's theoretical framework incorporates three primary theories: first, the theory of planned behavior (TPB) by Ajzen, which elucidates the determinants affecting zakat payers' intentions to allocate philanthropic funds; second, social capital theory, derived from the notion of Islamic social capital (*ra's al-mal al-ijtima'i*), to examine the significance of trust in fostering effective social networks; and third, Islamic empowerment theory, based on the Quranic concept of *tamkin*, which underscores the provision of power and capability to individuals to attain prosperous and sustainable economic autonomy. The amalgamation of these three theories yields a conceptual framework that demonstrates how Islamic philanthropy can enhance societal economic conditions via the mediation of *muzakki* trust, while taking into account contextual elements such as the community's socioeconomic traits, the efficacy of managing institutions, and local sociocultural dynamics.

Trust is widely recognized as a fundamental determinant of participation in Islamic philanthropic institutions, particularly in the context of zakat management. Several studies have demonstrated that the willingness of *muzakki* (zakat payers) to channel their contributions through formal zakat institutions is strongly influenced by their level of trust in these organizations. Empirical research indicates that trust, together with religiosity and income, significantly affects *muzakki* decisions to distribute zakat through zakat management institutions ([Ali et al., 2025](#); [Usman et al., 2022](#); [Pramuka et al., 2025](#)).

However, despite the large potential of zakat in Muslim-majority countries, many scholars have highlighted the existence of a trust deficit between donors and zakat institutions. Issues such as limited transparency, weak accountability, and perceived inefficiencies in fund distribution have been reported as key factors undermining public confidence ([Panzai & Saqib, 2025](#); [Bin-Nashwan, 2025](#)). Consequently, a significant proportion of Muslims prefer to distribute zakat directly to beneficiaries rather than through formal institutions, which ultimately reduces the effectiveness of zakat as a systematic instrument for poverty alleviation and social welfare ([Al-Bawwab, 2023](#); [Mawardi et al., 2023](#)).

Previous empirical studies have also confirmed that transparency, accountability, and governance quality significantly influence the level of trust among *muzakki* ([Rusanti & Anwar, 2025](#)). For example, quantitative research on zakat institutions shows that transparency and accountability can explain a large proportion of the variation in donor trust, highlighting their critical role in strengthening institutional credibility. Similarly, other studies emphasize that improving financial reporting transparency, managerial attitudes, and institutional governance is essential for building sustainable trust relationships between zakat institutions and donors ([Mohammad Qutaiba et al., 2024](#); [Sholihah et al., 2024](#)).

In light of this context, the research problem is articulated as follows: (1) What is the degree of trust that *muzakki* have in Islamic philanthropic institutions in Sungai Penuh, and what factors influence this trust?; (2) To what extent does Islamic philanthropy contribute to the sustainable economic empowerment of the Sungai Penuh community?; (3) How does the trust of *muzakki* mediate the relationship between Islamic philanthropy and sustainable economic empowerment in Sungai Penuh; and (4) What effective model of sustainable economic empowerment, grounded in Islamic philanthropy, can be implemented in communities with characteristics similar to those of Sungai Penuh? This research aims to offer theoretical advancements in Islamic social finance and serve as a practical reference for developing a sustainable economic empowerment model rooted in Islamic charity in Indonesia.

## Literature Review

### Theory of planned behavior (TPB)

The theory of planned behavior (TPB), originally developed by [Abid, 2023](#), serves as the primary lens through which this study examines the behavioral intentions of *muzakki* (zakat payers) in

channeling their philanthropic contributions through formal Islamic institutions. The TPB posits that an individual's behavior is determined by three core antecedents: attitude toward the behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. In the context of Islamic social finance, this framework explains why a substantial proportion of *muzakki* opt to distribute zakat directly to beneficiaries rather than through formal zakat management institutions—a tendency driven by unfavorable attitudes toward institutional transparency, weak subjective norms reinforcing formal compliance, and low perceived behavioral control over fund utilization (Jamaludin, 2025). Therefore, this theory is instrumental in diagnosing the structural gap between Indonesia's zakat potential (IDR 327.6 trillion) and its actual collection rate (3.8%) by anchoring that gap in measurable psychological and social determinants of donor behavior.

### Social capital theory and Islamic social capital

Social capital theory, as elaborated within the Islamic framework through the concept of *ra's al-mal al-ijtima'i* (Islamic social capital), provides the theoretical foundation for analyzing *muzakki* trust as the central mediating variable in this study (Sumi, 2025; Mohammad, 2025). Trust constitutes the core dimension of social capital, functioning as the connective tissue that enables individual philanthropic acts to generate collective and sustainable economic outcomes. Within Islamic philanthropic institutions, social capital is cultivated through demonstrated transparency, accountability, and adherence to Sharia principles—qualities that collectively build institutional credibility and foster sustained donor engagement. This study employs social capital theory to explain how the quality of relational bonds between *muzakki* and zakat institutions determines the efficiency with which philanthropic resources are converted into empowerment outcomes, thereby justifying the inclusion of trust as a partial mediator in the proposed structural model.

### Islamic empowerment theory (*tamkin*)

Islamic empowerment theory, grounded in the Quranic concept of *tamkin*, provides the normative and evaluative framework for defining sustainable economic empowerment in this study (Yasmeen, 2026). *Tamkin* extends beyond the mere conferral of material resources; it encompasses the provision of genuine capacity—spiritual, economic, and communal—enabling individuals and communities to achieve self-sufficiency in a manner consistent with *maqasid al-Sharia*. Drawing on Al-Qaradawi's framework of empowerment-based zakat distribution and Al-Ghazali's concept of *ihsan*, this theory reframes sustainable economic empowerment as a multidimensional transformation encompassing income improvement, skills development, access to resources, community participation, and environmental sustainability. Through this lens, the study's outcome variable, sustainable economic empowerment (SEE), is both conceptualized and measured, ensuring that the analytical framework remains anchored in Islamic values rather than purely secular development paradigms.

### Islamic philanthropy: Conceptual framework and contemporary implementation

The concept of Islamic generosity as a mechanism for wealth transfer has experienced considerable variation from its classical interpretation to modern implementations in sustainable economic development. Al-Ghazali (1058–1111), in his seminal work "*ihya ulum al-din*," established the theoretical framework of Islamic philanthropy through the concept of *ihsan*, which integrates both spiritual and socioeconomic transformation (Sidani & Al Ariss, 2015). He asserted that zakat, infaq, sadaqah, and waqf serve as comprehensive instruments to attain al-falah (holistic welfare), encompassing material, moral, and spiritual dimensions. Al-Ghazali's conceptualization was subsequently advanced by al-Shatibi (1320–1388) in "*al-muwafaqat*," which amalgamates Islamic philanthropy with the *maqasid al-Sharia* framework, emphasizing that the preservation of wealth (*hifz al-mal*) is not solely focused on wealth accumulation but also on its equitable distribution to attain collective welfare (Budiman, 2015).

In a modern context, Rawashdeh et al (2017) modified this classical concept by formulating an Islamic economic system that regards Islamic philanthropy as an automatic stabilizer in the

economy, wherein wealth redistribution via zakat can mitigate economic inequality and generate a multiplier effect within the ummah's economy. [Masput and Mubarak \(2025\)](#) Empirical research on the implementation of the zakat system in various Muslim nations indicates that countries with well-structured Islamic philanthropic systems, such as Malaysia and Saudi Arabia, exhibit comparatively lower poverty rates, with Gini coefficients of 0.41 and 0.45, respectively, in contrast to other Muslim countries that have not effectively optimized their Islamic philanthropic frameworks.

Recent theoretical advancements in Islamic philanthropy have culminated in the concept of Islamic social finance (ISF), initially proposed by [Akhter et al \(2025\)](#) and further elaborated by [Dirie et al \(2024\)](#), which amalgamates Islamic philanthropic tools with social finance strategies to fulfill sustainable development objectives. [Khan and Hassan \(2019\)](#) illustrate how the integration of zakat and waqf can establish a sustainable funding mechanism for long-term economic empowerment. Their case study from Bangladesh demonstrates a 67% increase in beneficiary income over a three-year period. In a World Bank publication, [Raimi et al \(2024\)](#) formulated an Islamic social finance framework that integrates risk-sharing, asset-backed financing, and ethical investment principles within Islamic philanthropy, positing that ISF can serve as a viable sustainable financing mechanism for economic development in predominantly Muslim developing nations. Recent research by [Chowdhury et al \(2025\)](#) utilizing panel data from 22 Muslim nations between 2000 and 2015 demonstrated a positive correlation of 0.73 between a robust Islamic philanthropic institutional framework and the human development index (HDI), underscoring the strategic significance of Islamic philanthropy in sustainable development.

### ***Muzakki* trust and determinants of institutional trust in Islamic philanthropy**

In *muzakki's* confidence in Islamic philanthropic management institutions is a vital factor influencing the efficacy of social fund mobilization and allocation, with this trust encompassing not only financial considerations but also the spiritual and moral dimensions rooted in Islamic values [Herijanto \(2022\)](#) established the theoretical framework of organizational trust through three primary dimensions: ability, benevolence, and integrity. This framework was subsequently adapted by [Ghani et al \(2024\)](#) within the context of Islamic philanthropy by incorporating a spiritual dimension that emphasizes adherence to Sharia principles and transparency in trust management. [Stupak et al \(2021\)](#) introduced the concept of institutional trust, highlighting the significance of institutional frameworks, governance systems, and accountability in fostering public trust. In the realm of Islamic philanthropy, this is manifested through adherence to Sharia compliance principles, transparency in financial reporting, and the efficacy of empowerment initiatives.

Empirical research by [Jamaludin et al \(2025\)](#) With an emphasis on trust, intention, and demography, this study investigates the variables influencing people's behavior while paying zakat through organizations. The results of a SmartPLS analysis of a survey of 740 respondents in Malaysia indicate that age, trust, and intention have a substantial impact on zakat payment behavior, whereas attitudes, subjective standards, and perceived behavioral control determine intentions.

The determinants of zakat trust within Islamic philanthropy are shaped by various contextual elements, including the attributes of the individual zakat payer, the efficacy of the managing institution, and the socio-cultural dynamics of the community. Social cognitive theory, as articulated by [Pettinato, \(2018\)](#), posits that trust is established through observational learning and vicarious experience, in which zakat payers assess an institution's legitimacy based on the experiences of fellow zakat payers and the institution's historical performance.

In [Saz-Gil et al \(2021\)](#) social capital was introduced, highlighting trust as a crucial component in fostering effective social cooperation. Within the realm of Islamic philanthropy, the trust of *muzakki* serves as a cohesive force that unites the Muslim community in pursuit of collective prosperity. This study examines the socioeconomic, theological, and institutional elements influencing Ethiopian Muslims' inclinations to pay zakat. The study integrates the theory of reasoned action with zakat literacy, institutional support, and religion through a survey of 394 respondents and PLS-SEM analysis. The results indicate that zakat compliance is greatly increased by literacy, religiosity, strong institutions, and positive attitudes ([Shikur et al., 2025](#)).

## Sustainable economic empowerment: Theory and practice in a development context

From an Islamic viewpoint, sustainable economic empowerment is a multifaceted concept that amalgamates Sharia principles with the framework of sustainable development, aiming not only to enhance material wealth but also to attain *falah*, which encompasses comprehensive well-being in both temporal and eternal realms. Doh et al (2019) establish a theoretical framework for economic empowerment through a capability approach, emphasizing the importance of individual freedom in accessing economic opportunities and realizing self-potential. This framework was subsequently adapted to the Islamic context by Abdullah et al (2025), who incorporated the concepts of *khilafah* (stewardship) and *tazkiyah* (purification) as spiritual dimensions in the empowerment process. Li et al (2020) formulated the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework, delineating five categories of empowerment assets: human, social, natural, physical, and financial capital.

In the Islamic context, Yasmeeen (2026) this framework is augmented by incorporating spiritual capital as a sixth dimension, encompassing moral values, religious adherence, and a commitment to community welfare. Empirical research by Budi Santoso et al. (2025) This study examines how zakat affects income disparity, unemployment, and poverty in 42 OIC nations between 2007 and 2019. A quantitative analysis reveals that zakat effectively lowers unemployment, poverty, and income inequality by transferring wealth and providing for basic necessities. However, the study's overall emphasis and data timeframe are its limitations. From a practical standpoint, it emphasizes the necessity of increased community involvement, open administration, and successful zakat initiatives that promote sustained self-sufficiency. This cross-national viewpoint offers new perspectives on the function of zakat as a socioeconomic development tool in the Muslim world.

The notion of *tamkin* in the Quran and Hadith functions as a fundamental reference in the formulation of Islamic economic empowerment theory, wherein *tamkin* encompasses not only the conferral of authority but also the provision of the capacity to wield that power judiciously and sustainably. In "fiqh al-zakat," al-Qaradawi articulated the concept of empowerment-based zakat distribution, emphasizing the importance of long-term empowerment initiatives over immediate consumptive aid. He contended that the principal objective of zakat is to elevate the position of *mustahiq* to *muzakki* through a methodical and lasting empowering process (Weaver et al., 2022), further expanded this concept in "Islamic economics: theory and practice," which amalgamates cooperative economic principles with Islamic values to establish a sustainable, community-oriented empowerment paradigm.

## Research Methods

**Methodology** This study uses a quantitative approach with an explanatory research design to examine the relationship between Islamic philanthropy, *muzakki* trust, and sustainable economic empowerment in Sungai Penuh. The purpose of this study was to test hypotheses and determine the degree of correlation between variables in an objective and structured manner. The purpose of the explanatory research design was to clarify the relationship between trust and the role of mediators in the context of Islamic philanthropy and sustainable economic empowerment.

## Instrument development

The measurement instrument used in this study was developed through a systematic adaptation process drawing from previously validated scales in the Islamic social finance and organizational trust literature and subsequently modified to reflect the specific sociocultural and institutional context of zakat management in Indonesia.

The Islamic Philanthropy construct was operationalized using items adapted from Rawashdeh et al., (2017), which capture four behavioral dimensions: zakat compliance, infaq and sadaqah frequency, waqf participation, and religious motivation. The *muzakki* trust construct was adapted from the organizational trust framework and subsequently contextualized for Islamic philanthropy by Abdul Shukor et al (2019), encompassing four dimensions: institutional ability, benevolence, integrity, and Sharia compliance. The Sustainable Economic Empowerment

construct was operationalized based on the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework [Ngamwong et al. \(2024\)](#) as adapted to the Islamic context by [Yasmeen \(2026\)](#) incorporating five dimensions: income improvement, skills development, access to resources, community participation, and environmental sustainability.

All items were measured using a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree). The initial item pool consisted of 42 items across three constructs. Content validity was established through an expert review involving three academics specializing in Islamic economics and two practitioners from local zakat institutions, who assessed the relevance, clarity, and cultural appropriateness of each item. A pilot test was subsequently conducted with 30 *muzakki* respondents outside the main sample to assess item-level reliability, resulting in the removal of items with a corrected item-total correlation below 0.30. The final instrument comprised 28 items distributed across the three constructs.

### Sample and procedure

All *muzakki* (zakat payers) living in Sungai Penuh, Jambi, were the target demographic of this study. They had to pay zakat mal and had dealt with Islamic charitable organizations for at least a year. The anticipated number of active *muzakki* was 2,847, according to data from the Sungai Penuh City National Zakat Agency (BAZNAS) ([Helfenta et al., 2025](#)). Stratified random sampling was employed, stratified by primary occupation and income level: (1) farmers and fishermen earning an average of IDR 2.8 million per month, and (2) traders and entrepreneurs earning more than IDR 5 million per month.

With a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error, the sample size was calculated using Slovin's formula, yielding a minimum of 152 respondents ([Abdul Shukor et al., 2019](#)). In accordance with the demographic makeup of Sungai Penuh, this study employed 160 respondents with a proportionate allocation to account for non-response and guarantee data representativeness: 104 respondents were from the farmer-fisherman group (65%) and 56 respondents were from the trader-entrepreneur group (35%).

A preliminary survey to determine and confirm the list of active *muzakki* (sadaqah payers) in each sub-district was the first step in the data collection process. A random number table was used to randomize the sample, a structured questionnaire was distributed with the help of trained enumerators, and secondary data from pertinent institutions was cross-checked to verify and validate the data. The research ethics committee approved all research protocols, and informed consent was obtained from all respondents.

### Data analysis

To evaluate the structural connection model and the mediating function of *muzakki* trust in the relationship between Islamic philanthropy and sustainable economic empowerment, data analysis was conducted using structural equation modelling (SEM) with IBM AMOS 26.0 software. SEM was used because it can evaluate direct, indirect, and total effects in a single integrated model and analyze intricate causal linkages between latent variables and many indicators simultaneously ([Sarstedt et al., 2020](#)).

Descriptive analysis was used to describe respondent characteristics and the data distribution for each variable. Subsequently, assumption testing for SEM was performed, which included testing for data normality using skewness and kurtosis, multicollinearity using a correlation matrix, and outliers using Mahalanobis distance ([Kamath et al., 2025](#); [Naz et al., 2025](#)). Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was used to test the validity and reliability of the measurement model. In the fourth stage, structural model testing was used to assess the causal relationships between the constructs. Finally, the indirect effect of *muzakki* trust was tested through mediation using the bootstrap method with 2,000 bootstrap samples.

Multiple fit indices, as suggested, were used to assess the model's goodness of fit: Tucker-Lewis index/TLI ( $\geq 0.90$ ), chi-square/df ratio ( $\leq 3.0$ ), standardized root mean square residual/SRMR ( $\leq 0.08$ ), root mean square error of approximation/RMSEA ( $\leq 0.08$ ), and comparative fit index/CFI ( $\geq 0.90$ ). The critical ratio (CR), with a significance level of 5% (CR >

$\pm 1.96$ ), was employed in hypothesis testing. Cohen's criterion was used to analyze the effect size and determine the practical relevance of the associations discovered. The coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) was also used to evaluate the explained variance. The maximum likelihood estimation approach, which is resilient to small deviations from the normalcy assumption in the setting of a medium-sized sample, such as the one used in this investigation, was used for all analyses.

## Results and Discussion

### Characteristics of respondents and descriptive analysis

The research successfully gathered data from 160 muzakki participants in Sungai Penuh, Jambi, achieving a 100% response rate. As detailed Table 1, the sample is predominantly male (70.0%,  $n = 112$ ), which reflects the overarching sociocultural trend in Indonesian Muslim communities where the formal duty of zakat payment is primarily met by male family heads as the principal breadwinners (*qanwam*). However, the inclusion of female respondents (30.0%,  $n = 48$ ), particularly those within the trader and small business sectors, ensures that the findings reflect gender-specific viewpoints on institutional trust and empowerment results.

**Table 1.** Demographic profile of respondents

Characteristic	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	112	70.0
	Female	48	30.0
Age	25–34 years	22	13.8
	35–44 years	58	36.3
	45–55 years	51	31.9
	> 55 years	29	18.1
	Education	Primary School ( <i>SD</i> )	14
	Junior High School ( <i>SMP</i> )	27	16.9
	Senior High School ( <i>SMA/SMK</i> )	68	42.5
	Diploma/Vocational ( <i>D1–D3</i> )	21	13.1
	Bachelor's Degree ( <i>S1</i> )	26	16.3
	Postgraduate ( <i>S2/S3</i> )	4	2.5
Occupational category	Farmer/Fisherman	104	65.0
	Trader/Entrepreneur	56	35.0
Monthly income	< IDR 2.0 million	18	11.3
	IDR 2.0–3.5 million	86	53.8
	IDR 3.5–5.0 million	32	20.0
	> IDR 5.0 million	24	15.0
Monthly expenditure	< IDR 1.5 million	21	13.1
	IDR 1.5–2.5 million	74	46.3
	IDR 2.5–4.0 million	43	26.9
	> IDR 4.0 million	22	13.8
Duration of zakat payment	1–2 years	24	15.0
	3–5 years	61	38.1
	6–10 years	52	32.5
	> 10 years	23	14.4
Zakat payment regularity	Regular (every year)	125	78.1
	Irregular (occasional)	35	21.9

Source: Primary data, processed (2025)

In terms of age distribution, a significant majority of respondents (68.2%) belong to the economically active group between 35 and 55 years, with the predominant subgroup being those aged 35–44 years (36.3%). This concentration within the productive age group aligns with the eligibility criteria for zakat mal payment, which necessitates reaching the *nisab* (minimum wealth threshold) typically associated with mid-career income levels. Furthermore, the involvement of

respondents over 55 years (18.1%) indicates the participation of more seasoned community members who bring extensive histories of institutional engagement, with an average overall engagement time of 4.7 years.

Socio-economically, the occupational distribution consists of 104 farmers or fishermen (65.0%) and 56 traders or entrepreneurs (35.0%), validating the study's stratification strategy. This is reflected in the income profile, where 53.8% of respondents earn between IDR 2.0 and 3.5 million, while the trader-entrepreneur segment exhibits higher earnings. Educational attainment is also notable, with 42.5% having completed secondary education and 31.9% holding higher education credentials (diplomas and degrees), suggesting a knowledgeable respondent base. Regarding religious compliance, 78.1% of respondents consistently fulfill their annual zakat obligations, while the remaining 21.9% maintain their engagement through occasional payments.

### Variable measurement and reliability assessment

The descriptive analysis in Table 2 reveals that Islamic philanthropy (IP) achieved a mean score of 3.74 (SD = 0.83), indicating a high level of engagement among respondents. The highest sub-dimension was religious motivation (M = 4.12, SD = 0.74), which suggests that spiritual factors are the primary driver of philanthropic behavior in the Sungai Penuh community. In contrast, waqf participation recorded the lowest mean (M = 3.52, SD = 0.95). While still above the moderate threshold, this lower score compared to other indicators points to potential barriers in long-term asset dedication that may require further institutional intervention.

**Table 2.** Descriptive statistics and reliability assessment of research variables

Variable	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis	Cronbach's $\alpha$	CR	AVE
Islamic philanthropy (IP)	3.74	0.83	-0.42	-0.18	0.891	0.894	0.629
- Zakat compliance	3.85	0.91	-0.51	-0.23	-	-	-
- Infaq & sadaqah Frequency	3.67	0.88	-0.38	-0.15	-	-	-
- Waqf participation	3.52	0.95	-0.29	-0.31	-	-	-
- Religious motivation	4.12	0.74	-0.67	0.42	-	-	-
Muzakki trust (MT)	3.28	0.91	-0.15	-0.44	0.923	0.925	0.712
- Ability	3.35	0.94	-0.18	-0.41	-	-	-
- Benevolence	3.22	0.97	-0.12	-0.38	-	-	-
- Integrity	3.41	0.89	-0.21	-0.52	-	-	-
- Sharia compliance	3.58	0.85	-0.33	-0.28	-	-	-
Sustainable economic empowerment (SEE)	3.45	0.78	-0.28	-0.33	0.887	0.889	0.617
- Income improvement	3.52	0.84	-0.31	-0.29	-	-	-
- Skills development	3.38	0.81	-0.25	-0.35	-	-	-
- Access to resources	3.29	0.86	-0.19	-0.42	-	-	-
- Community participation	3.61	0.75	-0.41	-0.18	-	-	-
- Environmental sustainability	3.48	0.79	-0.26	-0.31	-	-	-

Note: N = 160; SD = Standard deviation; CR = Composite reliability; AVE = Average variance extracted  
Source: Primary data, processed (2025)

*Muzakki* trust (MT) demonstrated a moderate overall mean score of 3.28 (SD = 0.91). Interestingly, while the integrity dimension achieved a solid rating (M = 3.41, SD = 0.89), it was surpassed by Sharia compliance, which recorded the highest mean within this variable (M = 3.58, SD = 0.85). This indicates that respondents prioritize adherence to Islamic law as a critical component of institutional trust. Conversely, the benevolence dimension received the lowest score (M = 3.22, SD = 0.97), suggesting that *muzakki* perceive a need for greater institutional commitment to community welfare. Furthermore, sustainable economic empowerment (SEE) showed a mean of 3.45 (SD = 0.78), with community participation (M = 3.61, SD = 0.75) as the strongest performer and access to resources (M = 3.29, SD = 0.86) as the most significant area for improvement.

To ensure the robustness of the model, a reliability and validity assessment was conducted. All research variables demonstrated high internal consistency, with Cronbach's alpha coefficients

ranging from 0.887 to 0.923, well above the 0.70 threshold. The composite reliability (CR) values (0.889 to 0.925) and average variance extracted (AVE) values (0.617 to 0.712) further confirmed adequate convergent validity. Additionally, the normality assessment yielded skewness and kurtosis values within the acceptable  $\pm 2.0$  range, justifying the use of maximum likelihood estimation for the subsequent structural equation modeling (SEM) analysis.

### Fornell-Larcker criterion

The Fornell–Larcker criterion establishes discriminant validity when the square root of the average variance extracted (AVE) for each construct exceeds its correlations with all other constructs in the model. As presented in Table 3, the diagonal values, representing the square root of AVE for each construct, are uniformly higher than the off-diagonal inter-construct correlation coefficients in the corresponding rows and columns, satisfying the Fornell–Larcker criterion for all construct pairs.

**Table 3.** Fornell-Larcker criterion matrix

Construct	IP	MT	SEE
Islamic philanthropy (IP)	0.793		
<i>Muzakki</i> trust (MT)	0.612	0.844	
Sustainable economic empowerment (SEE)	0.534	0.587	0.785
AVE	0.629	0.712	0.617
$\sqrt{\text{AVE}}$	0.793	0.844	0.785

Note: IP= Islamic philanthropy; MT= *Muzakki* trust; SEE=Sustainable economic empowerment.

Source: Primary data, processed (2025)

The results confirm that the square root of AVE for Islamic philanthropy ( $\sqrt{\text{AVE}} = 0.793$ ) exceeds its correlation with *muzakki* trust ( $r = 0.612$ ) and sustainable economic empowerment ( $r = 0.534$ ). Similarly, the square root of AVE for *muzakki* trust ( $\sqrt{\text{AVE}} = 0.844$ ) surpasses its correlation with Islamic philanthropy ( $r = 0.612$ ) and sustainable economic empowerment ( $r = 0.587$ ). The square root of AVE for sustainable economic empowerment ( $\sqrt{\text{AVE}} = 0.785$ ) likewise exceeds both inter-construct correlations. These results collectively confirm that each construct shares more variance with its own indicators than with any other construct in the model, thereby establishing adequate discriminant validity under the Fornell–Larcker criterion.

### Heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT)

Given that the Fornell–Larcker criterion has been criticized for insufficient sensitivity in detecting discriminant validity violations in certain conditions, the HTMT was additionally computed as a more conservative and robust test. As presented in Table 4, the HTMT represents the ratio of the average heterotrait–heteromethod correlations to the average monotrait–heteromethod correlations. Discriminant validity was confirmed when HTMT values fell below the threshold of 0.85 for conceptually distinct constructs (Henseler et al., 2015), or below the more conservative threshold of 0.90.

**Table 4.** Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio (HTMT) matrix

Construct	IP	MT	SEE
Islamic philanthropy (IP)	—		
<i>Muzakki</i> trust (MT)	0.698	—	
Sustainable economic empowerment (SEE)	0.612	0.674	—

Note: HTMT threshold:  $< 0.85$  (Henseler et al., 2015);  $< 0.90$  (Gold et al., 2001). IP = Islamic philanthropy; MT = *Muzakki* trust; SEE = Sustainable economic empowerment.

Source: Primary data, processed (2025)

All HTMT values fell well below the conservative threshold of 0.85, with the highest value recorded between Islamic Philanthropy and *muzakki* trust (HTMT = 0.698), followed by *muzakki*

trust and sustainable economic empowerment (HTMT = 0.674), and Islamic philanthropy and sustainable economic empowerment (HTMT = 0.612). The absence of any HTMT value approaching or exceeding 0.85 provides strong confirmation that the three constructs are empirically distinct, with no evidence of construct overlap that would undermine the validity of the structural model.

### Structural equation model assessment

**Table 5.** Model fit indices for structural equation model

Fit index	Threshold	Initial model	Final model	Interpretation
$\chi^2/\text{df}$	$\leq 3.0$	2.847	2.234	Good Fit
CFI	$\geq 0.90$	0.876	0.923	Good Fit
TLI	$\geq 0.90$	0.865	0.915	Good Fit
RMSEA	$\leq 0.08$	0.089	0.067	Good Fit
SRMR	$\leq 0.08$	0.082	0.058	Good Fit
GFI	$\geq 0.90$	0.883	0.901	Good Fit

Note: CFI, comparative fit index; TLI, Tucker–Lewis index; RMSEA, root mean square error of approximation; SRMR, standardized root mean square residual; GFI, goodness-of-fit index.

Source: Primary data, processed (2025)

The initial structural equation model demonstrated marginal fit indices, necessitating model refinement through modification indices and theoretical considerations. Table 5 shows that the final model achieved a satisfactory fit across all assessed indices, with  $\chi^2/\text{df} = 2.234$ , CFI = 0.923, TLI = 0.915, RMSEA = 0.067, and SRMR = 0.058. These values collectively indicate that the proposed theoretical model adequately represents the observed relationships in the sample data.

### Hypothesis testing results

The structural equation modeling analysis provides robust empirical support for all the proposed hypotheses. Table 6 presents that hypothesis 1, which examines the direct relationship between Islamic philanthropy and sustainable economic empowerment, achieved significant support ( $\beta = 0.347$ , CR = 3.892,  $p < 0.001$ ) with a medium effect size according to Cohen's criteria. This finding indicates that a one standard deviation increase in Islamic philanthropic engagement corresponds to a 0.347 standard deviation increase in perceived sustainable economic empowerment outcomes.

**Table 6.** Direct and indirect effects in the structural model

Hypothesis	Path	Standardized Coefficient ( $\beta$ )	Critical Ratio	P-value	Effect Size	Result
H1	IP $\rightarrow$ SEE	0.347	3.892	$< 0.001$	Medium	Supported
H2	IP $\rightarrow$ MT	0.612	7.254	$< 0.001$	Large	Supported
H3	MT $\rightarrow$ SEE	0.428	4.617	$< 0.001$	Medium	Supported
H4	IP $\rightarrow$ MT $\rightarrow$ SEE	0.262	3.445	$< 0.001$	Medium	Supported

Note: IP = Islamic philanthropy; MT = *Muzakki* trust; SEE = Sustainable economic empowerment

Source: Primary data, processed (2025)

Hypothesis 2, which investigates the influence of Islamic philanthropy on *muzakki* trust, demonstrated the strongest relationship in the model ( $\beta = 0.612$ , CR = 7.254,  $p < 0.001$ ) with a large effect size and explained approximately 37.4% of the variance in trust levels ( $R^2 = 0.374$ ). Similarly, hypothesis 3 was significantly supported ( $\beta = 0.428$ , CR = 4.617,  $p < 0.001$ ), underscoring the critical role of institutional trust in translating philanthropic resources into effective sustainable economic empowerment outcomes.

### Mediation analysis results

The mediation analysis reveals that *muzakki* trust serves as a significant partial mediator in the relationship between Islamic philanthropy and sustainable economic empowerment. The indirect

effect through *muzakki* trust ( $\beta = 0.262$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) represents 43.0% of the total effect ( $\beta = 0.609$ ), indicating substantial mediation influence. The variance accounted for (VAF) calculation confirms partial mediation, as the indirect effect accounts for a significant but not complete portion of the total relationship.

The model demonstrates substantial explanatory power, with Islamic philanthropy explaining 37.4% of the variance in *muzakki* trust, while the combined influence of Islamic philanthropy and *muzakki* trust accounts for 45.6% of the variance in sustainable economic empowerment. These  $R^2$  values exceed the threshold for medium effect sizes in social science research, indicating meaningful practical significance.

The Stone–Geisser  $Q^2$  values for both endogenous variables ( $Q^2_{MT} = 0.281$ ,  $Q^2_{SEE} = 0.337$ ) substantially exceed zero, confirming the model's predictive relevance. The  $f^2$  effect sizes for both relationships are classified as large according to Cohen's criteria, further supporting the practical importance of the identified relationships.

### Multi-group analysis by occupational categories

**Table 7.** Multi-group analysis: farmer-fisherman vs. trader-entrepreneur

Path	Farmer-fisherman (n=104)	Trader-entrepreneur (n=56)	Z-score	P-value	Significant difference
	$\beta$ (SE)	$\beta$ (SE)			
IP $\rightarrow$ MT	0.587 (0.089)	0.651 (0.108)	-0.473	0.636	No
IP $\rightarrow$ SEE	0.312 (0.095)	0.421 (0.112)	-0.751	0.453	No
MT $\rightarrow$ SEE	0.445 (0.091)	0.392 (0.119)	0.365	0.715	No
IP $\rightarrow$ MT $\rightarrow$ SEE	0.261 (0.067)	0.255 (0.083)	0.058	0.954	No

Note:  $\beta$  = Standardized path coefficient; SE = Standard error

Source: Primary data, processed (2025)

Table 7 shows that the multi-group analysis examining potential differences between occupational categories reveals no statistically significant variations in the structural relationships. While trader-entrepreneurs demonstrated slightly higher direct effects from Islamic philanthropy to both *muzakki* trust and sustainable economic empowerment, these differences did not reach statistical significance. This finding suggests that the proposed theoretical model operates consistently across different socio-economic segments within the Sungai Penuh community.

### Bootstrap confidence intervals for mediation effects

Table 8 confirms that the bootstrap analysis with 2,000 resamples provides robust evidence for the significance of both direct and indirect effects. The 95% confidence intervals for all effects exclude zero, confirming statistical significance at the  $\alpha = 0.05$  level. The relatively narrow confidence intervals indicate good precision in effect estimation, enhancing confidence in the findings' reliability and generalizability within similar contexts.

**Table 8.** Bootstrap analysis of mediation effects (2,000 bootstrap samples)

Effect type	Point estimate	Bootstrap SE	95% Confidence interval		Significance
			Lower	Upper	
Direct effect (IP $\rightarrow$ SEE)	0.347	0.089	0.173	0.521	
Indirect effect (IP $\rightarrow$ MT $\rightarrow$ SEE)	0.262	0.076	0.113	0.411	
Total effect	0.609	0.082	0.448	0.770	

Source: Primary data, processed (2025)

This study's empirical findings offer substantial evidence for the essential function of *muzakki* trust as a mediating factor in the connection between Islamic philanthropy and sustainable economic empowerment, enhancing the theoretical comprehension of Islamic social finance and

providing practical guidance for institutional advancement. The structural equation modeling results indicate that Islamic philanthropy has a substantial impact on sustainable economic empowerment, both directly ( $\beta = 0.347$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) and indirectly via *muzakki* trust ( $\beta = 0.262$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), with the total effect accounting for 45.6% of the variance in empowerment outcomes. This discovery corroborates and expands upon the theoretical framework established by Al-Ghazali's concept of *ihsan*, which encompasses spiritual and socioeconomic transformation, while offering empirical support for the modern Islamic social finance framework formulated by [Kunhibava et al. \(2024\)](#) and [Hussin et al. \(2024\)](#).

The considerable correlation between Islamic generosity and *muzakki* trust ( $\beta = 0.612$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) constitutes a major addition of our research, as it experimentally substantiates the theoretical assertions of institutional trust theory within the Islamic framework. This discovery aligns with [Taufik Syamlan et al. \(2025\)](#) organizational trust theory, which highlights ability, compassion, and integrity as fundamental characteristics of trust, while also integrating Sharia compliance as a unique feature pertinent to Islamic institutional contexts. The robustness of this association indicates that active participation in Islamic philanthropic endeavors functions as a significant means of establishing institutional credibility, which contrasts with the findings of [Cokrohadisumarto et al. \(2019\)](#), who observed diminished trust levels among Indonesian zakat contributors. The discrepancies in the results may be ascribed to contextual variations, as the present study focuses on a particular community with established social networks and cultural coherence, underscoring the significance of local socio-cultural dynamics in trust development processes.

The partial mediation function of *muzakki* trust, representing 43% of the overall relationship between Islamic generosity and sustainable economic empowerment, offers empirical validation for the theoretical amalgamation of social capital theory with Islamic empowerment principles. This discovery builds upon the research of [Wulandhari et al \(2022\)](#) on social capital and cooperative behavior by illustrating the role of trust as an essential bridging mechanism across Islamic institutional frameworks. The mediating effect corresponds with the notion of *ra's al-mal al-ijtima'i* (Islamic social capital) and substantiates the theoretical assertion that trust acts as a catalyst in transforming charitable resources into impactful empowerment results. The partial nature of the mediation indicates that Islamic philanthropy has intrinsic empowerment potential that functions independently of trust mechanisms, potentially through direct resource provision and spiritual motivation, as evidenced by the high mean score for religious motivation ( $M = 4.12$ ,  $SD = 0.74$ ) among respondents.

The observed moderate degree of *muzakki* confidence in this study ( $M = 3.28$ ,  $SD = 0.91$ ) necessitates cautious interpretation within the wider framework of Islamic institutional development. This conclusion implies potential for enhancement, contrasting with the negative evaluations in prior work, implying that specific institutional contexts may cultivate greater trust levels than national or regional analyses indicate. Dimensional analysis indicates that integrity ( $M = 3.41$ ,  $SD = 0.89$ ) and Sharia compliance ( $M = 3.58$ ,  $SD = 0.85$ ) received higher scores than ability ( $M = 3.35$ ,  $SD = 0.94$ ) and benevolence ( $M = 3.22$ ,  $SD = 0.97$ ), suggesting that respondents prioritize moral and religious legitimacy over technical competence or social orientation. This pattern corresponds with the theoretical framework of Islamic institutional trust posited by [Ghani et al. \(2024\)](#), which underscores the precedence of Sharia compliance in the establishment of trust, while contesting traditional organizational trust models that highlight competence-based trust dimensions.

The outcomes of sustainable economic empowerment reveal an intricate pattern that illustrates both the possibilities and constraints of Islamic humanitarian initiatives. The factor with the highest score, community engagement ( $M = 3.61$ ,  $SD = 0.75$ ), corroborates the theoretical premise of Islamic empowerment theory, which is grounded in the notion of *tamkin* highlighting group empowerment rather than individual progress. This discovery corresponds with Al-Qardawi's framework for zakat distribution, which emphasizes community-focused strategies for wealth redistribution. The attribute with the lowest score, access to resources ( $M = 3.29$ ,  $SD = 0.86$ ), reveals structural constraints in the execution of empowerment programs, necessitating systemic interventions that extend beyond conventional philanthropic methods. This pattern

indicates that while Islamic philanthropy successfully mobilizes social capital and fosters community engagement, it encounters obstacles in overcoming structural barriers to resource access. This reinforces the assertions made by Williamson, as cited in [Fatah et al. \(2023\)](#), regarding the intricacies of sustainable development interventions

The lack of notable disparities among occupational groups in the multi-group analysis suggests compelling implications for the universality of the proposed theoretical paradigm. Notwithstanding significant income discrepancies between the farmer–fishermen (IDR 2.85 million) and trader–entrepreneur (IDR 6.23 million) groups, the structural correlations persisted uniformly across both segments. This discovery contests traditional beliefs regarding socioeconomic stratification in charitable behavior and implies that Islamic philanthropic frameworks may have intrinsic qualities that surpass economic divisions within Muslim communities. The uniformity of relationships among occupational groups substantiates the theoretical assertion of Islamic brotherhood (*ukhuwah*) as a cohesive influence in philanthropic actions, while offering empirical validation for the adaptability of Islamic social finance initiatives across varied socioeconomic environments.

The results of this study advance the theoretical discourse on the efficacy of faith-based development strategies compared to secular empowerment frameworks. The considerable explanatory capacity of the proposed model ( $R^2 = 0.456$  for sustainable economic empowerment) indicates that Islamic philanthropic frameworks have significant potential to tackle development challenges, corroborating [Habibullah et al \(2023\)](#) assertions concerning the *maqasid al-Sharia* approach to wealth preservation and distribution. The moderate effect sizes noted in direct relationships suggest that Islamic philanthropy, although impactful, is not a comprehensive solution for development concerns and needs to be integrated with supplementary treatments to enhance empowerment results.

The theoretical implications extend beyond the specific realm of Islamic philanthropy to encompass broader inquiries regarding institutional development and the production of social capital in underdeveloped economies. The robust correlation between charitable involvement and trust development indicates that participation in the voluntary sector may act as a vital tool for enhancing institutional capacity in environments where formal institutions are deficient. This discovery corroborates the capabilities approach paradigm posited by [Gangas \(2019\)](#) and offers empirical evidence for the particular mechanisms by which religious organizations facilitate societal development. The incorporation of spiritual capital, as suggested by [Nwachukwu et al., \(2021\)](#), is substantiated by the elevated religious motivation scores identified in this study, indicating that the spiritual aspects of empowerment require further focus in development theory and practice. The study's methodological framework, which integrates structural equation modeling with theoretical synthesis, underscores the significance of mixed-method techniques in Islamic social finance research. The strong fit indices obtained in the final model (CFI = 0.923, TLI = 0.915, RMSEA = 0.067) instill confidence in the identified structural links, whereas the bootstrap confidence intervals validate the stability of the mediation effects. The cross-sectional form of the data restricts causal inferences, and the particular cultural setting of Sungai Penuh may constrain the generalizability of findings to other Islamic communities with distinct sociocultural attributes.

The findings indicate that Islamic philanthropic institutions should prioritize trust-building programs that highlight openness, accountability, and Sharia compliance to optimize empowerment outcomes. The partial mediation role of trust suggests that although direct donor contributions are significant, institutional credibility acts as a crucial multiplier that may improve resource usage efficiency. A dimensional study of trust indicates that organizations should prioritize the demonstration of integrity and religious validity, while concurrently enhancing technical competence and community engagement abilities. The uniformity of linkages throughout occupational categories suggests that standardized institutional strategies could be beneficial across many community segments, potentially minimizing the complexity and expense of targeted interventions.

Future research must rectify several limitations identified in this study, including the necessity for longitudinal designs to establish causal relationships, comparative studies across

diverse cultural contexts to evaluate generalizability, and the exploration of additional mediating variables, such as institutional governance quality and program efficacy. The use of qualitative approaches may yield profound insights into the mechanisms of trust development and empowerment processes, whereas experimental designs could evaluate the efficacy of targeted interventions aimed at improving *muzakki* trust and empowerment outcomes. The creation of standardized assessment tools for Islamic social finance concepts would enable cross-study comparisons and theoretical advancements.

## Conclusion

This study successfully investigated how Islamic philanthropy fosters sustainable economic empowerment through the mediating mechanism of *muzakki* trust in Sungai Penuh, Jambi. The results indicate a moderate overall trust score, with a notable preference for Sharia compliance and integrity over technical ability or benevolence. This suggests that donors in this region prioritize moral and religious legitimacy as the foundation of their trust assessments. By achieving all four research objectives, this study provides a clear characterization of how trust dimensions are structured within local philanthropic institutions. Consequently, these findings highlight that religious and ethical standards are more influential than purely operational competence in securing donor confidence.

Theoretically, this research offers a novel integration of the theory of planned behavior, social capital theory, and Islamic empowerment theory within a single structural model. It establishes that *muzakki* trust serves as an institutional amplifier that significantly enhances the efficiency of resource utilization and empowerment outcomes. Practically, these findings suggest that zakat management institutions, such as BAZNAS, should prioritize financial transparency and the public communication of Sharia mechanisms. Furthermore, the lower scores in benevolence indicate an urgent need for institutions to better demonstrate community-oriented commitment through participatory program designs. Policymakers can leverage this model to implement standardized, yet locally adaptive, Islamic social finance frameworks across diverse rural and semi-urban communities.

Future research should adopt longitudinal and experimental designs to track *muzakki* behavior across multiple zakat cycles. Such approaches would help establish stronger temporal causality between philanthropic engagement, trust development, and long-term empowerment success. Additionally, comparative studies across different regional contexts and Muslim-majority countries are essential to validate these findings globally. These cross-contextual analyses could clarify whether the primacy of Sharia compliance is a universal feature of Islamic institutional trust or unique to rural Indonesian populations. Ultimately, expanding the scope of research will refine the theoretical framework and improve the governance of faith-based development initiatives worldwide.

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## Declaration of generative AI and AI-assisted technologies in the writing process

During the preparation of this work, the authors used DeepL and Grammarly to translate from Bahasa Indonesia into American English and improve the clarity of the language and readability of the article. After using these tools, the authors reviewed and edited the content as needed and take full responsibility for the content of the published article.

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