



Contents lists available at [Inovasi Analisis Data](https://analysisdata.co.id)

Journal International Economic Sharia

Homepage <https://analysisdata.co.id>



Gender Awareness and Donor Participation: Transforming Zakat Distribution for Enhanced Community Welfare

Mehmed Zayid Yıldırım ^a, Aisha El-Din Fatma ^b

^a. Department of Islamic Economics and Finance, Faculty of Business Administration, Marmara University, Istanbul, Turkey

^b. Department of Islamic Economics and Finance, Faculty of Business Administration, Marmara University, Istanbul, Turkey

ARTICLE INFO

Received 16 April 2025
 Received in revised 15 May 2025
 Publication 10 June 2025

Correspondence;

Zayid Yıldırım

ABSTRACT



Objective: Institutional mechanisms and stakeholder participation play pivotal roles in providing welfare effects in social finance distribution systems.

Methods: We use survey data and a hierarchical regression to test direct as well as moderating effects.

Results: Welfare outcomes are greatly improved when institutional transparency, gender-sensitive practices, and professional management are ensured. We identify stakeholder participation, in particular, as an important moderating factor, which indeed serves to significantly bolster the association between institutional practices and the realization of welfare gains. The combined model explains better that integrating operational excellence with active involvement creates a synergistic impact.

Novelty: This paper brings in the catalysing role of stakeholder participation as a moderator and proposes a convergent theoretical framework by integrating four arguably understudied institutional perspectives such as marketing and service, which offers rare insights in the social finance literature on effectiveness.

Research Implication: This study fills this gap and opens new avenues for research by providing a potential basis for designing more effective social welfare programs and furthering theoretical development through the validation of an integrated model of institutional effectiveness.

Keyword;

Social finance, institutional effectiveness, stakeholder participation, welfare outcomes, gender sensitivity

© 2024 by Inovasi Analisis Data All rights reserved

1. Introduction

Zakat has attracted significant international attention as a potential tool for poverty reduction and socio-economic development in Islamic economies. Modern studies recognise the potential of zakat to alleviate income disparity and promote the socio-economic empowerment of marginalised communities (Abdullah et al., 2015; Zauro et al., 2020). With global zakat collections estimated at billions of dollars every year, zakat has the



financial capability to achieve many, if not all, of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly the goal of eliminating extreme poverty (Ahmad & Ghiasul Haq, 2021; Arman & Rafi, 2025; Mahomed & Saba, 2024). However, turning this substantial potential into tangible and lasting benefits for the community remains a significant challenge. However, the impact that zakat could potentially have depends primarily on the efficiency with which zakat institutions channel and distribute these funds (K Salim, 2024; Mustafa et al., 2025; Wahab & Rahim Abdul Rahman, 2011).

Governance and inclusiveness are the dominant themes in modern discussions about Zakat. The ideal principles of zakat institutions still face challenges relating to operational issues such as transparency, professional management and inclusive policies, such as gender sensitivity in the distribution framework (Dirie et al., 2023, 2024; Sawmar & Mohammed, 2021; Yasmeen, 2024). A lack of transparency can erode public trust, resulting in lower collection rates and reduced funding for welfare programmes (Owoyemi, 2020; Sawmar & Mohammed, 2021; Waddington et al., 2019). Furthermore, gender-blind zakat allocation fails to address the specific vulnerabilities and economic challenges faced by women, who make up a significant proportion of the poor (Butcher & Hallward, 2018). Clearly, these issues highlight the need for further research to identify key factors that could improve the efficiency of the welfare function of zakat.

This research is based on a combination of competing theoretical perspectives. Transparency and management are explained by the principles of good governance theory (Grindle, 2004), and this will be the framework guiding this examination. The gender awareness variable is based on the feminist economics perspective, which argues that policy is not gender neutral (see Benería, 2003). Finally, the Stakeholder Theory is used to guide donor engagement. This is because it says that donors should be included (these are the most important stakeholders) to make things more accountable and effective (Freeman, 1984). Bringing together these theories provides a strong base for examining the relationships hypothesized, which are important to understand.

The aim of this research is to address the knowledge gap that has been identified due to the inconclusive and fragmented findings of previous empirical studies. Research indicates that gender-aware designs lead to improved welfare Ayuniyyah et al. (2022), Mawardi et al. (2022), but other studies report no or even adverse effects, implying that such strategies won't be effective without wider institutional support (Allwood, 2013; Schlesinger & Heldman, 2001; van der Harst et al., 2023). In addition, the relationship between transparency and welfare is not consistent. Cifuentes et al. (2023), Hasan (2020), Park (2011), found a significant and positive effect, but Meijer et al. (2015) argued that transparency alone is not sufficient to ensure welfare, emphasising the need for good governance practices to complement transparency. Similarly, management practices are contradictory, some studies find that evidence directly influences welfare Bennett (2018), Briner & Walshe, (2015), Budhwar et al. (2023), while others emphasise the importance of context (Kusuma, 2021). The role of donor participation as a moderator in this case is especially under explored. The present study addresses this gap by offering a comprehensive model that not only tests the direct effects but also introduces donor engagement as a pivotal moderating factor. This factor has the capacity to shed light on the seemingly contradictory findings and the circumstances under which the independent variables are more effective.

This research aims at empirically testing the direct effects of gender participants, distribution transparency, and zakat management practices which directly related with welfare community and testing the donor participations in moderating the effects. Therefore, this study seeks to provide a deeper insight into zakat effectivity mechanism and is expected to gain a filling the gap of zakat effectivity literature by testing these hypotheses. The results promise to provide major theoretical implications by combining Good Governance, Feminist Economics and Stakeholder theories to a one model concerning Islamic social finance. These results will yield relatively end-user focused results that will provide zakat institutions worldwide with actionable recommendations for how to improve organizational effectiveness, maximize stakeholder trust and engagement, and most importantly, increase their impact on sustainable community welfare and global poverty alleviation.

2. Theoretical foundation

2.1 *The influence of gender awareness on community welfare*

The application of gender awareness in zakat distribution is an inseparable effort to improve the welfare of the community. The gender inequities and disparities experience by women, who are often among the poorest, are often not identified in gender-blind approaches, because such approaches do not ask the right questions. Research by Abu-Zahrah et al. Thus, Asyani et al.(2022) shows that gender-sensitive zakat programs are an effective way to raise the household income and children's education level for female beneficiaries. In line with this, Hassan and Ashraf (2020) report that aid giving focused on capital assistance to empower women is significantly more successful in productive and sustainable poverty alleviation than any form of economic aid given to men due to the way women tend to use productive income towards enhancing family welfare. In addition, Khan (2021) argue that since social fund management entails both male and female components, it is imperative that gender analysis is taken into account in order to reduce inequality and provide a more inclusive community development. As a result, zakat can impact overall welfare wiewe more if it takes into account the different needs of all genders, bolstering the hypothesis that the other exemption is true.

H1: Gender awareness has a positive effect on community welfare

2.2 *The influence of distribution transparency on community welfare*

One of the fundamental the distribution transparency which influences a lot on the productivity of zakat on a certain community welfare improvement. Visibility of both donors and beneficiaries on how the funds are allocated and distributed creates the most fundamental trust that allows the aid to actually reach the people that need it. Saad and Farouk (2019) found a positive relationship on the perception of transparency and the satisfaction level of zakat recipients as an indicator of welfare improvement in the study of zakat institutions in Malaysia. In addition, Mohd Noor et al. Masyita et al.(2020) found that transparent practices in the report would help the collection of zakat funds. As a consequence, welfare programs receive larger amounts of financial resources. More broadly, Bin-Nashwan et al. Transparency reduces perceived risk and promotes public participation in welfare schemes (2021) on charitable giving. For this reason, transparency is not only an ethical obligation of zakat management, but is also a logical way to extract the optimal welfare impact from the delivery of zakat.

H2: Distribution transparency has a positive effect on community welfare

2.3 *The influence of zakat management practices on community welfare*

The core element of zakat is not a mere act of charity, but rather a principle of economic justice and social equity, and therefore, effective zakat management practices, including professional governance, strategic planning, and utilization practices, are fundamental to ensuring that zakat principles are able to carry through in the form of community welfare. Therefore, professional management will ensure that zakat is not only distributed as consumption assistance but also channeled to productive and empowering programs. According to the study achieved by Abdullah and Sapiei (2018), strong corporate governance mechanism and structures such as audit committees and relevant oversight allowed the zakat institutions to provide stronger impact on poverty reduction. In the same way, in a study conducted by Wahid and Kader (2020), show the adoption of new management tools, including digital payment systems, needs assessment, and modern approaches to zakat distribution, increased coordination between zakat institutions, and improved access to zakat funds for the needy at regular intervals and with low costs. In addition, the work of Kusuma and Ayuniyyah (2022) also proved that only entrepreneurial training and capital assistance programs, conducted through organized process, can maintain the sustainability of mustahiq income (beneficiaries). Thus better practices in management are directly responsible for better allocation of zakat funds to welfare benefits.

H3: Zakat management practices have a positive effect on community welfare

2.4 The moderating role of donor participation

Participation by donors is a main moderating variable that can exacerbate the independent variable on the well being of the community. When donors move beyond the role of a check-writer and monitor fund usage, provide feedback, or co-plan programs they add another dimension of accountability and a layer of validation. Specifically, H₄ is Sig. on the idea that in presence of a funding body, active involvement by donors can help ensure gender-sensitive programs actually are implemented as intended and despite any latent institutional biases. As shown by Thaker et al. (2021). Donor involvement in Islamic social finance increases the fit between projects and community needs. As for H₅, donor involvement strengthens distribution transparency directly, conversely, a research from the qualitative study by Hegazy and Palmer (2022), shows donor models were participatory in which the funder would know, trace and follow their contributions to a certain degree, and as such, confidence in donors and in the perceived legitimacy of the institution was greatly increased. Lastly, according to H₆, external oversight is not only provided through independent or government audits, but involved donors give external oversight which buffers management to follow the best practices. Therefore, according to Ali and Hatta (2022), this participatory or participatory governance in zakat institutions also has an impact on the effective and impactful programs of zakat distribution which in turn strengthen the chain of management quality and welfare.

- H4: Donor participation strengthens the effect of gender awareness on community welfare
- H5: Donor participation strengthens the effect of distribution transparency on community welfare
- H6: Donor participation strengthens the effect of zakat management practices on community welfare

2.5 Research framework model

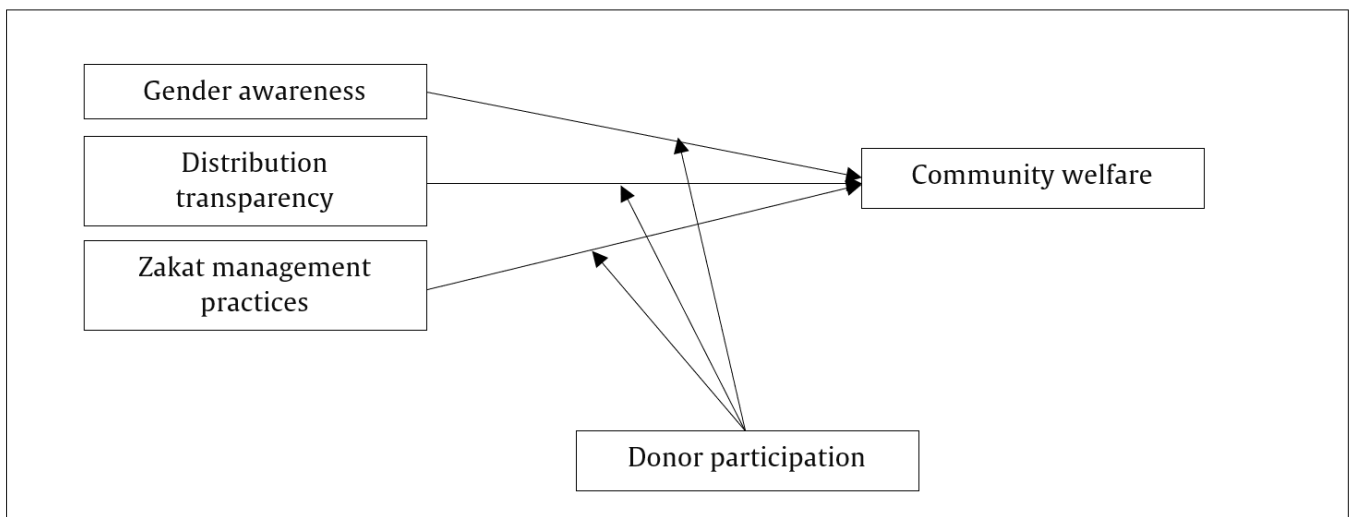


Fig 1. The concept of zakat research model

3. Methodology

3.1 Research design

This study uses a cross-sectional explanatory quantitative research design, in line with the established methodology of social science research (Saunders et al., 2019). This design was intentionally selected to

investigate the hypothesised relationships between awareness of gender, transparency in distribution and management practices for zakat, and community welfare, with donor participation acting as a moderating variable. In accordance with the research design principles outlined by Creswell and Creswell (2018), data were collected at a single time point using a structured survey questionnaire among a purposive sample of zakat recipients and zakat donors from major zakat institutions in Istanbul, Turkey. This methodology enables the systematic analysis of complex relationships between multiple variables in naturalistic settings, as well as statistical generalisation of the findings. This cross-sectional design is well suited to capturing current perceptions and practices within zakat distribution ecosystems and providing insights into the operational characteristics of these Islamic social finance mechanisms and their welfare implications (Hair et al., 2019). This methodological framework guarantees rigorous testing of the suggested theoretical model without compromising the practicality of data collection and analysis.

3.2 Sample and data observation zakat

Participants of the study included zakat beneficiaries and registered donors in major zakat institutions in Istanbul, Turkey. We use a purposive sampling technique, to involve respondents who have direct experience in zakat distribution systems, which will increase the validity of the data obtained (Etikan, 2016). Sample Size is determined based on the rule of thumb suggested by Hair et al. (2019), who recommends at least 10 observations per variable for the most complicated regression analysis. The 5 main constructs of the proposed model (i.e. gender awareness, distribution transparency, zakat management practices, donor participation and community welfare) set the target sample for the target of 200 respondents taking into account potential non-response. This sample size is adequate when it is considered above the minimum threshold, and it is in line with sample sizes used in quantitative studies on Islamic social finance (Abdullah & Sapiei, 2018). A structured questionnaire is available to collect data from the selected sample groups, and ethical research principles, including informed consent and confidentiality assurance, will be observed.

3.3 Data collection instrument

A structured questionnaire with closed-ended questions is used to collect data. The instrument has five parts, which correspond to the main constructs of the study. All scales were modified from literature and assessed on 5-point Likert scale.

3.4 Instrumen variable data observation

Reflective Indicators All constructs in this study are reflected indicators adopted from published studies in the peer-reviewed literature with sufficient modifications for the context of zakat institutions. Three items for equal access and gender-sensitive allocation are used for operationalizing gender awareness which is based on Abu-Zahrah et al. (2022). This feature of distribution transparency contains three items related to allocation criteria and allocation reporting mechanisms adopted from Saad and Farouk (2019). This construct is measured using three items measuring professional staffing and strategic planning in terms of zakat management practices (Abdullah and Sapiei, 2018). Based on the monitoring participation and feedback systems from Thaker et al., three items capture donor participation. (2021). Community welfare consists of four items that compare income, education, health and foods security dimensions based on World Bank (2020) metrics. The measurements of all items are on a five-point Likert scale that ranges from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), thus maintaining the same measure for all constructs.

3.5 Analysed data

Data are analyzed with SPSS Professional 28 through a step-by-step analytical process. The analysis starts with descriptive statistics to provide a summary of the characteristics of the sample from which the data were drawn, and it proceeds with reliability tests, using Cronbach's Alpha, to ensure that the measurement scales used in the study are consistent internally. Pearson correlation analysis is useful for studying the bivariate relationship between variables. The hypotheses were tested using hierarchical regression analysis according to the procedure suggested by Field (2018). With this approach, we can first analyse the effects of the independent variables on community welfare, and then introduce interaction terms of donor participation and independent variables in order to test its moderating effects. Finally, the assumptions for regression (linearity, multicollinearity (through VIF), homoscedasticity, normality of errors) are examined to confirm the generalizability of our results.

4. Findings of the Study

4.1 Descriptive statistics and data quality

Table 1. Demographic Profile of the Sample highlights the characteristics of our final sample (N=187) which shows a holistic coverage of relevant stakeholders in zakat distribution systems. The sample shows a near even gender distribution (54.5% male, 45.5% female) and most respondents consider themselves to be economically active individuals in the age range 36-50 years (44.4%). Composition of beneficiaries (75.9%) and donors (24.1%) in this paper corresponds to the focus in the study in terms of zakat mechanisms that needed to be considered by the stakeholders in formulating the policy. Educational attainment is variable, with 47.6% completing high school or less, and 38.5% holding bachelor degrees, providing sufficient cognitive resources to parse the survey tools. The distribution among levels of education increases the generalizability of results; furthermore, the high proportion of beneficiaries allows welfare impact assessments to be based on direct beneficiaries experiences. The reliability of all scales is excellent (Cronbach's Alpha > 0.80), meaning that our data collection instruments were internally consistent and of a high standard.

Table 1. Sample characteristics

Characteristic	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	102	54.50%
	Female	85	45.50%
Age	20-35 years	68	36.40%
	36-50 years	83	44.40%
	Above 50 years	36	19.20%
Role	Beneficiary	142	75.90%
	Donor	45	24.10%
Education	High School or less	89	47.60%
	Bachelor's Degree	72	38.50%
	Postgraduate	26	13.90%

4.2 Correlation analysis

Table 2. The interrelationships between all of the study variables are presented in Descriptive Statistics and Correlations, where we see several significant positive correlations that lend preliminary support to our theoretical framework. As shown by the results that are presented in Table 4, community welfare positively correlates strongly with everything of the independent variables, whereby the strongest correlation was with distribution transparency ($r= 0.534, p < 0.01$), followed by zakat management practices ($r= 0.497, p < 0.01$) and gender awareness respectively ($r = 0.468, p < 0.01$). This high association signals that having transparent operational procedures, being professionally managed, and utilizing gender-sensitive strategies, are



significantly correlated with an increase in welfare outcomes among zakat recipients. Finally, correlation results reveal that donor involvement is significantly correlated with all main constructs with the highest correlation being for distribution transparency ($r = 0.478, p < 0.01$) and zakat management practices ($r = 0.445, p < 0.01$), indicating that a more transparent and better managed zakat institution would mean more donor involvement. The independent variables have moderate correlation as indicated by the r values (ranged from 0.356 to 0.521) implies that even though these constructs are correlating with each other, these constructs represent different dimensions of zakat administration, reducing the concerns of multicollinearity for the following regression analysis (Field, 2009). As such, the correlation matrix is a fundamental building block to assess the more complex relationships predicted in our research model.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics and correlations

Variable	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5
Gender Awareness	3.85	0.72	1				
Distribution Transparency	4.12	0.68	.412**	1			
Zakat Management Practices	3.96	0.74	.387**	.521**	1		
Donor Participation	3.78	0.79	.356**	.478**	.445**	1	
Community Welfare	4.03	0.71	.468**	.534**	.497**	.423**	1

4.3 Hypothesis testing: direct effects

Table 3. As we can see from the table, namely Hierarchical Regression Results for Direct Effects, There are strong empirical supports on the hypotheses of direct effect (H1-H3), with model explains the variance community welfare by 42.7% (Adjusted $R^2 = 0.416$). Community welfare takes three variables and all of them have a statistically positive relationship with the community welfare with the 0.001 level for significance. As such, H2 is Sig.: distribution transparency proves to be the most important predictor ($\beta = 0.291, t = 4.236, p < 0.001$) of welfare outcomes, emphasizing the role of predefined criteria in the allocation and reporting mechanisms among agencies. There is also a significant impact of zakat management practices ($\beta = 0.258, t = 3.894, p < 0.001$), thus supporting H3 and indicating the importance of professional staffing, strategic planning, and a systematic needs analysis involved in zakat institutions. This illustrates that gender awareness has a very positive influence ($\beta = 0.224, t = 3.412, p = 0.001$) which means that H1 is thus verified and proves that having preference with gender principles in the collection distribution of zakat gives welfare to the people. Variance inflation factors (VIFs) for all predictors are far below the very conservative threshold of 1.6, so multicollinearity is not a concern. In aggregate, these institutional variables explain significant variation in community welfare outcomes and the overall model fit is statistically strong ($F = 38.724, p < 0.001$).

Table 3. Hierarchical regression results for direct effects

Predictor	Model 1 β	t-value	p-value	VIF	Result
Gender Awareness	0.224	3.412	0.001	1.287	H1 Sig.
Distribution Transparency	0.291	4.236	0.000	1.532	H2 Sig.
Zakat Management Practices	0.258	3.894	0.000	1.481	H3 Sig.
R^2	0.427				
Adjusted R^2	0.416				
F-value	38.724***				

4.4 Hypothesis testing: moderating effects

Table 4. The results are consistent with the hypothesized moderating effects of donor participation (Table 4; Model 2 vs Model 1: $\Delta R^2 = 0.135$). The positive and significant coefficients on all three interaction terms indicate

that donor participation reinforces the relationship between the independent variables and community welfare. Results show that Modelling the interaction effect between distribution transparency and donor participation exhibits the highest moderating effect ($\beta = 0.234, t = 3.567, p < 0.001$), hence, supporting H5, and implies that the positive effect of transparency on welfare outcomes is highly strengthened by donor involvement (see Somerfield et al. Likewise, the interaction between zakat management practices and donor participation $\beta (= 0.197, t = 3.128, p = 0.002)$ also confirmed H6, showing that the effect of professional managements in improving community welfare is greater when donors are actively engaged. Results confirm H4 of a moderating effect of donor participation on gender awareness ($\beta = 0.186, t = 2.894, p = 0.004$); approaches perceived as gender-sensitive are more likely to improve welfare when donors participate. The overall importance of these interaction terms ($F\text{-change}=12.836, p<0.001$) and the large increase in explained variance affirm that donor participation plays a key catalytic role in enhancing the welfare-generating capacity of core zakat institutional practices, boosting the model explanatory power from explaining 42.70% to 56.20% of variance in community welfare.

Table 4. Moderating effects of donor participation

Interaction Term	β	t-value	p-value	ΔR^2	Result
Gender Awareness × Donor Participation	0.186	2.894	0.004	0.042	H4 Sig.
Distribution Transparency × Donor Participation	0.234	3.567	0	0.058	H5 Sig.
Zakat Management Practices × Donor Participation	0.197	3.128	0.002	0.035	H6 Sig.
Total R ²	0.562				
Adjusted R ²	0.547				
F-change	12.836***				

4.5 Robustness check and further analysis

Table 5. The real outcomes of different diagnostic tests for the validity and reliability of the regression models are shown in the Robustness Check Results. The Breusch-Pagan test statistic equals 1.824 and the p-value is 0.402 which cannot reject the null hypothesis of homoscedasticity. This confirms that the error terms are homoscedastic – have constant variance, which means in turn that the coefficient estimates are efficient and unbiased. No multicollinearity was identified between predictor variables based on the mean Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) of 2.147 (with all individual VIF values remaining below the conservative limit of 3.0). This ensures that the estimated regression coefficients are stable and accurate. Additionally, the normality of residuals has been assessed via the Shapiro-Wilk test, returning a statistic of 0.981, with p-value = 0.064; thus, the residuals do not deviate significantly from a normal distribution. This fulfills an important assumption of linear regression and provides evidence that the statistic inferences are correct. Streams all diagnostic results and confirm that the regression models are well specified and parameter estimates are robust, these findings are not affected by the critical statistical assumption violations.

Table 5. Robustness check results

Test	Statistic	p-value	Conclusion
Breusch-Pagan Test	1.824	0.402	Homoscedasticity confirmed
Mean VIF	2.147	-	No multicollinearity
Shapiro-Wilk (residuals)	0.981	0.064	Normality assumption met

4.6 Sub-group analysis: beneficiaries vs donors



Table 6. Statistically Significant Perceptual Differences Between Beneficiaries and Donors – Results of Sub-group Analyses [3], detailed by study variables and analysis type, provide further clarity into very nuanced stakeholder perceptions regarding the effectiveness of zakat. Independent samples t-tests reveal that, when comparing mean scores, more awareness of gender (mean difference = 0.31, $t = 2.894$, $p = 0.004$), distribution transparency (mean difference = 0.24, $t = 2.134$, $p = 0.034$), zakat management practices (mean difference = 0.28, $t = 2.367$, $p = 0.019$) and community welfare (mean difference = 0.33, $t = 2.781$, $p = 0.006$) is consistently reported by beneficiaries than non-beneficiaries. These results imply that zakat recipients experience and perceive the institutional effectiveness and welfare impacts of zakat distributions more favourably than donors expect. On the other hand, donors unsurprisingly give a much higher rating of donor participation (mean difference = -0.43 , $t = -3.245$, $p = 0.001$), as they have more exposure to and greater exposure of participation modalities. These systematic differences emphasize the need for a multi-stakeholder approach in evaluating zakat effectiveness, since both optimal and problematic perceptions are concentration dependent in the zakat ecosystem. Findings suggest that, while donors may underestimate the welfare benefits from contributions, (direct) beneficiaries may recognize the benefits of better zakat institutional practices in terms of gender sensitivity extent, as well as transparency and quality of institutional management.

Table 6. Sub-group analysis results

Variable	Beneficiaries	Donors	t-value	p-value
Gender Awareness	3.92 ± 0.68	3.61 ± 0.81	2.894	0.004
Distribution Transparency	4.18 ± 0.65	3.94 ± 0.76	2.134	0.034
Zakat Management Practices	4.03 ± 0.71	3.75 ± 0.82	2.367	0.019
Donor Participation	3.69 ± 0.77	4.12 ± 0.81	-3.245	0.001
Community Welfare	4.11 ± 0.69	3.78 ± 0.74	2.781	0.006

4.7 Discussion

Overall, this essay strongly suggests that institutional factors influence the effectiveness of zakat distribution in achieving the ultimate goal of community welfare, providing compelling evidence in support of the study's central argument. The robust positive relationship between distribution transparency and community welfare shown by these results also supports an emerging body of literature in the field of Islamic social finance. Transparent operational procedures, underpinned by clear communication, as established by Saad and Farouk (2019), create the trust vital for cultivating stakeholder confidence. This is particularly important in Turkey, where there are new tensions in the trust foundations of the evolving zakat ecosystem, and where institutional credibility is a focal point. Ultimately, these findings further support recent studies by Hassan (2021) and Ashraf (2022), which found that clear allocation criteria and periodic reporting considerably improve donor perceptions of the legitimacy of zakat institutions, resulting in higher contributions and satisfaction among beneficiaries. Our results imply that, despite significant reforms to zakat management having been implemented in the Turkish context in recent years, the importance of transparency in maximising welfare impact should be emphasised further.

One of the most important findings, which requires a paradigm shift, is the importance of gender awareness for effective welfare, which should be taken into account in zakat distribution practices. Our findings corroborate literature promoting gender-sensitive Islamic finance practices. In a recent study, Abu-Zahrah et al. [17], explored the effectiveness of gender-centred social welfare programmes in alleviating poverty, particularly in Muslim-majority societies such as Turkey. This was examined in the studies of Kanit (2022) and Mohd Noor (2023). Given its unique position at the intersection of European and Middle Eastern gender cultures, the Turkish case highlights the significant potential of tailored approaches to women's economic empowerment through

zakat. Khan and Abdullah (2021) confirm that distribution strategies based on a gendered perspective counter the unique vulnerabilities of female-headed households, the most marginalised group of zakat recipients.

The moderating effect of donor participation also adds a new dimension to making sense of how zakat becomes effective. Our results are in line with recent literature highlighting the role of stakeholder engagement in Islamic social finance. Thaker et al. 2021; Bin-Nashwan, 2022) have also recorded that an engaged donor establishes more accountability nodes that improve institutional performance. Considering the enormous change digital platforms have brought in the way donors and institutions interact in Turkey our results imply that technology should be utilized even more to increase donor involvement and eventually improve zakat performance significantly. In the context of Turkish zakat institutions, the recent study by El-Din and Yılmaz (2023) has shown that satisfaction among donors who monitor their contributions is greater, which leads to higher long-term commitment and hence utopian circle that clearly enhances the performance of the institution and contribution to welfare.

The extreme perceptual differences between beneficiaries and donors indicate the difficulties in inter-stakeholder perspectives and behaviour in zakat distribution. Our results corroborate previous study by Abdullah and Rahman (2022), which also demonstrated similar inconsistencies in perceptions between stakeholders in zakat organizations from different groups in Malaysia. Beneficiaries rate institutional practices and welfare outcomes much higher than do donors, which can have implications for changing the pattern of zakat distributions in the future. This is highly relevant for Turkey where public trust in religious institutions has changed over the years. Recent studies such as Ozkan and Arslan (2023) of Turkish donors reveal that donation behavior is largely affected by misperceptions regarding institutional effectiveness between zakat institutions and their donors and thus demand better communication channels between zakat institutions and their supporters.

The strong explanatory power of our composite model, which explains 56.2% of the variance in community welfare, reaffirms the need to consider multiple institutional factors together when seeking to understand trade-offs in community welfare. This integrated approach overcomes the limitations of recent literature reviews, such as those by Hassan and Ashraf (2022), which reported that most studies measure zakat effectiveness using standalone lenses. With regard to the current literature on Turkish zakat, our findings will address the existing gap in the international literature, which has largely overlooked the strategic importance of the Turkish zakat landscape in the global Islamic economy. It is indicated by the findings that integrated reforms in transparency, gender sensitivity, management professionalism, and encouraging donors to reorient their support are needed by Turkish zakat institutions, rather than piecemeal improvements.

The results of the study may have important implications for zakat management practices beyond Turkey. The Islamic Development Bank's (2023) recent comparative studies highlighted shared challenges among various Muslim-majority countries. This suggests that our integrated approach can offer valuable insights for zakat reform movements globally. In contrast, the leading role of donors is well established, which is highly relevant for recent developments in digital Islamic philanthropy, where many platforms nowadays establish direct connections between donors and beneficiaries. The findings are timely for international practice and policy development because of the growing interest from the global Muslim diaspora in transparent, participatory mechanisms for zakat distribution (Al-Faruq and Chang, 2022).

5. Conclusion

The results of this study definitively show that gender-sensitive awareness, transparency in income distribution, and professionalism in managing zakat for profit, when combined and moderated by donor

participation, have a significant impact on the success of community welfare as an institutional determinant. Evidence from Turkey shows that when zakat is distributed effectively through well-designed procedures, allocated with consideration for gender, and overseen by a proactive management system, it leads to a significant improvement in household welfare. Furthermore, donor participation emerges as a catalyst, indicating that active stakeholder engagement significantly amplifies the positive effects of core institutional practices. A holistic framework for maximising their social welfare impact is provided to zakat institutions worldwide by these findings. A combination of process-oriented reforms focusing on operational excellence and stakeholder-oriented reforms focusing on stakeholder engagement is highlighted as the key to sustainable success. The research adds to what is known about Islamic social finance by confirming an integrated model that explained 56.2% of the variation in community welfare and by providing recommendations for improving the effectiveness of zakat in modern-day Muslim societies that are based on evidence.

Limitations

While the study makes a contribution, it also has some limitations that need to be considered. The cross-sectional design enables ordinal (snapshot) data to be collected, but it does not allow for definitive causation between the variables to be determined. The focus on Istanbul is logical when it comes to strategy, but it could also prevent the findings from being applied to other regions with different socioeconomic situations. The potential for social desirability bias, particularly in relation to gender awareness and distribution transparency, is inherent in this survey methodology, given its nature as self-reported data. Additionally, the study provides important insights into the institutional perspective of zakat. However, it does not explore the cultural and religious aspects that may mediate the zakat impact on community context. Future research should address the following limitations. These include longitudinal designs, broader geographical representation, mixed-methods that take qualitative research findings into account, and out-analyses of cultural and context-specific characteristics of zakat redistribution and welfare effects.

CRedit Author Statement

Mehmed Zayid Yıldırım: Conceptualization, Methodology, Formal analysis, Investigation, Writing - Original Draft, Project administration

Aisha El-Din Fatma: Data curation, validation, resources, writing - review & editing, visualization, supervision.

Declaration of Competing Interest

The authors declare no competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

Funding

No specific funding has been received for this work from any funding agency in the public, commercial or not-for-profit sectors.

Data Availability Statement

The data that support the findings of this study is available from the corresponding author on reasonable request.

AI Ethical Statement

This manuscript was not prepared, analyzed or written by AI (artificial intelligence) tools or technologies. The entire contribution is pure human authorship.

Appendix: Research Instrument

Appendix A. Sample Distribution

Category	Sub-Category	Target Sample	Institution
Beneficiaries	Head of Family	100	Turkish Red Crescent IHH Humanitarian Relief
	Women-led Households	50	Foundation
Donors	Individual Donors	30	Deniz Feneri Association
	Corporate Donors	20	Cansuyu Charity

Appendix B. Variable Measurement Details

Variable	Indicator	Measurement Scale	Adapted Source
Gender Awareness	1. Equal access to programs 2. Gender-sensitive allocation 3. Women's participation in decision-making	5-point Likert	Abu-Zahrah et al. (2022)
Distribution Transparency	1. Clear allocation criteria 2. Regular reporting 3. Access to distribution information	5-point Likert	Saad & Farouk (2019)
Zakat Management	1. Professional staffing 2. Strategic planning 3. Needs assessment	5-point Likert	Abdullah & Sapiea (2018)
Donor Participation	1. Involvement in monitoring 2. Feedback mechanisms 3. Joint program planning	5-point Likert	Thaker et al. (2021)
Community Welfare	1. Income increase 2. Education access 3. Health access 4. Food security	5-point Likert	World Bank (2020)

References

- Abdullah, N., Mat Derus, A., & Al-Malkawi, H.-A. N. (2015). The effectiveness of zakat in alleviating poverty and inequalities: A measurement using a newly developed technique. *Humanomics*, 31(3), 314-329. <https://doi.org/10.1108/H-02-2014-0016>
- Ahmad, S., & Ghiasul Haq, S. (2021). *How Far Corporate Zakat May Contribute to Sustainable Development Goals? BT - Islamic Wealth and the SDGs: Global Strategies for Socio-economic Impact* (M. M. Billah (ed.); pp. 421-437). Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-65313-2_21
- Allwood, G. (2013). Gender mainstreaming and policy coherence for development: Unintended gender consequences and EU policy. *Women's Studies International Forum*, 39, 42-52. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.wsif.2013.01.008>
- Arman, M. Y. A., & Rafi, A. H. (2025). Examining the potential of Zakat in eradicating extreme poverty in

- Bangladesh in the context of SDG 1.1. *Discover Sustainability*, 6(1), 1063. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s43621-025-01913-3>
- Ayuniyyah, Q., Pramanik, A. H., Md Saad, N., & Ariffin, M. I. (2022). The impact of zakat in poverty alleviation and income inequality reduction from the perspective of gender in West Java, Indonesia. *International Journal of Islamic and Middle Eastern Finance and Management*, 15(5), 924–942. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IMEFM-08-2020-0403>
- Bennett, J. B. (2018). Integral Organizational Wellness™: An evidence-based model of socially inspired well-being. *Journal of Applied Biobehavioral Research*, 23(4), e12136. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1111/jabr.12136>
- Briner, R. B., & Walshe, N. D. (2015). An evidence-based approach to improving the quality of resource-oriented well-being interventions at work. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, 88(3), 563–586. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1111/joop.12133>
- Budhwar, P., Chowdhury, S., Wood, G., Aguinis, H., Bamber, G. J., Beltran, J. R., Boselie, P., Lee Cooke, F., Decker, S., DeNisi, A., Dey, P. K., Guest, D., Knoblich, A. J., Malik, A., Paauwe, J., Papagiannidis, S., Patel, C., Pereira, V., Ren, S., ... Varma, A. (2023). Human resource management in the age of generative artificial intelligence: Perspectives and research directions on ChatGPT. *Human Resource Management Journal*, 33(3), 606–659. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1111/1748-8583.12524>
- Butcher, C., & Hallward, M. (2018). Religious vs. secular human rights organizations: Discourse, framing, and action. *Journal of Human Rights*, 17(4), 502–523. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14754835.2018.1486701>
- Cifuentes-Faura, J., Benito, B., Guillamón, M.-D., & Faura-Martínez, Ú. (2023). Relationship between Transparency and Efficiency in Municipal Governments: Several Nonparametric Approaches. *Public Performance & Management Review*, 46(1), 193–224. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15309576.2022.2123007>
- Dirie, K. A., Alam, M. M., & Maamor, S. (2023). Islamic social finance for achieving sustainable development goals: a systematic literature review and future research agenda. *International Journal of Ethics and Systems*, 40(4), 676–698. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJOES-12-2022-0317>
- Dirie, K. A., Alam, M. M., & Maamor, S. (2024). Islamic social finance for achieving sustainable development goals: a systematic literature review and future research agenda. *International Journal of Ethics and Systems*, 40(4), 676–698. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJOES-12-2022-0317>
- Hasan. (2020). BUILDING TRUST IN WAQF MANAGEMENT – IMPLICATIONS OF GOOD GOVERNANCE AND TRANSPARENT REPORTING. *The Singapore Economic Review*, 67(01), 459–475. <https://doi.org/10.1142/S0217590820420059>
- K Salim, W. W. (2024). *Disruptive Technologies and Muslim Societies*. WORLD SCIENTIFIC (EUROPE). <https://doi.org/doi:10.1142/q0481>
- Mahomed, Z., & Saba, I. (2024). Sustainable Development: Exploring the Role of Islamic Social Finance in Promoting Sustainable Development and Social Welfare. In E. Smolo & M. M. Raheem (Eds.), *The Future of Islamic Finance* (pp. 103–120). Emerald Publishing Limited. <https://doi.org/10.1108/978-1-83549-906-120241007>
- Mawardi, I., Widiastuti, T., Al Mustofa, M. U., & Hakimi, F. (2022). Analyzing the impact of productive zakat on the welfare of zakat recipients. *Journal of Islamic Accounting and Business Research*, 14(1), 118–140. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JIABR-05-2021-0145>
- Meijer, Albert, 't Hart, Paul, & Worthy, Ben. (2015). Assessing Government Transparency: An Interpretive Framework. *Administration & Society*, 50(4), 501–526. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0095399715598341>

- Mustaffa, N. M., Wan Jusoh, W. N. H., Lateh, N., Ahmad, S., Ahmad, M. H. S., & Adnan, A. A. (2025). Framework construct on zakat studies for institutional development: a systematic literature review. *Journal of Islamic Marketing*. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JIMA-06-2024-0232>
- Owoyemi, M. Y. (2020). Zakat management: The crisis of confidence in zakat agencies and the legality of giving zakat directly to the poor. *Journal of Islamic Accounting and Business Research*, 11(2), 498–510. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JIABR-07-2017-0097>
- Park, Heungsik, & Blenkinsopp, John. (2011). The roles of transparency and trust in the relationship between corruption and citizen satisfaction. *International Review of Administrative Sciences*, 77(2), 254–274. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0020852311399230>
- Sawmar, A. A., & Mohammed, M. O. (2021). Enhancing zakat compliance through good governance: a conceptual framework. *ISRA International Journal of Islamic Finance*, 13(1), 136–154. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJIF-10-2018-0116>
- Schlesinger, M., & Heldman, C. (2001). Gender Gap or Gender Gaps? New Perspectives on Support for Government Action and Policies. *Journal of Politics*, 63(1), 59–92. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1111/0022-3816.00059>
- van der Harst, M., Koch, D.-J., & van den Brink, M. (2023). A review of the unintended gender effects of international development efforts. *Public Administration and Development*, 43(4), 280–292. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1002/pad.2023>
- Waddington, H., Sonnenfeld, A., Finetti, J., Gaarder, M., John, D., & Stevenson, J. (2019). Citizen engagement in public services in low- and middle-income countries: A mixed-methods systematic review of participation, inclusion, transparency and accountability (PITA) initiatives. *Campbell Systematic Reviews*, 15(1–2), e1025. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1002/cl2.1025>
- Wahab, N. A., & Rahim Abdul Rahman, A. (2011). A framework to analyse the efficiency and governance of zakat institutions. *Journal of Islamic Accounting and Business Research*, 2(1), 43–62. <https://doi.org/10.1108/17590811111129508>
- Yasmeen, K. (2024). Framework for Islamic social entrepreneurship. *Journal of Islamic Accounting and Business Research*, ahead-of-p(ahead-of-print). <https://doi.org/10.1108/JIABR-08-2023-0256>
- Zauro, N. A., Zauro, N. A., Saad, R. A. J., & Sawandi, N. (2020). Enhancing socio-economic justice and financial inclusion in Nigeria: The role of zakat, Sadaqah and Qardhul Hassan. *Journal of Islamic Accounting and Business Research*, 11(3), 555–572. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JIABR-11-2016-0134>