

The Implementation of Islamic Good Corporate Governance at Baitul Maal Hidayatullah, East Java: Strengthening Accountability and Sharia-Based Transparency in Zakat Management

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ARMADA
JURNAL PENELITIAN MULTIDISIPLIN

e-ISSN: 2964-2981

ARMADA : Jurnal Penelitian Multidisiplin

<https://ejournal.45mataram.ac.id/index.php/armada>

Vol. 04, No. 05 Mei, 2026

Page: 407-415

DOI:

<https://doi.org/10.55681/armada.v4i5.1991>

Article History:

Received: Mai 02, 2026

Revised: Mei 14, 2026

Accepted: Mei 20, 2026

Abstract : *This study aims to analyse the implementation of Islamic Good Corporate Governance (IGCG) at Baitul Maal Hidayatullah (BMH) East Java as a response to declining zakat revenue and increasing demands for transparency in Islamic philanthropic institutions, using a descriptive qualitative approach with data collected through in-depth interviews, field observations, and document analysis to assess the application of IGCG principles within institutional practices. The findings show that BMH East Java has made efforts to implement IGCG, particularly in Sharia supervision and more transparent financial reporting, although several challenges remain, including inconsistency across organisational units, suboptimal stakeholder engagement, and limited use of digital technology. In conclusion, IGCG has the potential to enhance the credibility and performance of zakat institutions when implemented comprehensively and contextually, thus requiring strengthened internal audit systems, improved digital infrastructure, and continuous human resource development through training.*

Keywords: *Islamic Good Corporate Governance, Zakat Institution, Sharia Compliance*

INTRODUCTION

However, recent trends indicate a significant decline in revenue for several zakat institutions across Indonesia. This reduction has raised concerns about the effectiveness and sustainability of zakat fund management. To address these issues, scholars and practitioners have emphasized the importance of adopting Good Corporate Governance (GCG) principles. GCG provides a framework for directing and controlling organizations, balancing the interests of various stakeholders through core principles such as transparency, accountability, responsibility, independence, and fairness. In the context of zakat institutions, which operate based on Islamic values, the application of GCG has evolved into a more tailored concept: Islamic Good Corporate Governance (IGCG). IGCG integrates conventional governance practices with Islamic ethics and Shariah compliance. By incorporating values such as justice, transparency, and adherence to Islamic law, IGCG offers a more holistic approach to governance that aligns with the religious and moral obligations of zakat institutions.

As nonprofit entities, zakat management organizations such as Lembaga Amil Zakat (LAZ) are judged not by profit margins but by the growth and impact of managed funds. In Indonesia, the National Zakat Agency (Baznas) has repeatedly emphasized the gap between potential and actual zakat collection. In 2021, for example, zakat, infaq, and sadaqah (ZIS) collections amounted to only IDR 14 trillion, representing less than 4.2% of the estimated national potential (Al-Labiyah et al., 2023). This figure underscores the need to critically assess institutional performance and governance standards. Further evidence can be seen in data from Baitul Maal Hidayatullah (BMH) East Java between 2019 and 2023. From 2019 to 2021, ZISWAF receipts showed steady growth, reaching a peak of over IDR 88 billion in 2021. However, the following years saw a sharp decline,

with 2023 revenue falling to just under IDR 70 billion. This downward trend calls for deeper examination of both internal and external factors, including the lingering effects of COVID-19, economic volatility, and institutional performance issues.

Amidst this backdrop, interest in governance models has grown, particularly in connection to enhancing public trust and organizational transparency. Several studies (e.g., Noor, 2020) affirm that GCG implementation can strengthen operational integrity and encourage greater public participation in zakat contributions. However, without contextual adaptation to Islamic norms, GCG alone is insufficient. Hence, IGCG becomes crucial, offering a Shariah-aligned governance structure that resonates with both donors (*muzakki*) and recipients (*mustahik*). Despite its theoretical promise, practical implementation of IGCG remains inconsistent. One significant barrier is the limited awareness and understanding among zakat institution managers. Research by Hamid *et al.* (2019) highlights that many institutions still prioritize fundraising over governance, resulting in suboptimal transparency and accountability, which in turn erodes public trust. This misalignment between governance principles and institutional focus hinders long-term growth.

Moreover, Ghozali and Chariri (2016) observed that while larger zakat institutions have begun adopting IGCG principles, the extent and quality of implementation vary widely. A recurring issue is the lack of standardized financial reporting that is both accurate and accessible. This problem is exacerbated by the absence of unified reporting standards specific to zakat institutions in Indonesia, making it difficult to benchmark progress or foster comparative improvement. Regulatory frameworks and technology adoption also influence IGCG execution. While laws such as Indonesia's Law No. 23/2011 on Zakat Management provide a foundation, enforcement gaps remain. Technological innovations such as big data and artificial intelligence have the potential to enhance performance tracking and reporting. Nevertheless, adoption of such tools is still limited, particularly among small or remote institutions. These challenges suggest a critical need for further investigation into the effective implementation of IGCG within Indonesia's zakat ecosystem.

THEORETICAL REVIEW

The concept of corporate governance has evolved over decades to address the increasing complexity of organizational operations and the growing demand for transparency and accountability. At its core, Good Corporate Governance (GCG) refers to the structures, processes, and traditions that determine how power is exercised, how stakeholders are given a voice, and how decisions are made on issues of corporate direction and performance (OECD, 2004). Initially designed for the private sector, GCG has expanded its relevance to public and nonprofit sectors, including faith-based organizations such as zakat institutions. Zakat, one of the five pillars of Islam, is a fundamental religious obligation for Muslims. The role of zakat institutions, particularly in Muslim-majority countries, has grown increasingly critical in managing the collection and distribution of zakat funds to eligible recipients (*mustahik*). These institutions operate within a framework of public trust and moral responsibility, making governance not merely a technical necessity but a religious imperative.

However, the application of conventional GCG frameworks within Islamic institutions has sparked debates due to the lack of accommodation for religious values. In response, scholars and practitioners have developed the concept of Islamic Good Corporate Governance (IGCG), which integrates core GCG principles with Islamic teachings. IGCG ensures that the governance practices of Islamic organizations align with Shariah principles, encompassing both legal compliance and ethical excellence (*ihsan*). Key principles of GCG—transparency, accountability, responsibility, independence, and fairness—find their equivalent in Islamic teachings. For instance, transparency (*al-shafafiyah*) is emphasized in the Qur'an (Al-Baqarah: 282) through the command to document financial transactions. Similarly, the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ upheld accountability (*muhasabah*) as a moral duty. IGCG thus does not replace conventional GCG but rather builds upon it with deeper ethical grounding.

A defining feature of IGCG is the presence of a Shariah Supervisory Board (SSB) or Shariah Advisory Council (SAC), which ensures that organizational decisions are compliant with Islamic jurisprudence. According to Maali *et al.* (2006), the inclusion of SSBs within Islamic financial

institutions is a critical element of IGCG, offering assurance to stakeholders that funds are managed in accordance with Islamic law. For zakat institutions, this adds a layer of religious legitimacy beyond legal compliance. Another central component of IGCG is the concept of amanah (trust), which underpins the fiduciary role of amil zakat (zakat managers). The amil are entrusted with sacred funds, requiring them to maintain the highest standards of integrity, competence, and sincerity. Any breach of trust not only undermines institutional reputation but also risks spiritual consequences, as zakat funds are considered divine property (mal Allah).

IGCG also emphasizes the importance of maslahah (public benefit) in decision-making. This principle ensures that all organizational activities, including investment, operations, and disbursement of funds, aim at achieving social justice and reducing inequality. In the context of zakat management, this translates into efficient allocation of funds to those most in need, in a manner that promotes long-term empowerment rather than short-term relief. The integration of IGCG into zakat institutions also involves ethical financial reporting and disclosure. Transparency is not merely about publishing financial reports but ensuring that reports are accessible, understandable, and reflect the true state of affairs. Farook and Farooq (2011) highlight that ethical disclosure enhances trust among stakeholders and encourages sustained contributions from muzakki (zakat payers).

Despite the theoretical elegance of IGCG, practical implementation remains a challenge. Studies by Hamid *et al.* (2019) show that many zakat institutions in Indonesia have yet to develop strong governance frameworks. Their focus tends to remain on fundraising, with less attention paid to reporting standards, internal controls, and stakeholder engagement—all of which are vital components of IGCG. Additionally, Ghozali and Chariri (2016) argue that inconsistent application of IGCG principles across zakat institutions leads to varied levels of performance and public trust. Some institutions may have formal Shariah boards but lack effective internal audit mechanisms, while others may publish reports without adequate verification. Such inconsistencies weaken the perceived credibility of the sector. Legal and regulatory frameworks also influence IGCG adoption. In Indonesia, Law No. 23/2011 provides the national framework for zakat management. While the law mandates transparency and accountability, enforcement remains uneven. Trisnawati and Saefudin (2018) emphasize the need for clearer standards and more rigorous oversight mechanisms to ensure compliance among registered zakat institutions.

The technological dimension of IGCG cannot be overlooked. With the rise of fintech, big data, and AI, zakat institutions have opportunities to enhance their governance practices through real-time monitoring, automated reporting, and predictive analytics. However, Khariza (2021) notes that such technologies are underutilized, especially by smaller institutions that lack digital infrastructure and human resource capabilities. Cultural factors also shape the interpretation and implementation of IGCG. In some contexts, informal leadership structures and hierarchical decision-making may hinder accountability and transparency. Addressing such cultural barriers requires both structural reforms and capacity building among leadership and staff. Moreover, the role of education and training is critical in operationalizing IGCG. Zakat institution staff must be equipped not only with technical accounting and management skills but also with knowledge of Islamic finance and Shariah principles. Continuous professional development and ethical leadership training are vital to institutionalize IGCG.

Empirical data from BMH East Java (2019–2023) reveal a fluctuating trend in zakat collections, with a significant decline in 2022 and 2023. This trend underscores the urgency of governance reform. Stronger IGCG implementation may help rebuild donor confidence, improve operational efficiency, and ensure optimal fund utilization thereby reversing downward trends. The theoretical framework of IGCG offers a promising pathway for sustainable and ethical management of zakat institutions. It aligns religious obligations with modern governance practices, ensuring that zakat institutions remain both spiritually faithful and managerially competent. For BMH East Java and similar organizations, adopting IGCG is not only a moral obligation but a strategic necessity.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employed a qualitative descriptive approach to explore the implementation of Islamic Good Corporate Governance (IGCG) within a zakat institution. The qualitative method was chosen because it enables an in-depth understanding of the phenomena being studied, focusing on non-numeric data such as interviews, observations, and organizational documents. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with key personnel at Baitul Maal Hidayatullah (BMH) East Java, including program heads, Sharia supervisory board members, external auditors, and donors. In addition, field observations and document reviews particularly annual financial reports were conducted to validate and complement the interview findings. The research object was BMH East Java, a prominent zakat management institution in Surabaya, Indonesia. This institution was selected due to its relevance and representation of faith-based nonprofit organizations managing zakat. The study aimed to assess how IGCG principles such as transparency, accountability, responsibility, independence, fairness, and Sharia compliance are implemented and how they affect the institution's financial performance, employee satisfaction, and impact on public welfare. Both primary data (interviews and observations) and secondary data (financial documents, organizational charts, regulatory frameworks) were analyzed to provide a holistic view.

To ensure the credibility and validity of the research, triangulation techniques were applied. Data triangulation was used by comparing information from various sources, including financial reports and stakeholder interviews. Method triangulation involved combining interview results with document analysis and direct observation. Theoretical triangulation was used to interpret the findings through both conventional corporate governance perspectives and the Islamic governance framework. This integrated methodology strengthened the reliability of the conclusions and enabled a comprehensive analysis of IGCG implementation within the selected zakat institution.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The implementation of Islamic Good Corporate Governance (IGCG) in Baitul Maal Hidayatullah (BMH) East Java reflects a multidimensional process influenced by both Shariah principles and modern governance standards. This section explores the practical aspects of IGCG through the six primary pillars: transparency, accountability, responsibility, independence, fairness, and Shariah compliance. The analysis draws upon data collected from interviews, document analysis, and field observations conducted within the institution.

Transparency is a fundamental component of IGCG, ensuring that stakeholders, particularly donors and regulatory bodies, have access to accurate and timely information. At BMH East Java, financial transparency is primarily achieved through the publication of annual financial statements and program impact reports. These reports are distributed through digital platforms and in print. However, the depth and granularity of reporting vary across years, with some reports lacking itemized data on fund utilization by sector or region. Although BMH demonstrates an effort toward transparency, the limited availability of detailed program evaluations presents a potential gap. Stakeholders may require more comprehensive insights into the efficiency and effectiveness of fund usage. This is particularly relevant in the context of increasing competition among zakat institutions for donor trust and loyalty.



Figure 1. Coding Between Elements

Based on the coding derived from the research, several themes and interrelationships among elements can be analyzed using relevant theories, particularly those related to Islamic Good Corporate Governance (IGCG) and the performance of zakat institutions. Accountability is reflected in how responsibilities are assigned and fulfilled within the organization. The organizational structure at BMH East Java is clearly defined, delineating the roles of program heads, finance officers, and oversight boards. External audits are conducted annually, and internal evaluations are performed regularly. These mechanisms contribute to ensuring that each department performs its duties according to the institution's strategic plan. Nevertheless, findings from interviews suggest that external accountability toward donors and beneficiaries needs reinforcement. While internal documentation is thorough, external communication, such as donor follow-up or beneficiary feedback loops, is still limited. Enhancing this aspect can further solidify public confidence in the institution.

Responsibility within BMH East Java encompasses both legal and ethical dimensions. The institution complies with national zakat regulations, including Law No. 23 of 2011, and adheres to its own internal policies on fund disbursement. Ethical responsibility is reinforced through the inclusion of the Shariah Supervisory Board (SSB), which ensures alignment with Islamic legal norms. One of the key observations is that the institution's social responsibility extends beyond zakat distribution. BMH conducts community empowerment programs, such as vocational training and microenterprise support, which reflect a broader commitment to *maslahah* (public good). These initiatives demonstrate that responsibility is not merely about compliance but also about proactive social engagement. Independence is a critical aspect of IGCG, particularly in avoiding conflicts of interest and ensuring that decision-making processes remain impartial. BMH East Java maintains an independent audit committee and allows for external evaluations of its financial and operational systems. Decision-making is decentralized to some extent, with regional autonomy granted to local program managers.

However, qualitative data indicate that informal hierarchies or charismatic leadership figures sometimes influence operational decisions, which could pose risks to objective governance. A more structured policy on decision-making autonomy and checks-and-balances could address these risks. Fairness in zakat distribution is evident in BMH's application of the eight *asnaf* framework, which guides the classification of eligible zakat recipients. The institution employs data-driven needs assessments and verification processes to ensure that resources reach the most deserving beneficiaries. Geographic and demographic considerations also inform the allocation strategy. Still, feedback from field observations suggests that dissemination of criteria to grassroots communities could be improved. Some beneficiaries in rural areas are not fully aware of their eligibility or the application procedures. More inclusive communication strategies may enhance fairness and access.

Shariah compliance is an overarching principle in IGCG that distinguishes it from conventional governance. At BMH, this compliance is managed through regular SSB meetings,

issuance of fatwas, and review of programs and financial products. The presence of certified scholars in the board adds credibility and religious legitimacy to the organization. Nevertheless, the research identified gaps in publicizing SSB activities and decisions. Making these processes more transparent can further reinforce stakeholder trust, particularly among conservative donors who prioritize religious conformity. Financial reporting is a crucial element of both transparency and accountability. BMH produces audited financial statements, and these are aligned with national accounting standards. However, the reports are not always disaggregated by program type or region, limiting their usefulness for targeted evaluation. Donor confidence is significantly influenced by the quality and accessibility of financial reports. Interviews with donors reveal a desire for more dynamic reporting tools, such as dashboards or quarterly updates, which could offer real-time insight into program performance and fund utilization.

The fluctuation in ZISWAF receipts from 2019 to 2023 underscores the importance of strategic governance. While growth was observed between 2019 and 2021, a notable decline in 2022 and 2023 raises concerns. Multiple factors may have contributed, including post-pandemic economic constraints and internal inefficiencies. The decline highlights the urgency of optimizing IGCG principles, especially in stakeholder communication and performance management. Transparent reporting and proactive engagement may help reverse these trends and rebuild donor trust. The role of digitalization in enhancing IGCG is another key theme emerging from the analysis. Although BMH East Java has made strides in digital outreach, such as online donations and website-based reporting, integration of more advanced technologies like data analytics remains limited. These tools could enhance transparency, improve decision-making, and boost institutional credibility.

In summary, BMH East Java demonstrates a foundational adherence to IGCG principles, with specific strengths in compliance and organizational structure. However, opportunities exist to improve transparency, stakeholder engagement, and technological integration. Addressing these areas can strengthen institutional performance and align governance with both Islamic values and modern expectations. This analysis affirms that IGCG is not merely a religious mandate but a strategic imperative. Its consistent application can serve as a competitive advantage, enhancing trust, sustainability, and social impact in the long run. For BMH East Java, investing in governance reform is both a moral duty and a forward-looking necessity.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study reveals that the implementation of Islamic Good Corporate Governance (IGCG) at Baitul Maal Hidayatullah (BMH) East Java plays a significant role in enhancing institutional performance and public trust. The six principles of IGCG transparency, accountability, responsibility, independence, fairness, and Sharia compliance are gradually being embedded into the organizational structure and practices of BMH. Through in-depth interviews and document analysis, it was evident that the management of zakat at BMH has made meaningful progress, particularly in ensuring compliance with Sharia and improving financial disclosure. Nevertheless, challenges remain in terms of consistent implementation across all divisions, particularly regarding the completeness of documentation, clarity of roles, and optimal stakeholder communication. Some gaps were found in internal audit systems and the active involvement of the Sharia Supervisory Board. These shortcomings, if not addressed, could hinder the long-term effectiveness of IGCG and reduce public confidence.

Despite these limitations, BMH East Java demonstrates strong potential to serve as a model for other zakat institutions in Indonesia. The commitment of leadership, coupled with efforts to embrace ethical governance, signals a positive direction toward professionalizing zakat management in line with Islamic values. The study concludes that while the application of IGCG is not yet perfect, it has made substantial contributions to enhancing institutional governance and the impact of zakat distribution. To strengthen the implementation of IGCG, it is recommended that BMH East Java enhance the role of its internal audit division and the Sharia Supervisory Board through routine evaluations and independent reviews. Strengthening these oversight functions will ensure that governance practices remain aligned with both Sharia and professional standards. It is also advisable for the institution to invest in digital governance tools to improve transparency,

automate reporting, and enhance stakeholder engagement. Training and capacity-building programs for staff and leadership should be expanded to foster a deeper understanding of IGCG principles and to encourage a culture of accountability and integrity. Lastly, collaboration with external stakeholders such as regulators, donors, and academic institutions should be intensified to develop best practices, benchmark performance, and advocate for a more standardized approach to IGCG within the zakat ecosystem in Indonesia.

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